ANDRÉ LEFEVERE AND TRANSLATION AS A REWRITING PROCESS: THE CANONIZATION OF BERTOLT BRECHT IN THE ANGLO-SAXON WORLD

Burç İdem DİNÇEL[*]

Translation, probably one of the most complicated facts in human history, offers the very chance for individuals to build bridges between different cultures thanks to the messages, elements, literary and artistic components it conveys from one culture to another. In this respect, translation can be understood as a genuine form of cultural human action. However, this cultural aspect of translation has been neglected throughout the history of translation research due to the fact that translation has been treated as a sub-discipline of (applied) linguistics and literary studies by scholars. As a result, translation has been mainly concerned with questions, such as translatability, faithfulness, accuracy, and equivalence. Even though the questions mentioned above have an enormous importance within the boundaries of the field, the newly emerging discipline ought to have embraced the other aspects of translation which had been disregarded before.

The decades of the 1970s and the 1980s have witnessed the untiring efforts of the development and birth of "Translation Studies" as an autonomous discipline. 1976 Leuven Colloquium on Literature and Translation brought theorists from Israel and the Low Countries together and allowed these scholars the opportunity to share their studies with the other experts of translation. The proceeding research which has been carried out in the subsequent years after the Leuven conference played a vital role in the evolution of Translation Studies as an autonomous discipline. The Leuven seminar not only paved the way for the emergence of the discipline, but also strengthened the idea of translation as a crucial element of interaction between cultures in the decade of the 1970s. One of the most important contributions to this seminar was the participation of the Israeli scholar Itamar Even-Zohar with a paper entitled *Translated Literature within the Literary Polysystem* which has launched new debates within the realm of the recently evolving field. In addition to the discussions the study has set forth, the concept of (poly)systems theory has become the focus of attention. In the light of the opinions suggested by Itamar Even-Zohar and other scholars during the Leuven seminar, new approaches have been developed by translation theorists such as, Gideon Toury, Theo

---

[*] *Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Çeviribilim Bölümü Yüksek Lisans Öğrencisi*

Hermans, Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere within the framework of systemic and descriptive approaches to the study and practice of translation.[1]

A systemic and descriptive approach to the study of translation would surely open the gate to further scrutinies regarding the cultural aspect of translation. Seen from the cultural perspective, though, one can without difficulty judge that in order to comprehend an entire culture, merely detailed inquiries of translation/s –no matter how precise they are going to be for the evaluation of a foreign culture– will by themselves not provide adequate data. The analysis of translation/s should be nourished with the examinations of other types of writings (i.e., anthologies, reviews, criticisms, commentaries, historiographies, and productions of reference works) which constitute the image of a foreign author in a target culture. This gap which can be found in the study of cultural interaction through the means of translation was filled by André Lefevere. In his studies, Lefevere has taken this systemic approach one step further by using the term "rewriting".

Rewritings can be found in two forms in the literary system as defined by Lefevere: The first, being the obvious types of rewritings, namely the translations, and the second, being the less obvious ones, to wit; criticisms, historiographies and any other form of reference works. Seen from this perspective, rewritings stand for all factors related to the constitution of the image of a writer and/or a work of literature in a target culture. A meticulous reading of this definition, on the other hand, exposes to view the other constituents (such as, ideological factors, dominant powers, and current aesthetics of a target society) which play a vital role in the formation of a culture. All rewritings, *"whatever their intention, reflect a certain ideology and a poetics and as such manipulate literature to function in a given society in a given way."*[2] In this context, rewriting refers to a social phenomenon comprising the controlling powers of a certain society. It can be inferred here that Lefevere's main interest lies both in the conveying of the image of a foreign author to a target culture and that of controlling mechanism/s which lead to the possible change/s of the foreign image in a literary system. Prior to his development of the concept of system, Lefevere has focused on the notion and the function/s of rewriting in a literary system.

Taking into account the fact that the very word "ideology" represents an order of ideas and ideals forming the basis of an economic or political theory and at the same time

---

[1] Cf. Susan Bassnett, **Translation Studies**, London-New York: Routledge, 2004, pp. 1-4, Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere (eds.), **Constructing Cultures**, Multilungual Matters, Clevedon, 1998, pp. 123-128
[2] Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere (eds.), **Translation, History and Culture**, Cassell, London, 1995, p. ix

symbolizing the body of beliefs or principles pertaining to an individual or a social group,[3] rewritings can possibly act as an agent on behalf of a person or organization in a society as well. Consequently, rewritings can –by their very definition– not be innocent. From a positive perspective, though, rewritings, thus translations too, may play the decisive role for the evolution of a society by introducing new thoughts, artistic, and literary components. For instance, *"the hexameter was introduced into German poetry through the Homer translation of Johann Heinrich Voss. John Hookham Frere's translations of Luigi Pulci reintroduced ottava rima into English literature, where it was soon picked up by Byron and masterfully used in Don Juan."*[4]

In spite of these positive aspects in the development of cultures; translations have generally been used to manipulate the literary fame of a foreign author for the sake of the dominant ideological or poetological currents of a particular culture. This manipulation can be best observed in the case of refractions, –another term of Lefevere– which has a close connection with his concept of rewriting. Refraction, writes Lefevere:

"Denotes the rewriting of texts (the production of plays) in order to make them acceptable for a new audience. In the process, virtually every feature of the original may be changed, or else very little may be changed. Changes will usually fall under three categories: a change of the language in which the original is written, with its concomitant socio-cultural context, a change of the ideology of the original (i.e., its 'word view' in the widest, not just the political sense of the word) and a change of the poetics of the original (i.e., the presuppositions as to what is, or is not, literature that can be seen to have guided the author of the original, whether he/she follows them or rebels against them)"[5]

Just like Itamar Even-Zohar, who introduced the concept of a literary polysystem[6] into the realm of Translation Studies, André Lefevere took the description of the Russian formalists with respect to literature and systems as a starting point for his theoretical study. Prior to his theoretical analysis Lefevere states the fact that, *"the system acts as a series of*

---

[3] Michael Rundell (ed. in chief), **Macmillan English Dictionary**, International Student Edition, Macmillan Education Ltd., UK, 2002, p. 710
[4] André Lefevere, **Translating Literature, Practice and Theory in a Comparative Literature Context**, Second Edition, the Modern Language Association of America, 1994, p. 124

[5] André Lefevere, "Refraction – Some observations on the Occasion of Wole Soyinka's Opera Wonyosi", in Ortrun Skerrit-Zuber (ed.), **Page to Stage, Theatre as Translation**, Amsterdam/Rodopi, 1984, p. 192
[6] See, Even-Zohar Itamar, "The Position of Translated Literature Within the Literary Polysystem", in James S. Holmes, José Lambert, Raymond van den Broeck (eds.), **Literature and Translation: New Perspectives in Literary Studies**, Leuven:ACCO, 1978, pp. 117-127, Even-Zohar Itamar, "Polysystem Theory", **Poetics Today**, Fall 1979, pp. 287-310

'constraints' in the fullest sense of the words, on the reader, writer and rewriter",[7] and traces the reasons of these "constraints" in the definition of the Russian formalists of (literary) system. According to the Formalists, the literary system and the other systems pertaining to a particular social system interact in an *"interplay among subsystems determined by the logic of the culture to which they belong."*[8] The main reason of these series of "constraints" imposed on the erudite members of the society –in the point of view of Lefevere– lies in the mechanism which controls the logic of the culture.

In accordance with Lefevere's theory, the above mentioned constraints emerge from the double control factor mechanism of a system. One factor regulates the literary system mainly from the inside and is represented by professionals who are responsible for the poetics of a society. Another procures the literary system chiefly from the outside and ensures the relation between literature and the other components of the social system surrounding it. Dominant powers of a social system are a representative example of this second factor. In this context, the double control factor's twofold function in a social system can be explained in a broader sense: The powers, being the second factor, impose the parameters within which the professionals try to control the literary system from the inside. The rudiments of this control, patronage and poetics are thus displayed in every rewriting.

Patronage, probably the most efficient word to describe the second control factor in a general sense, alludes to *"mean something like the powers (persons, institutions) that can further or hinder the reading, writing and rewriting of literature."* [9] Acting as a regulatory unit within the system and comprising, powerful individuals, political parties, the media, institutions and the like, patronage seeks to find a way for the literary system's accordance with the rest of the society. Patronage consists of three components: The first one being the ideological component, determines what the relation between literature and other social systems is supposed to be, the second one, namely the economic component which enables the patron to pledge the (re)writer's livelihood, and the third one, that is to say, the status component, making it possible for the (re)writer to obtain a certain position in the social system. In case of all the indicated components' dispensation around one and the same patron, the patronage is regarded as undifferentiated, if these components do not depend on each other, the patronage is considered to be differentiated patronage. Whereas the French culture,

---

[7] André Lefevere, **Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame**, London and New York: Routledge, 1992, pp. 12-13

[8] Ibid, p. 14

[9] Ibid, p. 15

as it was established during the reign of Louis the XIVth (1643-1715), can be seen as a typical example of an undifferentiated patronage, the publishing houses or political social institutions of the capitalistic societies, can be shown as a representative example of a differentiated patronage.

As far as the first rudiment of the double control mechanism is concerned, the very word poetics is suggestive of its precise meaning. Poetics represented by professionals (i.e. critics, experts, instructors, translators, and rewriters) who are responsible for the aesthetics of a society, is composed of two components. The first one of these components is the inventory component (such as genre, certain symbols, characters, and prototypical situations). The second component of poetic is the functional one, which is prone to ideological influences from outside the literary system and determines the role of literature in a society.

