

## THE REPERCUSSIONS OF THE STATE IDEOLOGY IN THEATRE REPERTOIRES OF THE 1980S

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The transition process from autocracy to democracy has been realized in Turkish history through a series of reforms dating from the Tanzimat Period until contemporary times. Unfortunately, all of these changes have also become the object of the apparent resistance of societal and political formations within Turkish society, and as a matter of fact the dominant powers of the varying periods have monopolized the notion of democracy by imposing ethnic and religious allegiances on it. As a consequence of these, Turkish society – despite the establishment of the Republic in 1923 – has witnessed autocratic interventions under the guise of a democratic regime intending to maintain the permanence of the government. These interventions have been carried out either in obvious forms, namely coups, or using less obvious types that is to say, by founding a quasi-civil government which could then impose the dominant ideology of that particular time.

A quick look at the history of the Republic of Turkey indicates four significant military takeovers: The first one on May 27<sup>th</sup> 1960, the second on March 12<sup>th</sup> 1971, the third on September 12<sup>th</sup> 1980, and the fourth on February 28<sup>th</sup> 1997, all of which had a serious impact on the evolution of democracy in Turkey. This swift glance points to the fact that Turkish society has somehow become familiar with coups, and even relied on the presence of the Turkish army when the stability of the state is in peril. Among those four military interventions, the 1980 coup merits further attention and discussion due to the way that it differs from the other three: When compared with the other military interventions, the 1980 coup brought about much more extensive, radical and permanent social transformations within Turkish society as will be discussed in the following pages. Furthermore, whereas the 1960 coup repressed the right-conformist movement in Turkey,

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and hence set the ground for the resistance against the West<sup>106</sup>, the 1980 coup suppressed the left societal currents in Turkey, and thus creating the circumstances for the rise of the “right”, “liberal”, and “Islamic” movements in the country<sup>107</sup>. Although the transition period from military rule to civil government was accomplished by oppression, the civil government following the military rule introduced – in accordance with their general policy in terms of economic liberalism – a consumption culture and in consequence of this, looseness, a feigned lack of restriction, to Turkish people. As a result of these, enjoyment and entertainment took the place of societal responsibility in other words, the 1980s comprised both oppression and the so-called “freedom”<sup>108</sup>.

As an outcome of these circumstances, Turkish culture entered a phase of stagnation which can be discerned in every sort of artwork. One of the most apparent signs of this languidness can be observed in theatre translations and productions of the decade. Since a theatre production is the form of art which reaches the individual, a juxtaposition of the titles of the translated theatre texts in the repertoires of the State Theatres and private theatre companies of the 1980s in the light of the contemporary political conditions, might give an idea of how theatre productions were used as an ideological instrument by both the military and the so-called liberal government in the course of the depoliticisation of Turkish society. Additionally, by presenting the repertoires of the mentioned theatre companies, one can perceive the amount of the translated literature and the role it played in the making of the repertoires. In spite of the certain extent to which the state theatres were being controlled or managed by the government, there were still some influential theatre companies which were striving for the sake of “high-art” and societal responsibility, and where, therefore, the staging of politically sensitive theatrical works carried on in the decade in question. Such a

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<sup>106</sup> It is no wonder that the intensive discussions in Turkey regarding Marxism coincides this period.

<sup>107</sup> Later on, these movements were regarded as “the Rising Values” by Nilüfer Göle; see Nilüfer Göle, **Melez Desenler**, Metis Yayınları, 2002, İstanbul, p. 37-49

<sup>108</sup> Actually, a distinction between freedom and looseness should be made at this point of discussion for a better understanding of the state ideology. Freedom is a thing which can be lived in the mind or soul of an individual entirely, and has an intellectual feature that defines and even limits itself. On the other hand, looseness has an extrovert characteristic and derives from the absence of rigidity, and strictness and does not control itself. In this respect, by blurring this delicate distinction between the two words, the governments of the decade offered a superficial “freedom” which hampered the individual from questioning the dynamics of the country. For a discussion questioning the notion of freedom within Turkish society from this point of view, see Murat Belge, **Türkiye Dünyanın Neresinde?**, Birikim Yayınları, İstanbul, 1990, p. 114-117

juxtaposition of the repertoires of the State Theatres and subsidized theatres – particularly those of Dostlar Theatre and Ankara Art Theatre because of their political stance – suggests a detailed analysis of the translated theatre plays, thus, paving the way for fruitful research within the realm of Translation Studies. Nevertheless, in addition to the exhibition of the state ideology behind the theatre repertoires of the decade, another objective of this study will be to propose a conceptual framework for further research in the aforementioned area within the boundaries of Translation Studies.

Even though the 1970s is mostly regarded as one of the darkest decades of Turkish history in terms of political altercations, this period saw the untiring efforts of intellectuals who developed opinions chiefly based on independence from any type of domineering behaviour and freedom of thought in every field of life. In such a period, beneficial arguments aimed at liberating the art of the theatre from state domination emerged. Indeed, the idea of local management of the theatre companies with the purpose of integrating the notion of the art with public was vehemently discussed in the works of prominent theatre scholars like Metin And.<sup>109</sup> In the 1970s, the relationship between the State Theatres and the civil government was so apparent that the theatre establishments of Turkey had a centralist structure which could serve as an expansion of the ideology of the government. According to Ayşegül Yüksel, “*contrary to one of its founding principles, that is to say, introducing influential and contemporary playwrights to Turkish spectator, State Theatres have neglected the case of Brecht*”<sup>110</sup>, and when Ankara State Theatre staged one, namely *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*, towards the end of the 1970s, it was immediately prohibited<sup>111</sup>.<sup>112</sup> Ankara Sanat Tiyatrosu (hereafter Ankara Art Theatre) and Dostlar Tiyatrosu (hereafter Dostlar Theatre), two of the most prestigious private theatre companies in Turkey, were also the subject of harsh censorship when they staged Brecht plays or adaptations. The production of *Fear and Misery in the Third Reich*, for instance, by Ankara Art Theatre in the 1973-1974 seasons was interdicted as well. Seen from the perspective of the circumstances, due to the serious debates regarding the management of the theatre companies the decade launched (i.e. attempts to release State Theatres from

