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**THE ROLE OF TRANSLATION IN
COMMERCIALISATION OF POPULAR
CULTURE: *THE LITTLE PRINCE***

**POPÜLER KÜLTÜR BAĞLAMINDA
METALAŞMADA ÇEVİRİLERİN ROLÜ: *KÜÇÜK
PRENS* ÖRNEĞİ**

ABSTRACT

The overconsumption in capitalist societies has led to the commodification of culture, giving rise to the concept of the culture industry. The idea of the culture industry stems from mass culture and denotes the capitalist society's transformation of all aspects into commodities and its reliance on standardization. The theoretical foundation of this study is based on the concept of the culture industry as presented by Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno. The accumulation of social interaction within the sphere of language and literature in the culture industry also contributes to its role as a consumable aspect. Popular culture, in conjunction with globalization, facilitates the emergence of popular literature across different languages through translation. This study seeks to explore how popular literary works are positioned within the Turkish literary system through translation in relation to the culture industry. In this context, *The Little Prince*, one of the most universally translated works, is chosen as the object of study. The position of this work, whose popularity has been proven worldwide with a multitude of translations, in the Turkish literary system will be examined in the context of the function of translations using a holistic approach. This study explores the reception of this work within the Turkish cultural system, considering its portrayal in various translations, and how it is presented to readers with different ideologies. The positioning of the work within the Turkish literary system is examined in light of Pierre Bourdieu's theories on habitus and the cultural field.

Keywords: Popular culture, culture industry, popular literature, commodification, *The Little Prince*.

ÖZET

Kapitalist toplumsal düzende tüketimin aşırılığı içerisinde kültürün meta halini alması durumu kültür endüstrisi sorunsalını meydana getirmiştir. Kültür endüstrisi kavramı kitle kültürü kavramından gelişmekte olup, kapitalist toplumun her şeyi metalaştırarak standardizasyona bağlı kılmasını ifade etmektedir. Horkheimer ve Adorno tarafından ileri sürülen kültür endüstrisi, bu çalışmanın kuramsal temelini oluşturur. Kültür endüstrisi içerisinde toplumsallığın dil ve edebiyat alanında birikiminin oluşturduğu kümülatif yapı da tüketim unsuru halini alır. Bu durumun modern anlamdaki karşılığı ise popüler kültürdür. Popüler kültür, küreselleşmeyle beraber popüler edebiyatın doğuşuna çeviriler yoluyla zemin hazırlar. Bu çalışma, popüler edebiyat eserlerinin çeviri yoluyla Türk kültür dizgesindeki konumlanışını, kültür endüstrisi çerçevesinde ele almayı hedeflemektedir. Bu bağlamda, inceleme nesnesi olarak evrensel çapta en çok dile çevrilen eserlerden biri olan *Küçük Prens* seçilmiştir. Çevirilerinin sayıca çokluğuyla dünya çapında popülerliği kanıtlanmış bu eserin, Türk edebi dizgesindeki konumu, bütüncül bir yaklaşımla çevirilerin işlevi bağlamında incelenecektir. Farklı çevirilerde farklı stratejilerle yansıtılan bu eserin Türk kültür dizgesi bağlamında alınması ve eserin okura farklı ideolojilerle sunulması, bu çalışmada ele alınacaktır. Eserin Türk edebi dizgesindeki konumlanışı, Pierre Bourdieu tarafından ileri sürülen habitus ve kültürel alan kavramları çerçevesinde tartışılacaktır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Popüler kültür, kültür endüstrisi, popüler edebiyat, metalaşma, *Küçük Prens*.

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“In a world where books have long lost all likeness to books, the real book can no longer be one”

(Adorno, 2005, p.51).

