

Stylistics of Drama and the (Im)Possibility of Stylistic Achievement in Translation: The Case of John Millington Synge's *Riders to The Sea*

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Introduction

The very word style is a vast concept and gives the opportunity for one to observe it from various angles within the broad perspective of daily life. Most of the people use the word so frequently in their conversations and writings that one feels obliged to take the word for granted regardless of the vast connotations that it might suggest. A person can reasonably use the word style in relation to the shape or design of something when referring to its special features. In a similar vein, one can reasonably deploy the word as a yardstick in terms of describing the extraordinary qualities of a given artwork. A short look at these general ideas regarding style indicates how all of these daily notions direct one's attention to a distinctive manner of expression. Owing to the fact that any expression connotes language in the first place, one can plausibly take the notion of style in consideration from the perspective of language.

In very broad terms, then, style in language can be characterized as distinctive linguistic expression, and stylistics, "*the study of style, can be defined as the analysis of distinctive expression in language and the description of its purpose and effect.*"¹ This distinctive manner of expression, so far as the notion of art is concerned, can thus be considered as an individual hand that is identifiable everywhere in the creations of the same artist. After all, it is this distinctiveness that allows one to recognize the same artist in his or her works. As Hans-Georg Gadamer observes, "*an artist creates a style when he [sic] is no longer merely engaged in imitation, but is at the same time fashioning a language for himself.*"² The process of fashioning a creative language has indeed proved to be a vast field

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¹ Peter Verdonk, **Stylistics**, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, p. 4

² Hans-Georg, Gadamer, **Truth and Method**, trans. William Glen-Doepel. London: Sheed and Ward, 1988, p. 450

of research for scholars throughout literary history. The innumerable volumes of publications devoted to the study and practice of style demonstrates this clear-cut fact.

Poems and fictional prose have been the focus of interest for most of the scholars who muse on the study and practice of style. However, as far as dramatic texts are concerned, it is interesting to see how scant attention has been paid to the style of a given dramatic text by the stylisticians. To a certain extent, part of this hesitance might lie in the prevailing opinion which deems spoken conversation “*as a debased and unstable form of language.*”³ As a consequence of this inclination, dramatic texts, with all their emphasis on speech, were liable to be undervalued by the scholars who were engaged with stylistics. Furthermore, the fact that the classics were –in many cases– written in verse gave rise to many scholarly works most of which treat these works under the umbrella of “dramatic poems”. Even though poetry analysis can provide a lot of information in terms of understanding the style of a given dramatist, it is –more or less– confined to the limits of linguistic inquiry. Yet, stylisticians working within the domain of cognitive stylistics have been quick to observe this fundamental dilemma, and consequently, the research done on the subject after the 1980s have generated many stylistic frameworks for the analysis of the dramatic texts.⁴ Be that as it may, one can still Peter K. W. Tan’s observation in 1993 regarding the issue quite valid: “*the stylistic analysis of drama is really in its fledgling state at the moment.*”⁵ Indeed, drama is still the neglected child of stylistics.

On the other hand, negligence towards drama is not peculiar to the field of stylistics. Along the same line, one can see how relatively small amount of research has been carried out on the translations of dramatic and theatrical texts within the realm of Translation Studies. In Translation Studies, as in the case of stylistics, the focus of attention has been on the study of the translations of poems and fictional prose. In a manner evoking the situation of drama within the realm of stylistics, after the 1980s, thanks to the surge of interest in socio-cultural and political aspects of the study and practice of translation, fruitful research concerning the translations of dramatic and theatrical texts has been done in Translation Studies. Crucial notions, such as “performability”, “speakability”, and even

³ Jonathan Culpeper, Michael Short, Peter Verdonk, **Exploring the Language of Drama: From Text to Context**, London: Routledge, 1998, p. 3

⁴ For the growing body of recent literature with respect to the stylistics of drama, see Dan McIntyre, “Integrating Multimodal Analysis and the Stylistics of Drama: A Multimodal Perspective on Ian McKellen’s *Richard III*”, **Language and Literature**, Volume 17, Number 4, 2008, pp. 311-312.

⁵ Peter, K. W. Tan, **A Stylistics of Drama with Special Focus on Stoppard’s *Travesties***, Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1993, p. 18

“*playability*”⁶ have been introduced to the domain of Translation Studies with the purpose of analysing translated theatre texts. Apparently, the approach towards the translations of dramatic and theatrical texts is rather constructive and steady in Translation Studies when compared to the one in stylistics.

On the basis of what has been outlined so far, one can plausibly build a connection between the notion of style and the stylistics of drama through translation. Since antiquity, the attempt to re-construct a distinctive linguistic expression in another language has been a challenging process for translators. As far as the translations of theatrical texts are concerned, it can be observed that the translator’s task in terms of re-producing the style of the ST author becomes even harder for the fact that in theatre texts, two different styles come into play: the so-called plain writing style of the stage directions and the language of the spoken dialogue. A translator, by bearing in mind that these two different stylistic aspects of the ST can on no account be circumvented during the translation process, might produce their echoes in his or her TT. In certain cases, however, it is most probable for the translator to find him or herself in great pains in terms of rendering a particular style of a text. It is very likely for a style nourished by the socio-cultural elements of a particular community, to suffer most in a translation process.

A brief glance at the literary movements of the world history from the above-mentioned perspective of style suggests the case of Ireland due to the fact that the authors associated with the Irish dramatic movement have fashioned a distinctive language which would play a vital role during the course of building a “national” awareness in the country. The emphasis on the word national becomes quite noteworthy here when one takes it into account from the vantage point of the plays that William Butler Yeats, Lady Augusta Gregory and John Millington Synge wrote. Instead of producing plays which would put forward the idea of patriotism, these dramatists gained impetus both from the lives of Gaelic-Irish peasantry and from the cultural texts pertaining to Irish mythology. Synge, Yeats, and Lady Gregory, as Gregory Castle puts it, “*produced dramatic works under constraints that led them to the creation of a national style that avoided explicitly nationalist sentiments, a style that was recognizably Irish, drawing on folklore, myth, and legend, but that avoided the partisan, polemical, and propagandistic tendencies of the various*

⁶ Eva Espasa, “Performability in Translation: Speakability? Playability? Or just Saleability?”, in Carole-Anne Upton (ed.) **Moving Target: Theatre Translation and Cultural Relocation** Manchester: St. Jerome, 2000, p. 61, emphasis original.

nationalist factions.”⁷ In this respect, it becomes possible for one to infer how the distinctive language of a given artist or even a group of artists can be the representative voice of a community as well.

Of these three dramatists, the plays of Synge merit further attention because of the distinctive style that the author attains in his works. The development of the author’s style, however, has its roots in the years that Synge lived and studied the life in the Aran Islands. As Donna Gerstenberger notes, “*the Aran Islands provided for Synge a stage free of the complexities and false props of ‘civilization’, and against this stark background he saw enacted patterns of reality.*”⁸ Within this context, one can regard Synge’s documentary work entitled *The Aran Islands* as a yardstick for understanding the style that the author achieves in his works. The fact that the presence of *The Aran Islands* can highly be felt in Synge’s one-act play, *Riders to the Sea*, makes this short but compelling work one of the most distinguished pieces of the author. *Riders to the Sea*, when taken into consideration from this viewpoint, can be regarded as a significant work which might give the opportunity for one to discern Synge’s style.

