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RETHINKING TRANSLATIONAL ACTIVISM THROUGH AN ECOFEMINIST LENS

ABSTRACT

Ecofeminism, as an intersectional and global paradigm, elucidates how women's experiences and behaviours are influenced by various social and cultural circumstances determined by geographical location. It is a broad concept encompassing topics such as women's rights, ecological concerns, environmental issues, and the relationship between women and nature. This study aims to analyze the Turkish translation of ecofeminist elements in Jean Rhys's novel *Wide Sargasso Sea*. The translation of the ecofeminist dynamics highlights activism as a manifestation of agency. This prominent work has been translated by Pınar Kür, who does not deem either the book or herself "feminist" or "activist". As activism in translation is mainly associated with explicit self-description or the translator's intervention, the concept of "engagement" as a form of activism is used to explain the translator's situation, offering a new understanding of source-oriented translation strategy. The study concludes that translational activism need not take the form of active opposition and that maintaining ecofeminist and postcolonial aspects in translation requires a deliberate choice of activism that engages the translator.

Keywords: Ecofeminism, Activism, Engagement, Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*.

ÇEVİRİ AKTİVİZMİNİ EKOFEMİNİST BAĞLAMDA YENİDEN DÜŞÜNMEK

ÖZET

Ekoфeminizm, kesişimsel ve küresel bir paradigm olarak, kadınların deneyimlerinin ve davranışlarının coğrafi konumlara bağlı olarak çeşitli sosyal ve kültürel koşullar tarafından nasıl etkilenдigini açıklar. Bu kavram, kadın hakları, ekolojik sorunlar, çevresel sorunlar ve kadın ile doğa arasındaki ilişki gibi çeşitli konuları kapsar. Bu çalışma, Jean Rhys'in *Wide Sargasso Sea* adlı romanındaki ekoфeminist unsurların Türkçe çevirisini analiz etmeyi amaçlar. Esere ait tüm bu dinamikler, çeviride eylemliliğin bir türü olarak aktivizme işaret eder. Ancak bu eseri Türkçeye çeviren Pınar Kür, kendisini de eseri de "feminist" ya da "aktivist" olarak tanımlamamaktadır. Bu çalışmanın savlarından biri, çeviride aktivizmin aktif bir ajanda ya da açık bir tanımlama olmadan da var olabileceгidir. Çeviride aktivizm çoğunlukla çevirmenin açık tanımlamaları ya da müdaхalesiyle ilişkilendirildiğinden, bu çalışmada aktivizm, çeviride sadakat kavramına yeni bir bakış açısı da sunan "etkileşim" kavramı üzerinden incelenir. Çalışmanın sonuç kısmında çeviri aktivizminin aktif bir karşılık biçiminde olmak zorunda olmadığı, eserdeki ekoфeminist ve postkolonyal unsurların çeviride aktarımının bilinçli bir aktivist duruş ile sağlandığı ve bu duruşun çevirmenin etkileşimiyle sağlandığı ileri sürüлür.

Anahtar kelimeler: Ekoфeminizm, Aktivizm, Etkileşim, Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*.

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Introduction

The concept of agency has recently become a central focus in translation studies, with an increasing emphasis on the translator as an active agent. Translational activism is an essential manifestation of agency, as it pertains to how translators interact with matters of authority, representation, and power. This form of activism can be interpreted as the ideological dimension of translation, which seeks to inspire or influence audiences. This phenomenon has been described by scholars using a variety of terms. Rebecca Ruth Gould and Kayvan Tahmasebian refer to it as translational activism (2010, p. 10). Maria Tymoczko employs the term "activism in translation" (2010, p. 9). Mona Baker refers to it as "activist translation," especially in the context of "strongly politicized communities" (2010, p. 23). Although these concepts are distinct, they all refer to the intersecting dynamics that characterize activist translation practices. These methodologies are derived from similar inquiries: "What makes a translation activist?", "Does translation activism depend on the activist characteristics of the source text, or can a translation be considered activist even if the source text lacks such qualities?", and "Which strategy can be regarded as a sign of translation activism?". In this study, we adopt the term "translational activism," as referred to by Gould and Tahmasebian, as it offers a more comprehensive framework for the type of activism we aim to explore. To begin with, it is essential to clarify what is meant by translational activism in this context.

The answer to the question of "What makes a translation activist?" is also subjective, just like the definition of translational activism. While certain scholars perceive activism as an expression of agency that catalyzes substantial change within the target system, others associate it with translation strategies such as source-oriented translation. Probably the most prevalent understanding of translational activism is asserted by Paul Bandia (2020) as "a form of opposition or resistance to power". By the very definition, resistance emphasizes the unequal power relations and the force exertion of the superior one. In this context, the role of activist translation is to counter the opponent's influence, diverting or obstructing the actions and directions the power seeks to enforce on others. As the concept of activism is based on "reaction more than action," agency in this context is considered a "reactive form of activism rather than a proactive one" (Tymoczko, 2010, p. 10). In a more recent understanding of translational activism, its characterization is strongly linked to its boundaries. In *The Routledge Handbook of Translation and Activism* (2020), translation is considered activist "whenever and however it stirs readers and audiences to action" (Gould & Tahmasebian, 2020, p. 4). In this context, activist translation refers to the reception of the target text aimed at promoting active change.