Introduction

In the postmodern period, individuals established relationships with the masses based on capital, as described by Pierre Bourdieu through the idea of habitus. The term "industry" in this context goes beyond its usual definition of production processes and encompasses the standardization of cultural products similar to other goods, as well as the rationalization of distribution methods (Adorno, 2003, p.78; Held, 1984, p. 90). The concept of the culture industry is believed to be a significant contributor to popular culture. Advocates of the Frankfurt School argue that mass culture leads to the division and uniformity of human consciousness, ultimately promoting consumerism as its dominant force. The prevalence of capitalist structures within society, along with the ongoing emphasis on consumption-driven behaviors among individuals, is commonly represented by the concept of the culture industry.

The interaction of popular culture with the literary system gives rise to popular literature. Popular literature is influenced by consumption culture and exhibits characteristics distinct from classical literature. As a result, it has played a role in shaping and being shaped by sociocultural changes in the postmodern era. Translated literature demonstrates the active influence of popular literary works on the culture industry.

In this study, Saint Antoine de Exupery's prominent work, *The Little Prince* is scrutinized as a work of popular literature based on the theories of culture industry. This research aims to explore how the translations contribute to *The Little Prince*'s commercialization. The reasons for the popularity of these translations in terms of the work's narrative and its materialization will be discussed within the context of Türkiye. The effects of the controversial parts of the work on its popularity and reception in Türkiye will also focus on revealing the true nature of its position within the Turkish literary system.

After observing the abundance and diversity of the Turkish translations of *The Little Prince*, some basic questions regarding the relationship between the popularity of *The Little Prince* and its translations into Türkiye and the commercial aspects come to mind. The aim of this study is to analyze the role of translations of popular works of literature in the commercialization of popular culture through materialization. For this purpose, *The Little Prince* is chosen as the object of the study as it is one of the most translated works worldwide. Additionally, there is a contentious section in the book that refers to "a Turkish dictator," which is believed to be associated with Atatürk. This part of this longseller causes different interpretations in terms of the translations of the work. This study aims to examine the challenging aspects of the work and their impact on its reception within the Turkish literary system. Furthermore, the analysis delves into the commercialization of the work by examining its global popularity and controversial position in Türkiye. This study explores popular culture and literature from a sociological perspective that centers on the culture industry.

Despite the worldwide popularity of *The Little Prince*, academic studies have mostly focused on translation strategies or challenges of the work. They typically concentrate on comparing the source text with other translations or among themselves. In Türkiye, there are several

interpretations of the text, some of which have sparked controversy. Most research on the translation of this text concentrates primarily on addressing this debate and the applied strategies to overcome it. However, no research has been conducted on the commodification of *The Little Prince* and the impact of its translations in this context. This study is the first to examine the commodification of *The Little Prince* in relation to its popularity, with a specific focus on its translations. Contrary to prior research that emphasizes the translation process, this study centers on the translation as a final product. The aim is to exceed the boundaries of the translation strategies used in the text and to comprehend the dynamics and nature of the work from a holistic perspective within the target system. The goal is to go beyond the limits of the translation methods used in the text and comprehend the dynamics and characteristics of the work from a comprehensive perspective within the target system. For this purpose, a macro-level analysis is conducted by considering the dynamics of the culture industry and its interaction with popular literature.

1. Methodology and Theoretical Framework

The theoretical basis of this study lies in the ideas of culture industry and mass culture proposed by Frankfurt School theorists Theodor W. Adorno, and Max Horkheimer. The consumption habits of the contemporary world include literary and artistic works, forming a foundation for translating popular literary works analyzed in this research. In this research, the term "industry" encompasses not just production activities but also the industrialization and distribution of cultural products through standardization processes. Horkheimer's concept of "commodification" is employed to analyze the connection between the literary system and the economic system. While discussing the commercial aspect of the literary industry, Pierre Bourdieu's ideas on "cultural capital" and "habitus" are often referenced. In consideration of these ideas, the focus is on how the increased popularity of literary works impacts people's consumption habits. The focus of this study is initially on the aspect of the culture industry, a broad and intricate concept within this context.

