

**A case study of translator's preface in *Yok Edici*****İlgin AKTENER<sup>1</sup>****APA:** Aktener, I. (2019). A case study of translator's preface in *Yok Edici*. *RumeliDE Dil ve Edebiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi*, (14), 439-453. DOI: 10.29000/rumelide.541081**Abstract**

Translation and publication of foreign literature have at times resulted in obscenity court cases (e.g. the *Aphrodite* [1940] and *Tropic of Cancer* [1988] cases) against Turkish translators and publishers since the first decades of the Turkish Republic. The recent obscenity court cases against the Turkish translators and publishers of William S. Burroughs' *The Soft Machine* and Chuck Palahniuk's *Snuff* (2011) were interpreted as instances of censorship. Taking this as a starting point, this article conducts a case study of Ahmet Ergenç's translator's preface for *Exterminator!*, a book by Burroughs which contains obscenity and was published in Turkey after the aforementioned court cases. The aims of this case study is to investigate the purpose of and reasons behind Ergenç's preface and to determine whether Ergenç's preface was influenced by the court cases and the censorial conditions under which Turkish translators work. To do so, Ergenç's preface is studied in the light of Genette's (1997) understanding of allographic and authorial prefaces and an interview is conducted with Ergenç. As a result, it is discussed that Ergenç aimed at informing readers unfamiliar with Burroughs about his style, which consists of fragmented narrative and obscene words, to prevent misinterpretations of them as translation mistakes on the part of the reader. As to the question of the influence of censorship on Ergenç's preface, results of the analysis of the preface and the interview are conflicting. The article concludes that Ergenç denies any authorial responsibility for fragmentation and obscenity in *Exterminator!* and uses his preface to embrace invisibility as a translator while also gaining visibility at the same time through it.

**Key words:** Translator's preface, paratext, translation, censorship.***Yok Edici* isimli kitaptaki çevirmenin önsözü üzerine bir çalışma****Öz**

Yabancı edebi eserlerin çevirisi ve yayımı, Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin ilanından beri, zaman zaman Türk çevirmenler ve yayıncılara açılan müstehcenlik davalarına (örneğin *Afrodite* [1940] ve *Yengeç Dönencesi* [1988] davaları) yol açmıştır. William S. Burroughs'un *Yumuşak Makine* ve Chuck Palahniuk'un *Ölüm Pornosu* isimli eserlerinin Türk çevirmenlerine ve yayıncılarına yakın zamanda açılan davalar (2011) sansür örnekleri olarak yorumlanmıştır. Bu makale, bu davaları başlangıç noktası olarak, çevirmen Ahmet Ergenç'in Burroughs tarafından yazılmış, sözü geçen davalardan sonra basılmış, müstehcen kelimeler içeren bir kitap olan *Yok Edici* için yazdığı önsözü incelemektedir. Bu çalışmanın amacı, Ergenç'in önsözünün amaçlarını ve nedenlerini incelemek ve sözü geçen davalar ve Türk çevirmenlerin maruz kaldığı sansür koşullarının bu önsözü etkileyip etkilemediğini araştırmaktır. Bunu gerçekleştirmek için, Ergenç'in önsözü Genette'nin (1997) "allographic" (kitabın yazarı haricinde biri tarafından yazılan) ve "authorial" (kitabın yazarı

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tarafından yazılan) önsöz kavramları ışığında incelenmiştir ve Ergenç ile bir röportaj yapılmıştır. Sonuç olarak, Ergenç'in amacının Burroughs'u tanımayan okurlara onun üslubuna özgü öğeler olan parçalı anlatım ve müstehcenlikle ilgili bilgi vermek ve böylelikle, okuyucuların bu öğeleri, çeviri yanlışı olarak değerlendirmesini engellemek olduğu tartışılmıştır. Sansür koşullarının Ergenç'in önsözü üzerine olan etkileriyle ilgili olarak, metin incelemesi ve röportaj sonuçları birbirleriyle çelişmiştir. Bu çalışma, Ergenç'in *Yok Edici*'deki parçalı anlatım ve müstehcenlik için herhangi bir yazar sorumluluğunu reddettiği ve çevirmenlere görünürlük sağlayan önsözü bir çevirmen olarak görünmezliğin altını çizmek için kullanıp aynı zamanda kendini görünür kıldığı sonucuna varmıştır.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Çevirmenin önsözü, yanmetin, çeviri, sansür.