How to relate the indisputable presence of style inherent in Synge’s *Riders to the Sea* to the Turkish translation of the play, translated by Orhan Burian as *Denize Giden Atlılar*, will be one of the topics that this paper will dwell upon. Essentially, however, this study will lay particular emphasis on the development of Synge’s stylistic merits. Hence, prior to the stylistic analysis of the Turkish translation of the play, this article will demonstrate how Synge has managed to use the Aran material in *Riders to the Sea* with the purpose of indicating the author’s stylistic achievements. In order to do so, this paper will lean on the notion of intertextuality, that is, “*the way particular expressions recur in different texts and so provide a link between them.*”⁹ To that end, this study will initially pinpoint the hallmarks of Synge’s *Riders to the Sea* in the sections anterior to the stylistic examination of Burian’s Turkish translation of the play. Additionally, instead of analysing the Turkish translation with the intention to demonstrate the “good”, “bad”, “adequate” and “acceptable” aspects of it, this paper will aim at focusing on the extent that the TT reverberates with the style of the ST.

⁷ Gregory Castle, “Staging Ethnography: John M. Synge’s *Playboy of the Western World* and the Problem of Cultural Translation”, *Theatre Journal*, Volume 49, Number 3, 1997, p. 266

⁸ Donna Gerstenberger, **John Millington Synge**, New York: Twayne Publishers, 1964, p. 20

⁹ Peter Verdonk, **Stylistics**, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, p. 62

1. Stylistics of Drama

1.1 Stylistic features of John Millington Synge's oeuvre

John Millington Synge, together with William Butler Yeats and Lady Augusta Gregory, was one of the foremost playwrights of the Irish Literary Revival. As stated previously, the writers who were engaged with the Irish Theatrical Movement at the turn of the twentieth century worked persistently to revive and restore the heritage of the early Irish material in their plays. These writers under discussion were in the paradoxical position of being political through creating non-political works. Language has been the mere instrument for these writers during the course of creating a national style that shunned the extreme nationalistic inclinations of the period. In the course of fashioning a national style, one of the most significant actions undertaken by the writers of the Irish Literary Revival was to translate the early Irish texts. In Lady Gregory's translations of the early Irish material, for instance, the resistance to colonialism has been shown through language. As Maria Tymoczko puts it, "*both the Irish language movement and Gregory's choice of a non-standard Hiberno-English dialect must be understood as strategies for countering the dominance of power relations coded into the very language of the colonizers.*"¹⁰

As far as Synge's writing career is concerned, it can be seen that Yeats, the other prominent figure of the movement, acquires a crucial role for the intellectual path that Synge followed. When the two authors met in Paris, in December of 1896, Yeats' advice to his countryman was direct and prescriptive enough to influence Synge: "*Give up Paris. You will never create anything by reading Racine, and Arthur Symons will always be a better critic of French literature. Go to the Aran Islands. Live there as if you were one of the people themselves; express a life that has never found expression.*"¹¹ Yeats' advice is quite telling in the sense that it holds the key to the style that Synge would mould from that time on. Yeats' suggestion not only pinpoints Synge's well acquaintance with the masters of the tragic form, but also hints at the fact that how the Aran Islands have been waiting for their author to come and be the one to represent the lives of the Irish peasantry. Synge, by

¹⁰ Maria Tymoczko, **Translation in a Postcolonial Context**, Manchester: St Jerome, 1999, p. 138

¹¹ William Butler Yeats, **Explorations**, London: Macmillan, 1962, p. 418

following Yeats' advice, hoisted sails for the Aran Islands, and during the course of the Irish Literary Revival, became the author far more than Lady Gregory and Yeats, who gave the movement its unique national quality by bequeathing the world the type of play that has since become the prototype of Irish folk drama.

Going deeper into this general outlook regarding Synge's writing career, it becomes possible to find out how the author aims at creating a language which pertains exclusively to the Irish peasantry. Moreover, Synge's return to the life led in the Aran Islands denotes to the necessity of fashioning a language based upon the speech of the Irish peasantry. Synge's deliberate choice of representing the Irish peasantry in their own rights alludes to a vital distinction between the author and the other influential dramatists, say, Henrik Ibsen and George Bernard Shaw both of whom can be regarded as the pioneers of the modern drama. As Joseph Wood Krutch remarks, "*the Ibsens and Shaws wrote a language which might be precise and witty but which was also dry and dead because it was the language of the international intellectual and therefore inevitably without flavour.*"¹² Hence, it can be inferred that Synge, with the intention to provide a new insight to the realm of playwriting, has turned to the lives of the Irish peasantry to extend the scope "*of the resources of the language in actual current use.*"¹³ In this particular respect, it is most likely to consider Synge's style as a representative example of a literary expression that can be considered as, "*an enhancement, or a creative liberation of the resources of language.*"¹⁴

Thus, in order to examine how Synge made use of the resources of language creatively, a glimpse at his stylistic transformation of the "peasant speech" to "dramatic speech" becomes of utmost importance. Synge's distinctive expression in *The Aran Islands*, therefore, might well serve as a point of commencement in terms of tracing the author's overall stylistic achievements in his dramatic pieces:

*Listen to what I'm telling you: a man who is not married is no better than an old jackass. He goes into his sister's house, and into his brother's house; he eats a bit in this place and a bit in another place, but he has no home for himself; like an old jackass straying on the rocks.*¹⁵

This anecdote taken from *The Aran Islands* can be considered as a typical example of the Irish peasant speech. The excessive use of connectives (i.e. and, but), the usage of

¹² Joseph Wood Krutch, "**Modernism**" in **Modern Drama**, New York: Russell & Russell Inc, 1962, p. 96

¹³ George Steiner, **Language & Silence**, Yale: Yale University Press, 1998, p. 25

¹⁴ Geoffrey Leech and Michael Short, **Style in Fiction**, London and New York: Longman, 1992, p. 6

¹⁵ John Millington Synge, **The Aran Islands**, London: George Allen and Unwin, 1961, p. 87

semi-colons, as well as colons, with the aim to demonstrate the disjunctive feature of the peasant speech, allows Synge to echo this peculiar diction in his documentary works, such as *In Wicklow and In West Kerry* and *In the Congested Districts*. What is more, this short expression, spoken by an old man, alludes to one of the most idiosyncratic aspects of Synge's style, that is to say, imagery, which, according to T. R. Henn, "*invites our special consideration.*"¹⁶ And in Synge's account, imagery functions as a stylistic device which can be deemed as a bridgehead in terms of forming the central image of the anecdote. In the above quoted excerpt, the focus of the image is the resemblance between "the unmarried man" and the "old jackass". Despite the fact that Synge's narrative is vivid enough; the anecdote is rather long to incorporate in a dramatic piece. In *The Playboy of the Western World*, however, the edges of this unpremeditated diction become trimmed so that it can be appropriately used in a dramatic piece: "*What's a single man, I ask you, eating a bit in one house and drinking a sup in another, like an old braying jackass strayed upon the rocks?*"¹⁷ Synge, by re-writing the words of the old man, fortifies the image that he has previously established between "the unmarried man" and the "old jackass" in his Aran material with the help of the very verb "to bray". Within this context, it can be inferred how imagery is one of the stylistic devices that Synge deploys in his dramatic works.

Synge's occupation with the resources of language gave him the unique opportunity to discover a language which was peculiar to the Irish peasantry. Through this language, moreover, he has attained a style in which the comic and dramatic mingle. Nevertheless, Synge's distinctive fusion of the comic and dramatic aspects of the Irishmen has been achieved at great costs. When the nationalist riots, after the premiere of one of the author's most striking plays, namely, *The Playboy of the Western World*, are taken into account from the perspective of the author's melting the comic and dramatic in the same pot, they can, in the words of Maria Tymoczko "*serve as a touchstone for understanding the potential consequences of presenting early Irish material in ways that challenged nationalist ideology and the emerging nationalist paradigm of the comic.*"¹⁸ Therefore, in Synge's oeuvre, it is very likely for one to "*find a situation in which identity is forged in a presentation of style not pegged to national or psychological realisms, forged in the very*

¹⁶ T. R. Henn, "General Introduction", T. R. Henn (ed.) **Plays and Poems of J. M. Synge**, London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1963, pp. 13-14

¹⁷ John Millington Synge, **The Playboy of the Western World**, T. R. Henn (ed.) **Plays and Poems of J. M. Synge**, London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1963, p. 222

¹⁸ Maria Tymoczko, **Translation in a Postcolonial Context**, Manchester: St Jerome, 1999, p. 211

agon that throws it into question."¹⁹ This agon, which constitutes the core of the life led in the Aran Islands, would be the leitmotiv of Synge's plays, such as *The Shadow of the Glen*, *Riders to the Sea*, *The Well of the Saints*, as well as *The Tinker's Wedding*.

