Ahmet Mithat's Translation Preferences and Social Anxiety

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Abstract

This study will examine Ahmet Mithat Efendi's translation strategy in the context of "social anxiety." Social anxiety can be defined as an attempt to alleviate the anxiety caused by the rapid social transformations of the period through literature. Although Ahmet Mithat's translation strategy has been studied in the related literature, a detailed evaluation from the perspective of social anxiety is lacking. Analyzing how the author shaped this strategy will provide a new perspective to existing research and clarify his motivations in the translation process. The study employs a descriptive method to analyze Ahmet Mithat's literary translations and prefaces. In particular, the source cultures of the stories especially in his Letaif-i Rivayat collection, which are considered within the framework of "assumed translation," will be examined. Additionally, the influence of social anxiety on the author's translation preferences will be explained. This article argues that social anxiety was the key factor in Ahmet Mithat's translation choices, particularly in his engagement with Western culture. Understanding this influence will allow for a deeper comprehension of the motivations behind his strategy. In conclusion, this study offers a new theoretical framework by analyzing Ahmet Mithat's translation strategy through the lens of social anxiety.

Keywords: Translation Studies, Translation Strategy, Emotional Communities, Social Anxiety, Ahmet Mithat Efendi.

Ahmet Mithat'ın Çeviri Tercihleri ve Sosyal Kaygı
Öz

Bu çalışmada, Ahmet Mithat Efendi'nin tercüme stratejisi "toplumsal kaygı" bağlamında ele alınacaktır. Toplumsal kaygı, dönemin hızlı sosyal dönüşümlerinin yarattığı endişeyi edebiyat aracılığıyla hafifletme çabası olarak tanımlanabilir. Literatürde Ahmet Mithat'ın tercüme stratejisi incelenmiş olsa da, toplumsal kaygı ekseninde detaylı bir değerlendirme eksiktir. Yazarın bu stratejiyi nasıl şekillendirdiğini incelemek, mevcut araştırmalara yeni bir perspektif kazandıracaktır. Ayrıca, tercüme sürecindeki motivasyonlarını daha net ortaya koyacaktır. Çalışmada betimleme yöntemi kullanılarak, Ahmet Mithat'ın edebî çevirileri ve önsözleri analiz edilecektir. Özellikle, Letâif-i Rivâyât hikâye

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külliyatında yer alan ve "varsayılan çeviri"[1] kapsamında değerlendirilen metinlerin kaynak kültürleri incelenecektir. Bununla birlikte, toplumsal kaygının yazarın tercüme tercihlerini nasıl yönlendirdiği açıklanacaktır. Bu makale, Ahmet Mithat'ın Batı kültüründen faydalanarak yaptığı çevirilerde toplumsal kaygının belirleyici bir unsur olduğu iddiasını öne sürmektedir. Böylece, yazarın stratejisinin ardındaki motivasyonları daha iyi anlamak mümkün olacaktır. Sonuç olarak, bu çalışma Ahmet Mithat'ın tercüme stratejisini toplumsal kaygı bağlamında ele alarak literatüre yeni bir teorik çerçeve sunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Çeviribilim, Tercüme Stratejisi, Duygu Cemaatleri, Toplumsal Kaygı, Ahmet Mithat Efendi.

Introduction

Ahmet Mithat Efendi, a prominent figure in late Ottoman Turkish literature, is recognized not only for his literary works but also for his approach to translation. He is considered one of the first novelists of modern Turkish literature, a pioneering educator, and a prolific writer – often described as a "writing machine" due to his extensive literary output. It is often stated that the motivation behind these three fundamental features, which are accepted in the canonical history of Turkish literature, is the desire to teach and educate. In this context, the works of Ahmet Mithat that are considered translations among his narratives will be examined through the conceptual framework of social anxiety.

Ahmet Mithat's text selection strategy will be analyzed through the lens of André Lefevere's translation theory, Gideon Toury's "descriptive"[2] method, and Critical Discourse Analysis, drawing on the Frankfurt School's intellectual tradition, particularly Habermas's theories. This study defines anxiety as the attempt to mitigate the distress caused by rapid social transformations of the period. In this context, Ahmet Mithat's translation preferences are a multilayered issue that should be examined not only as an individual stance but also as a collective social matter.[3]

Although some studies discuss Ahmet Mithat's translation strategies, a comprehensive analysis from the perspective of social anxiety remains absent. This study aims to provide a new perspective to existing research and to clarify how Ahmet Mithat shaped his translation strategies. Therefore, the focus of the article consists not only of a purely literary journey in Ahmet Mithat's works but also of a social inquiry and critique. In this context, the main claim of the study is that the translations chosen by Ahmet Mithat from the Western socio-cultural background are guided by social anxiety.

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[1] Kavram, Gideon Toury'ye aittir ve kendisi, çeviribilimde tarihsel araştırmalar için yöntemsel bir çerçeve sunan İsrailli bir çeviribilimcidir. "Translatin Studies and Beyond" adlı çalışmasında çeviribilimde betimleyici çalışmaların doğasını ve yöntemsel çerçevesini ortaya koyar. Yaklaşımı, Itamar Even-Zohar'ın geliştirdiği çoğul-dizge kuramından ve sistemsel bir bakıştan beslenir. Toury'ye göre çeviriler, çeviri süreçlerinin aksine gözlemlenebilir olgulardır ve bu nedenle çeviri araştırmaları gözlemlenebilenden başlamalıdır (Demircioğlu, 2016: 59-60). Temelde çeviriyi de bir yeni metin ya da en yalın anlamda bir yeniden yazım olarak gören Toury için hangi metnin çeviri hangisinin çeviri olmadığı meselesi bir temel tartışma noktasıdır. Dolayısıyla çeviri olarak kabul edilen her metin için "varsayılan çeviri" ifadesini kullanarak bir kaynak metnin varlığının ancak varsayılabileceğinin altını çizer. Dolayısıyla Toury, çevirilerin birer yeni yaratım olduğunu ve- çoğul-dizge yaklaşımından esinlenerek- çevirinin zaman ve mekân boyutlarında geçişken, değişken ve canlı niteliklere sahip olduğunu vurgulamış olur.

[2] Toury attempts to outline the pre-process and process norms that shape translations within a given culture, thereby explaining and interpreting the decisions involved in translation. In Toury's "descriptive" approach, every form of translation phenomenon and behavior observed before and during the translation process is examined to understand the type and degree of the relationship established with the source text on the one hand, and its relationship with the social-cultural norms from which the translation emerges on the other. To implement this method, the researcher is directed towards "extratextual sources." However, there appears to be no methodological suggestion regarding the examination of discourses located outside or alongside the translation texts. For this reason, translation scholars tend to utilize a method called "Critical Discourse Analysis" in the investigation of translation discourses related to linguistic, textual, cultural, and social structures. This method views language as an analytical tool that helps understand discourses formed within the framework of dominant ideology, power relations, and various social phenomena in society. In this method, which focuses on all kinds of written or spoken texts, discourse has been evaluated as a specific form of individual and social uses of language. Written and spoken texts have been seen as products and processes that have emerged and been interpreted according to a specific perspective within a certain social context Demircioğlu, 2016: 156-158.

[3] With the framework established by descriptive methods and critical discourse analysis, the nature of the relationship that Ahmet Mithat develops with the source/original language and culture through the contents he addresses and subjects to a rewriting process via translation will be revealed. Moreover, the descriptive interpretation regarding the reality of which culture the author chose the contents for translation will lead to inferences about the nature of the emotional relationship the author has with the socio-cultural source of the original contents.

The methodology of the study is descriptive, and within this framework, the texts of Ahmet Mithat Efendi, which are accepted as literary translations, will be analyzed. In this context, some of the texts from the story collection "Letâif-i Rivâyât" are addressed within the assumed translation concept. These stories are titled "Gönül,"[4] "Nasip,"[5] "Cinli Han,"[6] "Bir Tövbekâr,"[7] "Çifte İntikam,"[8] "Kısmetinde Olanın Kaşığında Çıkar,"[9] "Diplomalı Kız,"[10] "İki Hud'akâr,"[11] and "Ana-Kız."[12] Examining these texts in relation to their source culture is crucial to understanding the author's social anxiety and its manifestations. Ahmet Mithat Efendi explicitly or implicitly acknowledges in the prefaces, explanatory notes, and rewriting practices of these stories that their themes are drawn from European sources. Therefore, these stories fall under the category of assumed translation.

This study aims to examine the social impact of translations while highlighting Ahmet Mithat's sensitivity to the cultural transformations of his era. The author's engagement with social issues through literature reflects the fact that he is not only a translator but also a social actor. In this context, it is known that Ahmet Mithat is a writer who drives discussions with his ideas about writing practices and what kind of translation approach would be appropriate for his time.

The "Decadence"[13] and "Classics"[14] debates in Turkish literary history were extensive and involved multiple participants over a prolonged period. In his article that initiated the Classics debate, Mithat Efendi argued that the main issue that should serve the needs of the period regarding translations was the necessity of choosing the right works from European classics to be translated. Ahmet Mithat, who showed great sensitivity in presenting works that would serve as examples for society as a whole and especially for the younger generation, stated that by selecting the right works from European literary pieces, young people would learn that their education would not consist merely of "the disgraceful

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[4] Ahmet Mithat Efendi, 2001: 88-105.

[5] Ahmet Mithat Efendi, 2001: 259-282.