A fundamental element of translational activism is considered to be its emphasis on power dynamics. Translation often serves as a mechanism for opposing prevailing cultural or political influences. Translators can choose to question or challenge the prevailing power dynamics of the source text or the target culture. Literary texts frequently mirror or influence the cultural and political environment, and translating literary texts involves deciding how to interact with that environment. Translational activism is associated with challenging dominant narratives by translating texts that critique colonialism, racism, or gender inequality, or by advocating for the inclusion of marginalized voices in global debate as discussed by the recent studies (Tymoczko, 2010; Carcelén Estrada, 2018; Baker, 2019; Washbourne, 2024; Manolachi & Musiysiwa, 2022). In the majority of studies on translational activism, it is seen as just one manifestation of the broader concept of translation agency. It has been noted that the activist aspect of translation

emerges when agency is linked to partiality. Current interpretations of activism hold that partiality can be a form of activism, as it embodies the translator's ideological position, whether actively or passively. Translation involves the engagement of the translator without adopting the "activist" designation since "partialities are what differentiate translations, enabling them to participate in the dialectic of power, the ongoing process of political discourse, and strategies for social change" (Tymoczko, 2002, p. 181). Partiality may be evident in translations, even by those translators who do not self-identify as activists. Kobus Marais supports Tymoczko's claims by asserting that even though translators do not follow a specific activist objective, they are agents through their semiotic work (2020, p. 107).

Apart from the dynamics of translational activism, different qualities are asserted for the "activist translator," describing his/her capacity. We specifically use the concept of "intellectual activism", a significant form of activism linked to feminist translation, as stated by Emek Ergun (2013, p. 271). Intellectual activism can be defined as the use of intellectual repertoire to oppose power figures or structures and to dismantle oppression based on unequal power relations (Collins, 2012). The term encompasses a wide spectrum, incorporating both active and passive participation in the process, despite its predominant association with the politically charged interventionism of the translator. According to Ergun, feminist translator "uses language to intervene and deconstruct hegemonic gender regimes" as a part of his/her intellectual activism (2013, p. 268). It can be asserted that her point of view about "activism" mainly involves active involvement in the recreation of meaning and context along with the discourses. From a broader viewpoint, translation is a possible "contact zone", as cited in Mary Louise Pratt, where "the self can engage with the other, an interaction that can enable us to confront ourselves (and the other) in unprecedented ways" (1991, p. 35). Moreover, Ergun considers the form of these encounters "both intellectual and activist" (Ergun, 2013, p. 286). This understanding expands the scope of intellectual activism to include more passive forms, as long as they involve an encounter with the unknown side. We associate this less active yet more widespread type of activism with the concept of "engagement". The terms are twofold. In the first place, it encompasses a diverse array of enterprises that activists establish, rather than merely responding to or opposing an external dominant force (Tymoczko, 2010, p. 11). With this concept, the agency is not regarded as an opposition but more as a commitment. Therefore, the "forms of activism involving choice and action" (Tymoczko & Gentzler, 2002, p. xvii–xxi) are at the forefront. Engagement offers a broader umbrella and provides greater freedom regarding the translator's involvement in the translation process, rather than activism. Some choices of translation in the form of indirect referral, which are considered out of the context of activism, can be evaluated within the frame of engagement. Therefore, we assert that recent developments and products in the translation industry seem to better align with engagement than with activism. Secondly, the act of literary translation is accepted as a form of literary activism through engagement. As Sherry Simon mentioned, translators are inevitably involved in "a politics of transmission, in perpetuating or contesting the values which sustain our literary culture" (2005, p. ix). In this regard, a literary translator is considered to have an activist role in relation to the politics embedded in literature. In a recent paper, building on the idea of engagement, Kelly Washbourne introduces the concept of "committedness" (2024, p. 4), emphasizing the translator's ethical and political engagement with the text. Therefore, every act of translation also involves engagement; however, the nature of this engagement is related to multiple factors, such as the selection of the text, how it is received on the target side, the

availability of the receiving context, and the translator's willingness and ability to convey the essence of the work.

The concepts of “intellectual repertoire” and “engagement,” which form the basis of intellectual activism, parallel the Bourdieusian concept of “*translatorial habitus*” in a translational framework. Daniel Simeoni (1998, p. 22) asserts that translatorial habitus is both a structured and structuring mechanism. It is structured through the translator’s acquired dispositions over a lifetime, and these dispositions, in turn, shape translational norms and conventions. A translator’s decision to draw on their intellectual repertoire for activism—whether through scholarly engagement or active resistance—is closely tied to their translatorial habitus. This decision also relates to questions of translatorial competence, emancipation, and subservience, which will be further analyzed.