1.2 From *The Aran Islands* to *Riders to the Sea*

In the light of the previous analysis, one can argue for the significance of the notion of intertextuality in terms of building a sound stylistic approach to John Millington Synge's *Riders to the Sea*. As Umberto Eco argues, "*if the work of art is form, the way of giving form involves more than just lexis or syntax (as can happen in what is called stylistics), and includes every semiotic strategy deployed both on the surface and in the depths of a text's nervous system.*"²⁰ Eco's argument becomes quite remarkable here in the sense that it demonstrates the necessity of deploying various textual strategies during the course of developing a stylistic approach to drama.²¹ Moreover, by digging into what Eco regards as "the nervous system" of a text, it becomes possible to discover different intertextual elements in the text. In such a case, as in the case of *Riders to the Sea*, stylistic approach might require the disclosure of intertextual references inherent in the text. Within this context, the Aran material that Synge uses in *Riders to the Sea* can be considered as the "eye[s]"²² of the play. When *Riders to the Sea* is re-considered in the view of the notion of intertextuality, it can be discerned that Synge's deployment of the Aran material in the play becomes the vital starting point in terms of developing a stylistic approach to the author's work.

In his one act play *Riders to the Sea*, Synge depicts the peasant life led on the Aran Islands. The central motif of the play is the agon that the islanders face against the coercive power of the nature. The sea, being the representative of the tyranny of nature is the antagonist of the play and it has "*an unseen but very real presence.*"²³ In this respect, it can

¹⁹ Gregory Castle, "Staging Ethnography: John M. Synge's *Playboy of the Western World* and the Problem of Cultural Translation", *Theatre Journal*, Volume 49, Number 3, 1997, p. 279

²⁰ Umberto Eco, *On Literature*, trans. Martin McLaughlin, London: Vintage, 2006, pp. 162-163

²¹ See also, Peter, K. W. Tan, *A Stylistics of Drama with Special Focus on Stoppard's Travesties*, Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1993, pp. 19-20

²² Cf. Jean Boase-Beier, *Stylistic Approaches to Translation*, Manchester: St Jerome, 2006, p. 93, p. 131

²³ Donna Gerstenberger, *John Millington Synge*, New York: Twayne Publishers, 1964, p. 51

be discerned that Synge employs one of the significant instruments of the language usage: personification. "Personification", as G. W. Turner argues, "*has wider uses than to enliven abstract ideas,*"²⁴ and in *Riders to the Sea*, the sea takes the form of an antagonist who claims the lives of all of the men of a family. The protagonists, on the other hand, are the islanders themselves: an old woman Maurya, her daughters Cathleen and Nora, her son Bartley, as well as the rest of the inhabitants of the Islands.

A glimpse at *The Aran Islands* is indicative of the profusion of this raw setting that Synge uses in *Riders to the Sea*. To a certain extent, *The Aran Islands* brims with yarns that would echo themselves in the peak moments of the *Riders to the Sea*. In order to see how this material has been treated in *Riders to the Sea*, it would be appropriate to glance at some passages from *The Aran Islands* which have direct relevance to the play. Consider, for instance, the author's reflections after witnessing a burial of a young man drowned in the sea:

*As they talked to me and gave me a little poteen and a little bread when they thought I was hungry, I could not help feeling that I was talking with men who were under a judgment of death. I knew that every one of them would be drowned in the sea in a few years and battered naked on the rocks, or would die in his own cottage and be buried with another fearful scene in the graveyard I had come from.*²⁵

Synge's thoughts concerning the lives of the Aran people indicate that "death" takes the form of a foregone conclusion for them. Not only Synge knows that every one of them would die, but also the Aran people themselves are aware of this bitter fact. Under such circumstances, death has become "*a part of daily life*"²⁶ in the Aran Islands. As the analysis of the play will show in the subsequent pages of this paper, "to be drowned in the sea and to batter naked on the rocks" are some of the dominant motifs that would recur in *Riders to the Sea*. As a matter of fact, these prevailing recurring themes, correspondingly connote "death". Even though most of the Aran men batter naked on the rocks, there are, at the same, certain instances in which the clothes that pertain to the Aran men can become the mere thing(s) that should help their wives and sisters to identify their dead bodies. Take, for example, another excerpt in which Synge recounts how the sister of a dead man identifies her brother:

²⁴ George Turner, *Stylistics*, Harmondsworth : Penguin, 1973, p. 126. See also, Geoffrey Leech and Michael Short, *Style in Fiction*, London and New York: Longman, 1992, pp. 199-200.

²⁵ John Millington Synge, *The Aran Islands*, London: George Allen and Unwin, 1961, p. 141

²⁶ Donna Gerstenberger, *John Millington Synge*, New York: Twayne Publishers, 1964, p. 28

Later in the evening, when I was sitting in one of the cottages, the sister of the dead man came in through the rain with her infant, and there was a long talk about the rumours that had come in. She pieced together all she could remember about his clothes, and what his purse was like, and where he had got it, and the same for his tobacco box, and his stockings. In the end there seemed little doubt that it was her brother.

“Ah!” she said, “it’s Mike sure enough, and please God they’ll give him a decent burial.” Then she began to keene slowly to herself. She had loose yellow hair plastered round her head with the rain, and as she sat by the door sucking her infant, she seemed like a type of the women’s life upon the islands.²⁷

This rather lengthy quote, so far as the crucial moments of *Riders to the Sea* are concerned, becomes arguably arresting owing to the distinguished way that Synge makes use of this sister’s narrative in the play. The central image of the above cited excerpt, that is to say, the keening sister with her infant, would resonate within the depictions of the characters of *Riders to the Sea*. Indeed, the overwhelming presence of this keening sister can be highly felt in the air when the old mother Maurya laments over Bartley. What is more, the way that the keening sister perceives the death of his brother resonates within the portrayal of the two daughters of the family, namely, Cathleen and Nora, when they try to understand whether their another brother, Michael has drowned in the sea or not. Looked from this perspective, then, it is most probable to consider the lament of this sister as one of the most striking aspects of *The Aran Islands* that Synge would weave into the language of *Riders to the Sea*.

By taking into account the depiction of the keening sister of *The Aran Islands*, one can return to their echoes in *Riders to the Sea* with the purpose of discerning how Synge has treated his pure material in his play under discussion:

MAURYA continues without hearing anything: There was Sheamus and his father, and his own father again, were lost in a dark night, and not a stick or sign was seen of them when the sun went up. There was Patch after was drowned out of a curragh that turned over. I was sitting here with Bartley, and he a baby, lying on my two knees, and I seen two women, and three women, and four women coming in, and they crossing themselves, and not saying a word. I looked out then, and there were men coming after them, and they holding a thing in the half of a red sail, and water dripping out of it – it was a dry day, Nora – and leaving a track to the door.²⁸

²⁷ John Millington Synge, *The Aran Islands*, London: George Allen and Unwin, 1961, p. 109

²⁸ John Millington Synge, *Riders to the Sea*, T. R. Henn (ed.) *Plays and Poems of J. M. Synge*, London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1963 p. 104

The significance of Maurya's mourning lies in the fact that it has the characteristics of the peasant speech. While the language of *The Aran Islands* is premeditated to some extent, the language of *Riders to the Sea* resonates with the idiosyncratic features of the diction of Irish peasantry. Syntactical constructions, such as "they crossing themselves, they holding a thing", can be shown as representative examples of Gaelic syntax in which "co-ordination used instead of sub-ordination."²⁹ In this moment of the play, Maurya, half in a dream, laments over Bartley. She has gone to the spring well in order to catch Bartley and give him his bread and to tell him