2. The Culture Industry

The cultures of postmodern societies reflect the dominant influence of capitalist economic policies on social dynamics. Although the consumption objects of capitalist societies are not solely products with commodity value, individuals also consume ideologies, cultures, emotions, and beliefs, in addition to the commodities they own. Such consumption activity is expressed through commodification or, in Herbert Marcuse's term, "reification." Reification involves a continuous cycle of consumption irrespective of the ontological status of the entities. Reification serves as the primary goal of mass society and contributes to the cultural framework of consumption within mass society. Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. articulated the concept of the culture industry as a representation of consumer society in their work "Dialectic of Enlightenment". Before the emergence of the culture industry, the idea of mass culture was employed to interpret and provide significance to the cultural landscape during the postmodern era:

The term culture industry was perhaps used for the first time in the book Dialectic of Enlightenment, which Horkheimer and I published in Amsterdam in 1947. In our drafts we spoke of 'mass culture'. We replaced that expression with 'culture industry' in order to exclude from the outset the interpretation agreeable to its advocates: that it is a matter of something like a culture

that arises spontaneously from the masses themselves, the contemporary form of popular art. From the latter the culture industry must be distinguished in the extreme. (Adorno, 2001, p. 98)

The concept of the culture industry is more closely related to industrialization than it is to the study of culture. This idea aligns with the economic transformation of all social activities within the capitalist framework of mass society in the postmodern era. At this stage, the term "industry," as mentioned in the study's introduction, no longer solely pertains to production operations but also encompasses the industrialization and dissemination of cultural goods through standardization procedures. The incorporation of economic principles into cultural activities, the pursuit of financial gain through cultural endeavors, and the commercialized creation of all forms of culture, including art and music, are manifestations of the cultural industry. According to Best and Kellner (2016, p.322), this scenario represents the reification and fetishization of bourgeois concepts, similar to commodities in capitalist societies.

The culture industry, also known as industrial culture, serves as a mechanism for capitalist organizations. It involves the commodification and global distribution of cultural products, such as music, visual art, and literature, through media channels. The act of purchasing cultural products as commodities is driven by a focus on the cultural context of capital accumulation rather than solely on economic motives. Gernot Böhme (2003, p.71) characterizes emerging production methods in the culture industry, and the connection between economy and culture as an aesthetic economy; Allen J. Scott (1997, p. 324) terms it cultural economy. The aesthetic and cultural economy sustains the operations of the culture industry by shaping perceptions of taste, cultural value, and essentiality associated with the products being consumed.

The cultural control that unites the contemporary population is rooted in the influence of collective action. As Nederveen Pieterse states, "Globalization and modernity make up a ready-made package" (1995, p.45). Modernization and globalization are key factors that unite societies within a collective framework. R. Sennett (2006) characterizes the contemporary and post-modern era's culture as new capitalism. In the period in question, cultural domination with expressions such as culture industry and new capitalist culture corresponded to cultural imperialism. It is also asserted that cultural imperialism essentially signifies a type of economic and political control, which is linked to colonialism in the realms of politics and economics (Barker, 1989; Williams, 2005). Therefore, the hegemonic position of cultural domination in the imperialist sense can account for the emergence of the culture industry.

The most visible form of this cultural domination in society is related to cultural capital. The artistic and literary creations contribute to the process of globalization and collective action. The collective action extends beyond national borders and becomes globalized. Consequently, a body of literature emerges with reduced cultural constraints: popular literature. The collective effort extends beyond national borders and has become globalized.

