

# A Translation Criticism; Eda: an Anthology of Contemporary Turkish Poetry<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

This study intends to present the readers of Turkish Poetry in English a translation criticism of *Eda: An Anthology of Contemporary Turkish Poetry*. The editor-translator, Murat Nemet-Nejat, positions the mystic Sufistic essence of Turkish literature, the legacy of Divan Poetry, to the core of contemporary Turkish poetry in the paratextual material. This claim is an overgeneralization because it underestimates other influences. Moreover, a comparative analysis of the source poems to the translations indicated that contrary to his overemphasis, the translator does not display close thematic or formative renderings of the poems that contain the Sufistic “essence” which he calls “eda”. Rather, the characteristic Sufistic elements are eliminated and poems are manipulated to such an extent that will not escape a postcolonial criticism. Shortly, the anthology offers the readers a rewriting that provides the readers with a distorted representation of Turkish poems in an orientalist alignment embellished with homoerotic images.

**Keywords:** Sufism, translation criticism, rewriting, postcolonialism, orientalism.

## BİR ÇEVİRİ ELEŐTİRİŐİ; EDA: BİR ÇAĐDAŐ TÜRK ŐİİRİ ANTOLOJİŐİ

## Öz

Bu çalışma Türk Őiirini İngilizce okuyanlara, *Eda: An Anthology of Contemporary Turkish Poetry* (*Eda: ÇaĐdaŐ Türk Őiiri Antolojisi*) üzerine bir çeviri eleŐtirisi sunmayı amaçlar. Editör-çevirmen Murat Nemet-Nejat, çağdaŐ Türk Őiirinin merkezine, Divan Őiirinin mirası mistik Sufi özü koyar. Bu bir genellemedir çünkü diĐer etkileri hafife alır. Ayrıca, kaynak Őiirlerin çevirilerle karşılaŐtırmalı analizi göstermiŐtir ki çevirmen, yaptıĐı aşırı vurguya karşın, “eda” diye adlandırdıĐı Sufi özü içeren Őiirlere konu ve biçim açısından yakın çeviriler ortaya koymaz. Aksine Őiirlerdeki karakteristik tasavvufî öĐerler atılmıŐ ve Őiirler post-kolonial bir eleŐtirmeden kaçamayacak bir biçimde deĐiŐtirilmiŐtir. Kısacası, antoloji okurlara Türk Őiirinin bir yeniden yazımını, tahrif edilmiŐ, oryantalist bir çizgide homoerotik imajlarla süslenmiŐ bir temsilini sunar.

**Anahtar sözcükler:** Sufizm, çeviri eleŐtirisi, yeniden yazım, postkolonyalizm, oryantalizm.

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## INTRODUCTION

**T**his study aims to present the translation criticism of a Turkish poetry anthology, *Eda<sup>2</sup>: An Anthology of Contemporary Turkish Poetry*, compiled, translated and edited by Murat Nemet-Nejat. In this anthology, most of the poems are translated by Nemet-Nejat and some of the articles and literary criticisms provided as the supporting material are written by him in addition to the commentary entitled “The Idea of the Book”, which follows the preface. Nemet-Nejat himself is presented as a “bridge” by Talât Sait Halman as “he devoted much of his literary life to transposing Turkish poetry into English” (Halman, 2004, p. 1). Halman also describes *Eda* as a bridge that links Nemet-Nejat’s three persona- poet, translator and critic (Halman, 2004, p 1). This three-dimensional role attributed to him makes his view point of Turkish poetry even more encompassing. The anthology offers the readers a view that combines Nemet-Nejat’s account of Turkish literature, and his approach to translation, which is already present in the work with the translation of numerous poems from various poets and paratextual materials.

*Eda* is an act of rewriting in several ways and it will contribute to the literary representation and survival of contemporary Turkish poetry as a whole with the images it creates. In his book *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*, Andre Lefevere states that “Rewriters created images of a work, a writer, a genre, a period, sometimes even a whole literature” (Lefevere, 1992b, p. 5). He adds that “Since translation is the most obviously recognizable type of rewriting and since it is potentially the most influential because it is able to project the image of an author in another culture, lifting that author and/or those works beyond the boundaries of their culture of origin” (Lefevere, 1992b, p. 9). Keeping in mind that rewritings are produced in the service or under the constraints of certain ideological and poetological currents (Lefevere, 1992b, p. 8) and rewriting is a way of manipulation (Lefevere, 1992b, p. 9), the images of contemporary Turkish poetry and poets created in this work will be scrutinized in this study. The translator may choose to apply some latent modifications or omissions as translations will also be published, sold and read more easily if they correspond to the dominant trends of literature in the target culture (Lefevere, 1992b, p. 87) which proves the stealthy devotion of the rewriter to the dominant ideology or “superior” culture.