[6] Ahmet Mithat Efendi, 2001: 338-383. The distinction between which of Ahmet Mithat's literary works are original and which are translations remains an unresolved issue in academic research, leading to ongoing debates in the field. Accordingly, numerous studies have attempted to compile lists of the author's translated works; however, these lists often vary significantly in content. Among the scholarly works considered authoritative, Işın Bengi's article titled *"A Pioneer in Translation Studies: Ahmet Mithat Efendi"* (A Pioneer in Translation Studies: Ahmet Mithat Efendi. In Esen, N. (2006). Hello O Writer! Critical Writings on Ahmet Mithat) (pp. 338-346). İstanbul: Boğaziçi University Publishing) is particularly noteworthy. In our study, the criteria used to identify the author's translated works are based on the framework established by Bengi. In her article, Bengi evaluates Ahmet Mithat's approach to translation through the lens of contemporary translation theorist Hans J. Vermeer's Skopos theory, and she first examines the author as a translator. She then compiles all works previously referred to as translations in various studies and identifies 32 such texts. By analyzing the cover pages and prefaces of these texts, Bengi categorizes the translation strategies employed by the author. One such criterion is Ahmet Mithat's explicit acknowledgment in some prefaces that the subject matter of a work was derived from a foreign source. For instance, in his story titled "Cinli Han (Caravanserai Haunted by Demons)", the author likewise notes that the narrative is based on a foreign source and is presented to his readers as such. Based on these criteria, "Cinli Han" is also considered a translated work in our study. (Ahmet Mithat Efendi, 2001: 338.

[7] Ahmet Mithat Efendi, 2001: 413-437.

[8] Ahmet Mithat Efendi, 2001: 497-520.

[9] Ahmet Mithat Efendi, 2001: 563-593.

[10] Ahmet Mithat Efendi, 2001: 593-663.

[11] Ahmet Mithat Efendi, 2001: 703-733.

[12] Ahmet Mithat Efendi, 2001: 823-851.

[13] "The discussion of classics among Ottoman intellectuals and writers, which began in August 1897 and lasted for about four months in the newspapers and magazines of the time, also constitutes an important starting point for understanding the concept of translation in late 19th-century Turkish literature. The topic of translating classics from European literature into Ottoman Turkish was brought to the agenda following the famous 'Decadent' debate of 1897. This issue was raised by Ahmet Mithat, whom we can consider an extremely important literary and cultural planner in terms of the history of translation at the end of the 19th century. Notable figures who participated in the discussion, which was debated in important newspapers and journals such as Tercümân-ı Hakîqat, Malûmât, and İkdâm, included Ahmet Cevdet, Cenap Şehabettin, Necip Asım, İsmail Avni, Hüseyin Daniş, Ahmet Rasim, Hüseyin Sabri, and the famous author of Galatât-ı Tercüme, Kemal Paşazade Saîd Bey (Lastik Saîd)." Demircioğlu, 2003: 15.

[14] The discussion of classics began with Ahmet Mithat's article titled "Müsâbaka-i Kalemiyye İkrâm-ı Aklâm," published in Tercümân-ı Hakikât on September 5, 1897. "However, by the time the discussion occurred in 1897, it is accepted that Ahmet Mithat had thoughts forming the basis of the classical debate that dated back as much to his translation works. For example, in the preface of Sid'in Hulâsası, which he prepared as the first attempt to translate the classics, Ahmet Mithat provides hints of the views that would contribute to the discussion of classics. Within this understanding, Ahmet Mithat expressed his concentrated views in "İkrâm-ı Aklâm" and thus opened the doors to a discussion that he firmly believed would prepare very important advancements for our linguistic and literary progress, which would last approximately three months." Kaplan, 1993: 166-167.

writings of Émile Zola or the depravity of Paul Bourget, but that there are also authentic literary works that could genuinely serve the discipline of mankind."[15]

From the author's perspective, translation strategy is fundamentally about selecting the appropriate text for translation. The focus of the article is positioned precisely at this point. What is the reason for Mithat Efendi to select the texts he would translate and convey to his target readers from among the texts in Letâif-i Rivâyât, appropriate for the size of the article, within the European socio-cultural framework? Could this selection process, within the context of Ahmet Mithat's era, be linked to the broader phenomenon of the "anxiety of influence"[16], which often shapes author's writing practices? Can it be verified that Ahmet Mithat's selection process was influenced by social anxiety, a shared emotion among many intellectuals of his era?

This study introduces a new theoretical framework by examining Ahmet Mithat Efendi's translation strategy through the lens of social anxiety. The article examines Mithat Efendi's translation approach within the framework of "social anxiety", considering his pioneering contributions to literature and education. The contents of the works in Ahmet Mithat's story collection and their relationship with the social context of the period hold significant importance in literary studies. Thus, translations function not merely as linguistic transfers but as instrument for shaping social consciousness. With this understanding, Ahmet Mithat Efendi appears to have become a force that triggers a process of cultural change. The author's need for this change, as well as the common emotion that guides the way the source culture is transferred to the target language and culture, form the main axis of the article.

1. "What is Meant by Social Anxiety?"

The primary aim of focusing on the notion of social anxiety as a guiding factor in Ahmet Mithat's translation strategy in this article is to offer a new perspective that differs from the commonly cited motivations in the existing literature concerning his narratives. While we acknowledge that, like many other Tanzimat intellectuals, Ahmet Mithat may have been driven by widely accepted goals such as enlightening the public, promoting social utility, embracing Western knowledge, and contributing to the salvation of a collapsing nation and community, our objective is to draw attention to a shared emotion impetus underlying these aims. In this regard, the article emphasizes the need to identify the collective that may have directed both Ahmet Mithat and other Tanzimat writers toward such objectives. Consequently, the concept of social anxiety constitutes the central axis of the article's analytical framework.

Social anxiety is an anxiety that has a common effect on the members of a social structure, regardless of whether individuals are aware of it or not. It is important to note that the available resources on this subject are limited. However, in analytical studies regarding the state of the individual and society in the face of modernity, various similar observations have been made regarding the existence of anxiety and related concepts. Among the key theorists of modernization and anxiety, Zygmunt Bauman argues that anxiety is an inherent and perpetual condition of modern society. According to him, anxiety is a normal and constant condition of modern society. Bauman argues that modern life keeps individuals in a state of continuous anxiety.[17]

Anxiety is a widespread feeling of unease triggered by an impending threat. This state may stem from specific experiences or reflect uncertainty about the future. In short, anxiety is an emotional response given in the face of uncertainty. It should also be noted that anxiety particularly affects social structures due to its outcomes. States and various organizations are influenced by anxiety, even if individuals do not psychologically feel it. This indicates a common anxiety. Social anxiety, though not explained by every individual, permeates the entire social structure, influencing collective perceptions and cultural production. In this study, a common emotion regarding the late Ottoman intellectuals, which includes the author and his translation preferences discussed in the context of anxiety, is addressed. In

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[15] Kaplan, 1993: 168.

[16] Gürbilek expresses the issue as a concern of masculinization while constructing a theoretical basis for new Turkish literature. Gürbilek, 2004: 10. She also specifies the reasons why the concern about feminization is a cause for anxiety as follows; "In a society where civilization is changing, the spiritual symbol of the community threatened by modernity is always addressed through women, as the private sphere is seen as a natural extension of it, meaning modernity-related concerns have always been discussed in relation to women." Gürbilek, 2004: 29.

[17] Bauman, 2006: 40-41.

the literary works of Ottoman intellectuals, including Ahmet Mithat, a collective awareness of social issues manifests as social anxiety. Therefore, anxiety can be identified in most themes within the texts of the intellectuals, as it is both a shared emotion and related to social issues. Consequently, the authors of the period share a sense of emotional community in this regard.

Emotional communities are groups bound by shared emotional norms, emphasizing certain feelings while marginalizing others. Multiple emotional communities coexist within a society. However, as societal conditions shift, these communities evolve – some emotions gain prominence, while others diminish. Individuals belonging to an emotional community come together based on common interests, values, and goals. These groups can be social communities or textual communities formed by ideological beliefs, teachings, and shared assumptions.[18]

In the 19th century Ottoman world, military defeats, socio-economic regressions, and the gaps that emerged within the social structure brought together writers united around the ideal of salvation. These writers, despite their ideological differences, shared common concerns about modernity, Westernization, and the evolving socio-cultural landscape. Some shaped their discourses by adopting Westernism, some Islamism, and others nationalism. However, all united in the sense that the West posed an inevitable and significant threat (seyl-i hurûşân)[19] and felt the necessity to build a new socio-cultural mentality in this direction. It is observed that an emotional approach takes precedence over a cold-blooded analysis in their discourses.

Social contagion theory suggests that emotions, like anxiety, fear, and panic, spread through societies much like biological contagions. This emotional transmission can impair rational decision-making and amplify collective anxiety. Similar to anxiety, feelings of fear and panic can spread throughout society and weaken individuals' reasoning abilities, facilitating the dominance of the source of anxiety over society.[20] When considered in this context, the set of events that cause social anxiety can influence consciousness, values, and judgments, turning them into tools that guide individuals' behaviors.

In this article, when considering the theory of contagion alongside social anxiety, it can be said that the anxiety felt by Ahmet Mithat reflects a genuine emotion for the writers of the Tanzimat period as well. Similarly, it can be thought that the opposite is also possible. In this context, social anxiety bears a common emotional characteristic for intellectuals who are faced with the transitioning from a communal structure to a framework driven by socio-cultural chances, manifests as tangible phenomenon in literary works.

Territorial losses, political instability, and economic decline, coupled with the erosion of socio-cultural and traditional values, generated deep concerns among both the ruling elite and intellectuals, significantly influencing cultural production. As a result of this social anxiety, intellectual debates fueled reform proposals, guided the Westernization process, and aimed to preserve the existing order.

In this context, it has been accepted that this anxiety-relieving mechanism[21] has weakened and lost its effectiveness due to the changes in perception caused by the destruction experienced within the cultural worldview. This situation has led to an even deeper sense of anxiety. The greatest effect of anxiety is that it focuses the mind solely on negative scenarios, thus hindering a broad perspective and

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[18] Rosenwein: 2007: 2.

[19] Meaning a raging flood, is a term used by many writers of the era to explain Europe's disproportionate rise. The term indicates that the flood is unstoppable and does not allow for a backward glance. It has become a common image that materializes the feelings toward Western modernity. For footnote information on who used the term and how, see, Kara, 1994: 15–17.

[20] Çakır, 2011: 65-66.

