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Questioning the image of a poet and his work: The case of Nâzım Hikmet

Başak ERGİL, *Kadir Has University, Turkey*

ergilbasak@hotmail.com

Abstract

Researchers in translation studies have long discussed how cultural identities, images of literary systems, authors and works are created through translation. In this vein, André Lefevere's concepts of "rewriting" and "image-making" are helpful in understanding the relation between "image-making" and translation processes. While discussing the "image" of a translated work, it is effective to focus on how a literary system, a writer or a writer's works are *presented* and *received*. Gerard Genette's formulization of "paratext = peritext + epitext" is instrumental in obtaining the necessary conceptual and theoretical framework for inquiring the ways of presenting a text or a body of texts. In applying Genette's concepts to translation studies, particularly within an ideological context, Urpo Kovala's approach allows research within a world-historical context, considering ideological and cultural dimensions of translation processes.

Taking this theoretical framework as the backbone of my study, I will discuss the image of Nâzım Hikmet and his poetry in Anglo-American literary systems. Hikmet is important for translation studies because he is (a) the Turkish poet with the greatest number of works translated into English, (b) the only Turkish poet whose poetry has been translated into over 50 languages, (c) one of the figures to whom UNESCO dedicated the year 2002, "The Year of Cultural Heritage". In this paper, I will evaluate my findings of the paratextual analysis of Hikmet's poetry in Anglo-American literary systems from the time they were first presented within those systems in 1932 to 2002 when four books were translated into English and published.

Key words: *Image-making, poetry translation, paratextual analysis, translation as rewriting, culture planning, cultural identities*