Lefevere supports the idea that “Translators, critics, historians and anthologizers all rewrite texts under similar constraints at the same historical moment. They are image makers, exerting the power of subversion under the guise of objectivity” (Lefevere, 1992a, p. 7). As an editor, anthologizer and translator, Nemet-Nejat, the rewriter of literature, has the power to shape the ideas of the target readers in analogy with his own perspective while he is contributing to the survival of the source texts. Thus, this study aims to find out how and in what way this power is exercised by him and it argues that the paratextual material provided in the anthology together with Nemet-Nejat’s translation lead the reader to a reading which is very much diverted from the poems’ real substance in the source language and a false representation of Turkish poetry which occasionally leads to implications of eroticism and (homo)sexuality. The employment of Sufism in the anthology and translation of the poems chosen will be examined in this light and the clashes between the essence of the poems and Nemet-Nejat’s translations will be revealed. While Nemet-Nejat puts Sufism in the core of contemporary Turkish poetry, he does not show the same sensitivity to the Sufistic and mystic elements in the poems. According to the findings of this study, the images the anthology creates in

<sup>2</sup> Eda means mien. Halman considers eda as focal title and explains that it was employed in Ottoman Turkish in the sense of “style” or “mannerism” or “affectation” (Halman, 2).

the poems of the examined poets are remote from the ones the source text-poems aim at. While the translator is paying “lip-service” (Lefevere, 1992b, p. 120) to the source culture, he supports the existing stereotypes of the “East” and its already-known images in the “West”. When Sufism in its core clashes with the ideology of the target culture (Lefevere, 1992a, p. 87) since it demands a totally distinct reading in a remote discourse because of its cultural and religious roots particularly, and the theme cannot be made to fit to the target culture (Lefevere, 1992b, p. 109), the anthologist do not hesitate to offer the readers a distorted discourse of the source poems.

The poems examined are modified to the extent that their “essence”; “eda”, is almost lost, although he claims to lavish importance to it as reflected in his article “The Idea of the Book” (Nemet-Nejat, 2004, p. 4). The significance given to the metaphysical and Sufistic aspect of contemporary Turkish poetry in the paratextual elements by him is not reflected in the translations because his interpretation of the Sufistic essence and his definition of Sufism do not overlap with the cultural and literary traditions of Sufism in the poems. He introduces so many variations in some of the poems that their form and theme deviates from the domestic literary canon (Venuti, 1998, p. 11) to a great extent which would make him subject to postcolonial criticism. Therefore, Lawrence Venuti’s supposition that “Translators are complicit in the institutional exploitation of foreign texts and cultures” (Venuti, 1998, p. 4) is justified in the anthology and the translations raise some ethical questions.

Additionally, the translator’s choice of poems does not necessarily reflect the Sufistic tendencies of the poets when the oeuvre they have produced is taken into consideration. Either the poems chosen are not fully representative for the poets who have Sufistic inclinations or the Sufistic elements are erased and distorted. Although he presents the anthology as representative of all contemporary Turkish poetry (Nemet-Nejat, 2004, p. 4)<sup>3</sup>, it is obvious from the preface by Halman “Several other important innovators are missing. This anthology does not purport to be wholly representative” (Halman, 2004, p. 2). Basing the whole literary tradition of contemporary Turkish poetry on Sufism is an over-generalization. It makes its point by offering the readership with representation of a false unitary “cultural identity”<sup>4</sup> and neglecting the contradicting aspects within it which is very much based on the “otherness” of contemporary Turkish poetry. However neither the metaphysical essence which he asserts is present in every poet and poem in the anthology nor contemporary Turkish Poetry really remained a continuum that has its roots in the metaphysical aspect of Sufism as he assumes.

In the anthology, the paratextual material is not the only place where the editor’s idea of translation comes to the surface. The choice of the poets and poems and the translations are even stronger evidences that reveal the translators’ conception of the tradition of Turkish poetry. Thus, in this study, a two level critical analysis will be used. The first level will be based on a macro level analysis of the paratextual material and the second on a micro level analysis that aims at the explication of translations. The main reason to analyze the paratextual elements is to discover the functions fulfilled by these elements that maintain the translation strategies of the translator. Better expressed, while the macro level analysis will cover the literal, translational and cultural views of the translator expressed in the paratextual material and focus on the characteristics of anthologization, editing and criticism, the micro level will concentrate on a critical analysis of the translations. The preface and afterword of the book (peritexts namely) and his article “Turkey’s

<sup>3</sup> The translator states that the collection tries to reflect the cadence of Turkish poetry’s total “allure”(4).

<sup>4</sup> Stuart Hall states that identities can arise within a fantasmatic field; that is to say they can be products of the fantasies (Hall 1996: 4). The identity of a nation is created from the perspectives of the other nations and their own inclinations.

Mysterious Motions and Turkish Poetry” will be examined closely in the same frame. The findings of both steps of the analysis will be compared in order to assess whether they overlap. *Eda’s* scope is very broad, thus the borders of the study should be drawn precisely. His rendering of this Sufistic essence in his translations of the poets who used Sufistic terminology and thus can be accepted in Sufi tradition in Turkish poetry; namely Yahya Kemal Beyatlı, Necip Fazıl Kısakürek and Asaf Halet Çelebi, will be analyzed.