2.1 Popular Culture and Popular Literature

Popular literature is defined as "any written work that is read, or is intended to be read by a mass audience" (Britannica). The emphasis on the mass audience results in the usage of the term to differentiate between high literature and popular literature, with only the latter seen as appealing to the working class. Therefore, there is always a differentiation between popular fiction and literary fiction. According to Bourdieu, the rationale for this differentiation is:

[...] At the other pole, there is the “economic” logic of the literary and artistic industries which, since they make the trade in cultural goods just another trade, confer priority on distribution, on immediate and temporary success, measured for example by the print run, and which are content to adjust themselves to the pre-existing demand of a clientele [...]. An enterprise moves closer to the “commercial” pole the more directly or completely the products it offers on the market respond to a pre-existing demand, and in pre-established forms. (1995, p. 142)

Popular literature tends to prioritize commercial aspects over the symbolic value of literary works, a trend commonly observed in the 2000s. The greater the number of books printed and distributed in the market, the higher the prevalence of popular literature. In popular literature, the commodification of books has led to the emergence of new literary forms. Since then, these emerging genres have become integrated into the literary market. The concept of a "bestseller" subsequently made its way into the literature as a result of effective marketing strategies (Enns & Metz, 2015, p. 5).

The emergence of popular literature runs alongside the rise of popular culture and encompasses various forms of media. As literary works are adapted to different formats, such as films and stage productions, these transformations also focus on the original text. Each new adaptation may offer a unique interpretation that upholds the significance of a text. In addition, these various media formats also generate specific economic worth, adding to the financial value of literary works.

The idea of commodification within the realm of the culture industry, which clarifies the origin of popular culture, is commonly regarded as a key characteristic of popular literary works. Nevertheless, while popular literary works have emerged across various periods and genres, certain shared characteristics can be identified. First and foremost, these pieces achieve "bestseller" status by adapting to current market needs, with some standing the test of time and earning the title of "longsellers". Besides, these works are mostly shaped around the theme of "escapism." At the same time, they have a fluent language that attracts people from diverse backgrounds, and they are called "page-turners" due to their easy-to-read features (Britannica).

The relationship between popular culture and literature is reciprocal. Jim Collins (2010) asks, “How did literary culture become popular culture?” in order to examine this relationship from a different perspective. This question suggests that popular literature not only reflects popular culture but also plays a significant role in shaping it. At this juncture, the initial point to be raised is the intersemiotic nature of popular literary works. The adaptation of literary works into cinema or other media forms, known as "Cineliterature," illustrates the influence of these works on popular culture. The popularization of literary culture started in the 1990s, but it concentrated on attracting a different reader profile than the traditional concept of literature. At present, the primary factor that sets apart popular literature from classical literature is its emphasis on glorifying the recipients and evaluating the worth of literary works based on their integration with readers' lives. Collins explains this situation as follows: “...it's all in how you read them, or, more precisely, what you read them for” (2010, p. 21). Thus, to discuss the popularity of a piece of literature, it is important to initially examine its reception. The enduring popularity of literary works from the past suggests that they have been interpreted in various ways, allowing each reader to connect with the work on a personal level. Popular literature has redefined the limits of traditional literary works and turned readers into active participants.

3. The Commodification of Cultural Works

In his book *Globalization and Culture*, John Tomlinson connects globalization with the process of commodification as he explores the impact of this phenomenon on the cultural sector. He states, “it is the commodification of culture, if not the influence of cultural products, that brings individuals together for an ideological purpose and structures and organizes cultural experience” (2017, p. 121). Tomlinson asserts that within the framework of globalization, media tools, television, music, art and literature are increasingly being commercialized as they are influenced by capitalist principles. This process of commodification also extends to cultural products through standardization in the industry. Tomlinson states that in the context of globalization, the production of media tools, television, music, art and literature are becoming commercialized while being shaped in the context of capitalism. Similar to media tools, this commodification occurs in the cultural field in the form of standardization. In the realm of Marxist value theory, the inclusion of use and exchange values in cultural and literary works suggests that these creations are commodified. This transformation into commodities results in the consumption of cultural works as products tailored for commercial interests. Commodified cultural products often exhibit common trends and share similar characteristics, which can be viewed as a form of standardization. Tomlinson examines this scenario in the context of globalization and argues that cultural products worldwide are experiencing a process of standardization. (ibid., p. 118). How does this situation manifest in consumption patterns within the domain of literature, which is a primary sphere of cultural creation? From a Bourdieusian viewpoint, the concept of cultural commodification appears to be connected to individuals’ habitus. This suggests that the culture industry influences or even prescribes the commodities that people should consume. Bourdieu’s idea of cultural capital pertains to decisions that mirror the cultural preferences of the social class individuals are part of. These choices foster shared awareness among members of the same class or group (Bourdieu 2010). 49). Mary Benton explores Bourdieu’s idea of cultural capital within the realm of literature and suggests that people engage in different patterns of purchasing books to construct a cultural identity, as books can be used to project diverse self-images. This phenomenon is described by Benton as bookafilage (1997, p. 279).