## 1. Introduction

A general overview of the Turkish history shows that translation and publication of foreign literature have been a risky business since the first decades of the Turkish Republic. This is evident in the obscenity court cases against the Turkish translators and publishers of Pierre Louys' *Aphrodite: mœurs antiques* and Henry Miller's *Tropic of Cancer* dated 1940 and 1988, respectively (Kabacalı, 1990; Durbaş, 2009; Kayış and Hürkan, 2012). Such court cases continue to cause legal trouble for Turkish translators and publishers of foreign literature. Two recent examples are *The Soft Machine*—written by William S. Burroughs—and *Snuff*—written by Chuck Palahniuk—court cases. In 2011, Turkish publishers, İrfan Sancı of Sel Publishing and Hasan Basri Çıplak of Ayrıntı Publishing, and translators, Süha Sertabiboğlu and Funda Uncu, were taken to court on the grounds of obscenity for publishing the Turkish translations of the aforementioned books. Although experts from universities judged that both books had literary value, the court cases did not result in the acquittal of the defendants. Instead, the court cases were deferred for three years. This was because of the provisional article 1/1-b of the 6352 Law in the Third Judicial Package (2012)<sup>2</sup>, which specified that court cases and punishments concerning media and press related offences would be deferred to a later date in order to facilitate judiciary services, and which came into force a day before the last trials of the court cases. In line with this law, the court ruling was that the cases would be dropped, if the defendants avoided committing another offence similar to the previous ones within the three years following the deferral ruling. However, if they committed similar offences, new charges would be added to the standing ones, and as a result, the defendants could be sentenced to prison time between 6 months and 3 years (Atik, 2012; Flood, 2012; Yılmaz, 2011; “Ölüm Pornosuna soruşturma!”, 2011; “Ölüm Pornosu'na 3 yıl”, 2011).

Read as a censorial practice imposed on publication activities in Turkey by international organizations and Sancı<sup>3</sup>, the deferral ruling indeed had censorial effects on the decisions and behaviours of certain publishers and translators. For example, Sancı postponed the publication of some books that, he thought, might be considered extreme by the Turkish public (i.e. *Public Sex: The Culture of Radical Sex* by Pat Califia and *Testo Junkie: Sex, Drugs, and Biopolitics in the Pharmacopornographic Era* by Paul B. Preciado) and published Kathy Acker's *Blood and Guts in High School* with a warning which stated

<sup>2</sup> The provisional article 1/1-b of the 6352 Law in the Third Judicial Package (2012) can be retrieved from <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/kanunlar/k6352.html>

<sup>3</sup> Pen International and International Publishers Association claimed that the judicial package which resulted in the deferral ruling was “a direct warning” to those who might engage in publishing in Turkey. See: <https://pen-international.org/news/turkey-burroughs-and-palahniuk-publishers-face-three-years-under-sword-of-damocles-threat> Sancı argued that the deferral ruling was a “censorship tool” forcing him to be cautious in his publication activities. See Aktener (2017) for more details.

that the book was only suitable for adults. Furthermore, Sertabiboğlu decided to discontinue translating “obscene” books (Aktener, 2017; 2019).

On the other hand, as confirmed by Aktener’s (2017; 2019) textual analysis of obscenity in a corpus of ten “obscene” books and their Turkish translations published by Sel and Ayrıntı Publishing<sup>4</sup>, publishers and translators did not seem to be affected at textual level. Aktener’s (2017; 2019) study reveals that the aforementioned publishers and several translators under investigation continued publishing and translating obscene books after the court cases without employing any drastic textual strategies that may be construed as self-censorship. This would then follow that although translators and publishers did not stop translating/publishing books which may cause them legal problems altogether and did not censor the books that they translated/published at textual level, they took some other precautionary self-censorial measures (Aktener, 2017; 2019).

Among the books included in the corpus of Aktener’s (2017; 2019) study is *Exterminator!* by Burroughs, which was translated into Turkish by Ahmet Ergenç under the title *Yok Edici*. Aktener’s (2017) study reveals that Ergenç did not employ any translation strategies to tone down the “obscene” nature of the book at textual level. However, as a preface for the book, he wrote a translator’s note that can be construed as a precautionary measure to reduce the risk of prosecution, considering the censorial conditions under which he works.