[21] Kesebir and Pyszczynski, 2011: 3. The meaning, purpose, and structure of life, provided by cultural worldviews, have great value as they convey to individuals a sense of worth and self-esteem. These tools, such as literary works, enable society to attain a strong position in the face of anxiety, thus creating a secure sense of "self-esteem" Koç and Kafa, 2019: 131. Even when not facing a threat, the need for protection, appreciation, and security provided by parents becomes insufficient after an individual's cognitive functions develop. A person feels safer and free from anxiety by connecting to the cultural worldview as a more permanent and superior source of value and protection. Thus, the construction of a cultural worldview is a fundamental dynamic that provides self-esteem and acts as a buffer against social anxiety during times of crisis. Considering specifically the Ottoman society, the new Turkish literature is also a newly constructed structure that serves as an important part of the cultural worldview for these reasons. The subject of the article can be interpreted in the context of Mithat Efendi's translation preferences, as the author turns to Western socio-cultural sources and seeks a new perception of self and a foundation for a cultural worldview.

reducing awareness. In addition, anxiety disrupts spontaneous movement, creativity, and the ability to develop original, in-depth solutions. As a result, the solutions developed are incomplete and insufficient because they are created within a framework of perception dominated by anxiety, far from a cool-headed evaluation.

Classical Ottoman social structure perceived itself as eternal, both temporally and spatially, grounded in concepts like the "eternal state" an "world order." This perception represented a common understanding for administrators, scholars, and the public. However, European modernization imposed intellectual, cultural, and economic transformations on both its own society and those within its sphere of influence. This process was also inevitable for Ottoman social structure. Although it progressed gradually, the socio-cultural structure and individuals of the Ottomans had to directly confront the pressure of the West's sudden and sharp transformations seeking to conform surrounding social structures to its own reality in the 19th century. This encounter has necessitated facing a consciousness of finitude for the Ottoman social structure and realizing this truth.

This emerging reality generated a profound sense of "ontological insecurity" -a paralyzing state where individuals struggled to diminish real threats from perceived dangers, leading to existential uncertainty which to ignore, meaning they struggle to navigate the world. Ontological insecurity became a defining factor in shaping the "modern self," playing a crucial role in late Ottoman social identity.[22]

The need to create new channels for conveying a new self-narrative or cultural worldview has arisen from the need to repair a shaken sense of self. The expression of "new Turkish literature" reflects this need for renewal, implicitly indicating a weakening of trust in the old understanding. During periods of heightened social anxiety -such as the Ottoman Empire's struggle for existence and intellectual pursuit of liberation -cultural buffer theory offers a framework for understanding the activation of anxiety-reducing mechanisms.

According to this approach, individuals need mechanisms to alleviate anxiety in the face of uncertainty, danger, or the threat of death. Because the cultural worldview and the tools that convey it are a structure constructed by humans, they are inherently fragile and sensitive. Therefore, the uncertainty and loss of self-arising from the feeling of being trapped between infinity and finitude have triggered a common emotion, namely social anxiety. This concept should be regarded not only as an expression of anxieties related to the transformation of a shared emotion or social structure but also as a state of feeling arising from the uncertainties brought about by the innovations that the phenomenon of society generates.

2. From "Anxiety of Influence" to Social Anxiety

To analyze the traces of social anxiety in a literary translation, the most relevant and effective theoretical framework is "anxiety of influence".[23] Although Bloom's approach has been understood and

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[22] Zarakol, 2012: 58.

[23] Nurdan Gürbilek's study is one of the studies that evaluate the first texts of modern Turkish literature in the context of the anxiety of influence. The fact that she discussed the issue in terms of masculinity-feminity opposition shows that she evaluated Western texts as unified by attributing gender to them and treated them as if they were living organisms. So she examines modern Turkish literature, particularly Turkish novels, through the lens of Harold Bloom's notion of anxiety of influence, interpreting this new literary formation as shaped by concerns of feminization, or fears of effeminacy. According to the critic, this situation is linked to the fear of losing "virility," or masculine identity, frequently emphasized by Cemil Meriç. The anxiety regarding the loss of masculinity often brings along fears of distancing from adulthood, leaving maturation to another, and being trapped in childhood. Gürbilek, 2004: 10. One of the issues Gürbilek questions in this context is the portrayal of female characters in early novels as more sensitive, susceptible to external influences, snobbish, and individuals acting intensely influenced by what they read. In attempting to understand this situation, she expresses that, in societies undergoing civilizational changes, women are seen as the spiritual symbol of communities threatened by modernity; therefore, the private sphere is accepted as a natural extension, identified with the inner self, positioned against the outside, and thus represents a field where anxieties regarding modernization are articulated. Gürbilek, 2004: 29. By evaluating anxiety of influence alongside fears of losing the power, authority, and dominance associated with masculinity due to concerns of feminization, Gürbilek's approach is an undeniable reading of Modern Turkish Literature. In terms of this article, it also creates an inspiring ground to bring closer the conceptualizations of anxiety of influence and social anxiety. Indeed, Gürbilek explains that "thinking of the novelist as a masculine figure (influencing but not influenced) and the reader as a feminine one (always influenced) does not solve the problem of influence but alleviates the anxiety it generates. Because the problem exists there, the author's mind is occupied with it; yet, it is also distant, having been transported into the distance, to a safe zone, the realm of the powerless gender that is highly open to influence, thanks to gender separation." Gürbilek, 2004: 33-34. In this analysis, she demonstrates how the

compressed within the individual worlds of its authors, we can argue in the framework of this article that Ahmet Mithat and many of Tanzimat authors have confronted the anxiety of influence that Bloom intended, if we consider all the texts produced in the West and all the new discourses emerging in the postmodern era as a unified text. Furthermore, regardless of how an authors' individual histories manifest, they cannot be addressed independently of social reality and the aspect of social reality that constructs them. In this context, it would not be incorrect to claim that Ahmet Mithat's preference for translation texts, which predominantly chose content from Europe, reflects the influence of a Western literary corpus that can be viewed as a whole and the new intellectual world behind it. It is considered that other studies which examine the anxiety of influence approach within the context of modern Turkish literature similarly conceptualize the West as a unified text.

Bloom's theory builds on Freud's concept of "angst vor etwas"[24] (fear of something), reframing it within the context of literary tradition and the struggle for artistic originality. Bloom's theory argues that Shakespeare's unparalleled position in the Western canon creates a psychological struggle for later writers, who experience "anxiety of influence" as they attempt to define themselves in relation to his legacy. For the writer who faces this situation, an anxiety of influence will emerge for him. According to this theory, which generates discourse primarily through the evaluation of poetry, poetry arises as a direct result of an influencing process. Accordingly, the writer also exists in the influence of a powerful writer who came before him, drawing from Freud—meaning an individual comes to self-existence as a result of a confrontation process with his father—. Consequently, the author and the literary text reflect this concern in the effort to overcome this effect or anxiety of influence.

The anxiety of influence, especially when it is interpreted as a compulsory adaptation to Westernization in social structures like the late Ottoman Empire that experienced the process of modernization, serves as a theoretical foundation for evaluating the shared emotional world that also affected Ahmet Mithat's translation choices within the framework of social anxiety. A study that assesses the issue while analyzing early period novels emphasizes the close connection between the individual and the collective. According to this approach, third-world texts, such as those from late Ottoman literature, possess allegorical structures. Although they may have been influenced by Western representations, they should be read as national allegories. Individual experiences reflect collective experiences, and the fate of individual heroes symbolizes the general struggle of social structure.[25] Therefore, Ahmet Mithat's translations and rewritings of texts selected from the Western socio-cultural environment, reflect both his individual reality and the emotional world of the social structure that experienced the same process of Westernization with him.

In this regard, the anxiety of influence is important as an effective theory, marking a common ground of the emotional world of late Ottoman literary culture. It supports the notion that this emotional community, which includes figures like Ahmet Mithat, is shaped by anxiety stemming from considering the Western socio-cultural realm as the main source culture while also feeling stigmatized as the "sick man" in the face of its authority. The ontological insecurity that arises from the feeling that the old cultural worldview, shaped by a strong sense of self or other, has lost its function, prompts Ahmet Mithat to try to fill the perceived authority gap either with a paternalistic or teacher role. The source of the new socio-cultural mindset is inevitably the Western culture. For this reason, the author sees it as compulsory to turn to this source in order to translate its texts. Through this means, he aims to maintain socio-cultural existence by enlightening the public and also using his own translation strategy to construct a new cultural worldview that includes new literary texts.

3. Transition from Community to Society and Social Anxiety

Along with the explanations above, the compelling results of the compulsory transition from community to society can also be considered as phenomena that trigger social anxiety. The changes experienced in the socio-cultural structure of the late Ottoman period are not solely due to the transformation from a small principality to a multinational empire; the necessity to adapt to the rapidly changing conditions of the modern world has also been a decisive factor in this transformation. The

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products of modern Turkish literature reflect a common emotion of the author and their social structure, serving to alleviate the possible discomfort this emotion produces.

[24] Bloom, 2014: 26. For a detailed reading on the Anxiety of Influence approach, Bloom, 2020.

[25] Gürbilek, 2004: 171.