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<sup>109</sup> Metin And, **100 Soruda Türk Tiyatrosu Tarihi**, Gerçek Yayınevi İstanbul, 1970

<sup>110</sup> Ayşegül Yüksel, **Sahnedeki İzdüşümler**, MitosBOYUT Yayınları, İstanbul, 2000, p. 69

<sup>111</sup> Unless indicated all translations are my own.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9. A prolific analysis of censorship and suppression in Turkish Theatre history can be found in, Dikmen Gürün, **Tiyatro Yazıları**, MitosBOYUT Yayınları, İstanbul, 2000, p. 81-91, and p. 95-102

the government domination), the oppression accompanied by censorship (e.g. the productions of State Theatres and the private theatre companies contradicting the ideology of the government), and so forth<sup>113</sup>, the 1970s can be regarded as one of the most “*dynamic periods of Turkish Theatre history.*”<sup>114</sup>

The tables below comparing the repertoires of Istanbul State Theatre, Ankara Art Theatre and Dostlar Theatre pertaining to the last two seasons of the 1970s give a general idea of the plays staged by State Theatres and private theatre companies.

|                                    |                               |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>1978-1979 Season</b>            | Kadife Çiçekleri              |
| Pof'la Paf (Children's Theatre)    | Duruşma                       |
| Kurnaz Avukat (Children's Theatre) | Keloğlan (Children's Theatre) |
| Yük                                | Leke, Çizgi-Benek, Renk       |
| <b>1979-1980 Season</b>            | Deli Dumrul                   |
| Yaralı Geyik                       | Antigone                      |
| Kedi Evi (Children's Theatre)      |                               |

Table 1: Istanbul State Theatre repertoire between 1978 and 1980

|   |
|---|
| <b>1978-1979 Season</b>   |
| Brecht-Cabaret / Bertolt Brecht, Brecht-Kabare, Adaptation: Genco Erkal                 |
| <b>1979-1980 Season</b>   |
| Caucasian Chalk Circle / Bertolt Brecht, Kafkas Tebeşir Dairesi, Translation: Can Yücel |

Table 2: Dostlar Theatre repertoire between 1978 and 1990

|   |
|---|
| <b>1978-1979 Season</b>                                     |
| Tak-Tık / Bertolt Brecht, Director: Rutkay Aziz             |
| <b>1979-1980 Season</b>                                     |
| Oyun Nasıl Oynanmalı / Vasıf Öngören, Director: Rutkay Aziz |
| Ferhat ile Şirin / Nazım Hikmet, Director: Engin Orbey      |
| Kafatası / Nazım Hikmet, Director: Metin Balay              |

Table 3: Ankara Art Theatre repertoire between 1978 and 1980

<sup>113</sup> A brief account of the general tendencies of Turkish Theatre in the 1970s can be found in Ayşegül Yüksel, “Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türk Tiyatrosunun Dünü, Bugünü, Geleceği”, in, **Türk Kültürü Kongresi [5.: 2002: Ankara]** – Ankara, Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Başkanlığı Yayınları, p. 3-23, esp. 9-12

<sup>114</sup> Yavuz Pekman, **Çağdaş Tiyatromuzda Geleneksellik**, MitosBOYUT Yayınları İstanbul, 2002, p. 210

As the tables indicate, while the repertoire of Istanbul State Theatre includes one noteworthy play (*Duruşma*, an adaptation of Kafka's *The Trial* by André Gide and Jean-Louis Barrault) that questions the order and the system in respect to the ponderousness of the state bureaucracy in any society, the choices of Dostlar Theatre and Ankara Art Theatre mainly involve plays and adaptations which seriously interrogate societal and political dynamics, pertaining to Bertolt Brecht and Nazım Hikmet, both of whom can be regarded as oppositional figures within literary history.

In the light of the political and social conditions of the 1970s, or pre-coup Turkey, as it may be called, a comprehensive analysis of the selections of the translated literature within the repertoires of the State Theatres and private theatre companies could display how the dominant ideology and its consequences overwhelmed the art of theatre in the 1980s. Nevertheless, despite the obvious dominance of the state ideology towards the State Theatres, private theatre companies, such as Dostlar Theatre and Ankara Art Theatre continued to stage works which keenly criticised the social order in Turkey.

Below are the tables offering a comparison between the repertoires of Istanbul State Theatre, Dostlar Theatre and Ankara Art Theatre.

|   |                                 |                         |
|---|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>1980-1981 Season</b>                   | Kül Kedisi (Children's Theatre) | Oyunu)                  |
| Kunduz Kürk                               | Barış Gezegeni (Çocuk Oyunu)    | Lysistrata              |
| Küçük Prens (Children's Theatre)          | <b>1982-1983 Season</b>         | <b>1984-1985 Season</b> |
| Kahvede Şenlik Var                        | Rozmersholm                     | Düşüş                   |
| Akümülatörlü Radyo                        | İki Efendinin Uşağı             | Komedi Sanatı           |
| Bir Yaz Gecesi Rüyası                     | Hayaletler Sonatı               | Hüzzam                  |
| Eurydice'nin Elleri                       | Kırmızı Pabuçlar (Çocuk Oyunu)  | Derya Gülü              |
| Yoklar Dağındaki Nar (Children's Theatre) | Gılgameş                        | Kızılderililer          |
| Gölge Ustası                              | <b>1983-1984 Season</b>         | Sevgili Doktor          |
| Truva Savaşı Olmayacak                    | Mikadonun Çöpleri               | Julius Caesar           |
| <b>1981-1982 Season</b>                   | İstanbul Efendisi               | <b>1985-1986 Season</b> |
| Yanlış Yanlış Üstüne                      | Limon                           | Sahibinin Sesi          |
| Rita                                      | Amadeus                         | İlk Yıllar (Roksalan)   |
| Kösem Sultan                              | Küçük Nasreddin (Çocuk          | Ah Şu Gençler           |
|   |                                 | Lokomopüf (Children's   |