"God speed you."³⁰ Yet, her vision about Bartley comes true, and consequently the grey Connemara pony "with great strength and timidity,"³¹ riding behind Bartley knocks him over into the sea. Maurya, after witnessing the death of Bartley with her own eyes, returns to her cottage and starts keening. In her mourning, Maurya recalls the deaths of the men of his family. When Maurya's words are re-read in line with Synge's depiction of the keening sister in *The Aran Islands*, one can comprehend the author's stylistic achievements to a certain extent. The infant whom the keening sister suckles becomes Bartley and this is the only direct relevance to the play. By taking this image as a starting point, Synge develops a striking monologue that effectively communicates the agon of the islanders to the readers. Moreover, Maurya's mourning partly evokes another stylistic aspect of *Riders to the Sea*: repetition. Synge, through his "repeated use of lexical items,"³² such as "women", foreshadows the later moments of the play in which the deplorable memories of Maurya would recur:

NORA: They're carrying a thing among them and there's water dripping out of it and leaving a track by the big stones.

CATHLEEN in a whisper to the women who have come in: *Is it Bartley it is?*

*ONE OF THE WOMEN: It is surely, God rest his soul.*³³

²⁹ Maurice Bourgeois, **John Millington Synge and the Irish Theatre**, London: Constable and Company Ltd., 1913, p. 226

³⁰ John Millington Synge, **Riders to the Sea**, T. R. Henn (ed.) **Plays and Poems of J. M. Synge**, London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1963 p. 100

³¹ John Millington Synge, **The Aran Islands**, London: George Allen and Unwin, 1961, p. 45

³² Geoffrey Leech and Michael Short, **Style in Fiction**, London and New York: Longman, 1992, p. 244

³³ John Millington Synge, **Riders to the Sea**, T. R. Henn (ed.) **Plays and Poems of J. M. Synge**, London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1963, p. 104-105

Thus, Synge, by re-creating the former sorrowful image in Maurya's mourning, not only portends this moment of the play, but also foregrounds the fact that the antagonist of the play, that is to say, the sea inevitably becomes victorious.

As mentioned earlier, the echoes of the keening sister of *The Aran Islands* can be heard in the exchanges between the two sisters, Cathleen and Nora as well:

NORA who has taken up the stocking and counted the stitches, crying out: *It's Michael, Cathleen, it's Michael; God spare his soul and what will herself say when she hears this story, and Bartley on the sea?*

CATHLEEN taking the stocking: *It's a plain stocking.*

NORA: *It's the second one of the third pair I knitted, and I put up three score stitches, and I dropped four of them.*

CATHLEEN counts the stitches: *It's that number is in it. (Crying out) Ah, Nora, isn't it a bitter thing to think of him floating that way to the far north, and no one to keen him but the black hags that do be flying on the sea?*³⁴

In the light of this exchange between Cathleen and Nora, it can be inferred that the yarn of the keening sister of *The Aran Islands* finds its voice in one of the most crucial moments of the play. The importance of this exchange will be pondered upon in the following section/s of this study but for the moment, suffice it to say that the presence of *The Aran Islands* can be felt in every nook and cranny of *Riders to the Sea*.

As the preceding analysis has demonstrated, the presence of the intertextual elements immanent to *Riders to the Sea* can provide a touchstone in terms of developing a stylistic approach to dramatic texts. When *Riders to the Sea* is re-read in the view of the intertextual elements pertaining to *The Aran Islands*, Synge's stylistic achievements, as well as the stylistic devices, such as repetition, foregrounding, and personification, and so forth, he deploys come into the picture.

2. *Riders to the Sea*

2.1 The language of the play

³⁴ Ibid., p. 101

In her remarkable study entitled *The Irish Dramatic Movement*, Una Ellis-Fermor considers John Millington Synge as, “*the only great poetic dramatist of the movement; the only one, that is, for whom poetry and drama were inseparable, in whose work dramatic intensity invariably finds poetic expression and the poetic mood its only full expression in dramatic form.*”³⁵ Ellis-Fermor’s observation sings the praise of Synge’s oeuvre in terms of the distinctive language that the author creates in his writings. In the core of Ellis-Fermor’s views regarding Synge’s artistry, lies the author’s tendency of deploying nature as a concrete play character in his dramatic works. In addition to that, Synge’s return to the lives of Irish peasantry gave him the unique chance to examine the language of the peasants, so that he could create a “real” speech which can be true and poetic at once. The emphasis on the very adjective “real” should not be underestimated here since through that language founded upon peasant dialect, Synge developed his distinguished style, which allows one to discern an improved and polished version of an actual (living) speech. Moreover, the fact that one can encounter meticulous symbolism in Synge’s works –*Riders to the Sea*, in particular– bestows upon his language a distinctive feature in which poetic and dramatic intermingle.

Synge’s figurative language in *Riders to the Sea* manifests itself in the symbols associated with the colours all of which acquire a vital function in the play. As Donna Gerstenberger maintains, “*Synge weaves a pattern of poetic meaning into the colours he brings to his stage, both in the speech and in the setting of the play, as a part of the heightened effect of his play.*”³⁶ Gerstenberger’s remarks regarding the language of the play are evocative of the notion of repetition. As argued previously, repetition can be regarded as one of the most important aspects of Synge’s style. In *Riders to the Sea*, it is most probable for the reader to observe how repetitively and effectively Synge deploys the colour red. Bartley, for instance, rides to the sea on the red mare with the grey Connemara pony running behind him.³⁷ During the course of the play, as Maurya’s mourning quoted in the preceding section indicates, the red mare is associated with the red sail in which the dead body of Patch was brought home when Bartley was a baby lying on Maurya’s two knees.³⁸ Above all –and that is the bottom line of the symbols that Synge associates with the colours– the old women who come to lament over Bartley’s death pull over their head red petticoats while

³⁵ Una Ellis-Fermor, **The Irish Dramatic Movement**, London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1967, p. 163

³⁶ Donna Gerstenberger, **John Millington Synge**, New York: Twayne Publishers, 1964, p. 48

³⁷ John Millington Synge, **Riders to the Sea**, T. R. Henn (ed.) **Plays and Poems of J. M. Synge**, London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1963, p. 99

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 104

they keen.³⁹ Looked from this vantage point, it can be seen that Synge turns the general meanings, such as sacrifice, blood, and so forth, linked to the colour red upside down, and makes that colour the symbol of grief.

Additionally, the fact that the stage directions in the beginning of the play show the presence of the white boards which have been bought at the cost of at a high price to make a coffin for Michael's coffin,⁴⁰ shows how Synge makes white the colour of death. Ironically, however, these same white boards would be used in the making of Bartley's coffin at the end of the play since Michael had already had a "*clean burial in the far north.*"⁴¹ The notion of repetition is evident at this stage of the play as well: the fact that Cathleen asks Nora the condition of the sea by the white rocks⁴² is evocative of Bartley's death since the grey Connemara pony will knock him over into the sea by the white rocks.⁴³ At this point, it is interesting to note that the colour of the pony riding behind Bartley is grey, a colour, which Synge uses "*to invoke wider echoes for his audience – those of the horsemen of the Book Revelation: 'And I looked, and behold a pale horse, and his name that sat on him was Death.*"⁴⁴

In a manner evoking the symbolic usage of the colours, such as white and grey, both of which Synge associates with death, black is used to summon death in *Riders to the Sea* as well. As the cited exchange between Cathleen and Nora in the preceding section demonstrates, while Michael's dead body floats to the far north, his only companion to keen him will be the "*black hags that do be flying on the sea.*"⁴⁵ Yet, Synge's style is persistent on enriching the traditional connotations associated with the colours. After all, as Susan Sontag succinctly declares, "*every style is a means of insisting on something.*"⁴⁶ Surely, "black hags" can be the sole companion of a dead body "to the far north", and can be deployed to evoke ideas regarding death. Still, when one recalls how Bartley takes Michael's grave rope in order to ride to the sea upon the red mare, the prophetic functions that the colours attain in *Riders to the Sea* come into play. Furthermore, Bartley takes

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 96

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 106

⁴² Ibid., p. 96

⁴³ Ibid., p. 105

⁴⁴ Donna Gerstenberger, **John Millington Synge**, New York: Twayne Publishers, 1964, p. 47

⁴⁵ John Millington Synge, **Riders to the Sea**, T. R. Henn (ed.) **Plays and Poems of J. M. Synge**, London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1963, p. 101

⁴⁶ Susan Sontag, **Against Interpretation**, New York: Farrar, Straus and Gireux, 1964, p. 35

Michael's rope that had been eaten by the "pig with the black feet,"⁴⁷ – a colour which insinuates how Bartley will be drowned by the white rocks.