It has been noted that the majority of studies on translation activism have focused on active opposition, leading to a deficiency in research on the translator’s submissiveness as a form of activism. This study aims to fill a void in translation studies, specifically in Türkiye, and to present a novel perspective on translation activism within an ecofeminist framework. This paper examines the source-oriented translation technique as a form of translational activism, specifically analyzing the Turkish translation of Jean Rhys’s *Wide Sargasso Sea*. In this regard, this study is distinctive in its approach. Also, it is one of the few studies in Turkish literature that address these issues within a single framework. The novel explores activism through postcolonial and ecofeminist themes. The first part offers an ecofeminist critique of the novel. The translatorial habitus of Pınar Kür, the Turkish translator of *Wide Sargasso Sea*, is further examined. The final chapter examines the connection between source-oriented translation and translational activism. This discussion presents a stylistic comparison of the source and target texts. The selected samples from the source text effectively illustrate its ecofeminist and postcolonial characteristics. A critical discourse analysis of the samples compares the target texts with the source material to reveal the translator’s activist ideology.

1. An Ecofeminist Reading of *Wide Sargasso Sea*

The focus of this study is on Jean Rhys’s prominent work, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, which explores postcolonial and ecofeminist themes. The ecofeminist side of the novel has been previously discussed by different scholars focusing on the relationship of nature and women (Johnson, 2015; Otero, 2019; Ateş, 2023; Özsert, 2023). Rhys’s novel delves into the complex dynamic between the colonizer and the colonized, addressing issues of power, identity, and marginalization. The narrative follows the protagonist, Antoinette, a Creole woman who struggles to find her place in a society that rejects her. As a member of a family with a history of slave ownership, Antoinette’s life is marked by traces of otherness and entrapment. The text also depicts the coexistence of distinct racial groups, such as white Creoles, black Caribbeans, and Western colonizers, reflecting the social stratification of the colonial context.

The activist side of the novel is discussed in terms of ecological feminism, which is “a widely encompassing ideology, touching on subjects as diverse as nature-based religion, women’s rights, environmental issues about water, land, and air pollution, wildlife conservation, but also the oppression of Third World countries and people by Western industrialized nations” (Federici, 2022, p. 66). The concept of ecofeminism was introduced by French feminist Françoise d’Eaubonne in 1974 and subsequently garnered increasing academic

attention, evolving into a distinct field, particularly after the 2010s. Environmental deterioration and the subordinate status of women are linked to male dominance. Currently, ecofeminism is recognized as "intersectional and global" (Federici, 2022, p. 68), emphasizing the experiences of women across various regions and their interactions. Diverse sociologies and civilizations necessitate varying perspectives on feminist concerns, as women exist under distinct situations. Transnational feminist perspectives reveal disparities among women across different social contexts. Given that gender inequality manifests variably among cultures, a singular definition of exploitation in a postcolonial context is unattainable. Non-Western concepts of feminism highlight social issues above political ones (*ibid.*, p. 302). It has been argued that "the future of feminisms is in the transnational, and the transnational is made through translation" (Castro & Ergun, 2017, p. 1). This transnational understanding of ecofeminism emerged as a response to global feminism, which standardizes women as white and Western and advocates for a political solidarity among feminists worldwide that transcends class, race, sexuality, and national boundaries (Mendoza, 2002, p. 296).

This study employs the ecofeminist framework as an "activist and academic movement" (Sanap & Bhatane, 2017, p. 144) to elucidate the interconnections between postcolonial and feminist themes in translation, as the representations of both women and nature contribute to exploitation. This exploitation manifests itself in the form of the colonizer's dominance in *Wide Sargasso Sea*. The natural environment of the West Indies is portrayed differently depending on the characters' viewpoints. Antoinette, the protagonist, correlates the fauna and landscape of the West Indies with favourable feelings such as belonging. In contrast, the male characters, representing the colonizers, view it as an inhospitable environment. Furthermore, spatial representation influences the identity development of both the protagonist and the antagonist. In the comparative analysis, we examine how translators engage with ecofeminist dimensions.

2. Translation of *Wide Sargasso Sea*

The thematic diversity of *Wide Sargasso Sea* brings different types of translational activism to the fore. It can be analyzed based on postcolonial translation and ecofeminist translation. By selecting a text of this dichotomous nature, we intend to discuss whether intellectual activism can take the form of intellectual engagement while adhering to its original purpose. This dualistic characteristic helps "multiple voices to be heard" (Reimóndez, 2017, p. 44). In a similar vein, Castro and Ergun (2017) conceptualize the transnational as a polyphonic space in which translation is employed as a means of cross-border resistance, solidarity, and activism. In this light, translating *Wide Sargasso Sea* can be deemed a deliberate act against the dominant narratives of colonial and patriarchal systems.

At the linguistic level, to foster a polyphonic space, the novel's diverse voices must be translated, while preserving the dominant English sections. Translating the novel's inherent polyphony requires a level of resistance, whether through engagement or resistance. The translator's agency can be exercised through various strategies in the translation of *Wide Sargasso Sea*, such as maintaining Creole idioms and unsettling the linear narrative structure. Furthermore, the novel's focus on the lives of marginalized characters, such as the Creole woman Antoinette, highlights the need for a feminist translation praxis that gives voice to the subaltern.