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| Theatre)                                     |
| Gül Satardı Melek Hanım                      |
| Toprağı Bol Olsun                            |
| Martı  |
| Kral'la Bilge Tavşan<br>(Children's Theatre) |
| <b>1986-1987 Season</b>                      |
| Gergedan                                     |
| Oyunlarla Yaşayanlar                         |
| Ermış Jeanne                                 |
| Söz Veriyorum                                |
| Cadılar Macbeth'i                            |
| Lodos  |
| Siz Ne Dersiniz? (Children's<br>Theatre)     |
| Tohum ve Toprak                              |
| <b>1987-1988 Season</b>                      |
| Önemli Adam                                  |
| Cimri  |
| İnsan Meier                                  |
| Yedi Kocalı Hürmüz                           |
| Mariana Pineda                               |
| Dört Kız Kardeş                              |
| Hoşu'nun Utancı                              |
| Büyük Miras (Children's<br>Theatre)          |
| Samanyolu                                    |
| İçimizden Biri                               |
| <b>1988-1989 Season</b>                      |
| Oyunun Oyunu                                 |
| Rüzgarlı Kadın                               |
| Soğan  |
| Üç Kuruşluk Opera                            |
| Damdaki Kemancı:                             |

|                                    |
|------------------------------------|
| Anatevka                           |
| Altı Kişi Yazarını Arıyor          |
| Bebek Uykusu                       |
| Köprüdeki Adam                     |
| Canlı Yayın                        |
| Odissinbad (Children's<br>Theatre) |
| Palyaçolar (Children's<br>Theatre) |
| <b>1989-1990 Season</b>            |
| Yaşar Ne Yaşar Ne Yaşamaz          |
| Gardiyan                           |
| Batı Yakasının Hikayesi            |
| Yangın Yerinde Orkideler           |
| Kral Üşümesi                       |
| Sevgili Soyтары                    |
| Ballar Balını Buldum               |

Table 4: Istanbul State Theatre repertoire in the 1980s

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| <b>1980-1981 Season</b>  |
| Hergün Yeni Baştan / Nazım Hikmet-Aziz Nesin-Haldun Taner-Bertolt Brecht, Adaptation: Genco Erkal                          |
| <b>1981-1982 Season</b>  |
| Ağrı Dağı Efsanesi / Yaşar Kemal, Adaptation and Direction: Macit Koper  |
| <b>1983-1984 Season</b>  |
| Galileo Galilei / Bertolt Brecht, Translation: Adalet Cimcoz-Teoman Aktürel-Genco Erkal, Director: Genco Erkal             |
| <b>1984-1985 Season</b>  |
| Barefoot in Athens / Maxwell Anderson, Yalınayak Sokrates, Translation: Mina Urgan, Director: Genco Erkal                  |
| <b>1985-1986 Season</b>  |
| Summer / Edward Bond, Yaz, Translation: Genco Erkal, Director: Genco Erkal   |
| <b>1986-1987 Season</b>  |
| Me, Bertolt Brecht / Bertolt Brecht, Adaptation: Genco Erkal   |
| <b>1987-1988 Season</b>  |
| Puntila and His Man Matti / Bertolt Brecht, Bay Puntila ile Uşağı Matti, Translation: Adalet Cimcoz, Director: Genco Erkal |
| <b>1988-1989 Season</b>  |
| Üzbik Baba / Alfred Jarry, Adaptation: Orhan Duru, Director: Genco Erkal   |
| <b>1989-1990 Season</b>  |
| Merhaba, Adaptation and Direction: Genco Erkal   |
| Largo Desolato / Vaclav Havel, Buruk Ezgi, Translation: Kemal Boztepe-Ülkü Akbaba, Director: Genco Erkal                   |

Table 5: Dostlar Theatre repertoire in the 1980s

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| <b>1980-1981 Season</b>  |
| Hikaye-I Mahmud Betreddin / Mehmet Akan, Director: Mehmet Akan                                     |
| Sınırdaki Duvar / Muzaffer İzgü, Directors: Rutkay Aziz-Yılmaz Onay                                |
| İyi Bir Yurttaş Aranıyor / Ataol Behramoğlu, Director: Rutkay Aziz                                 |
| <b>1981-1982 Season</b>  |
| Rumuz Goncagül / Oktay Arayıcı, Director: Rutkay Aziz  |
| Sihirli Giysi, Adaptation from Andersen: Yaşar Akın, Director: Yaşar Akın                          |
| Little Man, What Now? / Hans Fallada, Küçük Adam N'oldu Sana?, Adapted and Directed by Yılmaz Onay |
| Yaşasın Edebiyat / Sait Faik-Orhan Veli, Presenter: Kerim Afşar                                    |
| <b>1982-1983 Season</b>  |
| Resimli Osmanlı Tarihi / Turgut Özakman, Director: Engin Orbey                                     |
| Country Visitors (Summer People) / Maksim Gorki, Director: Rutkay Aziz                             |
| Rüyadaki Oyuncaklar / Metin Çoşkun, Director: Metin Çoşkun   |
| Aynın Fendi Avcıyı Yendi / Muharrem Buhara, Director: Yaşar Akın                                   |
| <b>1983-1984 Season</b>  |