### MACRO ANALYSIS, SUFISM IN THE PARATEXTUAL MATERIAL

Halman calls Nemet-Nejat’s translation an act of re-creation as “he liberates the originals from their formal or conceptual stringencies and sometimes seems to have written new poems in English out of the quintessence of his Turkish material” (Halman, 2004, p. 2). Nemet-Nejat justifies Halman’s idea with the following words that,

They [the translations in the anthology] run the gamut from being absolutely literal to a few where I took liberties. But in all I tried to be absolutely faithful to what I believe their essences are. My attempt was always to translate that essence without diluting it. (Nemet-Nejat, 2004, p. 21)

However, some of his translations can be considered imitations as he produces poems of his own which have only a point of departure in common with the source text (Lefevere, 1975, p. 76). In contrast to the liberties he takes he undermines the very “essence” of the poems in which he determines as three basic aspects- thematic, linguistic and metaphysical which he thinks as general aspects underlying the whole body of Turkish poetry (Nemet-Nejat, 2004, p. 4). The translation strategies applied by him do not overlap with the translation strategies he claims as the principles.

The reasons for the shifts of emphasis stems from the translator’s understanding of Sufism which he renders in the essay entitled “A Godless Sufism”. He writes;

In Sufism the language of God is often intermingled, fused with the language of sex- here, more than anywhere else, one see its Pagan, Shaman source. Also, Sufism’s is a sexuality where pleasure is unified with pain, hurting with being hurt, power with weakness, loss of self with finding God, a pull towards God with a pull towards sex, etc. It is also tacitly a homosexual eroticism (Turkish has no gender distinctions). In its mystical language, Sufism pulls out the officially suppressed, heretical, subversive, anti-authoritarian tendencies of the Islam. (Nemet-Nejat, 2004, p. 324)

Moreover, he uses *Sufi* and *erotic* as synonyms in the following sentence, “The poets turned essentially to Sufi/erotic folk poets” (Nejat-Nejat, 2004, p. 2). While he is putting emphasis on the shamanistic roots of Sufism rather than the teachings of Sufism of Rumi, he uses the images of eroticism and homosexuality because Rumi and Shams-e Tabriz are known in the West for their affair.<sup>5</sup> In this respect, he strengthens the already existing stereotypes of Eastern identity by emphasizing the eroticism in Sufism. Instead of challenging the Western orientalist understanding of *love*<sup>6</sup> with sensual images, his translation serves to “the secret and suppressed desires of Western subconscious” (Parla, 2001) with sensual images. Nevertheless, by using Sufism as the metaphysical aspect which is quintessential to Turkish poetry from his point of view, he makes use of spirituality to put emphasis on the gap between the source and target literary traditions which can be interpreted as an orientalist act as it puts emphasis on the gap between source and target cultures and alienating the other. This alienated other, which is a stereotype, can be the object which bears the secret desires

<sup>5</sup> Anissa Hélie writes that “Examples of poetry celebrating male love include Sufi poets such as Jalaluddin Rumi about his lover Shams-e-Tabriz and the Ottoman “divan literature” by male poets celebrating their male lovers” (Hélie 2004).

<sup>6</sup> The concept of love in Sufism implies divine affection towards God rather than a human.

of the subject itself as a kind of mirror. On the other hand, to the readers' surprise, in his article; "A Godless Sufism", he criticizes the intense interest in Sufism, especially Rumi, in the West as Rumi's images of "universe", "drink", "dance", "whirling dervishes" etc. (2004, p. 326) which support the already existing stereotypical images of the East in the West.

In Nemet-Nejat's words, "*Eda* is the poetic embodiment of the Sufi spirit in the Turkish language" (Nemet-Nejat, 2004, p. 329). However, it is questionable whether this aspect is valid for every poet and poem in the anthology. It is accepted that Sufism contributed to the foundation and development of Ottoman Divan literature and many Sufis were well-known poets (Gölpınarlı, 1953, p. 446)<sup>7</sup>. However, it is impossible to claim that contemporary Turkish poetry is dominated by Sufism. Fuad Köprülü asserts that after the rise and spread of Sufism among Muslims, it was influential in other literary fields as high and divine love were sources of inspiration for the poets (Köprülü, 2003, p. 150) but not all of the poets covered in the anthology can be labelled as Sufis.