Within this context, one can feel at ease with T. R. Henn's views regarding the figurative language of *Riders to the Sea*: "The symbols, set in their matrix of rhythmical speech of great subtlety and complexity, permeate the play. They dissolve, coalesce, combine in tension or opposition, to give depth or contrapuntal irony, retaining always their essential nature, which is to set the imagination in motion, to extend it beyond the bounds of **apparent simplicity** of the plot."⁴⁸ Notice how Henn alludes to the simplicity of *Riders to the Sea*'s plot and purports the fact that there are more points to be discussed in the play, in addition to the figurative language of the work. Henn's fruitful observation can thus be taken as a point of departure in terms of opening up a discussion with respect to the aspects of the play in question which allows one to discern how it radically belongs to the genre of traditional tragedy.

2.2 A tragedy in one act?

To claim that *Riders to the Sea* fundamentally pertains to the genre of traditional tragedy is a big step taken towards showing the fact that the significance of the play lies in its particular genre. Of course, one can plausibly put forward the idea that maintains how the classics, as well as, the works of, say, Shakespeare, Marlowe and Webster were written mostly in verse. Additionally, as George Steiner argues, "the idea of 'prose tragedy' is singularly modern, and to many poets and critics it remains paradoxical."⁴⁹ Yet, the distinction between verse and prose is a technical issue. Within the realm of tragedy, there are far certain issues to be mused on.

Riders to the Sea can be deemed as a solemn work that intrinsically possesses the essential features all of which bestow upon this work the characteristics of "prose tragedy". As Steiner acknowledges, John Millington Synge, together with Maxim Gorky and Bertolt Brecht, was amongst the first group of serious playwrights who followed Georg Büchner in

⁴⁷ John Millington Synge, *Riders to the Sea*, T. R. Henn (ed.) *Plays and Poems of J. M. Synge*, London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1963, p. 97

⁴⁸ T. R. Henn, "Introduction to the Plays", T. R. Henn (ed.) *Plays and Poems of J. M. Synge*, London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1963, p. 40, emphasis added.

⁴⁹ George Steiner, *The Death of Tragedy*, Yale: Yale University Press, 1996, p. 238

terms of bringing “to bear on the lowest order of men the solemnity and compassion of tragedy.”⁵⁰

The scenery of *Riders to the Sea* –in a manner evoking the “apparent simplicity” of the plot– is plain enough: “Cottage kitchen, with nets, oilskins, spinning-wheel, some new boards standing by the wall.”⁵¹ This is the relatively small world of the islanders and it does not strike the reader at all. Still, the tragic aspect of *Riders to the Sea* surfaces itself even in these stage directions for the fact that “wheel” stands for the tragic pattern of fate in the medieval tradition.⁵² In spite of the fact that the whole setting of *Riders to the Sea* is limited to the confines of the cottage kitchen, the overwhelming presence of the sea can be highly sensed throughout the play. When the stage design of the play is taken into consideration from this perspective, one can discern how Synge introduces the microcosm-macrocosm relationship in *Riders to the Sea*: “the kitchen is a small world which contains the puny attempts of man to make a home of the large, alien world of the sea. And the island itself, surrounded by the unfriendly sea, becomes a paradigm for life, but one in which the bitter demands of existence speak with foreshortened insistence.”⁵³ In *Riders to the Sea*, the vain attempts of the islanders can only delay “death” since the sea is the ultimate victor of the struggle between men and nature: “what happens is inevitable, and in this fact resides the real nub of tragedy.”⁵⁴ What is more, this struggle immediately signifies the dramatic conflict of the play: the agon between the sea and humanity, being singly and collectively at once. In this struggle, as T. R. Henn maintains, “the human opponents are on three levels; Bartley who must sell his horses at the fair; his sisters who seem to have a sacrificial-prophetic function, like Antigone and Ismené; Maurya who speaks the two great elegies for the dead.”⁵⁵

Henn’s comments regarding the dramatic conflict of the play becomes quite noteworthy in the sense that they are indicative of the fact that *Riders to the Sea* belongs to the true Ancient Greek tradition. In addition to the similarities between Cathleen and Nora, and Antigone and Ismené, the three women of the play are evocative of the Three Fates of Greek mythology.⁵⁶ Maurya, Cathleen and Nora, as in the presence of the spinning wheel in

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 275

⁵¹ John Millington Synge, **Riders to the Sea**, T. R. Henn (ed.) **Plays and Poems of J. M. Synge**, London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1963, p. 96

⁵² Cf. George Steiner, **The Death of Tragedy**, Yale: Yale University Press, 1996, p. 16

⁵³ Donna Gerstenberger, **John Millington Synge**, New York: Twayne Publishers, 1964, p. 46

⁵⁴ Denis Johnston, **John Millington Synge**, New York & London: Columbia University Press, 1965, p. 18

⁵⁵ T. R. Henn, “Introduction to the Plays”, T. R. Henn (ed.) **Plays and Poems of J. M. Synge**, London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1963, p. 37

⁵⁶ Cf. Donna Gerstenberger, **John Millington Synge**, New York: Twayne Publishers, 1964, p. 46

the beginning of the play, resonate with the tragic aspect of *Riders to the Sea*. As the preceding analysis regarding the language of the play has shown, the functions that the colours recur in the speeches of the characters attain a prophetic role during the course of *Riders to the Sea*. And the notion of prophecy is another feature that manifests itself in the masterpieces of tragedy, such as *Oedipus the King*, *Macbeth*, as well as *Athalie*.⁵⁷

Within this context, then, the affinities of *Riders to the Sea* with the genre of traditional tragedy can be observed to a considerable extent. Still, another point inherent in the play deserves further attention in order to discuss the tragic aspects of *Riders to the Sea* from a theoretical perspective. Although one can plausibly establish the link between Cathleen and Nora, and Antigone and Ismené with the purpose of putting forward the claim that *Riders to the Sea* pertains to the true Greek tradition, any argument regardless of Aristotle's *Poetics* is doomed to wander on the slippery slope of abstract claims. Therefore, at this juncture of the discussion, it would be reasonable to return to the point that has been touched upon in the preceding section of this study, that is to say, the exchange between Cathleen and Nora. As stated earlier, Cathleen and Nora try to fix the identity of their brother Michael through the clothes that the Young Priest has brought to their cottage. And Cathleen counts the stitches and finds out how their brother Michael has been "*floating that way to the north.*"⁵⁸ This is the *anagnorisis* (recognition) of *Riders to the Sea*. Consider, for a moment, Aristotle's definition of the term:

*A Recognition, as the word itself indicates, is a change from ignorance to knowledge, and thus to a state of nearness and dearness or to a state of enmity, on the part of those who have entered upon the action each with his situation defined in its initial happiness or unhappiness.*⁵⁹