In addition to these basic series of constraints, Lefevere states two more restrictions on the translator which merit mentioning. The first one of these supplemental constraints is the universe of discourse and it stands for the subject matter of the source text, the objects, traditions and creeds it gives an account of, which may be disagreeable to the senses of the target society,[10] and the second one, the situation of source and target languages themselves which Lefevere expressively places at the bottom of the list he postulates. In terms of Translation Studies, this attitude of Lefevere is quite significant, due to the fact that it demonstrates the "lese majesty" stance of the scholars in favour of a systemic and a descriptive approach to the study and practice of translation, as opposed to the linguistic oriented ones whose orthodoxies were/are dominating the very word/action translation. Throughout the history of translation, in other words, in the process of reformulation of the codes of a source language in a target language, certain rules emerging from the linguistic aspect of the understanding of translation were observed. According to Lefevere,

> *"These rules were long thought to be eternal and unchanging, centring mainly on fidelity or any number of its synonyms; in recent years most scholars writing in the field of translation studies have come to accept that such rules are mainly imposed by those people of flesh and blood who commission the translation, which is then made by other people of flesh and blood (not boxes and arrows) in concrete situations, with a given aim in mind."[11]*

This clearly indicates that rewritings, or accurately speaking, translations, cannot be analyzed without taking into account the factors which the scholar regards as patrons, literary experts, professionals, critics, institutions, political parties, ideology and poetics which control

---

[10] Cf. Ibid, pp. 87-97

[11] André Lefevere, "Composing the Other", in Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi (eds.), **Post-Colonial Translation**, London-New York: Routledge, 1999, p. 75

the literary system along with the process of publicizing of any type of literature within a social system.

What makes Lefevere's theory more significant is the fact that the scholar is in support of a dynamic approach to the systems thinking. The constraints which are being imposed on the (re)writers of a society are not absolute restrictions and they are open to change. This feature not only bestows a dynamic function (in the same manner as other theories) on the systems approach in Translation Studies but also allows the opportunity for one to build bridges between different disciplines by pondering, or even applying, this fruitful framework to other fields of studies.

Theatrical System

A theatrical system, any theatrical system, by its very nature is a conglomerate of sub-systems, such as specific theatre currents pertaining to a particular society, dramaturgy, staging, and so forth. In this sense, a theatrical system may resemble the literary system occupying the central position in Lefevere's theory. Even though the phantasms of the two systems have the same direction or tendency, they differentiate from each other in the spectacular dimension. What distinguishes a theatrical system from a literary system is the fact that, the former system comprises more spectacular components (e.g. dramaturgy, staging, sound and light usage, and so on), and each of them has its own anticipations, worries, expectations and choices, and as a matter of fact, there will be a lot of rewriters who will get involved during the course of a production of a play in a theatrical system when compared with a literary system. Seen from the perspective of translation, one can easily comprehend that the translation of a foreign text will have to go through a series of trials before it will be accepted for staging by the people who "commission" the play. The rewriting process of a translation starts just after this phase of trials,[12] and that is exactly the point where the rewriters step in during the process of the production of a play. Dramaturges, actors, playwrights, stage directors, sound and light technicians, and even dress designers, all of them, rewrite the translated text in their own terms.

---

[12] The word trial is used here in its standard lexical definition, hence, it should not be taken as reflecting the special sense Antoine Berman grants to it, see Antoine Berman, "Translation and the Trials of the Foreign" trans. Lawrence Venuti, in Lawrence Venuti (ed.), **The Translation Studies Reader**, London-New York: Routledge, 2000, pp. 284-297, esp. 286-87

According to Sirkku Aaltonen, *"theatrical systems are not rigid constructions but living organisms whose edges constantly merge into other systems. They respond to discourses from their surrounding contexts, often also actively taking part in creating them."*[13] Seen from the point of view of this statement, one can clearly discern that theatrical systems and literary systems resemble each other to a great extent. Yet, as stated above, a theatrical system includes a complex network of sub-systems varying from those of a literary one which deserve to be taken into consideration in the phase of an assessment of a foreign author. In this respect, two fruitful studies (one, written in 1982,[14] and the other one, which can also be esteemed as an extended version from the perspective of the universe of discourse of the former study[15]) which serve to the purpose of a copious evaluation of the theatrical system of a given society and the work/s of a foreign author have been carried out by André Lefevere during the 1980s and 1990s. In both of these studies, the German playwright and theatre theorist Bertolt Brecht, and his play *Mother Courage and Her Children* were selected as a point of commencement by Lefevere.

Lefevere's choice of Bertolt Brecht is quite significant in terms of providing a new insight within the realm of Translation Studies because it points out the crucial role of rewritings –together with their writers– in a socio-cultural system. Furthermore, by using the very term "cultural capital" and taking Brechtian plays as masterpieces of a cultural capital,[16] Lefevere invites a (re)comparison of the text typology offered by the German translation scholar Katharina Reiss in the beginning of the 1970s. Katharina Reiss, who is mostly celebrated with her functionalist approach to the study and practice of translation, has been very influential in focusing attention on the function of text both in the context of the original and in the context of the situation that demands a translation. By regarding the text as the unit of translation, and seeing it as a product of a given culture as an attempt at communication with a foreign culture, Katharina Reiss has set forth the notion of functional equivalence. The functional equivalence pursued by the text type was one of the most important contributions of Katharina Reiss to the study and practice of translation. However, the applicability of her text classification to the practical field of translation –particularly to the domain of literary translation– was open to debate.[17] Text typologies, according to Lefevere, *"draw an*