In his afterword, Nemet-Nejat mentions the Turkish Republic and linguistic reform of Kemal Atatürk which was "lightning-fast" and "unalterable" (2004, p. 324). According to him, this poetic movement involved wresting the Turkish language and poetry from the ubiquitous presence of Persian and Arabic (2004, p. 324). The language reform of the Turkish Republic is a crucial point for Nemet-Nejat as it leads Turkish poetry to turn to its Asian and Shamanistic roots, namely Sufism, as well as its folk tradition, which is based on Sufism as well, to establish a new identity itself (2004, p. 325). However, the readers are not informed about the rupture which the reforms created between the Ottoman literary legacy and the literary traditions of the Turkish Republic. Although he writes about this break in his article "Turkey's Mysterious Motions and Turkish Poetry", in the peritextual material of *Eda*, it is ignored in the anthology and Turkish poetry is represented as a unitary whole. Saliha Paker points out that after the foundation of the Turkish Republic, Turkish society entered a modern nation-building process and concomitant ideological revolution which aimed at a political and cultural break with the past. She criticizes the rupture purist language reform movement in the Republican period leads to in cultural and historical continuity (Paker, 2002, p. 127). In a similar vein with Paker, Kevin Robins considers Kemalism as a narrative of disavowal and denial (Robins, 1996, p. 68). The new phase the society enters is entirely open to the effects of West because the young Republic wanted to create "a modern, Europe-oriented and secular society" as Özlem Berk states (Berk, 2006, p. 6). Although, people could not deny the literary and intellectual accumulation of centuries in a fortnight, the Turkish Republic, along with all its institutions, including literature, turns its face to the West after the Kemalist Reforms. Nemet-Nejat neglects this side of the transformation which the society went through.

As Victoria Holbrook states (1994, p. 22) the Ottoman language and literature were severely critiqued and Ottoman poetry was a privileged signifier of the failing Sultanate after the foundation of Turkish republic and the change of the regime. She also mentions that this high form of poetry was augmented with an anti-divan "folk" literature. Nemet-Nejat misses this political and lingual conflict and only mentions the Sufistic turning back to the folk poetry (Anatolian and Asian). This is only one side of the coin as the Sufistic idea is composed of two factors; folk literature and Ottoman Divan literature. In other words both the folk literature and the high literature are influenced by Sufism (Genç, 2005, p. 103). Sufi literature is divided into two main branches, religious Sufi folk literature (e.g. Pir Sultan Abdal and Yunus Emre) and classical Sufi literature (e.g. Fuzuli and Şeyh Galib) (Tatçı, 1997, p. 12). Nemet-Nejat puts emphasis only on the first branch- folk literature by stripping it from its religious roots and neglects the more canonized and courtly classical branch

<sup>7</sup> Unless the contrary is stated, the translations from Turkish are done by the present writer.



which attracted the attention of an intellectual coterie and offers the readers a unified and homogeneous reflection of Turkish literary identity.

Nemet-Nejat declares that his understanding of Sufism focuses on the contradictions, reverse sides that lead to multiplicity as well as unity implying the pre-Islamic origins of Sufism in the central Asian Shamanism (2004, p. 6). In a way, as the article's title implies, which functions as an afterword, he bases contemporary Turkish poetry on the idea of "Godless Sufism, Ideas on the Twentieth - Century Turkish Poetry" (2004, p. 323). He tries to present a Sufism that stems from a secular motive. This artificial unification he resorts to can be considered disturbing from the standpoint of some among the target readership. Thus, he emphasizes the heretical nature of Sufism (2004, p. 326) which is in analogy with his own view despite the fact that heresy and shamanism are not totally compatible. Introducing heresy can make the text more neutral and acceptable in the target culture as it strips it of any adherence to any religious belief. While the Turkish, Asian, Kemalist and secular side of Turkish poetry is put forward by him, the conflicting, thus Persian, European and religious sides of it are erased. In other words, he overemphasizes one side of contemporary Turkish poetry to create a "domestic" and unified representation of it.

### MICRO ANALYSIS

In this part of the study, the poems of Yahya Kemal Beyatlı, Necip Fazıl Kısakürek and Asaf Halet Çelebi will be examined. The reason to choose the mentioned poets is their Sufistic tendencies and the Sufistic terminology they resort to. The rest of the poets in the anthology are, in any case, not known for Sufistic inclinations. Thus, their poems cannot be considered consistent with the metaphysical essence of contemporary Turkish poetry, Nemet-Nejat claims. As, it can be observed in this part of the study, he applies assimilative translation strategies as a translator in these translations.

#### 2.1. Yahya Kemal Beyatlı

The translations of three poems by Beyatlı are included in the anthology. First of all, in the case of an anthology which puts Sufism at the heart of contemporary Turkish poetry, one expects the translator to include "Rindlerin Ölümü" (The Death of Hafız) and "Sonbahar" (Autumn) into the anthology as these poems of Beyatlı would be more appropriate to trace the Sufistic legacy. In Beyatlı's poetry, Sufism is a means of dealing with the feelings of old age and death. It is accepted that the idea of death in Beyatlı's poetry has a Sufistic aspect, as in Sufism death signifies union with the God/lover as the term "şeb-i aruz" symbolises. However, it should be kept in mind that Beyatlı was not very much involved in Sufism outside of this poem (Özbalcı, pp. 84-97).