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| Güneyli Bayan / Bilgesu Erenus, Director: Rutkay Aziz  |
| Galile / Bertolt Brecht, Director: Rutkay Aziz   |
| Taziye / Murathan Mungan, Director: Nurhan Karadağ   |
| Mızıkçı / Ali Meriç, Director: Ali Meriç   |
| <b>1984-1985 Season</b>  |
| Misafir / Bilgesu Erenus, Director: Mehmet Akan  |
| Bir Şehnaz Oyun / Turgut Özakman, Director: Engin Orbey  |
| Bir Ceza Avukatının Anıları / Faruk Eren, Director: Rutkay Aziz  |
| Cesur Aslan ve Sevgi, Adaptation: Yaşar Akın-Ayşe Özçürümez, Director: Yaşar Akın                                |
| <b>1985-1986 Season</b>  |
| Rumuz Goncagül / Oktay Arayıcı, Director: Rutkay Aziz  |
| Nafile Dünya / Oktay Arayıcı, Director: Erol Demiröz   |
| Savaş Oyunu / Sermet Çağan-Yılmaz Onay-Özdemir Nutku, Director: Cezmi Baskın                                     |
| An Enemy of the People / Henrik Ibsen, Bir Halk Düşmanı, Translation: Yılmaz Onay, Director: Rutkay Aziz         |
| <b>1986-1987 Season</b>  |
| Zengin Mutfağı / Vasıf Öngören, Director: Rutkay Aziz  |
| Bu Zamlar Bana Karşı / Yılmaz Onay, Director: Yılmaz Onay  |
| The Wage of Freedom / Emmanuel Robles, Özgürlüğün Bedeli, Director: Altan Gördüm-Cezmi Baskın                    |
| <b>1987-1988 Season</b>  |
| The Shadow of a Gunman / Sean O'Casey, Silahşörün Gölgesi, Director: Rutkay Aziz                                 |
| The Lasts / Maksim Gorki, Sonuncular, Translation: Yılmaz Onay, Director: Rutkay Aziz                            |
| <b>1988-1989 Season</b>  |
| Sacco and Vanzetti / Howard Fast, Sacco ile Vanzetti, Translation: Seçkin Selvi Cılızoğlu, Director: Rutkay Aziz |
| <b>1989-1990 Season</b>  |
| Pırlatan Bal / Aziz Nesin, Director: Yaşar Akın  |
| Yusuf ile Menofis / Nazım Hikmet, Director: Yılmaz Onay  |
| Mefisto / Nazım Hikmet, Director: Rutkay Aziz  |

Table 6: Ankara Art Theatre repertoire in the 1980s

A brief glance at the repertoires of the Istanbul State Theatre, Dostlar Theatre and Ankara Art Theatre in the 1980s reveals that the selection of the texts to be performed differed from each other to a great extent. The basic choices of the Istanbul State Theatre oscillate between the works of children's theatre, and Turkish playwrights, such as Tarık Buğra, Turhan Oflazoğlu, Müge Gürman, and so forth. As far as "the highbrow stuff" what

Eric Bentley terms<sup>115</sup> is concerned, the plays of classic authors, such as Shakespeare, Molière, Henrik Ibsen, August Strindberg, Luigi Pirandello and Carlo Goldoni can be shown as representative examples of the choices of Istanbul State Theatre.<sup>116</sup> With respect to the oppositional figures of the literary world, on the other hand, one cannot help but wonder about the year of the first production of a Brecht play, that is to say, *The Threepenny Opera*, in 1988. With respect to the repertoires of the private theatre companies, on the other hand, their political and aesthetic sensitivity surfaces in the selection of texts to be staged. Still, the two theatre companies differ from each other with regards to the selections of the titles: whilst Dostlar Theatre chiefly focused on the notion of Brechtian theatre and adaptations from the works of prominent Turkish literary figures, such as Nazım Hikmet and Aziz Nesin, Ankara Art Theatre concentrated on the works of Turkish playwrights more than the former, and staged children's theatre productions (e.g. *Ayının Fendi Avcıyı Yendi*). Another interesting point worth mentioning in terms of the differences between the repertoires is the tendency of State Theatres to put on musicals, such as *Yedi Kocalı Hürmüz* and *The West Side Story*. Whereas the productions of State Theatres were entertainment oriented, the productions of Dostlar Theatre and Ankara Art Theatre concentrated on titles which reminded an expression which was then starting to lose its value: Societal responsibility. The most probable factor which impeded State Theatres from staging the works of politically sensitive authors, such as Bertolt Brecht, was the impact of the military regime and the politics of the government following it. In order for one to conceive an entire understanding of the making of the repertoires of a culture in the broadest sense, the 1980 coup and its after-effects in Turkey becomes a primary issue to be discussed.

According to Montesquieu, every event is the fact of a cause and a result linked to each other closely, and what rules a social community are not mere coincidences but exceptional cases which are the consequences of general causes.<sup>117</sup> Looking from this perspective, one can see that the 1980 coup was an outcome of the hectic decades, meaning the 1960s and the 1970s, which witnessed the generous politicization of the state bureaucracy and the most perilous disputes between the left and right wing movements in Turkish history. In order to put an end to these vicissitudes, the Turkish armed forces saw themselves – just like in the case of the previous coups – as the guardian of the state, and abandoned the

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<sup>115</sup> Eric Bentley, *In Search of Theater*, Vintage Books, New York, 1954, p. 4

<sup>116</sup> Needless to say, the productions of these classic authors were quite influential for the evolution of Turkish Theatre's aesthetic values. However, rather than offering an analysis of the titles in aesthetic terms, in what follows the paper will limit itself to the way the titles within the repertoires of the Istanbul State Theatre and private theatre companies in question differ from each other.