Ergenç’s preface is a paratext, which is defined by Genette (1997, p. 1) as an element that accompanies a literary text (e.g. the name of the author, the title of the literary text, prefaces, illustrations and so on). A review of translation studies focusing on paratexts and the Turkish context shows that translation scholars have found traces of ideology in paratexts that accompany translated/glocalised works (Tahir-Gürçağlar, 2002; Kansu-Yetkiner, 2014; Oktar and Kansu-Yetkiner, 2012; Kansu-Yetkiner and Oktar, 2010). One such study is that of Tahir-Gürçağlar (2002), in which she examines how paratexts, specifically epitexts and peritexts, reflect “a culture’s divergent definitions of translation and original” (p. 47) by focusing on the Turkish context. In the same study Tahir-Gürçağlar (2002) claims that the paratexts under investigation show traces of the dominant ideological stances of the socio-political context in which they were produced, i.e. the early republican period in Turkey. In the same vein, in her investigation of peritexts of translations of several books featured in the “100 Essential Readings” list of the Ministry of Education, which was issued in mid-2000s, Kansu-Yetkiner (2014) reveals that these peritexts are supportive of the idea of islamization contributing to the polarization between modernist Republican Kemalists and conservative pro-Islamists in Turkey.

To contribute to translation studies on the relation between paratexts and ideology within the Turkish context, this article conducts a case study of Ergenç’s translator’s preface in *Yok Edici*. The aims of this case study are to:

- (1) examine the purpose of and reasons behind Ergenç’s preface;
- (2) investigate whether Ergenç’s preface might be motivated by the censorial conditions under which Turkish translators work.

<sup>4</sup> These books are *The Soft Machine*, *Exterminator!* and *The Wild Boys* by William S. Burroughs; *Snuff*, *Pygmy* and *Stranger than Fiction* by Chuck Palahniuk; *Blood and Guts in High School* by Kathy Acker; *Deliberate Prose* by Allen Ginsberg; *The Undivided Self* by Will Self; and *Narcopolis* by Jeet Thayil.

In addressing the research aims, this article studies Ergenç's preface in the light of Genette's (1997) allographic and authorial prefaces and conducts an online interview with Ergenç. It begins with a contextualization of *Exterminator!/Yok Edici*, to clarify why Ergenç's preface for *Yok Edici* was regarded as a text worthy of investigation. Following this, it introduces methodological and theoretical considerations. Then, it presents the investigation of Ergenç's preface and the results of the interview with him. The article concludes with a discussion of results of the investigation of the preface and interview.

## 2. Contextualizing the text under investigation: Translator's preface in *Exterminator!* in Turkish

*Exterminator!* is a book of short stories written by William S. Burroughs, an American author associated with the Beat Generation and known mainly for *Naked Lunch*. Beat Generation writers, including Burroughs, were concerned with challenging the values and norms prevalent in the U.S. in 1950s and 1960s, the historical context in which they produced their works, as well as aesthetic and literary norms of their time. Therefore, they created works that were unconventional in terms of content and style. Shock-tactic obscenity was among the heterodox stylistic elements that they used in constructing their unconventional literary style (Stephenson, 1990; Lee, 1996; Newhouse, 2000; Russell, 2002). Similarly, Burroughs used obscenity in his works, which is evidenced by the obscenity court case against *Naked Lunch* that he faced in the U.S. in 1962 (Wilson, 2012) and *The Soft Machine* court case that the Sancı and Sertabiboğlu faced in Turkey in 2011. Furthermore, he is known to use such techniques as fragmentation and cut-up to create non-linear and experimental narratives in his works (Lydenberg, 1978; Houen, 2006; Wilson, 2012). The use of obscenity and experimental narrative can also be seen in *Exterminator!*: The textual analysis of obscenity conducted in Aktener's (2017; 2019) study shows that there are 34 obscene words in the source text of *Exterminator!*. Although more linear in comparison to some of Burroughs' other works such as *The Soft Machine*, *Exterminator!* contains a fragmented narrative, which can be illustrated with the last section of the book given below:

Cold Lost Marbles  
 my ice skates on a wall  
 luster of stumps washes his lavender horizon  
 he's got a handsome face of a lousy kid  
 rooming houses dirty fingers  
 whistled in the shadow  
 "Wait for me at the detour."  
 river . . . snow . . . someone vague faded in a mirror  
 filigree of trade winds  
 cold white as lace circling the pepper trees  
 the film is finished  
 memory died when their photos weather worn points of  
 polluted water under the trees in the mist shadow of  
 boys by the daybreak in the peony fields cold lost  
 marbles in the room carnations three ampoules of  
 morphine little blue-eyed twilight grins between his  
 legs yellow fingers blue stars erect boys of sleep

have frozen dreams for I am a teenager pass it on  
 flesh and bones withheld too long yes sir oui oui  
 craps last map . . . lake . . . a canoe . . . rose tornado in  
 the harvest brass echo tropical jeers from Panama  
 City night fences dead fingers you in your own body  
 around and maybe a boy skin spreads to something  
 else on Long Island the dogs are quiet (Burroughs, 1979, pp. 168-169).

Ahmet Ergenç's translation of *Exterminator!*, *Yok Edici*, was published in 2012 by Ayrıntı Publishing after *The Soft Machine* and *Snuff* court cases started. *Yok Edici* was not the only book by Burroughs that Ayrıntı published post-court case. They also published *Vahşi Oğlanlar* (2012; *The Wild Boys*). Additionally, they continued publishing books by Palahniuk, i.e. *Pigme* (2012; *Pygmy*), *Kurgudan da Garip* (2013; *Stranger than Fiction*), *Lanetli* (2014; *Damned*), *Anlat Bakalım* (2015; *Tell-All*), *Bir Haz Markası "Beautiful You"* (2015; *Beautiful You*), *Zoka: Renklendirmeniz İçin Muzır Hikâyeler* (2018; *Bait: Off-Color Stories for You to Colors*) and *Uydurma Bir Şeyler: Kafanızdan Silip Atamayacağınız Hikâyeler* (2018; *Make Something Up-Stories You Can't Unread*), after the court case. Among these books, *Kurgudan da Garip* and *Vahşi Oğlanlar* are also translated by Ergenç. None of the books written by Burroughs and Palahniuk and published by Ayrıntı after the court case—other than *Yok Edici*—contains a translator's preface. Ergenç's preface in *Yok Edici* is entitled "Çevirmenin Notu: Vahşi Üslubu Ehlileştirmemek" ("Translator's Note: Not Taming the Wild Style"; my translation).

Ergenç's preface in *Yok Edici* is deemed worthy of investigation due to the possibility that it is ideologically-loaded, similar to the case of the peritexts and epitexts that are studied by Tahir-Gürçağlar (2002) and Kansu-Yetkiner (2014). As its title suggests, Ergenç's preface is about Burroughs' literary style. Shortly before *Yok Edici* was published, Sertabiboğlu, the translator of *The Soft Machine*, was taken to court on the grounds of obscenity, which, as discussed, is a part of Burroughs' style. Bearing this in mind, Ergenç's discussion of Burroughs' style in his preface is considered to be a possible precautionary measure on the part of Ergenç to avoid the same fate as Sertabiboğlu. Ideology is one of the main drives for authorities to impose censorship (Müller, 2004). Therefore, addressing the second aim of this study (see Introduction) can be insightful in showing whether Ergenç's preface was merely an innocuous paratext underlining certain issues related to the original text and its translation or a paratext motivated by the ideological context (one that is not tolerant to sexual content) in which Ergenç works.

### 3. Methods and theoretical considerations

This study is informed by:

- (1) an investigation of Ergenç's preface in *Yok Edici* in the light of Genette's (1997) allographic and authorial prefaces;
- (2) an asynchronistic, online interview with Ergenç.

Since Genette's (1997) understanding of allographic and authorial prefaces constitutes the theoretical framework of the study of Ergenç's preface, it is presented in the next section (section 3.1). Additionally, Genette's (1997) arguments regarding other types of prefaces are also referred to where relevant in the investigation of the preface (section 4).