Additionally, the ecological dimension and characters' intimate connection to the West Indian landscape necessitate a translational ecocritical analysis. This analysis demonstrates the environment's active role in shaping and revealing the characters' personas. The protagonist of the novel, Antoinette, is a figure of both feminist and postcolonial activism, embodying the intersection of gender, ethnicity, and environmental belonging. Consequently, translation of *Wide Sargasso Sea* is an act of intellectual engagement challenging the dominant epistemologies and representing marginalized identities and their relationships with their environment.

The translation of the multiple themes in *Wide Sargasso Sea* foregrounds the importance of translation strategy. The decision to transfer the essence of these themes is associated with one of the oldest notions in translation studies: fidelity. However, we adopt a notion of fidelity that transcends the conventional interpretation based on dichotomies. Simon explains the shift of focus in fidelity based on identity as follows:

Fidelity can only be understood if we take a new look at the identity of translating subjects and their enlarged area of responsibility as signatories of “doubly authored” documents... When meaning is no longer a hidden truth to be “discovered,” but a set of discursive conditions to be “re-created,” the work of the translator acquires added dimensions. (1996, p. 12)

According to contemporary translation theory, the translator takes an active role as a co-creator of the meaning-making process. However, this recreation is not limited to the work's content but also encompasses its ideological context. Therefore, fidelity is redefined as “to be directed toward neither the author nor the reader, but toward the writing project- a project in which both writer and translator participate” (ibid., p. 2). Translation is regarded as a collaborative task of recreation under target conditions. In this sense, the notion of fidelity has expanded from faithfulness to the author's intention to faithfulness to the translation project itself, which legitimizes the explicit interventions of the translator for the sake of recreating similar discursive contexts. Therefore, the traditional understanding of “les belles *infidèles*” is replaced by the translator's dialogic engagement with the source text's dynamics.

The agency inherent in postcolonial and feminist translation is fundamentally linked to active resistance. Ergun posits that feminist translation “consistently interrupts the seamless reading experience and alerts readers to the fact that they are engaging with a translation” (2013, p. 25). The visibility of translation can be associated with activism, not through explicit self-identification, but rather due to the intrinsic characteristics of the source text and the textual strategies employed in the translation to preserve the essence of that text, which corresponds with modern standards of fidelity. The textual analysis in this study sheds light on how the Turkish version of the novel reflects an activist perspective, despite the absence of explicit activist statements or agendas. This analysis suggests that although the Turkish translation of the novel is not explicitly promoted as “feminist” or “postcolonial”, the translator has made conscious efforts to maintain the oppositional viewpoints and challenge the prevailing narrative structures. Furthermore, the translator of the novel, Pınar Kür, abstains from explicitly labelling herself or her translation as “activist”, despite her intellectual engagement in contexts related to activism. As activism starts with selecting a text, and the act of translation itself is linked to “creating new knowledge in border spaces” (Collins, 2017, p. xi) as an element of intellectual activism, every translation necessitates decisions regarding what to translate, what to omit, the strategy employed, and the rationale behind these choices. Although intellectual activism is

primarily associated with challenging prevailing conventions in translation strategies, its influence is evident not only in the final output but also throughout the process.

3. The (Non) Activist Translator: Pınar Kür

Despite being a significant author-translator in the Turkish literary canon, Pınar Kür does not explicitly identify as a feminist; yet, her writing demonstrates a feminist inclination. Consequently, I designate her as a (non)activist in this study. She possesses an activist streak, though she has not explicitly articulated it. This is evident in her emphasis on the protected societal status of women and the male-centric dynamics present in narratives about female characters in Turkish literature, including her own works: “Female characters are more prominent, and that there are female characters in my writings is because I am a woman myself, and I think that women are the ones who are adversely impacted and damaged in the conditions that reveal the incompatibilities and discomforts in society” (cit. Çin, 2010, p. 293). Kür was involved in protests during the 1960s, a time when the impacts of decolonization were being experienced, the pursuit of equality was amplified, and freedom and opposition to war were heightened. Kür's engagement in these protests shaped the development of her political identity (Aka, 2011, p. 121) as well as her *habitus*.

It is possible to observe parallelism between her authorial and translatorial *habitus*. Elif Aka (2011) discusses this interaction in her thesis, explaining that Pınar Kür's initial decision to undertake a particular novel is influenced by a critical similarity that guides her approach to both writing and translating. This shared thread is her relentless pursuit of the “new” in all of her creations and translations. She also asserts that, despite her works sharing recurring themes, storylines, or even character types, Kür consistently endeavours to introduce fresh elements, which she achieves by either translating previously unpublished authors into Turkish literary circles or through stylistic innovation in her writing. She also associates her authorial *habitus* with the translatorial one, stating that after publishing her original works, she became more selective in her translation choices, choosing texts that affected her deeply (ibid., p. 311).

The choice of the texts to be translated also reflects her innovative and activist perspective. Kür's decision to initiate the translation process demonstrates the substantial autonomy a translator can exercise, as selecting a specific work to introduce into a literary landscape is a strategic choice aligned with intellectual activism. Kür's agency was at the forefront, as she recounts that she was the one who decided to translate *Wide Sargasso Sea* and proposed it to the publishing company. These “behind-the-scenes details” are what translate a form of intellectual activism (Ergun, 2013, p. 271). The very selection of the text is the prior manifestation of engagement. Moreover, her motivation to translate *Wide Sargasso Sea* stems from her preference for authors who have not been translated by any other translator (Aka, 2011).