---

[13] Sirkku Aaltonen, **Time-Sharing on Stage**, Multilungual Matters, Clevedon, 2000, pp. 32-33
[14] André Lefevere, "Mother Courage's Cucumbers, Text, system and refraction in a theory of literature", (1982), in Lawrence Venuti (ed.), **The Translation Studies Reader**, London-New York: Routledge, 2000, pp. 233-249
[15] André Lefevere, "Acculturating Bertolt Brecht", in Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere (eds.), **Constructing Cultures**, Multilungual Matters, Clevedon, 1998, pp. 109-122
[16] Ibid, p. 109
[17] Akşit Göktürk, **Çeviri: Dillerin Dili**, Yapı Kredi Yayınları, Istanbul, 2002, p. 85

unwarrantedly sharp line between 'literary' and 'nonliterary' texts. They seem to postulate the existence of an ethereal verbal construction that uses only literary elements (what those might be is seldom specified) and that is then excluded from further analysis because it is 'too complicated' at the present [at that current] *stage of research.*"[18] Observing this gap within the theories of Reiss, Lefevere suggests a (re)reading,[19] an expansion,[20] and the application[21] of this approach to the practical field of translation. Seen from the point of view of translation theories, this perspective which can be observed throughout Lefevere's studies makes the scholar's theories much more beneficial.[22]

In the articles mentioned above Lefevere, offers a prolific analysis of three different translations (the first one is H. R. Hays' translation in 1941, the second one is Eric Bentley's translation in 1967, and the third one is the translation of Ralph Mannheim in 1972) of *Mother Courage and Her Children*. Three different Brecht translations done at three different points in time deserve further discussion for the canonization of a foreign author in various societies. Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956), who has lived probably in the most hectic period of the world history, was a German immigrant whose works launched serious debates within the realm of theatre and literary theories in 1941. In 1967, Brecht was not alive anymore, though; his plays were being translated into different languages, and his theories have started to gain much more attention than in the previous decades. In 1972 finally, Brecht had become a canonized author throughout the world and his works were regarded as classics. When looking at these three different translation years, one cannot help but wonder about the ironical way in which the canonization progress of Brecht took place. Brecht – just like many authors whose works are considered as classics nowadays – has been the subject of the so-called "veneration" posthumously. Despite the fact that the German dramatist was canonized in the world in the 1970s, and his plays were *"now* [then] *translated more on his own terms (according to his*

---

[18] André Lefevere, **Translating Literature, Practice and Theory in a Comparative Literature Context**, Second Edition, the Modern Language Association of America, 1994, p. 9

[19] Ibid.

[20] André Lefevere, "Translation Practice(s) and the Circulation of Cultural Capital: Some Aeneids in English", in Bassnett Susan and Lefevere, André (eds.), **Constructing Cultures**, Multilungual Matters, Clevedon, 1998, pp. 41-56

[21] Ibid, pp. 109-122

[22] Cf. André Lefevere, *Translating Literature, Practice and Theory in a Comparative Literature Context*, Second Edition, the Modern Language Association of America, 1994, p. 9, and Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere (eds.), **Constructing Cultures**, Multilungual Matters, Clevedon, 1998, pp. 41-56, pp. 109-122 with Katharina Reiss, **Translation Criticism – The Potentials & Limitations**, trans. Errol F. Rhodes, St. Jerome, UK, 2000, pp. 16-18, esp. 18, and Katharina Reiss, "Type, Kind and Individuality of Text, Decision Making in Translation", (1971), trans. Susan Kitron, in Venuti, Lawrence (ed.), **The Translation Studies Reader**, London-New York: Routledge, 2000, pp. 160-171, esp. 163-164

own poetics) than on those of the receiving system",[23] the mainstream of the world –
particularly of the Anglo-Saxon world– was hesitant towards Brecht's theatre theories and
attempting to "rewrite" his theories according to the poetological currents of their socio-
cultural system. In order to do so, several strategies have been developed by the rewriters of
Brecht in the Anglo-Saxon world.[24] The ultimate goal of these strategies was to dismiss the
theories which Brecht had developed in order to defend his epic theatre against the harsh
criticisms of his time.

The Rewriters of Brecht

The rewriters of Brecht, with the purpose of adopting the German dramatist's works
in the Anglo-Saxon world, have tried either to pacify or to acculturate the texts which they
were dealing with. Acculturation, in Sirkku Aaltonen's words, *"is the process which is
employed to tone down the Foreign by appropriating the unfamiliar 'reality', and making the
integration possible by blurring the borderline between the familiar and the unfamiliar."*[25]
Seen from this point of view, one can easily see that the Brecht translations which are being
discussed here –but mainly the ones of H.R. Hays' and Eric Bentley's–, have followed of this
process: Acculturation.

The prevailing theatre movements in Broadway were designed to entertain the
theatre-goers of the United States until then. In Eric Bentley's words, ***"entertainment,
amusement, show*** *– any of these words seems*[ed] *a clear and adequate description of the
thing"*,[26] and –with certainty– there was not enough space for any type of dramatic art within
the boundaries of this "thing". With the purpose of introducing the American theatre-goers
"the highbrow stuff",[27] Bentley made the notion of "well-made play" of Eugene Scribe as his
yardstick of assessment: *"the practice of Scribe is a reminder that plot without much else
makes better drama than much else without plot."*[28] On the other hand, Bertolt Brecht, who
has posed a serious challenge to the Aristotelian notion of catharsis and the Scribean concept
of "well-made play" traditions which –as an outcome of the untiring efforts of Bentley and
other theatre critics who share the same opinion/s with him– started to become