The interview included open-ended questions about Ergenç's perspective on translators' notes and prefaces and their uses, the reasons behind his preface for *Yok Edici*, the messages he aimed to send to the reader through this preface and the audience he targeted with it and his preference for writing a preface for *Yok Edici* instead of *Vahşi Oğlanlar* (see Appendix). Saldanha and O'Brien (2014) suggest that in certain cases, interview questions should be formulated in a way that they address issues that are important in the research but without foregrounding these issues. This is because interview questions that highlight issues that researchers seek to discuss with interviewees may result in answers influenced by interviewee's "assumptions regarding the researcher's expectations" (Saldanha & O'Brien, 2014, p. 176). Keeping this in mind, Ergenç was not explicitly asked whether his preface was motivated by the censorial conditions under which he worked lest his answer would be guided by any assumptions. Ergenç had room to think about his answers as the interview was asynchronistic. His answers were approximately one page long and analysed for content. Language of the interview was Turkish. The quotations used in the article are translated by the author.

### 3.1. Allographic and authorial prefaces

Tahir-Gürçağlar (2002) states that, depending on one's perception of translators' roles, a translator's preface can both be regarded allographic or authorial, which are two concepts that Genette (1997) discusses in his seminal work on paratexts. Genette (1997) describes the latter as a type of preface that is written by the author of the book and the former as a type of preface that is written by someone other than the author of the book for which the preface is written. Tahir-Gürçağlar (2002) suggests that if the translator is perceived as the author or the co-author of the book that she translates, her preface can be interpreted as authorial. Bearing Tahir-Gürçağlar's (2002) argument in mind, this article refers to authorial prefaces where relevant, although it mainly uses allographic prefaces in discussing Ergenç's preface.

Genette (1997, p. 264) categorizes allographic prefaces as "original", i.e. prefaces written for the first edition of the book, "later", i.e. prefaces written for an anthumous republication or for a translation of the book, and "delayed", i.e. prefaces written posthumously. In addition, he explains that allographic prefaces may function as presentations and recommendations. He adds that, when an allographic preface is used in its presentation function, it tends to be informative. It may provide insight into the book itself, the biography of the author of the book, and the place of the book within the author's oeuvre, a genre or a specific literary period. Presentational allographic prefaces which inform the reader about the "creation" (Genette 1997, p 265) of the book are generally posthumous. This is because, Genette (1997) explains, an anthumous preface about the creation of the book would most likely be written by the author herself, and therefore, would be authorial. Presentational allographic prefaces which are used to situate the book within the author's oeuvre, a genre or a literary period also serve as critical interpretations of the books for which they are written (Genette, 1997).

Genette (1997) maintains that recommendations are more important than presentations and serve their purpose generally in an implicit manner. That is to say, recommendations do not clearly underline the "genius" (Genette, 1997, p. 267) of the author, and the existence of a preface functions as a recommendation by itself. Usually, writers whose reputation is stronger than that of the author are asked to write recommendation prefaces. In the case of posthumous allographic prefaces that function as recommendations, a contemporary writer who has sufficient literary expertise to revisit the book or to produce a new reading of the book may be asked to do the preface-writing (Genette, 1997).

According to Genette (1997), the main function of an original authorial preface, which is a preface written by the author him/herself for the first publication of a book, is “to ensure that the text is read properly” (p.197). This function aims to elicit two actions; i.e. “to get the book read” and “to get the book read properly” (ibid). This means that an original authorial preface answers the questions “why and [...] how you should read this book” (ibid). Similar to the recommendation function of allographic prefaces, in doing the former, an authorial preface is mostly implicit and therefore does not mention such words as “talent” and “genius” (Genette, 1997, p. 198). Rather, it answers the why question by highlighting the importance of the subject of the work, originality of the work, unity of the work in the case that it is a collection and the truthfulness of the work (Genette, 1997).

As to the question of how, Genette (1997) suggests that it has overtaken the question of why since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This means that original authorial prefaces are more likely to explain how a work should be read than to highlight its value. In guiding the reader, such prefaces may present information on the genesis/origin of the work, the target audience of the work, the title of the work, the order in which the work should be read, context in which the work is the most meaningful, how the author interprets the work and the genre of the work, and may underline that the work is fictive (Genette, 1997).