One of the poems in the anthology; "Night" (Gece), is translated by Sidney Wade, thus it will not be very appropriate to examine it in this study. When it comes to "That Summer" (Geçmiş Yaz), no material that will reveal the so-called metaphysical aspect of the anthology is present in the poem in terms of its content. On the contrary, the poem is about a summer night spent with a beautiful woman and full of delights and sensual images. However, "Reunion" [vuslat] is very suitable for critical examination because it is loaded with images of Sufism such as union, love, time, nightingale, soul, God and a celestial night. The first and apparently the most important Sufistic element in this poem is its title "vuslat". In Sufism, "fenafillah" and "vuslat" are synonymous words. The Sufi who looks for "God", after having purified his soul from all worldly desires, wishes to die before death (killing his desire (nefs) for worldly objects) and dreams of one thing which is "vuslat"; reaching God symbolically and feeling one with God's existence (Genç, 2005, pp. 113). In Ottoman divan poetry, this unity/union is achieved with the beloved after a long and painful period of contemplation

and waiting, and thus the beloved is elevated to the level of an almost divine creature. However, he does not provide the readers with any endnotes or footnotes to explain the Sufistic associations of the term to the target readership even if he makes a reference to the idea that human soul was in unity with God's existence before birth and will reunite after death. Beyatlı applies a double meaning artfully in his poem. While he is using a metaphysical lexical item, he can mean a sensual one (Bilgegil, p. 558). Although he does not use words that have religious meanings very often, he does not avoid them, either (Bilgegil, 547) because lots of words such as God, death, time, destiny are embedded in Sufi culture. The translator's choice of "reunion" as the title does not reflect this double meaning because there is no Sufistic discourse in English and the translator does not provide the readers with any information in his translation.

In the same poem, the line that "Görmezler ufuklarda şafak söktüğü ânı" is rendered with the words "the lit horizon in the East" by Nemet-Nejat. Instead, "They do not see the moment dawn breaks in the horizon" would be a direct translation of the line. As "East" starts with capital letters, it does not simply imply the direction, it gains an orientalist meaning. Another alteration that can support this orientalist image is use of "crescent moon" instead of "mehtap" (full moon). The emotional associations of full moon are totally destroyed with this choice and replaced with a highly orientalist one by the translator.

In the following stanza, the translator adopts a totally different translation strategy. To produce a kind of phonemic translation and keep the sound-[O], the translator leaves the Turkish third person singular pronoun "O" as it is in Turkish. Simply, he does not translate it. O'ing around its neck can mean hugging as when you hug someone, you make a kind of circle that resembles "O". However, Beyatlı's poem does not have such phonetically experimental features.

Moreover, the translator's choice of third person singular possessive adjective "its" is even more startling. A reader who reads the original will never doubt that the poet is talking about a woman but the translator creates a love triangle, consisting of three people; "the poet"-most probably a man, "the beloved"-a woman and "it". It is true that in Ottoman Divan poetry the idea of love is mingled with the divine love for God which has Sufistic and religious roots. Thus the love for a human is accepted as metaphorical love which carries the lover to the true/divine love. In this case, the gender of the beloved does not have any importance (Gönel, 2010, p. 211). However, in the context of this particular poem, use of "its", creates a straightforward homosexual implication.

"Those sleeping asleep with their beloved /enduring all delight in that, satiation/ the world forgotten in those waters" are some other lines which are altered. A literal translation of Beyatlı's original lines - "Bir uykuyu cananla berâber uyuyanlar, /Varlıkta bütün zevki o cennette duyanlar,/ Dünyayı unutmuş bulunurken o sularda,"- could be, "those who sleep with the beloved / feel all the delight of existence in that heaven/ forget the world in those waters". The first striking change is the deletion of "existence" and "heaven" which can be accepted as Sufistic terms in the translation. The translator does not refrain from skipping metaphysical content and adding "satiation", which has highly sensual implications when it is compared to the poet's "heaven".

An addition, the translator's use of "Styx" instead of "death" in the following line "oh servant, this darkness worse than Styx/ Ey tâlih! Ölümden de beterdir bu karanlık" is startling. Styx is the name of a river in Greek mythology that formed the boundary between Earth and the underworld/ Hades. Thus it brings a totally new and false association to the poem which is very different from its real implications of death in the source culture.

In the last part of the poem, a number of culturally loaded words come one by one. The first one is "Ey tâlih!" which could be translated as "Oh fortune/luck/chance!" but translated as "Oh

servant!". The second one is "Ey aşk!" which simply means "Oh love!" but translated as "Oh sidekick" who can a friend/acquaintance from the same sex with you thus creates a homosexual implication. The last one is "Ey vuslat" translated as "Oh reunion" again rather than "union". These alterations erase almost all the Sufistic elements from the poem. The emotional effect the poem creates is destroyed to a great extent. Inserting this third person, who is servant or sidekick, once again the translator creates a love triangle which is very popular in Divan poetry but does not fit in to this poem. In this love triangle, the beloved is with someone else and does not care about the poet who is deeply in love with her and in this way she tortures him. In Beyatlı's lines the hearts and souls of the lovers unite and they yield to the magic of love. However, the translation ends awkwardly creating an implication of a homosexual affair because the servant/sidekick could be inclined towards his master or male friend.