Ottoman poets and divan scribes of the 14th century do not use the same language as their counterparts in the 16th and 17th centuries. Similarly, the military organization and warfare technology of the 14th century differ from those of the 16th century. Comparable changes can also be observed in land management and the financial system. However, one of the most important points is that there have been significant transformations in the way individuals belonging to different classes of Ottoman society think and perceive the world, and their lifestyles. Ottoman modernization encompasses not only the transformation of institutions but also that of individuals and the state, which is the fundamental structure organizing society.[26]

The transformations identified by historical and sociological studies have led to a point where the late Ottoman social structure has also become a ground for an old-new conflict. Understanding the reason for this situation by focusing on the differentiation occurring at the level of mentality appears to be beneficial from a scholarly perspective. Wherever the question-answer process based on the tradition of "nutkiyet" has undergone change, there has been a conflict between the traditional (old) and the modern (new). In this context, the intense experience of this conflict in the modern period is directly related to its occurrence in a relatively recent historical past, its widespread nature, and the profound transformations taking place in the question-answer process that forms the basis of nutkiyet.[27] Within this framework, the situation experienced during the Ottoman Westernization era demonstrates the anxiety of the transition from community to society. Community refers to groups that possess a shared value system, constructed through the questions and answers developed by human thought and language abilities. Society, on the other hand, represents a social state where the rational prevails over the emotional, the common value structure is torn, and the members of the community exist with very small units and low-level values. While community builds its worldview on a specific perspective, the world of reality and the world of values do not conflict with each other; rather, they complement each other. In the structure of society, however, the fundamental condition is the disconnection and fragmentation between the world of reality and the world of values.[28]

Well, what kind of reality does this new society represent and in which aspects can it be a source of anxiety? First of all, the concept of society is a term belonging to a specific social structure, more precisely, to the bourgeois public. The bourgeois society emerged at the end of the European Middle Ages and has undergone its own unique historical processes. Therefore, it is not possible to consider it as a general model and also evaluate it within the same framework as similar structures in different historical contexts.[29]

However, we speak of types of modernization, forms of Westernization, nations, public spaces, and the concept of society. Therefore, we cannot deny the existence of these concepts and their role in shaping our lives. However, we cannot say that this structure has formed completely problem-free or that it functions spontaneously without creating any deficiencies or inconsistencies. Because the Ottoman individual, while transitioning from a communal structure to a social order, has had to incorporate themselves into an external reality instead of experiencing this transformation through

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[26] Ortaylı, 2001: 14.

[27] Fazlıoğlu, 2023: 170. The concept of nutkiyet indicated in the study refers to the intellectual and linguistic ability that enables people to both ask questions and generate answers. Within this capability, throughout all times, when the questions arising from the humanity—comprising its dual nature of animality (humanity) or nutkiyet—change, a dichotomy of old and new has emerged and will continue to emerge. For further reading, see Fazlıoğlu, 2023: 163-171. In contrast, regarding the topic we are addressing, the negative attitude towards tradition during the Westernization period in which Mithat Efendi engaged in writing activities can also be interpreted in connection with the explanation above, as it was preferred over the newly added European socio-cultural, scientific, and economic structure, and even the claim that tradition was ineffective. Those living within a social structure that has attained a common acceptance do not feel the need to define it as a tradition. This is because the system operates as it should be. However, encountering a new system may lead those within the social structure to find themselves in a different narrative regarding their position in relation to that structure. The common answers to the shared questions can create a new common emotion. For many discourses and practices during the Ottoman Westernization process, this situation can be felt as part of a change summarized by the transition from community to society, characterized by the lack of a strong sense of self in the face of the new system. Consequently, this created a need to the feeling of deprivation that emerges with the transition, with a new socio-cultural world that alleviates anxiety. Ahmet Mithat's preferences in selecting the texts he will translate are also part of this common emotion.

[28] Fazlıoğlu, 2023: 170.

[29] Habermas, 1997: 10. Quoted in Dellaloğlu, 2020: 225.

natural historical processes. This situation has led to various gaps and issues of compatibility in both historical and intellectual terms.

The awareness of the disconnection created by the difference between community and society can be concretized with Mithat Efendi's text titled "Ana-Kız," which he translated through "bast" and "temhîd" furthermore created a new narrative through "ifrağ". The character Jermen Valide, who struggles to live with her grandchild in poverty and a state of dependency, one day finds a small amount of money she had long forgotten in a corner and thanks God, and in the writer's expression, this situation is expressed as,

"For this reason, she thanks Almighty God. (Cenab-ı Hak)". Then the author continues as; "How? Did you not find that remark about 'Cenab-ı Hakk' surprising? Living within the bounds of the noble ethics of Islam and the good customs of the Ottomans, you may not find it surprising at all to see this blessed word, which has always been your constant refrain, among these lines. However, you may consider that this fact is taking place in Paris. In Paris!... Is there still a form of education or remembrance of the divine, such that the name of God is considered necessary to be uttered in the language of servitude with feelings of gratitude? The spiritual progress of Paris has taken such a direction that even those who have completely abandoned the idea of divinity have also forsaken the use of the word 'Adiyo' at the farewell of civilization worship. This word is the complete counterpart of the latter part of our polite expression 'Allahaısmarladık' with its omission. They have started to use 'oruvar,' and if we were to translate it with our Islamic terminology, we would have to say 'Inshallah, we will meet again.' However, if it is necessary to translate it in accordance with their unfortunate manners, then it is also necessary to omit the first part of this."[30]

Ahmet Mithat refers to the content he translated[31] from another language in the introductory section titled "Expression" of his story called "Ana-Kız". He states that he draws fifth of his content from a "specially selected article" from a European newspaper. He acknowledges, "My readers are aware that I received many ideas in the form of stories and novels from European newspapers and later how I published and adapted them myself."[32] The act of publishing and adapting them into novel form is a general translation strategy known by the author's target audience. Additionally, his remarks on the greeting customs of Parisians are among the important points examined in this article.

The author attempts to explain the inability to provide equivalent terms in Ottoman Turkish for the European greeting customs when applying a literal translation approach, by pointing out the gaps between the two languages and cultures. These gaps arise because certain parts of the original greeting words are no longer used by Parisians. These parts are primarily based on beliefs. Mithat Efendi illustrates how these elements would have been addressed if considered with their full Ottoman Turkish equivalents, particularly highlighting similar aspects within the Turkish-Islamic cultural sphere, such as the words "inşallah" and "Allah." Ultimately, he shares with his readers that he has filled these gaps with content from his own cultural sphere, translating through "bast" and "temhîd" furthermore created a new narrative through "ifrağ".

Throughout Letâif-i Rivâyât, similar expressions have been included in almost all of the stories, and in the last story, "Ana-Kız," the subject appears to be explained. The expression "Cenâb-ı Hakk" is

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[30] Ahmet Mithat Efendi, 2001: 825. The original quotation in Ottoman Turkish is as follows; "Bundan dolayı Cenab-ı Hakk'a teşekkürler ediyor." … Nasıl? Şu 'Cenab-ı Hakk'a!' lâkırdısına istigrab etmediniz mi? Ahlâk-ı âliye-i İslâmiye ve adât-ı hasene-i Osmaniye mukteziyatı dahilinde yaşadığınız cihetle her daim vird-i zebanınız olan bu kelime-i mübarekeyi şu satırlar arasında görünce hiç de istigrap etmeyebilirsiniz. Lâkin düşünebilirsiniz ki bu vak'a Paris'te güzar eyliyor. Paris'te !… Orada terbiye-i diniye, tahatturat-ı uluhiye kalmış mı ki böyle ihtisasat-ı müteşekkirane ile nam-ı Huda ber-averde-i lisan-ı ubudiyet edilmeye lüzum görülsün? Paris'in terakkiyat-ı makûse-i maneviyesi o kadar meydan almıştır ki fikr-i uluhiyetle bilkülliye terk-i ülfet eden hazele-i medeniyet - perestan veda makamında 'Adiyo' kelimesinin istimalini de terk etmişlerdir. Zira bu kelime bizim 'Allahaısmarladık' kelime-i nezaketimizin kısm-ı ahirinin hazfıyla mukabil tammıdır. Onlar 'oruvar' kullanmaya başlamışlardır ki biz tabirat-ı İslâmiyemiz ile tercüme edecek olsak 'İnşallah yine görüşürüz' demekliğimiz lazım gelirse de onların adab-ı menhuselerine tevfikan tercüme eylemek lazım gelir ise bunun da kısm-ı evvelini hazf etmek lâzım gelir."

[31] The author explains the practice of translation by using the term "iktibas." İktibas is defined in the Kubbealtı Dictionary as "transferring a word or phrase to one's own speech or writing, either verbatim or in meaning." Ayverdi, 2005. Based on his own expression, we can clearly outline the issue as follows: Mithat Efendi utilized the content of a specific paragraph written in a European newspaper to compose one-third of his story "Ana-Kız," either verbatim or by taking just its meaning. This is a method that the author frequently reiterates, as indicated in the quotation above. Additionally, the quote is among the statements that clearly express the fact that the sources of the texts chosen by the author for translation are European.

[32] Ahmet Mithat Efendi, 2001: 593.

also among the most frequently repeated in this context and, while its use may not seem out of place within the Turkish-Islamic cultural repertoire, it is one of the expressions that may be interesting to the reader in the narrative focusing on the adventures of a Christian character living in Paris. The resulting gap has been addressed by the anxiety-relieving mechanisms of the author, filled with the specific contents of their cultural sphere. Thus, the anxiety arising from the imbalanced hierarchy created by the encounter between the original and target languages has been attempted to be alleviated.

This gap essentially points to the situation of the social structure in which Ahmet Mithat lived, caught between the community and society. Neither the community nor the society terms can be attributed solely to a specific historical period. Living as a community encompasses a common social structure before modernity and spans different geographies. In contrast, the author attempts to alleviate the anxiety arising from the necessity of transitioning to a new social structure, shrouded in many unknowns, with expressions belonging to the community. The necessity of integrating into a new social structure appears to generate social anxiety. Through the way he fills this gap, Mithat Efendi reflects his anxiety of losing himself due to admiration for the West while simultaneously insisting on being "himself"[33] through indebtedness. The phenomenon of gaps created between translations and the tendency to fill them with content from his own culture supports the fact that the author prefers the Western socio-cultural system as the fundamental source culture. And also indicates Mithat Efendi's anxiety about constructing a new literary mechanism that addresses these concerns.

For this reason, in his content preferences, Ahmet Mithat emerges as a writer who has endeavored to alleviate the feeling that the anxiety-relieving mechanisms associated with the cultural repertoire of the historically perceived Arabic, Persian, and Turkish cultures have become ineffective due to the transition from community to society, which marks a change encompassing a long axis of time and space and bearing socio-cultural gaps. In this context, Mithat Efendi has tried to establish himself as an authority, with social anxiety guiding his translation preferences as well, similar to most of his discourses and practices, aimed at addressing the absence of this anxiety-relieving socio-cultural mechanism.