---

[23] André Lefevere, "Mother Courage's Cucumbers, Text, system and refraction in a theory of literature", (1982),
in Lawrence Venuti (ed.), **The Translation Studies Reader**, London-New York: Routledge, 2000, p. 237
[24] André Lefevere, "Acculturating Bertolt Brecht", in Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere (eds.), **Constructing
Cultures**, Multilungual Matters, Clevedon, 1998, pp. 112-113
[25] Sirkku Aaltonen, **Time-Sharing on Stage**, Multilungual Matters, Clevedon, 2000, p. 55
[26] Eric Bentley, **In Search of Theater**, Vintage Books, New York, 1954, p. 4, emphasis original.
[27] Ibid, p. 4
[28] Eric Bentley, **What is Theatre? A query in chronicle form**, Horizon Press, New York, 1956, p. 67

150

overwhelmingly present in the theatre scenes and perceptions in the United States of America in the 1950s and the 1960s, was definitely not in line with the poetological currents of the so-called Broadway stage. In order to adapt Brecht to the theatre dynamics of the USA, Hays has opted to divide Brecht's texts into acts and scenes whereas Bentley has chosen to add stage directions.[29] To state the matter differently, both Hays and Bentley have irrefutably "rewritten" Brecht in their own terms. Moreover, in doing/rewriting so, both of the aforementioned names have evidently neglected and dismissed the alienation effects, namely, the de-familiarization devices (songs, prologues, a different acting, and an episodic structure in the dramaturgy) which play the vital role in Brecht's theories. Alienation effects play the most significant role in Brecht's notion of theatre known as "epic theatre" due to the fact that they serve to create a critical distance between the reader/spectator and the play. Also, it is this critical distance which prevents the reader/spectator from identifying him or herself with the characters of the play, and it is in the light of this critical distance that societal dynamics become questionable. Furthermore, through the means of this critical distance in Brechtian plays, and as a matter of fact, Brecht's whole theories regarding theatre, acquire an open-ended feature. Thus, distorting this crucial notion of Brecht would also mean the loss and the abandonment of all the postulates which Brecht was striving to establish.

Even though there arise no problems from an assessment of Ralph Manheim's translation from a traditional perspective of translation studies, a systemic approach might serve better in judging its function in the target culture. According to Lefevere, *"Hays and Bentley established a bridgehead for Brecht in another system; to do so, they had to compromise with the demands of the poetics and the patronage dominant in that system."*[30] This statement can be read as; the previous Brecht translations provided the unique opportunity to Ralph Manheim to translate Brecht more on the German author's terms. Yet, John Willet, one of the editors/translators of Brecht's collected works into English, while introducing Brecht's theoretical writings to the Anglo-Saxon reader, tries to evaluate the German dramatist in his own terms, in contrast to the entire theories of Brecht:

> *"This selection from Brecht's notes and theoretical writing [sic] is meant to give English-language readers the main texts and set these in chronological order so as to show how his ideas evolved, gradually forming into a quite **personal aesthetic** which applied to other spheres besides the theatre... The endless working*

---

[29] Cf. André Lefevere, "Acculturating Bertolt Brecht", in Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere (eds.), **Constructing Cultures**, Multilungual Matters, Clevedon, 1998, pp. 115-118, André Lefevere, "Mother Courage's Cucumbers, Text, system and refraction in a theory of literature", (1982), in Lawrence Venuti (ed.), **The Translation Studies Reader**, London-New York: Routledge, 2000, pp. 240-243

[30] André Lefevere, "Mother Courage's Cucumbers, Text, system and refraction in a theory of literature", (1982), in Lawrence Venuti (ed.), **The Translation Studies Reader**, London-New York: Routledge, 2000, p. 244

*and re-working which it underwent, the nagging at a particular notion until it could be fitted in, the progress from an embryo to an often differently **formulated final concept**, the amendments and the after-thoughts…"*[31]

Eric Bentley and the Notion of Rewriting

Indeed, it is a very clear start for an introduction, written even in a naïve manner, a finicky reading of these words, on the other hand, indicates that there is an evident contradiction to the Brechtian sense of theatre and theory. According to John Willet then, Brecht, who had always avoided for his whole career to reach a final concept[32] was being concluded/formulated in his notion of theatre.

Among the mentioned three rewriters of Brecht, Eric Bentley deserves further discussion to allow for a comprehensive understanding of the notion of rewriting as developed by André Lefevere in his theories. As Lefevere has stated in one of his studies, rewritings, or, *"refractions of Brecht's work available to the Anglo-Saxon reader who needs them are mainly of three kinds: translation, criticism, and historiography."*[33] Due to his importance as an acknowledged drama critic, playwright, and translator, in the literary and the theatrical system of the English speaking world, Eric Bentley's writings regarding the theories of Brecht become the primary issue to be discussed. Additionally, by publishing influential writings and criticisms along with translations of Brecht's plays into English, Eric Bentley has played one of the significant roles with respect to the recognition/canonization of Brecht in the Anglo-Saxon world. Therefore, a brief glance at criticisms and commentaries of Bentley regarding the works of Brecht provides the opportunity to understand the recognition/canonization process of Brecht and his theories in the English speaking world.