Her authorial-translatorial *habitus* also plays a role in determining her predominant translation strategy, serving as the basis for her engagement with the source text. It is possible to trace her competence in Turkish and background information on the Turkish literary system in the translations she regards as “faithful.” In Kür's opinion, faithfulness does not entail a literal, word-for-word translation; rather, it entails the reproduction of the original text's impact in the target language while plainly distinguishing the outcome as a translation rather than an original work (2011, p. 295). This modern understanding of fidelity is based on creating an

equivalent effect. It is possible to understand both from her explanations and the criticism of her work that she adopts a source-oriented translation strategy as a crucial part of her intellectual activism. The translator's intellectual activism is evident in the intertextual material as well. In her introduction for *Wide Sargasso Sea*, she articulates her views on Jean Rhys by stating that it would not be right to constrain her within the confines of feminism "because Jean Rhys' subject is not fundamentally the conflict between men and women, but rather the conflict between the 'weak' and the 'strong'" (1982, p. 13). Kür's characterization of feminism in this context appears to be aligned with radical feminism. However, radical feminism has waned in influence, particularly since the 1980s, because some of the radical feminists were also criticised for being essentialist, meaning that they limited "being a woman" to biological sex in their activist framework. Given that this preface was composed in 1982, Kür's approach to characterize the author not as a feminist likely arose from perceiving her as transcending the confines of feminism. The power dynamics that Kür alludes to only rose to prominence with the emergence of the concept of "gender" in the 1990s. The concept of gender has enabled the examination of how societies construct power dynamics predicated on gender-based hierarchies. Philosopher Judith Butler's studies on the "gender trouble" radicalized "gender" go beyond the "biological sex" (cit. Rochefort, 2020; Thébaud, 2007). As such, the situation that was previously perceived as transcending the boundaries of feminism can now be examined within the expanded framework of feminist thought and analysis. Additionally, despite Kür's assessment that the author does not align with feminist ideology in the preface, she notes that the narrative establishes an association between nature and women:

Jean Rhys brings a nature that she has not seen since she was 16, with all its beauty and dark fantasy elements, before the eyes of the reader with surprising vividness. So much so that you can see and smell even the tropical flowers whose names we do not know and whose scents we do not recognize. Most importantly, you experience all the pain of Antoinette Cosway - that girl created by nature and in a way a victim of it - and her life that has turned into a nightmare, as deeply as she does, with as much astonishment and helplessness as she does. (Kür, 1982, p. 14)

The quotation describes a type of relationship that is central to the perspective of ecological feminism, which emerged as an influential movement in the aftermath of the 1980s. These narrative features, which Pınar Kür situates outside of established literary movements, demonstrate an activist dimension. The manifestation of Jean Rhys' activist identity in the target text can be attributed to the translator's influence. Through a feminist hermeneutical approach, it can be argued that the translation reshapes the narrative to affirm and amplify Rhys' proto-feminist critique. This underscores the translator's agency in recontextualizing the novel for a Turkish readership. Pınar Kür's perspective that Jean Rhys is not affiliated with any established literary movement and transcends the boundaries of feminism may also apply to Kür herself. Given that the central theme Kür explores as an author is the power imbalance experienced by women in society, it is evident that this perspective is likewise reflected in the works she selects to translate. However, Kür's choice not to self-identify as a feminist in her role as a translator can be explicated by the factors discussed in the context of Rhys. Moreover, the concept of activism discussed here may be understood as directly tied to the translator's cultural habitus in a Bourdesian sense, rather than any specific ideological movement. To illustrate Kür's translational activism, selected examples from the source text and their translations are examined. These examples are drawn from passages that most clearly embody ecofeminist themes. Moreover, the translations of these passages demonstrate Kür's translatorial habitus.

Through this comparative analysis, the transfer of ecofeminist elements is discussed based on Kür's intellectual activism.

4. The Comparative Analysis

This part focuses on examples from the source text and their translations to trace the strategies the translator employs. In this analysis, the source text is abbreviated as ST, whereas TT stands for the target text. To make it more understandable, a back translation for each example is provided and abbreviated as BT.

Example 1

ST: 'It was a song about a **white cockroach**. That's me. That's what they call all of us who were here before their own people in Africa sold them to the slave traders.' And I've heard English women call us **white niggers**. So between you, I often wonder who I am and where is my country's and where do I belong and why was I ever born at all.' (Rhys, 1999, p. 61)

TT: "Beyaz karafatma hakkında bir şarkydı. Ben yani. Kendi Afrikalı ırkdaşları bunları köle tacirlerine satmaya başlamazdan önce adalaraya yerleşmiş olan bizlere, hepimize, öyle derler. Ayrıca İngiliz kadınlarının da bizlere **beyaz zenci** dediklerini çok iştittim. Yani, kısacası, ikinizin arasında çoğu kez soruyorum kendime, kimim ben, vatanım neresi, nereye aitim, zaten neden doğmuşum diye." (Rhys, 1982, p. 116)

BT: "It was a song about a white roach, me in other words. That's how they call us, all of us who have settled in the islands before their African people sold them to the slave traders. Besides, I have heard many times that English women call us white coons. Thus, in short, I ask myself very often between you that who I am, where is my homeland, where do I belong, why was I born.