4. The Source of Translated Texts in Ahmet Mithat, the Mission of Education, and Social Anxiety

Firstly, let me emphasize this point; as understood from Ahmet Mithat Efendi's statements emphasizing the necessity of being extremely careful in translation preferences, "we see that two aspects stand out in his writings on the subject of translation. One is the selection of literary contents to be translated, and the other is how the translation should be done."[34] In fact, he codes the subject as a national issue and considers translations of works he deems unhelpful to be equivalent to the misuse of service. With this statement, the author seems to strive to fulfill the role of authority he has assumed by deeming the established and functioning authorities of the previous era as ineffective. For he establishes a direct relationship between the practice of writing and patriotism. Thus, by engaging in writing, specifically choosing correct translation texts, he aims to save the homeland and educate his audience in this regard.

In a comprehensive study on Ahmet Mithat, the author's original style is discussed, noting that he employed the strategy of "writing through translation." According to the study, Ahmet Mithat "described Ottoman translation practice as a series of texts that cannot be reduced to clichéd descriptions such as "harfiyyen" (literally) or "mealen" (in a summary manner) and that contain various nuances."[35] Ahmet Mithat characterized the works he chose to translate as "a text that he renewed (i.e., changed) according to the context of his time (in terms of both language and content), presenting a clear and interesting example of the act of 'updating,' which is one of the main purposes observed in what is now called 'retranslation.'"[36]

The author's characteristic also highlights the different position among the first period literary products and writers, which are considered within the context of the history of new Turkish literature and specifically Tanzimat literature. It is argued that in most modern translation studies, a common and

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[33] Gürbilek, 2004: 32.
[34] Gökçek, 2012: 199-200.
[35] Paker, 2014: 46.
[36] Paker, 2014: 46.

absolute translation strategy continued throughout the 19th century and even extended into the Republican era. However, the reality that various strategies based on the Arab-Persian and Turkish traditions of transcription, citation, imitation, recreation, interpretation, commentary, transformation, and summary (nakil, iktibas, taklid, tanzir, tefsir, şerh, tahvil, hülasa) were also used as fundamental strategies in Ottoman culture has not been taken into account. Additionally, in literature history books—the first being Abdülhalim Memduh's Tarih-i Edebiyat-ı Osmaniye (The History of Ottoman Literature) — translations from Europe until the Republican era are examined predominantly in the context of their contributions to the Ottoman modernization. In contrast, this study argues that the effort towards Westernization or modernization, which is concretely reflected in the body of texts forming the Ottoman cultural environment in the context of literary polysystem[37], should not be considered the primary motivation but rather a result. And also claims that the common emotion leading to this result is the social anxiety felt by people of the era, especially the intellectuals.

In translations considered as contributions to the Westernization movement, Mithat Efendi is known as a figure who established the institutionalization[38] of acceptable translation during a time when translation activities were the subject of a critical discussion framed by acceptability and adequacy. According to findings from the first study[39] that addressed translations from European literature through the lens of a translation theory during the Tanzimat period, and comparisons with works by another academic from the same school, it can be observed that Ahmet Mithat employed a distinctly differentiated translation strategy, presenting his style to the new literary environment as a revolutionary[40]. In this way, Mithat Efendi appears to have facilitated a paradigm[41] shift not only in terms of translation style but also for the Ottoman society to which he belonged. As a result, Ahmet Mithat has become one of the significant authors that opened a new conceptual world in terms of the Ottoman social structure of his time. Indeed, "a paradigm primarily guides a community, not a topic. If community members are dissatisfied with their practices and initiate a change, this act entails the dissolution of the existing structure followed by its reconstruction—resulting in a radical transformation of the application."[42] From this perspective, Mithat Efendi has created hybrid[43] texts that serve the need for developing a new paradigm by engaging with his readers in content primarily motivated by educational intent.

We know that Ahmet Mithat's efforts in education were also shared by his contemporaries and the intellectuals of his time. "The first literary translation from the West is Münif Paşa's Muhaverat-ı Hikemiyye (Philosophical Dialogues, 1859)[44], translated from French." Münif Paşa's work holds significance beyond being the first translation due to the subjects he addresses in the preface. For "Münif

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[37] Israeli literary theory and comparative literature professor Itamar Even-Zohar's work is inspired by Czechoslovak structuralists and Russian Formalists, utilizing the concept of "system" as proposed by Yury Tynianov and Roman Jakobson. In this new approach, the author examines the concept of the system from the perspective of the Russian Formalists Tynianov and Jakobson, aiming to understand translated literature within a system through a synchronous and diachronic view. The term "polysystem" denotes a dynamic, functional, dense, and complex cultural structure with intersecting and partially overlapping components. In this new approach, Even-Zohar emphasizes that viewing linguistic phenomena only in a synchronistic form, as accepted by Saussurean structuralism, impedes the understanding of how language operates across different periods, suggesting that the processes of change can only be understood by also incorporating a diachronic dimension. Therefore, Even-Zohar's system encompasses both synchronic and diachronic aspects and cannot be considered independently of historical contexts. Both synchrony and diachrony hold historical dimensions. Even-Zohar, 1987. For a more detailed reading, see website https://www.tau.ac.il/~itamarez/works/papers/translation/index.html To summarize, Even-Zohar defines the polysystem as "the system of various systems that are interrelated, operate as a single structured whole while utilizing different options simultaneously, and intersect and partially overlap." Even-Zohar, 1970: 11, cited by Yürek, 2002: 20. In light of this approach, the majority of academic translation studies in Turkey, particularly those after 1980, generally accept the evaluation that many Ottoman translation activities during the Westernization period operated within a polysystem.

[38] Paker, 1987: 38.

[39] The aforementioned pioneering study belongs to Saliha Paker. Paker, 1987, cited in: Demircioğlu, 2016: 103.

[40] Bengi-Öner: 1999: 67-77.

[41] Işın Bengi-Öner defines the paradigm, as reported by T. S. Kuhn, as "the entire set of beliefs, values, and techniques shared by members of a particular community" Kuhn, 1982: 165, quoted in Bengi-Öner, 1999: 67. Therefore, Ahmet Mithat Efendi has contributed to the transformation of the imaginative world that constitutes the existing literary system with his new translation strategy. The subject I discuss within the framework of this article is the answer to the question of what the reason for this transformation is and which factor in the common emotional world is driving this change.

[42] Kuhn, 1982 cited by Bengi-Öner, 1999: 67.

[43] Parla, 2007: 89.

[44] Okay, 2005: 87.

Paşa's preface is, in a way, a preface to the literature of the Tanzimat period."[45] One of the key points emphasized by Münif Paşa is the selectivity demonstrated by the Tanzimat intellectuals. Above all, they choose what is useful and beautiful. They have adopted a didactic and pragmatic attitude. "According to them, the aesthetic value of a literary work is measured by the benefit that the information it provides brings. Teaching while entertaining, entertaining while teaching. The second point that Münif Paşa draws attention to is introducing literary genres and styles from Western literature that are unknown to us."[46] We can also include the effort to convey the values of Western culture, which may not be accepted by the societal norms of the time.

It is an obvious reality that the author's desire to teach is repeatedly expressed through a participatory and authoritative authorial presence in his texts. Ahmet Mithat presents this desire as an absolute necessity and employs various methods in this endeavor. Using different literary genres as a means of dialogue[47] with the reader, incorporating multiple literary forms in a hybrid manner into his texts, and presenting contemporary and popular European literary works to the local public by utilizing different translation methods are among the author's writing strategies. The translation activities appear to have been carried out in a special form and with conscious choices as one of the important methods.

In contrast, the selections made from Western sources are clearly beneficial for the writer's readers, as his preference leans towards this new socio-cultural mentality. Conversely, if we approach the issue through the lens of what texts would not benefit the readers, which sources do those texts belong to? There is no reason to claim that the texts that could be selected from the common Arab-Persian-Turkish cultural repertoire, from which the author hails, would seem useless for the readers who are practically at the level of elementary school students for Mithat Efendi. Therefore, while Ahmet Mithat chooses the texts he will translate, he is also making a choice towards a new civilizational conception. From this perspective, it can be said that a new writing atmosphere emerged, in which the functionality of the accumulated knowledge of Islamic civilization in general and the socio-cultural world of the Ottomans in particular is not trusted, which became the reality for Mithat Efendi. How has this writing practice, in which the old is deemed unreliable and the new is considered beneficial and thus reliable, been directed by a shared emotional world? The claim of my study is that this is a social anxiety, as explained in the conceptual explanations above.

Storytelling is a fundamental educational method for Mithat Efendi. This can be inferred from the literary genres preferred by him, as well as from the explanatory texts he wrote as prefaces to his literary works. In one of them he explains the subject as follows: "… nations have filled their libraries with books containing tales and legends rather than other kinds of books, and this tendency and decline, originating from humanity, has been such that since ancient times, wisdom has been depicted within tales and legends."[48] Therefore, it can be stated that he sees the story as the most successful means of conveying wisdom.