#### 4. Investigating Ergenç’s preface

Considering Genette’s (1997) framework of allographic prefaces, it can be suggested that Ergenç’s preface in *Yok Edici* is both “later” and “delayed” in that it is for a translation of the book and is written after Burroughs’ death in 1997. Genette (1997) categorizes preface-writers (senders) as follows: “authentic” preface-writers, i.e. real people whose authorship of the preface is validated by other paratextual signs, “apocryphal” preface-writers, i.e. real people whose authorship of the preface is invalidated by other paratextual signs, and “fictive” preface-writers, i.e. imaginary people who are portrayed as preface-writers (p. 179). In the light of this, Ergenç’s preface can be regarded as authentic since his authorship of the preface is confirmed by such paratextual elements as the copyrights page in *Yok Edici* and Ayrıntı’s webpage.<sup>5</sup> Addressee of the preface is those who are not knowledgeable about Burroughs (See Sentence 1 in Table 2).

As to the function of the preface, it appears that Ergenç used it for the sake of presentation. Overall, there are 18 sentences in Ergenç’s preface. Ten of these sentences present information about Burroughs’ life, style and works, and *Exterminator!*, while there are no sentences functioning as recommendation. Table 1 presents the sentences<sup>6</sup> that function as presentation:

Table 1: Sentence-based distribution of two functions of allographic prefaces

Function	Sub-function		Excerpts from the preface
Presentation	of the author’s	life	Sentences 8-10: Burroughs bir yerlerde, bol bol kullandığı morfinin etkisini şöyle tanımlamış: “Beyinde, hızla giden bir trenin penceresinden bakılıyormuş hissi uyandıran bir görüntü silsilesi yaratıyor. Görüntüler sönük, titrek, grenli, eski bir filmde çıkmış gibi.” (Ergenç, 2012, p. 10)
		style	Sentences 5-7:

<sup>5</sup> See: <https://www.ayrintiyayinlari.com.tr/kitap/yok-edici/499>

<sup>6</sup> In Table 1 and 2, sentences are numbered in accordance with the order in which they appear in the preface.

		Burroughs'un kelimenin tam anlamıyla "vahşi" bir üslubu var. Uygarlığın kontrol sistemlerine söyledikleriyle olduğu kadar, söyleyiş biçimiyle, üslubuyla da karşı koyuyor. Sentaksı dağıtarak, semantik çerçeveyi sarsıyor, kelimeleri olağan anlamlarının dışına çıkarıyor, bazen okuru hiçbir araç barındırmayan bir "kelime bulamacı"nın içine fırlatıyor. (Ergenç, 2012, p. 10)
	works	Sentences 11-12: Burroughs'un metinlerinde bu "morfin" etkisini görmek mümkün. Noktalama işaretlerinin olmadığı, cümlelerin yarıda bırakıldığı, bir görüntüden diğerine aniden geçen pasajlar, okurda bir sarsıntıya yol açıp, farklı algı kanalları açmaya ve bir yandan da dilin statüsünü sorgulamaya yarıyor. (Ergenç, 2012, p. 10)
	of the book	Sentence 4: Bu parçalı, doğrusal bir gidişata sahip olmayan, anlatıyla birlikte dilin kendisine ( <i>sic</i> ) de parçalayan anti-edebiyat metninde birçok şey "çeviri hatası" ya da "baskı hatası" gibi gelebilir Burroughs'u bilmeyen okurlara. (Ergenç, 2012, p. 9) Sentence 13: Ortaya çıkan çok katlı, parçalı, doğrusal bir gidişata ve "tutarlı" bağlara sahip olmayan bu kitabı çevirirken yapılabilecek en vahim şey, sanırım bu "vahşi" üslubu ehlileştirmek olurdu. (Ergenç, 2012, p. 10)
Recommendation	of the author	None
	of the book	None

More importantly, the other eight sentences of the preface, as well as Sentence 13, which also functions as presentation, have various other translation-related functions, i.e. statement of intent<sup>7</sup> commentary on Ergenç's translation choices, rejection of authorship on the part of Ergenç and presentation of other information relevant to the translation choices. Table 2 presents the sentences with the aforementioned functions:

Table 2: Sentence-based distribution of other translation-related functions

Other translation-related functions	Excerpts from the preface
Statement of intent	Sentence 1: Burroughs'un ne menem bir yazar olduğunu, okurları nasıl acayip bir edebi evrene davet ettiğini bilen bilir ama bilmeyenler ya da Burroughs'la yeni tanışanlar için buraya bir kaç not düşmek istedim. (Ergenç, 2012, p. 9)

<sup>7</sup> Genette (1997) uses the term "statement of intent" in reference to author's interpretation of the book for which an original preface is written (p. 221; see section 3.1). However, in this case, statement of intent is used to refer to Ergenç's explanation for writing the preface.