The notion of habitus is closely linked to cultural capital. Habitus, defined as an individual's previous experiences, way of life, routines, and tendencies, also influences future decisions. As a result, individuals' cultural preferences are directly influenced by their habitus. Bourdieu asserts that the concepts of field, capital, and habitus are interconnected and suggests that cultural preferences stem from individuals' entrenched cultural disposition within their social class. The instance he presented from French society suggests that exposure to art and receiving art education has enhanced the upper class's ability to appreciate works of art, while this is not the case for the lower class. Thus, he linked refined cultural preferences with higher social classes. At this juncture, it can be asserted that Bourdieu's delineation of distinct cultural preferences linked to varying social classes becomes standardized in cultural goods because of the globalization-induced commodification of culture. Therefore, individuals from all social strata tend to prefer cultural products with similar traits.

Commodification is closely linked to global capitalism, leading to the emergence of the idea of "global culture" (Tomlinson, 2017, p. 123). This leads to the prevalence of Anglo-American literature in the field of literary works. Providing access to the same literary pieces for different

social classes and promoting their consumption through various means has stimulated a widespread literary market. Commodified cultural products such as these popular literary works are available to people of all social classes, blurring the line between the class-based consumption of cultural products in the literature. Popular literary works that appeal to all social classes are works that highlight the source culture in the context of global capitalism. It appears that the dominance of these predominantly English works in the literary market is a consequence of their cultural hegemony. The selection of these works by the target literature is based on the potential for the source literature to influence and mould the dynamics of the target literature. The cultural products that people choose based on their habitus may change to readily available forms of literature, indicating that global imperialism can directly influence an individual's habitus.

4. The Commodification of Translated Literature: *The Little Prince*

It is claimed that the reproducibility of works of art in the context of popular culture damages the singularity and uniqueness of these works (Moore, 2012, p. 76). During the process of reproduction, the roles of literary works may shift alongside their intended purpose in production. As a result, as these works turn into commodities, their primary function becomes consumability. The foremost question to be asked at this point is what determines the popularity of commoditized literary works and their translation. Nick Stevenson provides two perspectives on this issue: for goods to gain popularity, their economic benefits must be the primary focus, and this can only happen if these items are suitable for large-scale production. Secondly, these works must have the potential to be open to destructive readings of the target audience, therefore the ideological aspect of these works is at the forefront (2008, p. 151). Both propositions will be discussed in the context of this study, within the framework of the translations of *The Little Prince*, one of the most translated works in the world.

This work, written by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, was published in New York in 1943. The first Turkish translation of the work was made by Ahmet Muhip Dıranas in 1953, and this translation was published in three issues of Child and Home Magazine, the publication of the Child Protection Agency. After the copyright expired in 2014, there was a surge in translations. In 2015 alone, 71 new translations of *The Little Prince* were published, including reprints (Akgün, 2016, p. 43-47).

The large number of versions of *The Little Prince* has prompted scholarly research to concentrate on these translations, particularly on translators' decisions and strategies for translation. Master's theses and different articles have been written about the book. In the thesis of Ayberk Erkey, it has been asserted that *The Little Prince* in Türkiye has two crucial characteristics "being a translation phenomenon for Türkiye and the controversy over the expression 'Turkish dictator' " (2007, p.43). This "expression" has been the subject of discussion in multiple articles, but its status as a "phenomenon" specific to Türkiye has not been examined. Previous research has focused on thoroughly analyzing the content, either in terms of its storyline or its target audience (adults or children). It is important to elaborate on the factors that contribute to its status as a prominent "phenomenon" in translation, as it encompasses more than just narrative issues.