This is one of the most striking paragraphs reflecting the social dynamics in the West Indies about colonialism in *Wide Sargasso Sea*. "White cockroach" and "white nigger" are the epithets used by the locals to refer to the ex-slave owners. These phrases also reflect the identity confusion and social exclusion felt by female characters, Annette and Antoinette. It is also crucial that this feeling only belongs to the women in the novel. These epithets also create a sense of guilt for Antoinette, who can empathize with the cruelty of her ancestors. Kür translates "white cockroach" as "beyaz karafatma", which is the colloquial counterpart of "hamam böceği". Moreover, some people use the term "karafatma" as a way to discriminate against women who cover their heads with various forms of veil. Thus, the term has the potential to recreate that anti-veiling discourse in the target culture. The term is a sign of the categorization of women in Turkish society based on their religious preferences, which is also a part of feminist criticism. Even though it seems a direct result of her source-oriented translation strategy at first glance, the term "karafatma" is a potent symbol for the target audience, emphasizing the activist nature of the original reference.

By using two antonyms, "beyaz" and "kara", she adds extra dichotomy to the context by increasing the effect of the epithet. This seems to reflect her intellectual activism. "White niggers" is also translated as "beyaz zenci", which is also controversial in Turkish. "Zenci" is an offensive term that is used intentionally as the author uses "nigger" to offend the ex-slave owners. These terms force readers to reckon with their own cultural attitudes toward race and history. In translating these epithets, Kür allows the original text's critique of colonialism to resonate deeply in the Turkish context, where postcolonial legacies, identity struggles, and racial tensions are also present, albeit in different forms. Through the translation of "white nigger" and "white cockroach," Kür does more than just convert words; she amplifies the **historical and emotional** truths of the source text. She makes the reader confront uncomfortable truths about identity, race, and the ongoing effects of colonialism, showing that these issues transcend geographical and cultural boundaries. It shows her fidelity to the source

text or the project itself, specifying her source-oriented strategy. As a result of this strategy, she creates an activist translation of these terms based on her intellectual activism.

Example 2

ST: Everything is too much, I felt as I rode wearily after her. **Too much blue, too much purple, too much green. The flowers too red, the mountains too high, the hills too near.** And the woman is a stranger, her pleading expression annoys me. I have not bought her, she has bought me, or so she thinks. (Rhys, 1999, p. 41)

TT: **Her şey çok fazla, diye düşündüm karımın ardından, bıkkın, sürerken atımı. Çok fazla mavi, çok fazla mor, çok fazla yeşil. Çiçekler aşırı kıızıl, dağlar aşırı yüksek, tepeler aşırı yakın.** Ve kadın yabancının biri. Yüzündeki yalvarır gibi anlam sinirime dokunuyor. Ben onu satın almadım ki, o beni satın aldı- ya da öyle sanıyor. (Rhys, 1982, p. 78)

BT: While I was riding my horse wearily after my wife, I thought that everything was too much. Too much blue, too much purple, too much green. The flowers were too red, the mountains were too high, the hills were too near. And she is just a stranger to me. Her pleading face gets on my nerves. I am not the one buying her, she has bought me- or she thinks so.

This passage can be analyzed through the framework of transnational ecofeminism, as it portrays the environment from the perspective of the male colonizer, Mr Rochester, who is depicted as a white Englishman humiliating the local people and the landscape. The natural setting portrayed differs from the conventional Western depiction. The female protagonist exhibits a capacity to appreciate the surrounding natural beauty. The shift from her optimistic perspective to the male character's pessimistic tone is discernible. The novel conveys a persistent feeling of estrangement and detachment. The male character, Mr Rochester, experiences even the natural splendour of the wilderness as a source of frustration and displeasure. In the target text, the translator Kür meticulously renders every individual detail of the descriptive passages. The same sense of alienation can be felt in the target text achieved through the translator's faithful strategy to the source text. The translator maintains the clear distinction between the two divergent perspectives, which provides a foundation for the ecofeminist analysis. Even though Kür may not engage in activism directly, her **faithful translation** allows the novel's critique of colonialism, gender inequality, and ecological degradation to resonate powerfully with readers in a new cultural context. In this manner, she helps to retain the **ecofeminist critique** at the heart of the novel, highlighting how the exploitation of nature and women are deeply intertwined in the colonial context.