In *Riders to the Sea*, *anagnorisis* acquires a crucial function since from that moment on, the play takes a more tragic turn. Maurya returns to the cottage and reveals the truth regarding Bartley. Subsequently, women come to the cottage in order to lament over

⁵⁷ Cf. George Steiner, *The Death of Tragedy*, Yale: Yale University Press, 1996, p. 196

⁵⁸ John Millington Synge, *Riders to the Sea*, T. R. Henn (ed.) *Plays and Poems of J. M. Synge*, London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1963, p. 101

⁵⁹ Aristotle quoted in John Jones, *On Aristotle and Greek Tragedy*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1968, p. 58

Bartley, while the men bring his dead body home in a piece of sail. At these final moments of the play, moreover, the keening old women acquire a choral function.⁶⁰

Furthermore, Synge's brevity and economy in *Riders to the Sea* allow him to start his play in *media res*, that is to say, in the middle of the action. Such a strategy, to a certain extent, derives from Synge's "ability to compress a great deal into a very short space upon the stage."⁶¹ Thanks to Synge's mastery of one-act play, the audience witnesses how most of the *praxis*, or in other words, most of the "tragic loss" of the play has already taken place. Moreover, constant references to Michael's absence heighten the tragic effect all the more. Be that as it may, Synge manages to withdraw his information from the audience until the final moments of the play. As a matter of fact, Synge, by allowing Maurya to reveal the entire tragic history of the family in her two elegies, bestows upon his play a cathartic effect.⁶²

All in all, *Riders to the Sea* can be considered as a genuine example of "prose tragedy" in which one can perceive the fundamental features of classical tragedy. Synge, by complying with the demands of modernity, has replaced the almighty gods of the Greek tragedies with nature in order to depict it "in such rapacious guise as the unappeasable ocean"⁶³ of his play. Furthermore, the fact that *Riders to the Sea* resonates with the essential features of classical tragedy in a modern fashion broadens the scope of the play even more.

3. A Stylistic Approach to Translation

3.1 From *Riders to the Sea* to *Denize Giden Atlılar*

John Millington Synge's one act tragedy *Riders to the Sea* was translated into Turkish as *Denize Giden Atlılar* by Orhan Burian in 1940 and it was published by the Ministry of Education in the same year as one of the first translations implemented by the Translation Bureau.⁶⁴ Burian's translation was re-published in 1984 by De Yayınevi, in the

⁶⁰ Cf. John Millington Synge, *Riders to the Sea*, T. R. Henn (ed.) *Plays and Poems of J. M. Synge*, London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1963, pp. 104-105

⁶¹ Donna Gerstenberger, *John Millington Synge*, New York: Twayne Publishers, 1964, p. 34

⁶² Cf. Rónán McDonald, *Tragedy and Irish Literature: Synge, O'Casey, Beckett*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002, p. 80

⁶³ Terry Eagleton, *Sweet Violence: The Idea of the Tragic*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003, p. 128

⁶⁴ At this point of discussion, it becomes obligatory to note that Synge's *Riders to the Sea* was also published by Mitoş Boyut Publishing House in 2003 with the translation of Özcan Özer. Nevertheless, a close reading of the two translations demonstrates that Özer's translation is –to a considerable degree– a duplicated version of Orhan Burian's translation. Cf. John Millington Synge, *Denize Giden Atlılar*, trans. Orhan Burian, Istanbul: De Yayınevi, 1984 with John Millington Synge, *Denize Giden Atlılar*, trans. Özcan Özer, Istanbul: Mitoş Boyut, 2003. For that reason, Özer's version of *Riders to the Sea* has been excluded from the corpus of this

same volume with Bertolt Brecht's *Señora Carrar's Rifles*, a play which the German dramatist has written as a modern version of Synge's *Riders to the Sea*. Burian, a professor of English Language and Literature, has translated various works from English into Turkish. Additionally, he was one of the influential translators working for the Translation Bureau – an official organization which aimed to “realize a ‘Turkish renaissance’ by importing these works [works that represent Western civilization] into Turkey via translation and making them instrumental in creating a new culture and literature which would be national in essence but rising upon Western concepts and ideas.”⁶⁵ What is more, the fact that Burian's translation of Synge's one act tragedy *Riders to the Sea* was published for the first time in 1940 becomes quite significant since the year 1940, as one scholar argues, “has been a turning point in Turkey's cultural history, and paved the way for the literary and cultural renaissance of the Republican Turkey.”⁶⁶ * In the light of this remark, then, it can be inferred that analysing Burian's translation of *Riders to the Sea*, can also provide one with the preliminary information regarding the first series of translations undertaken by the Translation Bureau in 1940 in Turkey.

In order to circumvent one problematic aspect of stylistic analysis, that is to say, to reveal the distinguishing features of a text so that they can stand for the stylistic features inherent in the whole work under discussion, this paper has attempted to demonstrate the “eyes” of *Riders to the Sea* with the purpose of indicating the style markers of Synge's language. Hence, by bearing in mind the quoted excerpts taken from *Riders to the Sea* in the preceding sections of this paper, all of which are representative of the loosely constructed sentences in the diction of the Irish peasantry, the repetition inherent in Maurya's mourning, as well as the repetitive pattern that Synge would develop later on in the play; one can turn to Burian's translation with the intention to trace these stylistic aspects in the TT:

MAURYA: (Bir şey işitmeden sözüne devam eder.) Sheamus ile babası vardı. Üste onun da babası. Karanlık bir gece, kayboldular. Güneş doğduğu zaman onlardan bir tahta parçası, en ufak bir işaret bile kalmamıştı. Sonra Patch, teknesi devrildi de boğuldu. Şurada Bartley ile oturuyordum, küçücüktü; dizlerimin üstünde yatıyordu, baktım iki kadın, üç kadın, dört kadın içeri girdi;

article. Moreover, since the ultimate goal of this paper is to observe the extent that the Turkish translation of *Riders to the Sea* reverberates with the style of the ST, in what follows, Özer's version of the play, as well as the policy of the Mitos Boyut publishing house will not be debated in detail. Yet, it goes without saying that the issue invites special consideration from the perspective of Translation Studies.

⁶⁵ Şehnaz Tahir-Gürçağlar, “The Translation Bureau Revisited: Translation as Symbol”, in Maria Calzada Pérez (ed.) **Apropos of Ideology**, Manchester: St Jerome, 2003, p. 119

⁶⁶ Suat Karantay, “‘Tercüme Bürosu’: Normlar ve İşlevler, **Metis Çeviri**, 16, 1991, p. 96

* Unless indicated, all translations are my own.

*istavroz çıkardılar, bir kelime bile söylemiyorlardı. O zaman dışarı baktım, gördüm ki arkalarından erkekler geliyor. Kırmızı bezden yarım bir yelkene sarılı bir şey taşıyorlar. Bezden damla damla su akıyordu. – O gün hava kuruydu Nora – kapiya kadar iz bırakmıştı.*⁶⁷

A glance at Burian’s translation of Maurya’s elegy is indicative of the prospective problems that the style of the peasant speech might pose on the translator of the text. Burian, in order to trim the loosely constructed peasant speech, cuts the sentence into three parts. Thus, the communicative effect intrinsic to the distinctive style peculiar to the Irish peasantry becomes diminished to a considerable extent. Consequently, the sentence in the translation which reads as, “güneş doğduğu zaman onlardan bir tahta parçası, en ufak bir işaret bile kalmamıştı” fails to convey the style of the ST regarding the forlorn deaths of Sheamus and his father. Although Burian strives to render the other sentences of Maurya’s mourning as a whole, he opts to cut the last sentence once again, and thus, makes Maurya start her last words in her keening with a hyphen. This translation strategy, inevitably gives rise to an ambiguity in the TT, and as a matter of fact, it becomes arguably rather hard for one to comprehend what has left its traces up to the door.