The global success of this piece, with translations into 480 languages and dialects, and over 200 million copies in circulation, is evident. This widespread appeal appears to stem from more

than just the story itself, as its adaptation to various formats seems to play a key role in its universal recognition. *The Little Prince* has inspired various adaptations across different media, including radio dramas, anime, musicals, movies, and cartoons. Furthermore, *the Little Prince* has been featured in exhibitions at museums worldwide, significantly enhancing its international prominence. Toys inspired by The Prince, the Fox, and the Rose were created. The portrayal of *The Little Prince* in the book appeared on various items, ranging from glassware to clothing. Additionally, the illustration of a boa constrictor swallowing an elephant has gained widespread popularity and has even been used as a tattoo design by many people. The widespread circulation of book quotes across different social media platforms within the new media field highlights the shift in the book from a literary work to a popular commodity, emphasizing its commercial aspect. In the realm of new media, the creation of a "virtual identity" through sharing quotes from the work or using paratexts on social media has proven to be highly effective within this commercial framework (Işık & Yaşar, 2021, p. 1202). The widespread nature of content created on social media ensures that it attracts a broad audience, leading to increased visibility and popularity.

The Little Prince, now a ubiquitous cultural phenomenon, has gained significant popularity in Türkiye. According to the Le Petit Prince Collection portal, Chinese has the highest number of translations at 464, while Turkish follows closely behind with 216 translations. There are a total of 25 translations published in Polish, the first language in which the work was translated after English. The first Turkish version was produced ten years after the Polish translation. This suggests a significant history of Turkish translations over time. Given the work's universal appeal, it is not surprising that it gained popularity in Türkiye. However, due to the expressions "a Turkish dictator" ("un dictateur turc") and the death penalty mentioned in the fourth chapter of the book, the work caused great controversy in Türkiye. A translation of the work published by Nehir Publishing has been confiscated. Furthermore, in 2005, the title was even removed from the list of 100 Foundational Literary Works published by the Ministry of Education (Neydim, 2005). This passage discusses the discovery of the planet where *The Little Prince* resides. A Turkish astronomer claimed to have discovered it, but when he presented his findings at an international symposium, he was not taken seriously due to his outdated clothing. However, after clothing reform in 1920 changed his attire, people began taking him seriously and acknowledging his discovery. The dictator declared that individuals who do not adhere to modern fashion will face capital punishment. At first glance, there may be a connection with Atatürk in this passage. However, Nedim clarifies that clothing reform occurred after the date mentioned, emphasizing that there is no critique of Atatürk here. Instead, he argues that formalism in the West, rather than Türkiye, is criticized (ibid.). This critique of the Western world lacks self-criticism in Western nations and has not led to meaningful changes or censorship. When we consider the reception of the work in Türkiye, it is evident that this part includes significant ideological choices because of concerns about associating Atatürk with the label "dictator." This part is also believed to have shaped the reception of the work in Türkiye on a global level. It is also argued that despite receiving widespread acclaim internationally, this widely popular work did not garner sufficient attention in Türkiye:

Published in over 400 languages and dialects, Saint-Exupéry's 1943 masterpiece continues to receive worldwide acclaim with each new translation, except those in Turkish. Instead, in Türkiye, the Little Prince was a cause of considerable public furor and odium, especially in the

1990s. By the end of the millennium, Turkish publishing houses were inundated with complaint letters. Readers threatened to sue; some did indeed.¹