Example 3

ST: "I hated the mountains and the hills, the rivers, and the rain. I hated the sunsets of whatever color, I hated their beauty and magic and the secret I would never know. I hated its indifference and the cruelty which part of its loveliness... above all I hated her. For she belonged to the magic and the loveliness. She had left me thirsty and all my life would be thirst and longing for what I had lost before I found it." (Rhys, 1999, p. 103)

TT: "Dağlardan da, tepelerden de, ırmaktan da, yağmurdan da nefret ediyordum. Gün batımından, rengi ne olursa olsun, nefret ediyordum. Buranın güzelliğinden, büyüsünden, hiçbir zaman öğrenemeyeceğim sırrından nefret ediyordum. Çevrenin kayıtsızlığından, çekici güzelliğinin bir parçası olan zalimliğinden nefret ediyordum. Hepsinden çok Ondan nefret ediyordum. Çünkü bu büyüye, güzelliğe uygundu. O da, onların malıydı. Onun yüzünden susamış ama susuzluğunumu giderememiştim, ömrüm boyunca daha bulamadan yitirdiğim bir şey için susuzluk ve özlem çekecektim." (Rhys, 1982, p. 194)

BT: I hated the mountains, the hills, the river and the rain. I hated the sunset in every color. I hated the beauty, the charm and the secret which I would never learn. I hated the indifference of the surrounding, the cruelty which is a part of its charming beauty. However, I hated her the most. Because she was made for this magic and beauty which also belong to them. That's why I was thirsty for her and never quenched my thirst, I would be thirsty and longing for what I have lost before finding.

As Kür mentioned in the preface of her translation, the environment is portrayed as an overwhelming factor that causes emotional pain and distress, increasing Mr Rochester's feelings of alienation and deprivation. Kür maintains the expressions of dispossession linked to the broad concepts of colonial oppression, gender exploitation, and ecological alienation. The colonizer tries to govern both land and people, yet finds himself in a

constant state of desire and frustration, as both nature and women are viewed as inaccessible, estranged, and ultimately uncontrollable.

Kür's translation constitutes an act of intellectual activism, accurately conveying the emotional and political critique inherent in the source text. Kür's work exceeds traditional notions of faithful translation by maintaining the themes of alienation, dispossession, and gendered oppression, thereby conveying the ecofeminist resistance inherent in Rhys' portrayal of the colonial context. Therefore, Kür's faithful translation allows the target audience to explore the broader ecofeminist themes in the source text regarding the relationship among nature, women, and colonialism. Consequently, ecofeminist translation serves as a form of resistance, encouraging readers to acknowledge the intricate networks of oppression that influence both gendered exploitation and colonial violence.

Example 4

ST: 'You haven't yet told me exactly what you did with my—with Antoinette.'

'Yes I tell you. I make her sleep.'

'What? All the time?'

'No, no. I wake her up to sit in the sun, bathe in the cool river. Even if she dropping with sleep. I make good strong soup. I give her milk if I have it, fruit I pick from my own trees. If she don't want to eat I say, "Eat it up for my sake, **doudou**." And she eat it up, then she sleep again.' (Rhys, 1999, p. 93)

TT: 'Karım- Antoinette'e yani, ne yaptığını hala tam olarak açıklamadın bana.'

'Anlattı ben. Uyuttu onu.'

'Ne? Onca zaman mı?'

'Yok, yok. Arada uyandırıdı ben, o güneşte otursun, serin ırmakta yıkansın için. Uykudan gözünü açamasa bile. Çorba yaptı ben en iyisinden içirdi, bulduğumda süt verdi, öz ağaçlarından meyva topladı verdi. Yemek istemediğinde canı, <<Hatırım için ye, **doudou**>> dedi ben ona. O da yedi, sonra uyudu gene.' (Rhys, 1982, p. 174)

BT: 'My wife- Antoinette, you still haven't told me what you did to her.'

'Told you, slept her.'

'Sorry? All this time?'

'No, no. For sunbathe, for bathe, sometimes wake up. She dropping sleep. Good soup I made, give her. Give her milk. Give her fruit my trees. She don't eat, I say, "Eat for me, doudou." She eat, then sleep.'

This example shows that local people use Creole as a symbol of their secondary status. One notable characteristic of the Creole dialect is observed in Godfrey's speech, where he omits the verb in the statement: "I too old now". Another instance occurs when Christophine states, "she pretty like pretty self," which exemplifies the Creole dialect's omission of inessential elements to convey a sense of vitality for speakers of the source language (Smith, 1997). The Creole dialect in *Wide Sargasso Sea* operates as a marker of class distinction. Instead of using an equivalent dialect in the target language, the translator creates a new dialect to provide the source-language dialect. Paul Bandia explains this situation by stating that linguistic vernacularisation serves as a translating act of resistance against authority and a declaration of identity for marginalized or oppressed groups. Activist translators, often creative authors, are inclined to dismantle the language of officialdom, which relies heavily on metropolitan standards, by highlighting the hybridity, variety, and multilingualism of postcolonial communities (Bandia, 2020, p. 519).

Bandia associates activist translation with creative writing, which can also be interpreted as rewriting in this case. However, Kür's translation actively engages with the power structures embedded in the source text by preserving the multilingualism and linguistic hierarchies of the original as a sign of activism. She not only ensures the narrative's authenticity but also highlights the novel's central colonial tensions. As a result, it is possible to assert that activism

has multiple dimensions because there are multiple ways to hybridise the source text. In her translation, Kür refrains from homogenizing or oversimplifying the linguistic contrasts present in the original work. Instead, she maintains the multilingual components, enabling the target text's audience to experience the same sense of tension and disruption evoked by the source text. The language in *Wide Sargasso Sea* carries profound significance, functioning not merely as a communicative device but also as a marker of identity and power dynamics. The employment of Creole, for instance, serves as a symbolic expression of resistance and local identity, starkly contrasting with the colonial language of English. Kür's translation, therefore, is not just an act of prioritizing the source text's narrative but a deliberate political gesture that reflects the source text's engagement with colonial structures. In this way, the translator contributes to the continuation of resistance through language, allowing the postcolonial struggle to resonate across linguistic borders.