In his preface to the *Mother Courage and Her Children*, Bentley somehow makes the reader feel his suspicious and even hesitant attitude towards the Brechtian theatre by expressing his displeasure of Brecht's plays as being untragic and pessimistic.[34] In addition to

---

[31] Bertolt Brecht, **Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic**, Willet, John, (ed. and trans.) Eyre Methuen Ltd., London, 1974, p. xiii, emphasis added.

[32] In fact, especially in the last years of his life, precisely speaking, between 1952 and 1956, Brecht started to focus on the theories of Stanislavski whom he had neglected to examine throughout, and moreover, started to question his epic theater's stance against the Aristotelian theatre. For a comparison made by Bertolt Brecht himself between his notion of acting and Stanislavski's system, see Bertolt, "Notes on Stanislavski" trans. Carl R. Müller, in Erika Munk (ed.), **Stanislavski and America, An Anthology from the Tulane Drama Review**, Hill and Wang, New York,1966, pp. 124-136

[33] André Lefevere, "Mother Courage's Cucumbers, Text, system and refraction in a theory of literature", (1982), in Lawrence Venuti (ed.), **The Translation Studies Reader**, London-New York: Routledge, 2000, p. 238

[34] Eric Bentley, "Preface", in Bertolt Brecht, **Mother Courage and Her Children**, Translated by Eric Bentley, Eyre Methuen Ltd., London, 1978, p. ix

this attitude, Bentley also adds more stage directions to the play in order to create a more realistic atmosphere for the Broadway spectator.[35] Bentley's realistic approach to the theater of Brecht also surfaces in his theoretical writings: *"The theater of Narrative Realism **(this reiteration may stand as a conclusion)** has more in common with the **great theater of the remoter past** than with the theater of today and yesterday."*[36] This statement allows for an evaluation of Bentley's theoretical stance within the realm of theatre theories. As stated before, Bentley is more in favor of the Scribean and Aristotelian tradition with their use of realistic and naturalistic elements mainly, aiming at a certain identification of the spectator/reader with the play. In Bentley's words, *"as a method of staging, Narrative Realism stands midway between the two extreme methods of the modern theater, which we may call naturalism and symbolism."*[37] In Bentley's point of view then, Brecht's notion of epic theatre would weave in and out of the two types of theatrical currents, that is to say, naturalism and symbolism, both of which could most probably *"let the spectator to identify him* [– or herself] *with the people into the story (empathy), to let him* [– or herself] *be carried away by the story's suspense."*[38] Furthermore, from the perspective which Bentley develops and supports throughout his article, it can be inferred that he is erring in the formulation of the Brechtian sense of theatre and making the fatal mistake – just like John Willet – of concluding Brecht's theories in terms of dramaturgy. A skeptic and a suspicious reader of Bentley's article, on the other hand, can think that Bentley's use of the word conclusion should be assessed in terms of the deduction of an article, but a picky reading of the entire article leads to a repudiation of this opinion as Bentley applies this judgment to Brecht's entire dramaturgy.[39] Since a theory, any sort of theory, evolves with the debates it launches within the realm of the discipline/s it pertain/s, finalizing or formulating a theory would be equal to putting an end to its progressive changing.

Bentley's suspicious behaviour towards Brecht's notion of acting and the German dramatists approach to the actor can be observed in his other forms of rewriting. According to Bentley, actors were merely means of deployment for Brecht in order to write better and better plays. In Bentley's words, *"Brecht speaks of what is done in a finished performance. As*

---

[35] Cf. André Lefevere, "Acculturating Bertolt Brecht", in Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere (eds.), **Constructing Cultures**, Multilungual Matters, Clevedon, 1998, p. 115
[36] Eric Bentley, **In Search of Theater**, Vintage Books, New York, 1954, p. 151, emphasis added.
[37] Ibid, p. 138
[38] Ibid, p. 143
[39] Ibid, pp. 135-151, esp. 138 and 148.

a director, he tells actors to do what is presumably to be done 'on the night'."[40] In the light of these words – and an itemized analysis of the whole article – one can observe that Bentley develops his arguments on two basic points: The former is the deductive attitude of Brecht which compels him to focus on the questions how the actors should re/act during the preparation process of a play and the latter, is the fact that the German dramatist is in search of a particular playwriting and a staging method which corresponds to his notion of theatre.[41] Bentley's suggesting arguments can be analyzed in Brecht's notion of theatre. What distinguishes Brecht's entire theories from the other profound theatre theories of the 20th century, on the other hand, is the way that the German theoretician elucidates the issues he argues in his theories. These illuminations, which aim at developing a societal point of view of an actor, form the basis of Brecht's theories. Additionally, for Brecht, actors were merely the people from whom a dynamic dramaturgy was to be achieved in order to establish his theories on a solid ground. The other argument of Bentley can be traced in the oeuvres of Brecht's career (particularly between 1952 and 1956). His different approaches to the classic texts, such as Sophocles' *Antigone*, Goethe's *Urfaust*, Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*, and so forth, in the Berliner Ensemble can be shown as typical examples of Brecht's theatre theories' applicability to different theatre texts as well. In this respect, one can observe Bentley's negligence and reduction of theoretical writings of Brecht to the technical sense of the very word and notion of acting. In addition to his persisting in concluding/formulating Brecht's notion of theatre, Bentley also dismisses the German dramatists approach to the actor, by doing so; Bentley is reiterating his fateful comment from the point of view of acting.[42]