The scenario described here stems from the perception of popular culture products as instruments of a universally recognized ideology. Conversely, commercialized products persist "...in an area of struggles where social consensus is achieved by being shown as a product of common sense and general consent" (Doğanay, 2013, p. 158). The issue mentioned did not limit the translations of the work; in fact, there was a surge in translated versions. For instance, *The Little Prince* became the first work to be translated into Laz. The selection of this particular work for the first translation appears to stem from its esteemed position and widespread appeal within the Turkish literary landscape. Among the numerous translations of *The Little Prince*, there exist many versions that render the phrase "un dictateur Turc" as "a Turkish dictator" without any form of censorship (İthaki Yayınevi, 2019; Epsilon, 2015; Yürülü Fener, 2015; Zeplin, 2015; Hece, 2015). While we acknowledge the contentious nature of Turkish works, publishing this chapter with alternative translation strategies demonstrates a different option for readers. For this reason, despite its controversial nature, this particular section did not hinder the translation or global popularity of the work in Türkiye. In contrast, *The Little Prince* serves as a significant example of how diverse ideologies can find common ground within society.

High profile translators such as Selim İleri, Azra Erhat, and Ahmet Muhip Dıranas produced early translations of the work. The Turkish literary scene welcomed the work through three translations that were released in 1953. Cemal Süreya and Tomris Uyar's translation was published later, in 1965. These works serve as the foundation for the translation comparisons conducted on *The Little Prince* in Türkiye (Neydim, 2005; Akgün, 2016; Atan & Çoban, 2023; Cirit & Arkan, 2023). Between 1943 and 1960, when the work was initially published, it was mainly translated into major languages like English, Spanish, Japanese, and Italian. As a result, having multiple translations of the same work during this period in Türkiye indicates the significance placed on it. What these early translations share is their portrayal of the term "dictator" in a more moderate light. Texts designed to appeal to both adults and children continue to be widely accessible through reprints in the current market. However, translations produced after 2000 have been able to offer more source-oriented texts, possibly benefitting from the work's prior acceptance by the target audience. The presence of both previous editions and contemporary interpretations suggests an ongoing need for diverse types of texts, ensuring that one does not overshadow the other.

During the modern times, following the third quarter of the 20th century, "the act of translation was accommodated as an aesthetic venture into the realm of world literature, while translators were seen as actuators of this mundane task in the shade of target readers' needs and expectations" (Abdal, 2022, p. 175). While answering the question of what the role of these translations in the process of commodification of popular culture is, the main point to discuss is whether *The Little Prince* has turned into a commercial product because of its numerous Turkish translations, or if it has become an integral part of Turkish culture as a popular meta owing to its worldwide appeal. Various perspectives exist for answering this question, depending on the different historical periods in Türkiye. It is noteworthy that initially, the work did not achieve popularity upon its first publication. The rise in popularity of the work appears to correspond with

¹ For access to the full version of the article written by Pelin Şenel but published anonymously: <https://lynnchenel.com/the-little-prince-translation-turkish/>.

a reduction in the impact of the war and an increase in its translations. A differentiation can also be drawn between 1953, when the first translation occurred in Türkiye, and the 2000s. The widespread popularity of the book in the 2000s is also linked to its adaptation into various art forms. *The Little Prince* manifested in many diverse ways, has become a widely circulated cultural commodity since its copyright expired in Türkiye in 2015. So, it can be argued that the significant increase in Turkish translations results from both commercialization and the removal of copyright restrictions.

On the other hand, it has been asserted in this study that the widespread availability of translations makes this work more accessible than other literary pieces, thereby contributing to its commercialization. As more and more translations are produced, it is possible to reach a copy of *The Little Prince* on the shelves of chain stores of local markets such as ŞOK and A101. Therefore, it goes without doubt that the consumability of the work is directly related to the abundance of translations. The work itself is called a “translation phenomenon” proving the crucial role of translations in turning *The Little Prince* into a work of popular culture. There are different factors turning it into a crucial phenomenon. The most popular one is the discussions around “Turkish dictator” and how to translate this phrase as it may show an ideological stance. Another one is about how much of the true nature of the work is conveyed in the translations because the work is open to destructive readings which may not be very well received. Furthermore, how much of the text is sacrificed in the translations for the sake of preserving and/or increasing the consumability of the work is also crucial especially for the translations after 2015. This strategy is generally applied by the new publishing houses which are retranslating the canonical works of literature because their financial value is already guaranteed. *The Little Prince* is one of the best examples of these canonical works not just because of its narrative but of its “dual perspective” (appealing to both children and adults) (Neydim, 2005). This dual perspective makes most of these translations possible as the narrative is not complicated. As a result, translations as products are fluent and accessible to people of all ages.