<sup>117</sup> Berke Vardar, *Fransız Edebiyatı*, Istanbul, Multilingual, 1998, p. 280

government on the 12<sup>th</sup> of September 1980. What distinguished the 1980 coup from the previous ones was the road it took “*to cure the unhealthy condition of the country.*”<sup>118</sup> While the 1960 and the 1971 coups were mainly interested in rebuilding the constitutional structure of the state, the ultimate goal of the 1980 coup – in addition to restructuring the constitutional framework of the state – was the depoliticisation of the whole society with the purpose of impeding the political and ideological fragmentation and polarization which had had a crucial role in the crisis of pre-coup Turkey.

The basic purposes of the military regime were declared explicitly in the first communiqué as being, “*to preserve the integrity of the country, to restore national union and togetherness, to avert a possible civil war, to re-establish the authority of the state and to eliminate all the factors that prevent the normal functioning of the democratic order.*”<sup>119</sup> Additionally, in his first press conference, General Kenan Evren, who was then the Chairman of the National Security Council, restated these aims clearly by adding another objective to them: “*To establish a civilian government in a reasonable time after concluding the legal preparations.*”<sup>120</sup> The new government – according to the announcement of the militarist regime – would be “*a liberal, democratic, secular based on the rule of law, which would respect human rights and freedoms.*”<sup>121</sup> Indeed, right after the “legal preparations” were concluded, the military government left its place to the ANAP (Motherland Party) government and acted like a hidden manager behind closed doors throughout the decade. Seeing from this perspective, one can observe the effects of the 1980 coup divided into two periods; the first is the intervention period between 1980 and 1983, and the second is the ANAP government period between 1983 and 1990.

In one of his press conferences in 1981, Kenan Evren likened the military coup to a “*medical treatment.*”<sup>122</sup> Since – without a doubt – any sort of medical treatment brings pain with itself, the 1980 takeover also comprised pain but with one significant difference: At the beginning of the decade, Turkish society saw an abundant numbers of executions, suppressions of freedom of thought and expression, censorship in almost every field of

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<sup>118</sup> Nurdan Gürbilek, **Vitrinde Yaşamak**, İstanbul, Metis Yayınları, 2001, p. 70

<sup>119</sup> İhsan Dağı, “Democratic Transition in Turkey, 1980-83: The Impact of European Diplomacy,” **Middle Eastern Studies**, Vol. 32, No. 2 (Apr. 1996), p. 124-141, p. 125 Available: < <http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/dagi.htm> >

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., p. 125

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., p. 125. It should be noted here that the 1980 coup also had other plans (i.e. such as reformulating the working conditions, educating the administrators of managing companies in the context of National Security, and so forth) which it could not manage to realize. A comprehensive analysis regarding this subject can be found in Murat Belge, **12 Yıl Sonra 12 Eylül**, Birikim Yayınları, İstanbul, 1992, p. 31-38

<sup>122</sup> Nurdan Gürbilek, **Vitrinde Yaşamak**, İstanbul, Metis Yayınları, 2001, p. 70

communication.<sup>123</sup> One of the most important “contributions” of the military regime in the sense of reshaping the constitutional order of the state reveals itself in the 64<sup>th</sup> section of the constitutional law: “*The State protects the artistic activities and the artist. The State takes the necessary measures in order to protect artworks and the artist, and to utilize, to support and to spread the love of art [to the society].*”<sup>124</sup> Looking from the view of the constitutional right of an individual, one can see how the State determines the right to benefit from the very word and act of art<sup>125</sup>. This added section to the constitution also gets the complete control of art and thereby makes it a servant of the military regime in terms of spreading their ideology to the society. In order to extend further the principles of the military regime, and with the purpose of “supporting” art, all the governments of the decade offered generous financial assistance to the State Theatres for the sake of “spreading the love of art”. Within this context, one can see how the centralist structure of the State Theatres of the 1970s took an obvious form in the beginning of the 1980s.

In 1983, however, when the military rule “allowed” a civil government to take its place, this depressing atmosphere started to disappear gradually (to say the least, most of the measures were started to be taken in less apparent forms after the ANAP government). The liberal discourse of Turgut Özal, the Prime Minister of the period, who introduced the “free market economy” to Turkey, led the way for the emergence of consumption culture, and with this approach, the ANAP government, “*responded to most of the desires of Turkish people who wanted to strike it rich.*”<sup>126</sup> Especially in the second half of the decade, as a result of this free market economy discourse, money and wealth were determined as the units of measurement in every field of society. In this period, Turkey “*became an admired state in the global world in which every single aspect of life determined by a central power.*”<sup>127</sup> The repercussions of this policy became apparent in cultural products and, as a matter of fact, in the second half of the 1980s enjoyment and entertainment took the place of societal responsibility, and unconscious consumption reached its peak in Turkey. The consumption

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<sup>123</sup> As regards to the severe censorship implemented by the military regime towards the press, see Veli Özdemir, **12 Eylül Darbesi ve Özgürlüğün Bedeli ARAYIŞ**, Ankara, Ümit Yayıncılık, 2004, p. 78-82, and for the documents related to the decisions of the Ankara Martial Law Commandership, see *ibid.*, p. 133-135.

<sup>124</sup> **Cumhuriyetin 75. Yılında Türk Tiyatrosu**, İstanbul, MitosBOYUT Yayınları, 1999, p. 13, emphasis added

<sup>125</sup> Even though this added section may suggest a positive approach of the government to the artistic activities in the first place, more attention should be paid to the state applications in the practical field rather than the constitutional field, for a better understanding of the state ideology behind the theatre repertoires of the decade. It is not surprising to see at this point of discussion that the applications of the governments of the decade regarding the private theatre companies in the practical field contradict with this so-called positive approach. For a brief account on the constitutional changes carried out by the military government in the early 1980s, see Ayşegül Yüksel, **Sahnedeki İzdüşümler**, MitosBOYUT Yayınları, İstanbul, 2000, p. 75

<sup>126</sup> Murat Belge, **12 Yıl Sonra 12 Eylül**, Birikim Yayınları, İstanbul, 1992, p. 56

<sup>127</sup> Yavuz Pekman, **Çağdaş Tiyatromuzda Geleneksellik**, MitosBOYUT Yayınları İstanbul, 2002, p. 215

culture not only erased the suppressive effects of the military takeover but also offered artificial freedom to people. In order to meet the needs of this cultural climate, the theatre translations and productions of the decade opted to satisfy the daily taste of the individual. The norm was amusement and Turkish society was really attached to this situation.