On the other hand, the TT resonates with the ST in terms of the repetitive pattern created through the continuous usage of “women” to a certain degree. The repetitive pattern which reads as, “they’re carrying a thing among them and there’s water dripping out of it and leaving a track by the big stones”⁶⁸ that the author would develop in the later stages of *Riders to the Sea*, however, finds its echo in the Turkish translation, but again with the same translation strategy: “Aralarında bir şey taşıyorlar. Ondan damla damla su akıyor. Büyük taşların yanında iz bırakmış.”⁶⁹ From this perspective, therefore, it can be inferred that Burian has chosen to segment the sentences during the course of his translation.

As indicated in the earlier sections of this study, another important aspect of *Riders to the Sea* was the *anagnorisis* scene, in which Cathleen and Nora try to understand if their brother Michael has drowned in the sea or not. By keeping in mind the excerpt pertaining to that specific section of the ST that has been discussed in the preceding sections of this paper, it would be legitimate to take a look at the Turkish translation of that part:

⁶⁷ John Millington Synge, **Denize Giden Atlılar**, trans. Orhan Burian, Istanbul: De Yayınevi, 1984, p. 46, emphasis added

⁶⁸ John Millington Synge, **Riders to the Sea**, T. R. Henn (ed.) **Plays and Poems of J. M. Synge**, London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1963, pp. 103

⁶⁹ John Millington Synge, **Denize Giden Atlılar**, trans. Orhan Burian, Istanbul: De Yayınevi, 1984, p. 47

NORA: (Çorabı alıp ilmeklerini saymıştır, haykırır.) Michael'dır Cathleen, Michael. Allah rahmet eylesin. Nine bunu duyarsa ne diyecek? Bartley de denize çıktı.

CATHLEEN: (Çorabı alır.) Düz örgü bir çorap.

NORA: Üçüncü çifti örmüştüm ya, onun ikinci teki. Altmış ilmek yaptım, sonra dördüncü eksiltiydim.

*CATHLEEN: (İlmekleri sayar; haykırarak) Sahiden ilmek o kadar. Ah Nora, onun o halde ta poyraz eline kadar yüzdüğünü düşün; denizin üstünde uçuşan kara cadılardan başka yasını tutacak hiç kimse de yoktu; ne acı değil mi?*⁷⁰

Burian's translation demonstrates that the translator has opted to use the diction of Turkish peasantry with the purpose of re-producing the style of the ST. The fact that Burian has chosen to use more localized expressions, such as "Allah rahmet eylesin", "altmış ilmek yaptım, sonra dördüncü eksiltiydim" can be regarded as the representative examples of the Turkish peasant speech. Although Burian's translation conveys the style of the ST to some extent, a close reading of the above cited excerpt in the light of Synge's text reveals certain points of deviation from the style of *Riders to the Sea*. The fact that Burian clears the ambiguity inherent in the ST with "nine", which stands for "grandmother" in Turkish, might perplex the reader, since Nora is referring to her mother Maurya by saying: "God spare his soul and what will herself say when she hears this story, and Bartley on the sea?"⁷¹ Furthermore, by rendering "black hags that do be flying on the sea" as "denizin üstünde uçuşan kara cadılar" Burian overlooks the significance of one peculiar word of Irish peasantry, namely, "hag". While the word "hag" stands for "witch" in Standard English, in Irish-English it refers to "devilish sea birds".⁷² Looked from this perspective, then, it becomes apparent how the word choices of the translator might affect the rendering of the style of the ST to a considerable extent. As a consequence of Burian's word choices, the peculiar expression like "black hags" in Hiberno-English becomes rendered into Turkish as a reflection of its traditional definition in Standard English.

This last point is significant in the sense that it drops valuable hints with respect to the way that Burian approaches to Synge's text. Within the cultural dynamics of the 1940s, one of the principal goals of the translation movement undertaken by the Translation Bureau

⁷⁰ Ibid., pp. 42-43, emphasis added.

⁷¹ John Millington Synge, *Riders to the Sea*, T. R. Henn (ed.) *Plays and Poems of J. M. Synge*, London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1963, p. 101

⁷² Cf. Donna Gerstenberger, *John Millington Synge*, New York: Twayne Publishers, 1964, p. 49

was to introduce the Western classics to the Turkish readers. As was mentioned previously, Burian's Turkish translation of Synge's *Riders to the Sea* belongs to the first wave of the translations executed by the Translation Bureau. Nevertheless, as Şehnaz Tahir-Gürçağlar points out, "these first translations by the Bureau should not be taken as representative of its later work, for starting with 1941, the Bureau concentrated on the translation of the seminal classics of western literature and mainly of Ancient Greek works."⁷³ Within this context, therefore, Burian's translation of the play can be deemed as an initial source of information as regards the first series of translations of the Translation Bureau. In view of the stylistic analysis of *Denize Giden Atlılar*, it can be seen that Burian attempts at resonating with Synge's style in his translation by opting to segment the sentences of the ST, as well as deploying the Turkish peasant speech. While the latter can be considered to be a reasonable translation strategy in terms of re-creating the Irish peasant speech in Turkish, the former runs against the grain of the loosely constructed Irish rustic speech. Furthermore, the translation of the cultural specific word, like "black hag" as "kara cadı" is suggestive of the fact that Burian regarded *Riders to the Sea* as a text pertaining to the English literary system; while, in fact, the play brims with expressions and sentence structures peculiar to Ireland, as well as Hiberno-English.

3.2 *Denize Giden Atlılar Revisited*

CATHLEEN leaves her wheel and looks out: *God forgive you; he's riding the mare now over the green head, and the grey pony behind him.*

MAURYA starts, so that her shawl falls back from her head and shows her white tossed hair. With a frightened voice: *The grey pony behind him...*⁷⁴

CATHLEEN: (Çıkrığı bırakır ve dışarı bakar.) *Allah senin taksiratını affetsin: Kısrağa binmiş yeşilburunun üstünden geçiyor, kır tay da arkasında.*

MAURYA: (Yerinden sıçrar, şalı başından düşer, karma karışık olan ak saçları meydana çıkar, sesinde bir korkuyla) *Arkasında kır tay...*⁷⁵

⁷³ Şehnaz Tahir-Gürçağlar, *The Politics and Poetics of Translation in Turkey, 1923-1960*, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2008, p. 164

⁷⁴ John Millington Synge, *Riders to the Sea*, T. R. Henn (ed.) *Plays and Poems of J. M. Synge*, London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1963, pp. 102, emphasis added.

⁷⁵ John Millington Synge, *Denize Giden Atlılar*, trans. Orhan Burian, Istanbul: De Yayınevi, 1984, p. 44, emphasis added.

The above-quoted excerpts taken from the ST and TT of *Riders to the Sea* respectively, can be taken as yardsticks in terms of making a closing statement with respect to the confines of stylistic achievement in a given translation project. As the analyses pertaining to the previous sections of this paper have demonstrated, the notion of repetition, let alone the concepts of symbolism and personification, both of which acquire a vital role in terms of foregrounding the tragic aspect of the play, are the most significant aspects of John Millington Synge's figurative language, hence his style. Nevertheless, a glance at the above cited excerpts indicates, how the repetitive pattern of the ST has not received particular attention from the translator of *Riders to the Sea*. And as a matter of fact, the reader of the TT can scarcely recognize that significant aspect peculiar to *Riders to the Sea*.

Then again, this statement should not be taken as a condemnation of Orhan Burian's Turkish translation of *Riders to the Sea*; it should rather be perceived as a final remark which puts momentous emphasis on the very first principle of any given translation project: the distinctive manner of linguistic expression of the ST; in short, the notion of style, and the extent to which the translator of that text in question takes particular heed of the style of the ST author. Even though Burian was one of the translators of the Translation Bureau who advocated "style-based" translations,⁷⁶ the strategies followed by the translator in *Denize Giden Atlılar*, all of which have been discussed in detail from a stylistic perspective in the preceding subsection of this article, make his statement open to debate.