Therefore, it is possible to assert that the translations of different versions of *The Little Prince* contributed to the commercialization of the work as a part of popular culture regardless of the translation strategies. As the target audience becomes increasingly exposed to the translation itself as a product, supported by visual materials related to the narrative and reflections of the work in the digital world, its consumability has risen significantly.

When considering the example of *The Little Prince* in the context of the Turkish cultural industry, it is possible to argue that the commercial aspect of the work outweighs its literary aspect. In the frame of innovative modes of production known as aesthetic or cultural economy within the intersection of economic and cultural spheres, publishers' notable enthusiasm for this work is based on its established market appeal and successful track record. The commercial aspect appears to be a significant factor driving the translation of works, particularly since 2015. This aligns with the theory of culture industry, which asserts that every production is driven by commercial interests. Horkheimer's assertion regarding the culture industry, in which he discusses “the economic system assuming the role of objective reason, authoritarian religion, or metaphysics” (2002, p. 81), appears to hold true even for *The Little Prince* which encompasses profound universal values and assertions that are applicable across different cultures.

Conclusion

The study discusses dimensions of the causality of the culture industry, focusing on mass culture and popular culture concepts that contribute to the development of the culture industry concept. Some ideas about historical materialism and the structure of capitalism that form a critique of the culture industry are discussed. In general, it can be argued that the critique of the culture industry stems from the perspective that the social realm is intertwined with economic and political factors. Consequently, cultural aspects have also taken on an economic nature within late capitalist society, as evidenced by various indicators. In a society where culture and cultural artifacts are commercialized and traded, the primary goal of cultural creations is often focused on financial profit.

One of the most notable instances of commodification within popular culture is *The Little Prince*, the subject of analysis. The fact that this piece, authored by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, deals with the idea of fleeing from war and worldly materialism is particularly noteworthy given its transformation into a commercial product over time, thereby embodying the very materialism it critiques. Even watercolour artworks, which greatly influenced the work's popularity, have now been commercialized separately from the original pieces. Based on Stevenson's theory within this study's framework, *The Little Prince* has been acknowledged as a cultural product. This is due to its susceptibility to critical interpretations from the public, stemming from its commercial success and portrayal of varied ideologies.

Every translation is essentially a form of reproduction, as the culture industry views each reproduction as a reinterpretation or presentation of an existing work in a different style. Every reinterpretation can also be considered an ideological reproduction. From this viewpoint, it can be argued that *The Little Prince's* translations offer varied interpretations, particularly concerning the controversial fourth chapter. However, given the extensive range of translations, there is a sense that commercial interests take precedence over ideological objectives in this context. Even the translations of the book omitting the expression "a Turkish dictator" might be influenced by economic considerations. By creating a neutral version, a higher rate of sales may have been aimed. In a Marxist sense, these translations are cultural products that are tailored for commercial interest. Thus, the concepts of culture industry have been deemed applicable to this research. However, Horkheimer's argument that commodification leads to the standardization within cultural sphere has been refuted. Since different ideological stances are exhibited in the translations of the work, no standardization has been found. The range of translations produced after the 2000s, when the work became commercialized, indicates that even though they do not conform to established norms, these translated works continue to contribute to commodification. Moreover, regardless of different translation strategies, it has been concluded that different versions of *The Little Prince* are examples of bookaflage in Benton's term in Turkiye. The reason is that they are consumed to create a specific cultural stance by individuals based on the popularity of the book as a part of global culture.

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