To serve this purpose, Ahmet Mithat wrote stories inspired by contemporary and often popular literary works from Europe, and he did not hesitate to indicate the sources of his writings. In doing so, he offered explanations regarding his writing methodology. The author even refrained from appropriating in the novels he took up for the purpose of translation. This is clearly understood from his words: "… I always make numerous corrections to the novels I obtain from Europe even 'through translation' and afterwards I recommend these works to the moral fabric of the Ottoman people."[49] Therefore, while Mithat Efendi demonstrates the necessity of rewriting through appropriation and hospitality, he also expresses his purpose. He has defined prioritizing the morals of society and presenting content that serves this morality, filtered through European culture, as his fundamental starting points. The author relates this to the fact that what comes from Europe is often inferior and that the bad outweighs the good. Consequently, the author, who is particularly meticulous in his quotations,

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[45] Okay, 2005: 88.
[46] Okay, 2005: 88.
[47] Kaya, 2024: 64. The connection established between the issue of self-awareness revealed through the conversations of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, as mentioned in the relevant PhD thesis, and Bakhtin's concept of dialogue has been inspired.
[48] Ahmet Mithat Efendi, 2013: 17. The original Ottoman Turkish version of the quotation is as follows: "… milletler kütüphanelerini kütüb-i saire'den ziyade hikayat ve menakıbı mutazammın kitaplarla doldurmuşlar ve yine benibeşerde olan şu meyilden ve inhimakten nâşidir ki ezmine-i kadîmeden beri hikemiyatı hikayat ve menakıb içinde tasvir edegelmişlerdir."
[49] Ahmet Mithat Efendi, 2023: 10.

indicates a tendency to take an idea from the work he quotes and create a brand-new piece. For example, in the preface of "İki Hud'akar," the twenty-first book of Letaif-i-i Rivayat written in 1894, Ahmet Mithat expresses that he chose this content because he read it in a French newspaper and it aligned with his views that Europe's spiritual progress is not something to be appreciated.[50] Thus, it is clear that the author's discourse is largely clear, and he uses appropriate textual equipment to serve this discourse as much as possible.

This observation can be confirmed by almost all of the author's works. The author has consciously adopted the attitude of a first teacher, providing basic explanations and shaping literary and intellectual texts with advice on new topics that he believes society will be unprepared for. For example, in his work titled "Kıssadan Hisse (Moral of the Story),"[51] Ahmet Mithat concretely demonstrates this internalization by anticipating a gradual reading competence in terms of language simplicity in the arrangement of the stories. Therefore, in the earlier stories, the language is much simpler, whereas in the later tales, the use of Arabic and Persian words increases. "First, children will be accustomed to reading with simple and short stories, and then they will be guided to get used to longer and more difficult texts."[52]

Continuing from the text "Kıssadan Hisse," the author has placed a moral after each fable, excluding two. Additionally, most of the fables are narrated from Fénelon and Aesop. Therefore, there is also a kind of translation activity involved here. As expressed in the preface, Ahmet Mithat believes it is important to convey the thoughts of Aesop, whom he perceives as a philosophical figure. Moreover, the stories included in the author's selection of fables point to the spiritual values that the people, facing necessary socio-cultural changes due to pressure from Europe, may need in their daily lives. Nevertheless, Ahmet Mithat does not leave his work to chance but adds a moral at the end of each fable that he believes the reader should discern. At the end of the book, perhaps as an exercise for his readers, he presents the responsibility of deriving morals from the last two fables, which are local and anonymous, to the reader. All of this demonstrates that Ahmet Mithat continues to produce in a consistent manner that aligns with his synthesizing, target-oriented translation strategy aimed at social benefit.

The author's efforts have been accompanied by an interest in theater plays and practices. Ahmet Mithat has expressed his interest in theater on many occasions. After finishing his daily tasks, he goes to the Ottoman Theater. He values theater highly due to its use of both auditory and visual means of expression. Although he thinks that the pleasure a reader derives from the act of reading is limited, he sees theater as a matter of progress in civilization. Particularly in countries with low literacy rates—which the author considers to include the Ottoman Empire, labeling it as one of the countries that have not progressed in civilization and seemingly embracing this stigma—he believes that elements related to progress and civilization can be conveyed to the public through theater. Therefore, theater is one of the important tools that will serve Mithat Efendi's role as an educator. However, the author, who believes that theater can also have harmful aspects, is convinced of the necessity for a theater that is moral, rectifying of morals, increases love for the state, nation, and family, and showcases human values.[53]

5. Searching for Social Anxiety in Ahmet Mithat's Translation Preferences

The aforementioned approaches provide a framework that facilitates understanding how Mithat Efendi writes as a representative of an emotional community, in light of the roles of translated text content and the intertextual movements woven together. Based on this, the subject will be elaborated with concrete examples from the author's translated stories in the Letâif-i Rivâyât collection.

When we think about philosophy in its initial meanings and counterparts, anxiety indicates an emotion that guides Ahmet Mithat in determining the texts he will translate as social anxiety. Simply put, in Mithat Efendi, translation serves the purpose of capturing the contemporary. The reason for this is the lack of philosophical and intellectual readiness regarding the reality of the new socio-cultural world among Ahmet Mithat and most of the Tanzimat writers. The author's literary translation preferences make this evident. Therefore, Mithat Efendi has made selections from European popular

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[50] Ahmet Mithat Efendi, 2023: 11.
[51] Ahmet Mithat Efendi, 2017.
[52] Ahmet Mithat Efendi, 2013: 16.
[53] Enginün, 1990: 1-3.

culture in a way that he believes will meet the basic life needs of the social structure he is in. At this point, the direction of social anxiety is clear, as the author presents content in a form that is more accessible and easily digestible for a larger audience and broader masses. As a fatherly figure and authoritative educator, Mithat Efendi felt an urgent responsibility to equip the public with essential knowledge about the new socio-cultural reality, European thought, and modern worldviews. In this context, for example, among the literary styles dominant in the European literary public of the time, realism has been more influential on Ahmet Mithat's writing practices, because if the new reality can be conveyed in a realistic way within the literary field, it can have a rapid impact.

Realism's known pioneer in this era of Europe, Emile Zola, is referenced by the author through his stories, indicating how much people need the realities of the West by alluding to Zola.[54] However, while doing this, the author portrays a rather generalist attitude towards Western civilization in the content selected from popular realist texts in Europe. This can also be considered a sign of societal anxiety. In response to orientalist narratives and the prevailing discourse of the era, Mithat Efendi constructed a counter-image of the West. Through his Occidentalist[55] lens, he selectively positioned Western texts to serve his ideological stance. Rather than focusing on how the West presents its own reality, Mithat Efendi's concern lies in how these representations align with his own cultural and emotional framework. This study thus examines the role of social anxiety in his selection of texts and their adapted content.

The generalized approach in Ahmet Mithat's translation texts examined in this article, which reflects a negative depiction of the West, appears as a manifestation of a writer's stance eager to quickly make decisions and persuade the reader with urgent solutions in order to achieve total liberation. Although the writer presents positive characters imagined from within a negative tableau—such as Jermen Valide and Luiz in the story "Ana-Kız"—he openly or implicitly points out multiple times that they can only be of a naiveté that could emerge from his own imagination[56] and that they are individuals not found among similar characters in Europe, specifically Paris.

Mithat Efendi frequently presents European civilization as a model in his literary and intellectual works. He argues that the West has advanced beyond what the East could conceive, emphasizing the need for engagement with Western knowledge and culture. These expressions reflect a reductionist perspective, implying that Western progress is absolute while positioning the East as historically inferior or secondary.

As Mithat Efendi states, "The services that the Eastern nations have rendered to the civilization of the world are not limited to a spiritual contribution; they also relate to material aspects. However, given that the material progress of Europe is at a level that the Eastern nations have never even dreamed of, we Easterners find ourselves in need of and obliged to follow Europe for material advancement."[57]

The situation of being "in need" and "in obligation," seen in translation text preferences, indicates the author's social anxiety in the practice of filling the void created by abandoning the civilization circle to the Western civilization. For an individual and social awareness of being integrated into an authority and a new strong socio-cultural system operates as a anxiety-relieving mechanism. The new conception

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[54] Ahmet Mithat Efendi, 2023: 703. In the "Introduction" of his story titled "İki Hud'akâr," while referring to Zola, he uses a critical language, complaining that Zola and similar writers have chosen the most negative scenes of reality as subjects for their novels by claiming, "we are writing naturalistic novels." In this sense, he expresses that he has "written this lovely story by opposing everyone" in the aforementioned story that is particularly discussed in the introduction. Conversely, in his stories, including "İki Hud'akâr," Ahmet Mithat depicts Europe as a place of great immorality, intense poverty, and imbalances. This situation is actually one of the concrete points indicating the author's social anxiety. In the story titled "Diplomalı Kız (Graduated Girl)," Mithat Efendi points to Emile Zola's narratives to convince his readers that there is no longer hope for humanity in Paris, a city that has become a place where even miracles cannot be expected. Ahmet Mithat Efendi, 2001: 621.

[55] Occidentalism, which is easier to understand when considered alongside the opposing concept of Orientalism, indicates the situation in which the East completely becomes a subject of research for the West. This concept involves the effort to produce knowledge about the West by moving away from the position of the object. Therefore, he would have alienated the one who alienates him. For a detailed study on the definition of the concept, its counterparts in the literature, academic studies related to the concept, and traces of the occidentalist attitude in some of Ahmet Mithat Efendi's novels, Koçyiğit, 2021.

[56] Ahmet Mithat Efendi, 2001: 825.

[57] Ahmet Mithat Efendi, 1307: 288. The original Ottoman Turkish version of the quote; "Milel-i şarkiyenin medeniyet-i umumiye-i âleme ettiği hizmet yalnız bir hizmet-i mâneviyeden ibâret olmayıp maddiyâta da taallûku bulunduğu müberhendir. Ancak bugünkü günde Avrupa'nın terakkiyât-ı maddiyesi milel-i şarkiyenin hiçbir zaman hayalinden bile geçmemiş olduğu derece-i kemâlde bulunduğundan biz Şarklılar terakkıyât-ı maddiye için Avrupa'yı tetebbua muhtaç ve mecburuz."

of being deprived of these triggers anxiety if this situation finds a correspondence in the emotional world, whether real or not. It may direct the interlocutor towards wholesale, urgent, and quick in-text solutions. The circumstances that determine Ahmet Mithat's translation choices exemplify this. The author converses with his reader from within the community of feelings brought about by the thought that the complex new situation set forth by the new social reality and the habits of the old altered are not useful for the current reality. This new situation primarily requires the construction of a new cultural ground and the assumption of a new position. For one to feel secure and to be free from anxiety, this new cultural construction is necessary.