## 2.2. Necip Fazıl Kısakürek

Kısakürek wrote many works from social articles to plays and poems of a religious and Sufistic nature (Okay, p. 128). His interest in philosophy, Sufi and folk literature turns into mysticism in his poetry. After 1943, after his religious tendencies increase, he repudiates some of his earlier poetry (Enginün, 2002, p. 159). The first poem, "Beklenen" (Expected), is one of his best-known poems from the poet's book *Çile* (*Suffering*). The title of the poem is not translated by Nemet-Nejat but the poem is listed in the appendix with its original title.

The first striking alteration that attracts attention is in the second line of the quatrain. It can be back translated as "nor the grave for the young dead body". Nemet-Nejat translates the line in the following way; "Nor the tree for the martyr". He forces a very religious and nationalistic connotation to this poem. As there are usually trees in graveyards, the translator takes liberties to make use of this free association. Furthermore, by turning "taze ölü" into "martyr"; he creates an orientalist association.

In the second quatrain of the translation drastic shifts occur. A rough translation of the second quatrain could be as follows, "It has passed, I do not want you/ in your absence I have found you / leave your shadow in my delusions/ do not come, now it is meaningless". However, in Nemet-Nejat's translation the alteration of "delusion" into "wet dreams" dominates the translation and makes it very sensual. In parallel with this meaning, the translator prefers to use "drench" which turns the poem into a depiction of a dirty dream. Finding someone in his/her nonexistence and overcoming the desire felt for the beloved is a common topic in many stories in Divan poetry and in Sufi literature, too. Instead of this Sufistic meaning, the translator creates a sensual one.

The second poem Nemet-Nejat includes into the anthology by Kısakürek is "Gazel". Actually, the real title of the poem is "Ben" (Me). At first sight, one can see that the translator uses a similar form to the original poem. Actually, he transforms the form of the poem into a *gazel*, a Divan poetry form. In *gazel*, the first couplet rhymes with each other and the second lines of the other couplets rhyme with the first couplet while the first lines of the other couplets are free. However, the consistency of *gazel* as a literary form with the subject matter of this poem is a debatable topic because the most common subject matter of this form is love (Gökalp-Alparslan, 2001). The poem is shortened because the sixth and the seventh couplets of the poem are omitted. The sixth couplet of the source poem contains "Allah" (God) and "vebâl" (sin/fault). Therefore, it is hard to ignore the erosion of religious Islamic discourse from the poem. The seventh couplet is about isolation due to honesty or wisdom. Possibly, Kısakürek implies his literary stance in this couplet however the translator skips the sixth and seventh couplets.



The last couplet of the poem is also loaded with other Sufistic and religious images. In the first line, the translator produces a translation very similar to the target poem keeping the Sufistic images of mirror, moth and candle. In the rest of the poem, the translator makes other changes to erase the religious context. The corpse the poet mentions is most probably Muslim because he depicts a scene with the two angels- "Münker" and "Nekir" who are believed to question the soul in the grave in Islam. For a poet who is known for his religious inclination in the last phase of his literary career, these lexical elements can be considered characteristic for Kısakürek. However, the translator defines the corpse as "miscreant" which can mean "bad" and "cruel" and also "unbeliever" in contrast to the core of the source poem.

The third poem by Kısakürek is "Otel Odaları". The translator does not translate its title and makes the poem only a starting point for his translation by making use of the first couplet. Assuming that it is a poem of loneliness and solitude, after the first couplet the translator does not translate the rest of the poem. However, he changes the already existing material radically. Addition of "jisms" is shocking as Necip Fazıl Kısakürek's style is not suitable for the use of vulgar slang or sensual vocabulary items in the translations of his poems. For a poet to use this word, he must be from a totally different literary line than Kısakürek. Moreover, for the literary era he lived in, in the literary circles he was a part of, it would be pornographic, crude and scandalous.

The fourth poem of the poet can also be subject to extensive discussion. The title of the poem- "Serseri" (Vagrant), is not translated. However, as it does not contain Sufistic elements thus it will not be analyzed. Likewise, the last poem "Fret" (Çile) is not subject to criticism here.

### 2.3. Asaf Halet Çelebi

Çelebi is accepted as a poet who was inclined to classical Turkish poetry and known for his tendencies towards Sufism (Miyasoğlu, 1993, p. 7-8). Çelebi wrote critiques of Mevlana (1940) and Molla Camî (1940), which demonstrates his mystical tendencies (Miyasoğlu, 1993, p. 13). He filtered all the material he used in his poetry from an Islamic cultural and Sufistic perspective (Miyasoğlu, 1993, p. 11). He comes from a family whose members are from the *Melevî* sect- the sect of Sufism (Miyasoğlu, 1993, p. 20) represented by Rumi. He studied Buddhism and Tagor and was interested in Eastern culture (Koç, 2011, p. 1).