Summary and Conclusion

The ultimate goal of this paper was to develop a stylistic approach to dramatic texts through translation. In order to do so, the introduction part of this study attempted to emphasise the necessity of developing a sound stylistic approach to dramatic texts. Furthermore, the introductory part of this article demonstrated that dramatic texts –until very recently– have been considered as the neglected domain within the realm of stylistics. With the purpose of filling the gap between stylistics of drama and stylistics, in the subsequent sections, the paper argued for the significance of intertextual elements in a given artwork. Thus, in this paper, the notion of intertextuality has been deployed as a tool in terms of disclosing the style of a given text, thereby enhancing the scope of stylistic analyses of dramatic texts. In order to concretise the arguments proposed, the stylistic features of the

⁷⁶ Bülent Aksoy, "Cumhuriyet Döneminde Çeviri Anlayışları" in Mehmet Rifat (ed.) **Çeviri ve Çeviri Kavramı Üzerine Söylemler**, İstanbul: Düzlem Yayınları, pp. 81-82

Irish dramatist John Millington Synge's oeuvre have been taken as a focal point. Starting with a general glance at the Synge's oeuvre, this study tried to trace the author's stylistic achievements through his works entitled *The Aran Islands* and *Riders to the Sea* respectively. In the light of the analyses regarding Synge's aforementioned works, this paper aimed at showing how the notion of repetition and personification have been persistently used by the author with the intention to foreground the tragic aspects of the play. Additionally, the fact that *Riders to the Sea* was a representative example of "prose tragedy" was another point that this study attempted to shed light on. What is more, in view of the illations drawn during the course of the paper, Orhan Burian's Turkish translation of *Riders to the Sea* has been analysed with the purpose of observing to what extent the TT reverberates with the style of the ST.

The findings of the study suggest that Burian's translation of the play bears the traces of the translator's attempts at resonating with Synge's style. Burian's choice of rendering the Irish peasant speech in Turkish peasant speech can be taken as a token of the translator's awareness of the style intrinsic to the ST. While this is the case, the strategies (i.e. segmenting the sentences, overlooking the notion of repetition, as well as the cultural specific expressions immanent to the play, and so on) adopted by Burian prevents the TT reader to grasp the distinctive style that Synge attains in his work. Be that as it may, as a significant example of the first wave of the translations undertaken by the Translation Bureau, Burian's translation of *Riders to the Sea* can still be deemed as an important step taken towards introducing Synge's plays to Turkish readers. In this particular respect, Burian's text can serve as a blueprint for the prospective productions of the play. During the transferral of *Denize Giden Atlular* from "page" to "stage", moreover, a meticulous dramaturgy work on the performance text can overcome the stylistic problems that have been discussed in this paper.

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Dram Sanatının Biçembilimi ve Çeviride Biçemsel Edinim Olana(ksızlı)ğı: John Millington Synge'in *Denize Giden Atlılar* Oyunu Örneği

Öz

Biçem kavramının hemen hemen her sanat eserine içkin bir olgu olduğu tartışma götürmez bir gerçektir. Dolayısıyla, bahsi geçen kavram, konu üzerinde yapılmış sayısız araştırma için esin kaynağı olmuştur. Ne var ki, konuya tiyatro metinleri açısından bakıldığında,

biçembilim alanındaki çalışmaların birçoğunun daha çok düzyazı ve şiir türleriyle sınırlı kaldıkları gözlemlenmektedir. Tiyatro metinlerinin biçimsel açıdan incelenmelerini sekteye uğratan nedenlerden bir tanesi, söz konusu eserlerin sahnelendiklerinde –seyirciyle buluştukları anda– tam olarak hayata geçmeleridir. Bu nedenden ötürü, sahneleme için bir taslak olan tiyatro metinleri üzerinde yapılacak biçimsel çözümlere, araştırmacılar tarafından büyük ölçüde eksik gözüyle bakılmaktadır. Bununla birlikte, sahnelenme aşamasından önceki dramaturji çalışmaları sürecinde metin üzerinde yapılacak biçimsel çözümler, oyun yazarının biçiminin izleyiciyle buluşması açısından hayati bir öneme sahiptir. Sahnelenecek eser, çeviri bir metin olduğundaysa, kaynak ve erek metinlerin biçimsel çözümlerinin önemi bir kat daha artmaktadır.

*Bu tartışmayı çıkış noktası olarak alan makale, İrlandalı oyun yazarı John Millington Synge'in **Denize Giden Atlılar** adlı oyununun ve eserin Türkçe çevirisinin biçimsel bir çözümlemesini sunmayı hedeflemektedir. Bu amaç doğrultusunda çalışma, öncelikli olarak Synge'in **Aran Adaları** başlıklı belgesel eserini mercek altına alarak, yazarın İrlanda'daki köy yaşamını nasıl aktardığını incelemektedir. Ayrıca makale, metinlerarasılık kavramına başvurarak Synge'in **Aran Adaları**'ndaki dili, **Denize Giden Atlılar**'da nasıl özgün bir tiyatro diline dönüştüğünü göstermektedir. Çalışmanın bir sonraki safhasında, **Denize Giden Atlılar**'ın düzyazı biçiminde kaleme alınmış bir tragedya olduğu, oyunun geleneksel tragedya türüyle koşut özellikleri ortaya konarak tartışılmaktadır. Makalenin son bölümünde ise, oyunun Orhan Burian tarafından yapılmış çevirisi, çalışma boyunca üzerinde durulmuş noktaların çevirideki yansımalarını gözlemlemek maksadıyla biçimsel açıdan incelenmektedir. Çalışmanın sonuç bölümü, oyunun sahnelenme sürecindeki dramaturji çalışmalarının, metin üzerine de biçimsel açıdan odaklanmasıyla yazarın biçiminin izleyiciye aktarımında önemli bir rol oynayacağını savunmaktadır.*

Anahtar kelimeler: *biçem, biçembilim, dram sanatı, çeviri, Synge*

Abstract

The fact that the notion of style is intrinsic to almost every artwork is beyond dispute. As a matter of fact, this concept has been a source of inspiration for countless scholarly work done on the subject. Even so, when the point is taken into consideration from the perspective

of dramatic texts, it can be observed that the bulk of the research undertaken within the realm of stylistics has confined itself with genres such as prose and poetry. One of the reasons which brings the stylistic analyses of dramatic texts to a standstill is the fact that these works come into existence in the proper sense of the word when they are staged, as well as at the moment they meet with the audience. For that reason, to a considerable degree, a stylistic analysis undertaken on a theatre text that is essentially a blueprint for a production is considered as incomplete by the researchers. Nevertheless, stylistic analyses of the text in the dramaturgical process prior to the staging of the play acquire a crucial role in terms of rendering the style of the playwright to the spectators. When the play to be staged is a translated text, the significance of the stylistic analyses of the source text and the target text respectively gain further importance.

*Taking the above-outlined argument as a starting point, this paper sets out to propose stylistic analyses of John Millington Synge's **Riders to the Sea**, as well as its Turkish translation. To this end, the article initially focuses on Synge's documentary work entitled **the Aran Islands** with the purpose of examining how the author has rendered the peasant life in Ireland. By leaning on the notion of intertextuality, this study, moreover, demonstrates how Synge transformed the language of **the Aran Islands** into a distinctive theatrical language in **Riders to the Sea**. Through the exposition of the play's common traits with the genre of traditional tragedy, the following section of the article discusses **Riders to the Sea** as a prose tragedy. The last part of the paper provides a stylistic analysis of Orhan Burian's Turkish translation of the play in order to examine the traces of the points that have been touched upon during the course of the study in the translated text. The conclusion of the study argues for the significance of the dramaturgical studies concentrating also on the text from a stylistic perspective, anterior to the production of the work in the sense of conveying the style of the playwright to the spectators.*

Key words: style, stylistics, drama, translation, Synge,