In fact, the world was really attached to this amusement culture in the 1980s. During this decade a serious move from high culture towards popular culture realized itself. In other words, as a consequence of the development of postmodernism, the established theories of modernism concerning the notion of art were seriously questioned and, as a matter of fact, postmodern movements emphasizing the artificiality of the distinctions between “high culture” and “popular culture” became apparent in architecture, literature, theatre, plastic arts and in other disciplines. These tendencies were benevolently accepted, especially in cultural field, and as a result the “high culture” of the remote past gradually lost its dignity. The modernist aesthetic, writes John Docker, “*defined itself by its opposition not only to what it saw as bourgeois culture, but to mass culture and entertainment*”<sup>128</sup>, and when amusement and entertainment became the aesthetic norm to evaluate the cultural products in the bourgeois and capitalistic Western world, the aesthetic values of modernism were dismissed right away. The rudiments of the postmodern society of the Western world were entertainment, leisure and consumption. In order to found such a culture, even the most radical social groups or ideas pertaining to a particular subculture of a society were used in fields, such as advertisement and fashion.<sup>129</sup> In this respect, one can see how the rise of popular culture within the global scale and the rise of the consumption culture in Turkey are concurrent phenomena. The social process and tendencies of Turkey and the world leading to these phenomena correspond to each other. Especially the foregrounding of the “free market economy” and the neo-liberal applications can be shown as representative examples of the dominant tendencies of the decade. In the 1980s, whereas Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher were the leading figures of these policies in the Anglo-Saxon world, Turgut Özal was the director of the 1980s show in Turkey. Indeed, it is not surprising to observe the extraordinary interest towards arabesque, a kind of contemporary Turkish music containing elements derived from Arabian music and regarded as an element of “low-culture” due to the way it dramatizes the people who migrate from the rural cities of Turkey to the big cities of the country, such as Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir, both in the government level and social level in the 1980s. From the vantage point of the prevalent tendencies of the decade, one can infer

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<sup>128</sup> John Docker, **Postmodernism and Popular Culture**, Cambridge University Press, UK, 1996, p. 246

<sup>129</sup> Nurdan Gürbilek, **Vitrinde Yaşamak**, Istanbul, Metis Yayınları, 2001, p. 31

that, the rise of arabesque, or in Nurdan Gürbilek's words, "*the return of the oppressed*"<sup>130</sup> was an outcome of cultural and political liberalism under Özal.

Even though every type of freedom was strictly limited throughout the 1980s, Turkish people felt themselves free like they had never been before, or, in Nurdan Gürbilek's words, "*the pleasure principle of the society was to enjoy the freedom of consumption, and to release themselves from the establishments of the state.*"<sup>131</sup> This freedom of consumption blurred the line of demarcations between the high-art and the low-art to such a degree that the meaningful theatre productions fell out of favour. In terms of theatre productions, "*melodramas, comedies and quasi-splendid musicals which featured abundant number of stars*"<sup>132</sup> started to prevail among the repertoires of the State Theatres and many private theatre companies. In spite of the "free" climate created by the ANAP government, productions comprising even a slight threat on the State were still being censored and prohibited. During this decade, "*in order to evade the censorship of the government, Turkish playwrights and some of the private theatre companies' were auto censoring their own works.*"<sup>133</sup> Moreover, as Ayşegül Yüksel stated, "*the government preferred to see the productions that could make the people laugh and divert, and rumours around Ankara have it how one of the ministers of the ANAP government advised the general manager of the State Theatres that, instead of staging depressing things, staging comic plays which could put a smile on the face of the spectator [would be a better step to take]*"<sup>134</sup> for the evolution of art in Turkey. In the light of this statement, one can see how the centralist structure of the State Theatres echoes itself in the selection of the titles in the repertoires. As the tables in the previous pages pointed out, the repertoire of the Istanbul State Theatre mainly based on titles (e.g. musicals, comedies, melodramas) aimed at entertaining people. This aim was so evident that it even surfaced itself on the children's theatre productions. While the children's theatre productions in the previous decades – particularly in the 1960s and the 1970s – had included themes of societal and political dynamics of Turkey, the mentioned productions of the 1980s merely consisted of "*good hearted people and decent characters who dedicated themselves for the sake of humanity.*"<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> Ibid., p. 102

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., p. 15

<sup>132</sup> Ayşegül Yüksel, **Sahnedeki İzdüşümler**, MitosBOYUT Yayınları, İstanbul, 2000, p. 75

<sup>133</sup> Ayşegül Yüksel, "Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türk Tiyatrosunun Dünü, Bugünü, Geleceği", in, **Türk Kültürü Kongresi [5.: 2002: Ankara]** – Ankara, Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Başkanlığı Yayınları, p. 13

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., p. 13

<sup>135</sup> Nihal Kuyumcu, **Çocuk Tiyatrosu**, MitosBOYUT Yayınları, İstanbul, p. 33. For the evolution of children's theatre dating from the Constitutional Period until contemporary times, see *ibid.*, p. 24-34. Additionally, Tekin Özertem, **Türkiye'de Çocuk Tiyatrosu**, Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları Eskişehir, 1992, p. 74-79 provides the list