One of the most radical translations of Nemet-Nejat is one of Çelebi's poems, "Ayna" (Mirror). The title of the poem is not translated and the poem is shortened and altered. The first striking feature of the translation and poem is the spacing. In the source poem, apart from the title, capital letters are not used. In the target poem capitals letters are only used at the start of sentences. The second feature that attracts attention is the use of reflexive pronouns and possessive adjectives. In the last sentence, finally the lover's gender comes to the surface. It is a woman because the translator says "her face is visible invisible." However, at the beginning he uses the reflexive pronouns such a way that can lead to homosexual implications. Moreover, the mirror is widely used as a simile. The whole universe and all humans are reflections of God, in other words, mirrors in Sufism (Tenik, 2009, pp. 491-500). Çelebi's poem is written for "Nigâr-ı çîn" who can be simply a picture, an image, Buddha/God or an idol of Buddha, or the dream of the beloved (Çelebi, 1998, pp. 103-124). The "Gotamack" mentioned in the poem is the real name of Buddha and it is a sign of the interaction of the poet with Buddhist culture. The translator ignores the fact that the mirror simile is driven from the reflections of God in Sufism. His translation is a split from Sufistic traditions.

The next poem of the poet translated by Nemet-Nejat is "H" (He). When the whole poem is taken into consideration, it is apparent that the translator makes "a phonemic translation" (Lefevre,

1975, p. 19) putting emphasis on the sound “h”. The similarity between “oh! hi o” and “ferhâad”, “oh!” and “âaaahh”, “private oh!” and “ferhâd” attracts attention. However the emphasis made on the story is completely lost. This well-known story of Ferhad and Şirin is told by many writers of Ottoman Divan poetry and contemporary Turkish poetry, such as Şeyhî, Ahî, Celilî and Nazım Hikmet and Ümit Denizer (Çelebi, 1998, p. 104). Thus, it may appear to the reader the genre has shifted because there is no longer any implication that it is a love poem. As the gender of Çelebi’s “he” is not explicit, the translator uses “it” while translating which causes a loss of the vital elements vital to the poet. It is known that “he” symbolizes Ferhad because it contains the intended letter or phoneme “h”. Using “it” instead of “he”, the poet, being a Sufi himself refers to a Sufistic meaning of “he”. Symbolically, it is accepted as the highest spiritual point a Sufi can reach. A Sufi starts his journey from the first letter of the Arabic alphabet- ħ; “alef” [elif]- and reaches “he” [ه]; the last letter. Furthermore, some groups in Sufism explain the whole world according to sounds (Compare Hurûfîlik, Çelebi 1998, p. 105). The Turkish word for “Allah”, “Ferhad”, many religious prayers includes this last letter pronounced as “he” in Turkish (Çelebi, 1998, p. 104). Apparently, it is very hard to communicate the same message Çelebi intends to the target readership as they do not have a common background with the source readership.

The last two poems translated from Çelebi are “Uncle Sea Buoy” (Şamandıra Baba) and “Maria” (Mariyya). As “Uncle Sea Buoy” and Maria do not contain any Sufistic elements, they will not be examined here.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of this study show that Nemet-Nejat proposes a very much twisted representation of contemporary Turkish poetry in his translation. The content of criticism is restricted to three poets, namely Beyatlı, Kısakürek and Çelebi, whose poetry carries signs of Sufism. The underlying reason of this choice is the Sufistic metaphysical aspect the translator describes at the heart of Turkish poetry. In the macro-analysis part of the study, the Sufistic discourse which the translator creates is examined. In the second part of the study-micro analysis- the translations of the poems have been analyzed.

This study illustrates that the translator places the metaphysical essence at the core of contemporary Turkish poetry, which is an over-generalization and is not valid for every period of Turkish poetry. The translator presents Turkish poetry as a unified whole and a continuum starting from its Shamanistic and pre-Islamic roots because of the fact that the Turkish language and Sufism are Asian in origin. Furthermore the constant emphasis he puts on secularity and his neglect of the Anatolian interpretation of Sufism, which cannot be isolated from its religious roots, and his avoidance of reflecting western influences on Turkish poetry in the anthology, especially in the paratextual materials, creates a distorted and shifted representation of contemporary Turkish poetry. The Sufistic discourse he creates attracts the attention of Westerners who are already familiar with orientalist spiritual and sensual images. In the micro-analysis part, some of his translations can be considered imitations, because he produces poems of his own which have their point of departure in common with the source text (Lefevre, 1975, p. 76). He applies many kinds of semantic shifts and omissions, especially to make the homosexual eroticism which he aims to emphasize visible even when there is not such inner aspect in the poems. He abuses the lack of gender distinction in the pronouns and possessive adjectives. The arbitrariness of his choices is in analogy with the discourse he creates in the paratextual material provided in the book. Thus, the findings of two level analysis in this study (discursive and textual) overlaps as the translator’s assimilative strategies are reflected in his translation.