A significant part of Ahmet Mithat's translation strategy is based on the phenomenon of selecting products from the source language, which he has contributed to as a literary genre—either a novel or a story—through translation. In this sense, the acceptability and adequacy characteristics of the author's translations are directly related to the necessity he felt to fill the gaps in authority and socio-cultural structures himself, acting as the father and teacher of his audience. As a writer who perceives and feels in a struggle for existence, Ahmet Mithat believed it was his duty to produce works that his audience would accept, drawing strength from new knowledge and socio-cultural experiences. To accomplish this, he developed an educational methodology, which he implemented across his works. According to his teaching philosophy, European civilization served as the primary source of both knowledge and moral lessons – both positive and negative.

As Mithat Efendi explains: "For our material and spiritual advancements, the deductions and examples we follow are all aspects of European civilized life... We must learn its virtues so that we can adopt and imitate them. We must learn its vices so that rejection and avoidance are possible. According to a high authority, it is necessary to learn disbelief in terms of the essence of true faith, so that true avoidance of that filth can be possible."[58] According to a high authority, it is necessary to learn disbelief in terms of the essence of true faith, so that true avoidance of that fifth can be possible. As clearly indicated in the above quotation, the author sees European civilization as the sole source of education and teaching. This educational approach notably excludes the socio – cultural heritage of Arab, Persian, and Turkish traditions – despite their historical significance and continued presence in contemporary Ottoman society. As a teacher, the author also values translations for the transmission he will conduct to his audience. Therefore, Mithat Efendi chooses content for his translations from the European socio-cultural universe.

Mithat Efendi's translation strategy emerged as a response to the perceived authority gap in Ottoman social structure. Faced with political instability, military defeats, and the rapid expansion of Western influence, he sought to assert himself as a cultural authority. His efforts to alleviate the anxiety of "fatherlessness"[59] reflect a broader attempt to establish a new, stable intellectual foundation amid socio-cultural upheaval. This aligns with André Lefevere's approach to translation history, which made significant contributions to the development of the field of translation studies as an independent discipline in the 1970s. Lefevere addressed the meanings of the concepts of translation history and translation as "rewriting," "patronage," and "manipulation" in a manner that is adapted to the definition and function of translation.

In the work titled "Translation, History, Culture," co-authored with Susan Bassnett, and generally in Lefevere's approach, the relationship between history and translation, the transformative power of one culture over another, and issues of ideology/power such as whether translation brings innovations or suppresses them are examined in terms of concepts like rewriting, alteration[60], and patronage[61]. Lefevere highlights the profound cultural influence of translation: "Whatever their intentions, all rewritings reflect a certain ideology and poetics, thus manipulating literature to function in a specific way within a particular society."[62] Lefevere asserts that translation plays a crucial role in cultural

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[58] Ahmet Mithat Efendi, 2003: 5-6. The original Ottoman Turkish version of the quote: "Zira kendi terakkiyât-ı maddiyye ve maneviyyemiz emrinde istidlâl, imtisal eylediğimiz şeyler hep Avrupa ahvâl-i maişet-i medeniyyesidir. … Hüsniyyâtını öğrenmeliyiz ki ahz ve taklit edebilelim. Kubhiyatını öğrenmeliyiz ki ret ve tevakki mümkün olsun. Bir güstâr-ı âlîye göre imanın kemal-i hakikati noktainazarınca taallüm-i küfr dahi lâzım imiş. Ta ki o şirkten bihakkın tevakki mümkün olsun."
[59] Parla, 2022.
[60] Demircioğlu, 2016: 20-23.
[61] Lefevere, 1992: 8.
[62] Lefevere, 1992: 8.

enrichment and continuity. "These dynamic grants literary rewriters significant cultural power. Lefevere suggests that extensive research into translation's ideological influence could deepen our understanding of its role in shaping knowledge and education."[63] According to the thinker, the rewriting nature of translations also guarantees the permanence of literary works. From this perspective, we can say that source cultures become an authoritarian power that secures the existence of the target cultures into which the translation is made.

The aforementioned concepts and the dominance of the cultural influence area in the context of this definition also provide a ground for comparing Ahmet Mithat's translation strategy with the tradition of "nazire". Indeed, when considering the nazire tradition within the scope of the Ottoman cultural repertoire, its field of influence has not developed towards a foreign culture. It has served the natural cultural nourishment of an intertwined and interactive triple structure. However, since the texts that Mithat Efendi chose for translation and the examples of rewriting he presented consider the West as a source, according to Lefevere's emphasis, regardless of his intentions, he has opened his own cultural atmosphere to the cultural influence and guidance of the West, making his socio-cultural existence dependent on it. We know that Ahmet Mithat made conscious choices when selecting his translations, contrary to the claims of some studies, as confirmed by leading Turkish academics in translation studies[64]. This shows that Ahmet Mithat's preference for the West as a new socio-cultural vision is a conscious choice. The fact that he engaged in some synthesis efforts in the content of the European cultural texts he included in Letâif-i Rivâyât for translation does not contradict his claim of centering Western civilization as his primary reference point.

The studies addressing the issue of the cultural-dependent relationality of metatextual and extratextual practices accompanying the genre of nazire began in the late 1980s. With these studies, especially the first translations from the West to Turkish in the genres of novel, poetry, and philosophy in the late 1850s began to be regarded as indicators of the increasing interest in European culture and literature. This observation is significant in terms of the articles area of interest, as especially Paker's works[65] analyze the translations made during the Tanzimat period and afterward by separating them from the discourse of Turkish national literary historiography.[66] The article tends to view the translation practices of this period within the frameworks of polysystem and cultural repertoire conceptualizations, seeing them as parts of the common socio-cultural tradition of Arab-Persian-Turkish. It specifically addresses Ahmet Mithat and his translations, emphasizing the author's importance as one of the key figures in Ottoman translation history at the end of the 19th century. Additionally, it evaluates the author's translation practices in light of the concepts of "acceptability" and "adequacy."[67] This original academic framing allows for posing questions about the similarities and differences between Mithat Efendi's translation strategy and the nazire tradition as a dominant literary genre within the Arab-Persian-Turkish cultural repertoire; it also addresses the reasons for the emerging differences and their influence on directing the author toward Western literary products.

In this context, it can be claimed that Ahmet Mithat continued the tradition of nazire but chose examples from the West for rewriting, reflecting the traces of his social anxiety in his translated works. In the short or long prefaces of many translated stories, it is clearly conveyed or can be inferred that Ahmet Mithat selected the translated stories in Letaif-i Rivayat from European content. He either took the entire original text and transformed it into a new story by changing the subject, setting, and characters, or took a part of it and created a new and original story with additions. This is, in fact, a

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[63] Lefevere, 1992: 10.

[64] Işıl Bengi-Öner is the first person to pay attention to the originality in the translations of Mithat Efendi among the mentioned academics. In her related study, Bengi-Öner evaluated Ahmet Mithat's translation strategies in light of Hans J. Vermeer's Skopos Theory. Thus, she aimed to prove that Mithat Efendi could be regarded as a translator. The premises of Skopos are as follows: "Every discourse requires a departure from its point of origin. Every action has a purpose. Among many options, an action is selected by the person continuing the action according to their own justifications. The person who selects the action and identifies its reasons determines the method to achieve the purpose in the most optimal way. Translation is an action; it is an action directed by purpose. … When we look at Mithat's approach to translation in light of Vermeer's Skopos theory, we see that Mithat was aware that he had departed from the point of origin when he began the translation, that he clearly defined his purpose, that he determined his action, and that he identified his method in accordance with his action and purpose." Vermeer, 1996: 11-15. Cited by Bengi-Öner, 2006: 345

[65] Demircioğlu, 2016: 121-126.

[66] Demircioğlu, 2016: 103-120.

[67] Demircioğlu, 2016: 104.

complete nazire method in terms of technique. The difference lies in the author's preferences shaped by his emotional world. How do we understand this?

In the Ottoman tradition, the concept of translation is expressed through nazire, tafsir, bayan, and nakl in the context of intercultural overlap.[68] It is important to emphasize that this translational approach functions to make foreign elements unique, transforming and assimilating them; moreover, it represents a broader cultural strategy rather than being limited to text translations. "The discussions of this translation style/nazire in the field of texts are also seen in the domain of images. Considering that nazire is, in fact, a means through which the artist develops their own style, and that it is mirrored in the West with the term 'imitatio,' we can understand how translations and nazire have become unique works of art through small additions made by the artist. Serpil Bağcı[69] highlights similar adaptation process in Islamic art, particularly in miniature painting. She demonstrates how the miniatures in Şerif's Şehname-I Türki were "Ottomanized" in their Turkish translation, with visual elements reshaped to align with local artistic conventions."[70]

When compared to the Turkish-Islamic tradition of nazire, the social anxiety manifesting in Ahmet Mithat's attitude can become clearer. Within the nazire tradition, literary texts function within a shared cultural sphere, even when written in different languages. Because these works emerge from a common intellectual and artistic tradition, no significant linguistic or cultural gaps arise between the source and target texts. The differences in a new literary product created by adding certain intellectual and literary innovations become contents that contribute to the shared cultural repertoire. An original text is produced as the author blends and shapes individual ideas and literary skills without ignoring the shared social reality. Since there is no loss of cultural ground that would cause anxiety and no array of socio-cultural gaps that need to be filled, the new product, which is a kind of translation, is shaped by the harmonious whole of the original text, the target text, languages, and cultures.