Example 5

ST: "Our garden was large and beautiful as that garden in the Bible- the tree of life grew there. But it had gone wild. The paths were overgrown and a smell of dead flowers mixed with the fresh living smell. Underneath the tree ferns, tall as forest tree ferns, the light was green. Orchids flourished out of reach or for some reason not to be touched. One was snaky looking, another like an octopus with long thin brown tentacles bare of leaves hanging from a twisted root." (Rhys, 1999, p. 10-11)

TT: "Bahçemiz genişti, çok güzeldi. İncil'deki bahçe gibi- Yaşam Ağacı bile vardı. Yabanileşmişti ama. Yollarını otlar bürümüştü. Kurumuş ölü çiçeklerin kokusu, taze, canlı çiçeklerinkine karışıyordu. Ağaç gibi büyüyen, nerdeyse ormandakiler kadar yüksek olan eğrelti otlarının altında ışık yeşile dönüşüyordu. Bol bol açan orkideler ya uzanamayacağım yerdeydiler, ya da, her nedense, dokunulmazlıklar vardı. Bir tanesi yılan görünüslüydü; bir başkası ahtapot benziyordu, eğri büğrü bir kökten uzanan ince uzun, kahverengi ve yapraksız dokungaçları vardı." (Rhys, 1982, p. 21)

BT: Our garden was large and very beautiful. There was a Tree of Life as the garden in the Bible. But it was wild. The paths were overgrown by grass. The smell of the dead flowers was recognized with the smell of the fresh flowers. The light was turning green under the tree ferns as tall as the ones in the forest. The flourished orchids were either out of my reach or somehow, they were untouchable. One of them had snaky appearance, another was like an octopus with long brown tentacles without leaves hanging from a crooked root.

In Rhys' original passage, the garden is portrayed as wild and overgrown, with tangled paths and the mingling scents of decay and fresh life. This imagery of decay and vitality coexisting serves as a powerful metaphor for the postcolonial world depicted in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, where the colonial system, much like the garden, has become untamed and chaotic, yet still retains traces of its former beauty and potential for regeneration.

Kür's translation preserves these symbolic tensions between beauty and decay, life and death, which are crucial for maintaining the ecofeminist critique of the original text. By preserving the multilingual and culturally specific elements of the garden's description, the translator not only honours the aesthetic and thematic richness of the source material but also emphasizes the deep interconnections between colonialism, gender, and nature. This activist approach in translation allows readers in the target culture to engage with the ecological and gendered undercurrents of the original, even as they resonate with contemporary issues of colonial legacies, identity, and environmental degradation.

Kür emphasizes the resilience of the natural environment and the local women with the descriptions of the beauty of the garden in the target text. Kür preserves the activist spirit of the original text through fidelity to the discourse of the author and encourages the target audience to recognize the true essence of the ecofeminist critique of the source text.

Conclusion

This study focuses on the translation of ecofeminist elements, which are evaluated within the frame of translation activism in *Wide Sargasso Sea*. It has been concluded that Kür's commitment to preserving the ecofeminist critique of Rhys' original work makes this translation particularly significant. She not only preserves the essence of nature's imagery but also amplifies the message of resistance embedded in it. By preserving the multilingual and culture-specific aspects of the source text, Kür gives readers access to its deeper layers, enabling them to engage directly with its ecological, feminist, and postcolonial elements. One of the most important findings of this study is that Kür presents literary translation activism by reconstituting the text in a different timeline, not just by active opposition but by preserving the embedded nature of the text itself. Even though her activist identity is not directly reflected in the translation, she maintains her activism by staying faithful to the source text's origins, which is also a result of her intellectual habitus.

This study concludes that a more definitive framework for translation activism can be established. First of all, it has been argued that a translation can be activist, regardless of whether the source text inherently possesses that quality. Through the reconstruction process inherent in translation, the translator can show activism as it does not have to be in the form of opposition to the status quo or resistance to power (Washbourne, 2024). The term "engagement" is used to present a softer form of activism, offering a "reaction" that need not manifest as "action." Moreover, it also symbolizes the cultural engagement of the translator as well as the translation being a form of engagement with literary tradition. Therefore, even though *Wide Sargasso Sea* is not intrinsically regarded as an activist text, it has been asserted in this study that it is possible to identify activism in Kür's translation. It has been asserted that *Wide Sargasso Sea* becomes activist in translation. The activist nature of the target text is considered to result from a contemporary understanding of fidelity, which also facilitates new insights for further research. This study is based on only one translation by Pınar Kür, which can be further detailed by focusing on other translations by her. As the number of academic studies on the notion of fidelity increases, more theories are emerging, offering innovative perspectives for future research.

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