As the concept of rewriting always implies, this anthology offers the readers a transformed image of Turkish poetry which can be a mirror of the translator's worldview and literary stance and enjoys so many auctorial freedom that reaches to the level of "adaptation". The anthology supports the already existing images of the East and Sufism which the translator uses to feed the target culture with the already existing Orientalist images - such as sexuality, eroticism and preserves the self-image of the target orientalist culture by creating an alienated other.

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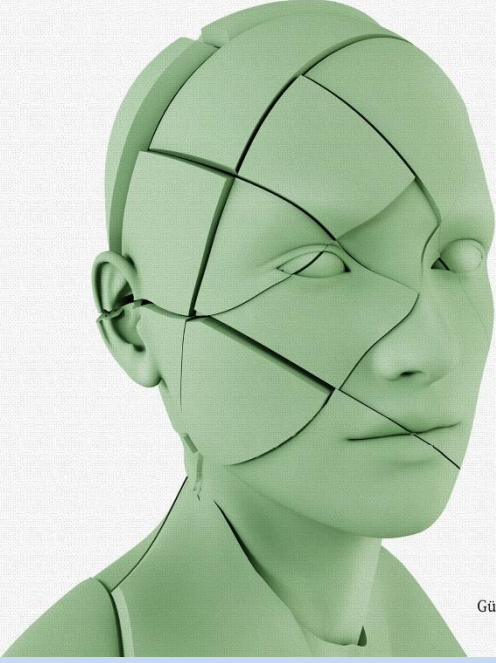
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# TÜRK BİLİMKURGU EDEBİYATI VE ARKETİPLER

DR. VELİ UĞUR



Günce Yayınları

Oktay Yivli

# Öykü Nasıl Okunur

modern öykü ve yöntem



Günce Yayınları

MAKSUT YİĞİTBAŞ

Edebiyatın Ebemkuşağı

Halit Ziya Hikâyeciliğinde

Renklerin Dili

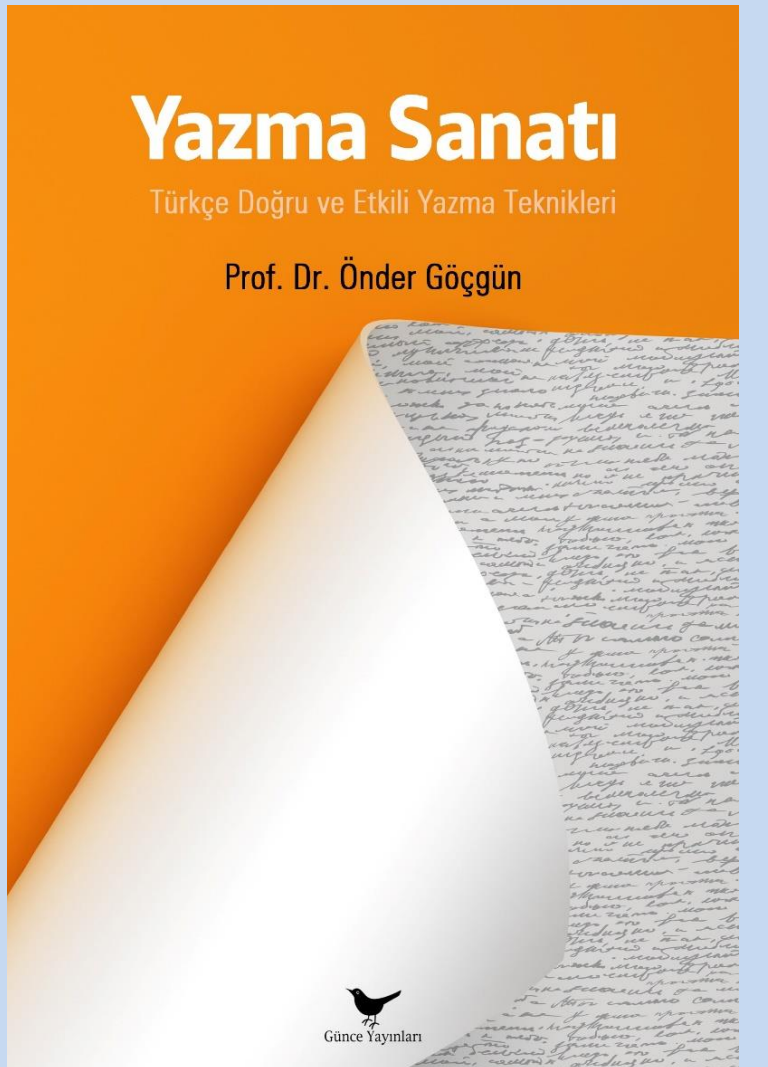


Günce Yayınları

# Yazma Sanatı

Türkçe Doğru ve Etkili Yazma Teknikleri

Prof. Dr. Önder Göçgün



Günce Yayınları