Under these circumstances, in order to meet the requirements of the popular demand, most of the private theatre companies – and therefore, their productions – started to neglect politically sensitive works in other words, they followed the road which was determined by the dominant ideology of the society. However, art has a unique structure which bestows an autonomous feature upon it. Since a characteristic as such contradicts with limitations and absolute truths, art in authoritarian regimes finds itself in a precarious situation. Although Turkey has a democratic regime, the country has witnessed – and is still witnessing – autocratic measures which were/are being taken for the sake of the permanence of the State. In the words of Zehra İpşiroğlu, “*what lies in the origin of art is suspicion, revolt, independent and critical thinking.*”<sup>136</sup> And in the case of the absence of independent and critical thinking, the powers that can exercise the dominant ideology of a particular society can easily form individuals – according to their system of beliefs and principles – even in a very short period of time. In the light of the political movements (either in terms of a military takeover or the forming of a so-called civil government which can employ the dominant ideology) one can see how two types of individuals – both of which – have many things in common (e.g. an individual who accepts everything without questioning, living just for the sake of the moment, etc) were formed in the 1980s. Yet they were differentiated from each other in one perspective: While the former type of the individual formed in the first part of the decade, namely between 1980 and 1985, was shaped in accordance with the oppressive approach of the regime towards society, the latter type moulded in the second half of the decade was characterised in conformity with the consumption culture which was introduced by the civil government. Still, the relationship between these two strategies which were undertaken by the governments (military government and the ANAP government) was dialectical: the facts which were suppressed by the former surfaced in the strategy of the latter, and the things that were eased by the latter were oppressed by the methods of the former.<sup>137</sup>

Another meaningful point worth debating is the 1980s’ so-called positive aspect in which the social change took place. The term hybridity, as proposed by Nilüfer Göle<sup>138</sup>, effaced the limits of perimeters within the boundaries of different world views, thus allowing each social group to speak their ideas in a relatively free way as compared to the beginning

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of the titles of the children’s theatre productions pertaining to the Istanbul State Theatre between 1935 and 1979 which offers a comparison with the selections of the children’s theatre productions of the Istanbul State Theatre in the 1980s.

<sup>136</sup> Zehra İpşiroğlu, **Eleştirinin Eleştirisi**, MitosBOYUT Yayınları, İstanbul, 1998, p. 23

<sup>137</sup> See, Nurdan Gürbilek, **Vitrinde Yaşamak**, İstanbul, Metis Yayınları, 2001, p. 12, 102, 103

<sup>138</sup> Nilüfer Göle, **Melez Desenler**, Metis Yayınları, 2002, İstanbul

years of the decade. This social change, in which individuals belonging to different subcultures (i.e. Islamic groups, left and right currents, and so on) of the society found the chance to express their ideas, has a close association with the economic discourse of the ANAP government. In a cultural atmosphere that emphasized the significance of the present tense, these social movements had the very chance to develop an autonomous feature which, in consequence, enabled these social groups to fortify their stances against the official/dominant point of view of the government. The language in this free way of expressing ideas, however, went through a series of changes in accordance with the consumption culture developed in the 1980s. During the decade, the use of expressions in the Turkish language was impaired as well.<sup>139</sup> This statement regarding the deterioration of the language can be best explored in relation to the eradication of the borderlines between the language of high culture and low culture. This extirpation regarding the language realized itself in the language of the magazine culture which exposed the life of the ordinary individual to view. Looking from this perspective – and taking into account the dominant formats of the 2000s television culture in Turkey – one can see how the seeds of this deteriorated culture had been planted in the 1980s.

In spite of this consumptive cultural climate of the 1980s, Dostlar Theatre and Ankara Art Theatre continued to stage politically sensitive plays, as their repertoires documented earlier. As far as the repertoire of Dostlar Theatre is concerned, the name of Brecht suggests itself as a representative example showing the political stance of the theatre company. In addition to the Brechtian notion of theatre, Dostlar Theatre repertoire includes adaptations from oppositional figures of Turkish literary system, such as Nazım Hikmet and Aziz Nesin. In the Ankara Art Theatre repertoire, on the other hand, the dominance of Turkish playwrights can be observed. Even though such a difference within the repertoires of the two theatre companies may suggest Ankara Art Theatre's tendency towards staging Turkish plays and therefore giving a say to Turkish playwrights more than the other theatre companies in the first place, the adaptations of Dostlar Theatre from renowned Turkish authors also offered a chance for the rereading of the works of those important figures of Turkish literary history. In this respect, both of the mentioned theatre companies' worthwhile contributions to Turkish Theatre in the hectic atmosphere of the 1980s can be regarded as a resistance against the consumption culture which lead to a serious deterioration in cultural aspects in the long run.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> Ibid., p. 9

<sup>140</sup> For the reviews and criticisms of different staging approaches of Dostlar Theatre and Ankara Art Theatre on Bertolt Brecht's *Galileo Galilei*, see Zehra İpşiroğlu, **2000'li Yıllara Doğru Tiyatro**, , MitosBOYUT Yayınları,

In terms of Translation Studies, a systemic and descriptive approach to the study of the repertoires of State Theatres and private theatre companies might serve better in judging the function of translated plays in the 1980s. The systems approach, as proposed by André Lefevere<sup>141</sup>, for instance, can set forth a new insight with respect to the translated theatre texts within the Turkish literary system in the referred decade. Lefevere's theories become quite profitable when one thinks of the scholar's concept of undifferentiated and differentiated patronages.<sup>142</sup> According to Lefevere, "*patronage is undifferentiated when its three components, the ideological, the economic, and the status components, are all dispensed by one and same patron [...] patronage is differentiated, on the other hand, when economic success is relatively independent of ideological factors [...]*"<sup>143</sup> Regarding the theories of Lefevere, the 1980s Turkey can be taken as a starting point due to the fact that the decade comprises both differentiated and undifferentiated patronages. Although the beginning of the decade saw undifferentiated patronage owing to the strict measures taken in every aspect of the country, the second half of the 1980s witnessed the differentiated patronage of the ANAP government as an outcome of its "free market economy discourse". Yet the presence of the military regime can be felt throughout the country. In this sense, the decade might suggest itself as a specific example because of the hidden existence of undifferentiated patronage within differentiated patronage.