This study considers the nazire tradition significant because literary works produced within this framework – particularly in the context of Islamic and Turkish – Islamic literature – can be viewed as a form of assumed translation. This perspective suggests that examining the conceptual and linguistic similarities across Arabic, Persian, and Turkish literary traditions can provide insights into the evolving nature of translation in Turkish literature – where boundaries between adaptation, citation, and original composition have remained fluid for centuries. Therefore, according to this perspective, nazire compositions are regarded as products formed as a result of the act of translation, within the framework of the current research proficiency achieved in translation studies. Moreover, this approach views the 'actions' expressed in the discourse of the poets in literary products written as nazire as the concrete indicators of translation in both the poet's and, in a sense, society's language.[71] In addition, evaluating

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[68] Demircioğlu, 2009: 161, footnote 4, refers to the issue by stating, "Saliha Paker expresses that, with the hypothetical concept established in reference to Anthony Pym's concept of 'interculture,' Ottoman translators and poets have been active in the overlapping areas of Arabic, Persian, and Turkish for centuries. According to Paker, this overlapping area appears to have developed as an independent system as a result of a hybridization that became distinct in the Ottoman language and cultural structure from the 16th century; therefore, it should be considered separately from the concept of 'common Islamic culture." Saliha, 2002: 120-143. Additionally, Demircioğlu specifically explains how the concept of "imitation" should be treated. The conceptualization used by Cemal Demircioğlu is described in his mentioned article as follows: "I am using the concept of imitatio (imitation) here not as the author's imitation of reality, corresponding to the concepts of mimesis or representation, but in the sense of the transference relationship between a work and another work that serves as its model. Therefore, imitatio refers, in a way, to the meaning similar to Cicero's (106-43 BC) 'exprimerem imitando,' which defines 'deriving by analogy' or 'creating one work by imitating another,' or the term 'imitation' that signifies 'indifference to the source text' in John Dryden's (1631-1700) classification of translation in the British tradition. (For Cicero and Dryden, see also Robinson, 1997. This transition, which actually began during the Tanzimat, provides clues about Ottoman translation theory that has yet to be written by researchers, suggesting that 'imitation' has been one of the significant concepts of this theory from at least the Late Anatolian Turkish period until the end of the 19th century." Demircioğlu, 2016: 172, footnote 26. With the conceptual and historical ties, he established, Demircioğlu refers to both the rooted structure and the unique functionality of Ottoman translation strategies.

[69] Bağcı, 2000: 162-176.

[70] Koç, 2006: 354.

[71] This approach requires re-conceptualizing the notion of translation within a specific culture and period by situating past translation practices within a certain context and comparative perspective. Demircioğlu, 2016: 161. Utilizing a reverse reading of this approach, evaluating the tradition of imitation as a translation act implicitly acknowledges that the literary works emerging from this tradition contain both the individual psychological aspects of the poets who wrote them and the socio-cultural attributes related to the social structure they belong to. In this framework, it can be inferred that Ahmet Mithat shares the idea that translation carries the characteristics of both individuals and social structures, and that this understanding,

nazire as a form of translation makes it possible to identify "the actions and culture-specific forms of expression and phrases, mapping both the discourses of the poet-translators related to translation and the culture-specific perceptions at a macro level."[72] In this direction, nazire texts will allow for interpretations related to their authors and the socio-cultural structures from which they originate.

After the Tanzimat, in the new construction process of the period, the authority is comprised of European writers and their writings. Although Ahmet Mithat denies this fact by using negative words about some aspects of the West in his writings, he accepts the European authors, their real and imagined worlds, in short, the West, by engaging with them. The hierarchical structure established between the socio-cultural world of the original text's author and that of the imitation writer, seen in the early periods of the Turkish-Islamic imitation method as well as in the classical periods, seems to have shaped Ahmet Mithat's translation preferences. Although the hierarchy formed within the Islamic civilization encompassed various cultural differences before the 19th century, it essentially nourished a common cultural repertoire. The form of imitation used in Ahmet Mithat's translation strategy implicitly places a new and foreign cultural structure above within the hierarchical order. Although the author may criticize certain aspects of both the text and external elements, his preference for the source culture affirms the authority of the West.

Conclusion

In this study, Ahmet Mithat Efendi's translation strategy has been examined in the context of societal concerns, which are also reflected in the literary works of many intellectuals of the period, with a multifaceted perspective on the relationship between literature and translation. The main claim of the study is that the texts selected by Ahmet Mithat from the Western socio-cultural universe serve not only as a means of cultural transfer or education but also as a manifestation of the societal concerns created by the Ottoman Westernization process and as an attempt to address them. Therefore, translation processes have been evaluated as an important tool for understanding the social dynamics of the period.

One of the main concepts of the study, social anxiety, has been defined as an emotional state that creates a common effect on the members of a community, regardless of whether individuals are aware of it or not. The transformations occurring between individuals and society during modernization processes, especially during the Ottoman's Westernization process, have been evaluated as the fundamental elements determining anxiety. In this context, Ahmet Mithat, while presenting the cultural accumulation of the West to Ottoman society through translation, has been influenced by this anxiety and has tried to alleviate it.

Ahmet Mithat Efendi's translation strategies have been examined through three basic elements; the first and most fundamental strategy is Ahmet Mithat's selection of translation contents from the West. While making selections from here and adapting certain aspects of Western literature to Ottoman society, he placed moral values at the forefront and chose texts suitable for the expectations of Ottoman society. Additionally, the translated texts were not simply conveyed word-for-word. The author subjected the contents he addressed to a rewriting process in his translations. The texts also serve an educational and instructive function. Here, the author's aim was to prepare Ottoman society for the

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consciously or unconsciously, influences his translation activities, as reflected in various elements of his literary products. For example, in the first part of his story "Bir Tövbekâr," Ahmet Mithat addresses the strength of the bond between the individual and the social structure in which they exist and develop concerning moral issues. "Some would note that all these incidents of lovers are not prevented by morality and public etiquette, but rather they are stopped by the morality and private manners; however, if everyone were to adjust their personal morals and private manners accordingly, it is undoubtedly true that morality and public etiquette would easily arise. Otherwise, if everyone wishes to exempt themselves from the rules of public etiquette while desiring others to correct their situations, the improvement of public morality cannot be achieved under any circumstances." The original Ottoman Turkish version of the quote; "Bazıları netayic-i facia ve bazıları netayic-i mudhike intac eyleyen bunca vukuat-ı âşikaneyi ahlâk ve adab-ı umumiye îka etmeyip belki ahlâk ve etvar-ı hususiye tarafından îka olunduklarına dikkat edilecek olsa da herkes kendi ahlâk ve etvar-ı hususiyesini ona göre tashis eylese ahlâk ve adab-ı umumiyenin dahi pek kolaylıkla husule geleceğine hiç şüphe edilemez idi. Yoksa herkes kendisini adab-ı umumiye kanunu ahkâmından hariç ve müstesna tutup da başkalarının tashis-i ahval etmelerini arzu eyleyecek olursa ahlâk-ı umumiyenin ıslahı hiçbir vechle mümkün olamaz." Ahmet Mithat Efendi, 2001: 413. From this quotation, the conclusion relevant to our topic is that the author regards the individual and the social as intertwined, interrelated structures in motion.
[72] Demircioğlu, 2016: 161.

modernizing practices of the West. For this purpose, Ahmet Mithat presented his translations in a form that Ottoman society could comprehend, both linguistically and conceptually.

To explain Ahmet Mithat's translation strategy, the study utilized Andrée Lefevere's approach to translation history, Gideon Toury's descriptive translation studies, and critical discourse analysis. These approaches demonstrate that translation processes are not merely linguistic transfers; rather, translation is shaped within an ideological, cultural, and socio-political context. In the study, the translated texts in Ahmet Mithat's story anthology Letâif-i Rivayat were analyzed, and the functions of the texts selected by the author in the context of social concerns were evaluated.

The transition from the community structure to the societal structure in the process of Westernization of Ottoman society has deeply affected the identity and sense of belonging of individuals and institutions. Ahmet Mithat's translation practice aimed to balance the anxieties experienced by Ottoman society during this transformation. The study reveals that Ahmet Mithat engaged in the construction of a new cultural worldview through translation as a mechanism to alleviate these anxieties.

It has been shown that the translation processes served as a kind of mediator for the Ottoman reader, who was not directly exposed to Western culture. Ahmet Mithat's selections functioned to introduce not only the technical advancements of the West but also its social and cultural aspects to the Ottoman public. However, the notion that the West should not be entirely imitated and that the Ottomans should pursue modernization while preserving their own cultural values is frequently emphasized in Ahmet Mithat's works.

The study also shows that Ahmet Mithat's translation choices are addressed in the context of the anxiety of influence. Within the framework of Bloom's theory of anxiety of influence, it has been evaluated how the concerns felt by Ottoman writers during their encounters with the West guided their literary productions. In Ahmet Mithat's selections from Western literature, it has been observed that admiration for Western culture and a critical distance towards it are intertwined.

When considered in the context of Occidentalism, Ahmet Mithat's attitude towards the West has been evaluated as a search for balance, accepting the superiority of the West while arguing that Ottoman society needed to preserve its own identity. At this point, although the idea has been reflected that a selectivity towards Western culture should be developed through the themes of translations, and that Ottoman society should shape its own Westernization process by learning from the West rather than directly imitating it, it has been pointed out that the author's choice of the Western socio-cultural universe as a primary source is connected to social concerns.

This study evaluates Ahmet Mithat Efendi's translation practice in the context of the shared social concern during the Westernization process of the Ottoman social structure. The findings indicate that Ahmet Mithat's translations are not merely a process of cultural transfer, but also involve a form of social engineering effort. It can be said that Ahmet Mithat's translation strategy served as a kind of buffer mechanism in the relationship between the modern Ottoman intellectual and the West. While the technological and scientific advancements of the West were conveyed to Ottoman society, a more selective attitude was adopted regarding Western social and moral norms. This situation demonstrates that translation is not only a literary activity but also a part of the process of creating social consciousness.

In conclusion, Ahmet Mithat's translation strategy can be regarded as an effort to find a solution to the identity, culture, and belonging issues faced by Ottoman society during the process of Westernization. The contribution of this study to the literature is to emphasize the fact that translation has a social function and to reinterpret Ahmet Mithat's translation process in this context. Thus, it becomes clearer that translation was not only a linguistic practice but also served as a tool for social and cultural transformation during the process of Ottoman modernization.

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