Conclusion

A systemic and a descriptive approach to the rewritings of Brecht in the Anglo-Saxon world within the prolific framework suggested by André Lefevere can assist the researcher to assess the function of a foreign text in a given society. How a foreign text is rewritten, and the way the image of a foreign author is constructed according to the

---

[40] Eric Bentley, "Are Stanislavski and Brecht Commensurable?", in **Tulane Drama Review**, Vol. 9, No. 1 (Autumn, 1964), p. 69
[41] Ibid, pp.69-71, esp. 70
[42] For recent and comprehensive studies regarding Brecht's approach to actors and his notion of dramaturgy, see, John J. White, **Bertolt Brecht's Dramatic Theory**, Camden House, UK, 2004, pp. 238-313, and Kerem Karaboğa, **Oyunculuk Sanatında Yöntem ve Paradoks**, Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınevi, 2005, Istanbul, pp. 179-241

ideological and poetological currents of a particular society would offer a scholar the opportunity to analyze other forms of rewriting, namely, criticisms, historiographies, production of reference works, together with the translations. As the analyses of various types of refractions, or generally speaking rewritings, during the course of this study have shown, the canonization of Bertolt Brecht in the Anglo-Saxon world has been realized through various types of rewriting. How the rewriters of Brecht have accomplished this process can be perceived by the descriptive analyses of the refractions of the German dramatist's works in the Anglo-Saxon world. The ideological, economical, status components of the notion of patronage and poetological currents which play the vital role within the systemic approach of Lefevere have been quite decisive during the canonization process of Brecht in the Anglo-Saxon world. In order to make the Brechtian concept of theatre fit in to the Broadway stage, the theoretical writings of the German playwright have mostly been dismissed. Consequently, the Brechtian notion of theatre has been tried to be reformulated by the drama critics, reviewers, scholars and translators of the Anglo-Saxon world, therefore, construing the works of Brecht within a limited scope.

The act of translating which is probably one of the most crucial ways of building bridges between different cultures can provide one an entire understanding of a foreign author in a given society if accompanied by the other forms of rewriting regarding the author. Within the seminal framework provided by André Lefevere, not only translation, but also other types of (re)writings concerning a foreign author have become the focus of attention within the realm of Translation Studies. By analyzing the rewritings pertaining to a particular socio-cultural system, and the constraints or the so-called burdens which are being put on the shoulders of translators by the dominant powers or the ideological/poetological currents of a society, Translation Studies can act like a bridgehead between different cultures. Moreover, by the points of view which systemic and descriptive approaches offer to the researchers, Translation Studies can become the unique umbrella for covering all of these interdisciplinary studies. The concept of a literary system, as suggested by Lefevere, can be applied to a theatrical system in order to allow for theorizing about this problematic and the most neglected area of Translation Studies. Furthermore, the framework posited by André Lefevere is a definite indication of the fact that a/the "cultural turn" has taken a heavy toll within the realm of Translation Studies.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Aaltonen, Sirkku, **Time-Sharing on Stage**, Multilungual Matters, Clevedon, 2000

- Bassnett, Susan, **Translation Studies**, Third Edition, London-New York: Routledge, 2004

- Bassnett, Susan and Lefevere, André (eds.), **Translation, History and Culture**, Cassell, London, 1995

- Bassnett, Susan and Lefevere, André (eds.), **Constructing Cultures**, Multilungual Matters, Clevedon, 1998

- Bassnett Susan and Trivedi Harish (eds.), **Post-Colonial Translation**, London-New York: Routledge, 1999

- Bentley, Eric, **In Search of Theater**, Vintage Books, New York, 1954

- Bentley, Eric, **What is Theatre? A query in chronicle form**, Horizon Press, New York, 1956

- Bentley, Eric, "Are Stanislavski and Brecht Commensurable?" **Tulane Drama Review**, Vol. 9, No. 1 (Autumn, 1964), 69-76

- Bertolt, Brecht, **Mother Courage and Her Children**, Translated by Eric Bentley, Eyre Methuen Ltd., London, 1978

- Even-Zohar Itamar, "The Position of Translated Literature Within the Literary Polysystem", in, James S. Holmes, José Lambert, Raymond van den Broeck (eds.), **Literature and Translation: New Perspectives in Literary Studies**, Leuven:ACCO, 1978, p. 117-127

- Even-Zohar, Itamar, "Polysystem Theory", in, **Poetics Today**, Fall 1979

- Göktürk, Akşit, **Çeviri: Dillerin Dili**, Yapı Kredi Yayınları, Istanbul, 2002
- Karaboğa, Kerem, **Oyunculuk Sanatında Yöntem ve Paradoks**, Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınevi, 2005, Istanbul

- Lawrence Venuti, (ed.), **The Translation Studies Reader**, London-New York: Routledge, 2000

- Lefevere, André, **Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame**, London and New York: Routledge, 1992

- Lefevere, André, **Translating Literature, Practice and Theory in a Comparative Literature Context**, Second Edition, the Modern Language Association of America, 1994