Taking as a point of commencement the fruitful observation of Zehra İpşiroğlu regarding the translations of Bertolt Brecht in Turkey<sup>144</sup>, a systemic and descriptive approach to the translated theatre texts within the repertoires of State Theatres and private theatre companies, for instance, Dostlar Theatre and Ankara Art Theatre, as proposed during the course of this study, can serve as an explanatory tool for the manipulation and usage of the art of the theatre as an ideological instrument used by the ruling powers of the 1980s Turkey. According to Mary Tymoczko, "*descriptive translation studies set translation practices in time and, thus, by extension, in politics, ideology, economics, culture.*"<sup>145</sup> In this sense, a systemic and a descriptive study on the practice of translation in the 1980s within the framework proposed in the preceding pages would shed light on the thematic changes and new tendencies in theatre translations, and thus will bring to view the possible economic,

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Istanbul, 1998, p. 96-109, and Ayşegül Yüksel, **Sahnedeki İzdüşümler**, MitosBOYUT Yayınları, İstanbul, 2000, p. 99-100

<sup>141</sup> André Lefevere, **Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame**, London and New York: Routledge, 1992

<sup>142</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 11-26

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17

<sup>144</sup> Zehra İpşiroğlu, **Tiyatroda Devrim**, Çağdaş Yayınları, İstanbul 1988, p. 140-143

<sup>145</sup> Maria Tymoczko, **Translation in a Postcolonial Context**, St. Jerome, UK, 1999, p. 25, emphasis original

cultural and ideological reasons which lie beneath the tendency of the State Theatres to stage melodramas, comedies, and musicals. In doing so, a study of this kind could enrich the theoretical background of the study of translations in the 1980s.

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### **Özet:**

*1980’ler, dünya üzerinde “seçkin” kültürden “popüler” kültüre doğru yönelişin – edebiyattan müziğe, mimariden sosyal bilimlere postmodern dalganın yükselmeye başlamasının – belki de kendini en açıkça hissettirdiği dönemlerden biridir. “Seçkin” kültür ile “popüler” kültür*

arasındaki ayrımın yapaylığını vurgulayan, modernitenin bir çok değerinin alışına geldiğini ve boş zaman anlayışı içinde bireylerin giderek tekil arayışları içinde çalışmaktan ziyade eğlenceye yöneleceklerine ilişkin değerlendirmelerin, Batı dünyasının post-endüstriyel toplumunda eğlence ve tüketimin ön plana çıkmasında önemli bir role sahip olduğu görülmektedir. Popüler kültürün küresel ölçekte yükselişi karşısında seçkin kültürün saygınlığını yitirisi Türkiye’de hemen hemen eşzamanlı gözlenen bir olgudur. Bu durum, Türk Tiyatrosu’nda 1980’lerde gözlemlenen durgunluğun en kayda değer nedenlerinden biri olarak yorumlanabilmektedir. İlk bakışta, 1980’ler Türkiye’sine damgasını vuran en önemli olayın 12 Eylül Darbesi olduğu görülmektedir. Bununla birlikte, dönemin askeri hükümeti tarafından uygulanan kitlelerin depolitizasyon sürecini dikkate alan bir okuma, darbeden ziyade, darbenin doğurduğu sonuçların ülkedeki sanat anlayışı üzerinde daha büyük etkileri olduğunu ortaya çıkarmaktadır. Döneme günümüz açısından bakıldığında ise, söz konusu dönemde toplumca el üzerinde tutulan “yıldız”ların yer aldığı melodram, komedi ve müzikaller, 1980-1990 arasında gerek askeri gerek de “sivil” yönetimlerin uyguladığı bireylerin “uysallaştırılma” sürecinde sanat pratiğinin bir manipülasyon aracı olarak kullanılmasının açık bir örneğidir. Bu tartışmayı çıkış noktası olarak alan makale, devlet tiyatroları (İstanbul Devlet Tiyatrosu) ile özel tiyatroların (Dostlar Tiyatrosu ve Ankara Sanat Tiyatrosu) 1980-1990 arasındaki repertuarlarında devlet ideolojisinin izlerini ortaya çıkarmayı amaçlamaktadır. Devlet tiyatrolarının 1970’lerde kendini hissettirmeye başlayan merkeziyetçi yapısının, 1980’lerde daha da belirgin bir hal alması ile kurumun oyun seçimlerinde komedi ve müzikallere – önceki dönemlerle kıyaslandığında – daha fazla yer verdiğini gösteren çalışma, bu durum karşısında Dostlar Tiyatrosu ile Ankara Sanat Tiyatrosu repertuarlarındaki oyunların dönemde önemini yitirmeye başlayan bir kavram halini alan “sosyal sorumluluk” bağlamında belirgin bir çizgiyi koruma çabasında olduklarını tartışmaktadır. Yazıda tartışılan bir diğer husus da, 1980 ile 1990 yılları arasındaki hükümetlerin, farklı yollardan – askeri yönetimin baskı ve sindirme, ANAP yönetiminin ise görünüşte vaad ettiği özgürlük söylemi ile – toplumu “tekleştirmiş” olmalarıdır. Bu “tekleştirme” sürecinde özel tiyatroların oyun seçimlerindeki tutumlarına ilişkin tahlillerde bulunan çalışmanın bir başka hedefi de, 1980’lerdeki tiyatro repertuarlarındaki çeviri eserlerin dönemin kültür dizgesinde nasıl bir yere sahip olduğunu ortaya çıkaracak, dönemdeki çevirilerin hangi ekonomik, ideolojik ve kültürel koşullar altında gerçekleştirildiğini irdelenecek betimleyici çeviri çalışmaları için kuramsal zemin hazırlamaktır.