- Michael Rundell (ed. in chief), **Macmillan English Dictionary**, International Student Edition, Macmillan Education Ltd., UK, 2002

- Munk, Erika (ed.), **Stanislavski and America, an Anthology from the Tulane Drama Review**, Hill and Wang, New York, 1966

- Reiss, Katharina, **Translation Criticism – The Potentials & Limitations**, trans. Errol F. Rhodes, St. Jerome, UK, 2000

- Skerrit-Zuber Ortrun (ed.), **Page to Stage, Theatre as Translation***, Amsterdam/Rodopi, 1984

- White, John J., **Bertolt Brecht's Dramatic Theory**, Camden House, UK, 2004

- Willet, John, (ed. and trans.) **Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic**, Eyre Methuen Ltd., London, 1974, 179-209

<u>Özet:</u>

Farklı kültürler arasında iletişim kurmanın şüphesiz en önemli yollarından biri olan "çeviri" eylemi, tarihin en eski dönemlerinden beri dil üzerinde çalışmalarda bulunan araştırmacıların ilgisini çekmiştir. Bu ilginin odak noktasını ise hiç kuşkusuz, kuram ve uygulamaya yönelik soru(nsal)lar oluşturmaktadır. Bahsi geçen soruların özünde ise genelde, kaynak metne bağlılık ve sadakat kavramlarının başat rol oynadığı görülmektedir. Bu bağlamda düşünüldüğünde, çeviri eyleminin genellikle edebiyat ya da uygulamalı dilbilimin bir alt kolu olarak görülegelmiş ve kültürel perspektifinin çoğu zaman göz ardı edilmiş olması pek de şaşırtıcı olmamaktadır. Bununla birlikte, özellikle yirminci yüzyılın son çeyreğinde çeviri olgusunun kültürel alandaki önemine ilişkin yapılan çalışmalar, akademik çevrelerde Çeviribilim'in özerk bir bilim dalı olarak anılmasına neden olmuştur. Söz konusu zaman dilimine kadar kaynak metin ile çeviri metin arasındaki tutarlılık, kayma ve diğer metin içi unsurları gözlemleyen araştırmacılar çalışmalarında, çeviri eylemini kültürel bazda değerlendirmenin doğal bir getirisi olan, metin dışı ögelerin de tartışılmasını gündeme getirerek, çeviriye ilişkin yüzyıllar boyunca geliştirilmiş kuralcı anlayışın yerini işlevsel, dizgesel ve betimleyici yaklaşımların almasının yolunu açmışlardır.

Çeviribilim'in yakın tarihine göz atıldığında, Belçikalı çeviri kuramcısı André Lefevere'in gerek kuramsal gerek de uygulamaya yönelik çalışmalarının, çeviri olgusunun kültürel öneminin ayırdına varılması yönünde önemli saptamalar içerdiği görülmektedir. Çeviriyi bir

"yeniden yazma süreci" olarak gören Lefevere çalışmalarında, bu sürecin hangi koşullar altında gerçekleştirildiğine, ideolojik unsurların çeviriyi nasıl bir manipülasyon aracı olarak kullanabileceklerine ve çevirmenlerin ait oldukları kültür dizgesini şekillendirmedeki rollerine ilişkin çözümlemeler sunmaktadır. André Lefevere'in araştırmalarını diğer çeviri araştırmalarından ayıran bir diğer önemli özellik ise, sanat alanında dünya çapında tanınmış bir ismin salt çevirilerinden ziyade, bu isim hakkında yazılmış eleştiri, görüşler ve derlemelerin de çeviriler ile birlikte değerlendirilmesi gerektiğini öneriyor olmasıdır, ki bu durum – doğası gereği dallararası araştırmalara açık olan – çeviri eylemine farklı bilim dallarından yaklaşılmasını kuramsal bir zemine oturtmaktadır.

Çeviri olgusundaki kültürel perspektif ile André Lefevere'in geliştirmiş olduğu kuramları çıkış noktası olarak alan bu çalışma, yirminci yüzyılın en kayda değer tiyatro adamlarından biri olan Bertolt Brecht'in Anglo-Sakson dünyasında nasıl algılandığını tartışmaya açmayı hedeflemektedir. Makale, Brecht'in oyunlarını İngilizce'ye çevirmiş, yazarın Amerika'da geçirmiş olduğu yıllarda kaleme aldığı yazıları ile Brecht'in önemli destekçilerinden biri olmuş ve günümüzde de dünyanın önemli tiyatro eleştirmenlerinden biri olarak nitelendirilen Eric Bentley'in, Brecht hakkındaki kuramsal çalışmalarını irdelemektedir. Brecht'in gerek tiyatro anlayışı, gerekse de oyuncuya yönelik yaklaşımlarını ait olduğu kültür dizgesinin normlarına "uydurma" çabasında bir yoruma gidenin yalnızca Bentley olmadığı, aynı zamanda Brecht'in kuramsal yazılarını İngilizce'ye çeviren John Willet'ın da aynı yaklaşım içinde olduğunu gösteren çalışma, günümüzde de Brecht'in tiyatro anlayışına ilişkin tartışmaların başlangıç noktasını ortaya çıkarmak amacındadır.