Comments on translation choices	<p>Sentence 3:</p> <p>Bu <i>sic</i> ibaresine bir Burroughs çevirmeni olarak sık sık başvurmak istedim. (Ergenç, 2012, p. 9)</p> <p>Sentences 13-17:</p> <p>Ortaya çıkan çok katlı, parçalı, doğrusal bir gidişata ve “tutarlı” bağlara sahip olmayan bu kitabı çevirirken yapılabilecek en vahim şey, sanırım bu “vahşi” üslubu ehliştirmek olurdu. Bu ehliştirme iki düzeyde işleyebilir. Birincisi, Burroughs’un “imge silsilesi” adını verdiği yöntemle kelime ve cümleleri üst üste yığarak yarattığı yığınları ayırıştırma, sentaksa müdaha (<i>sic</i>) etme ve rasyonel bağlantılar kurma itkisi. İkincisi ise, Burroughs’un büyük bir çıplaklık ve “müstehecenlik”le kullandığı dili, hüsünatabirlere bulayıp yumuşatma dürtüsü. Ben burada bu iki hatadan da kaçınmaya, Burroughs’un vahşi üslubunu aynen muhafaza etmeye çalıştım. (Ergenç, 2012, p. 10)</p>
Rejection of authorship	<p>Sentence 18:</p> <p>Bütün bir kitap için dev bir “<i>sic</i>” notu düşüp, sizi Burroughs’la baş başa bırakıyorum</p>
Other information	<p>Sentence 2:</p> <p>Özellikle akademik metinlerde kullanılan Latince “<i>sic</i>” diye bir ifade vardır; birileri birilerinden “garip” bir şeyler ya da yazım, baskı hataları içeren bir şeyler alıntılarken “aynen böyle yazılmıştır” “benim hatam sanılmasın” anlamında kullanılır. (Ergenç, 2012, p. 9)</p>

A more in-depth examination of Sentence 5, 6 and 7 (see Table 1) shows that in discussing Burroughs’ style, Ergenç underlines its wild nature and unconventionality. Moreover, he informs the reader about how Burroughs creates this wild style, i.e. by dismantling syntax and using words in unusual ways, and the purpose of the style, i.e. resisting control systems. In Sentence 8, 9 and 10 (see Table 1), Ergenç introduces information regarding Burroughs’ life by mentioning his morphine use and presenting his statements about the effect of morphine on one’s brain. However, the real purpose of these sentences is not educating the reader about the fact that Burroughs used morphine. In Sentence 11 and 12 (see Table 1), Ergenç makes a connection between Burroughs’ morphine use and works by underlining that the morphine effect can also be seen in his texts, which lack punctuation marks, and contain incomplete sentences and constantly changing images. This means that while Ergenç uses his preface to offer some biographical information about Burroughs, i.e. his morphine use, he also implies that Burroughs’ life choices are reflected in his literary style. In addition to these, Ergenç offers his perspective on *Exterminator!* by characterizing it as a text of anti-literature, which lack a linear narrative and is fragmented, in Sentence 4 and 13 (see Table 1).

Nevertheless, bearing in mind the sentences with other translation-related functions presented in Table 2, it cannot be suggested that Ergenç’s ultimate aim was to present Burroughs, his style and works, and *Exterminator!* to the reader. From the onset of the preface, Ergenç hints at the fact that Burroughs is not a conventional writer. This can be seen in Sentence 1 (see Table 2): Although this sentence functions as a statement of intent in that it explains why Ergenç wrote the preface, i.e. in order to make some remarks about Burroughs for those who are not knowledgeable about him, it also suggests that Burroughs invites readers to a bizarre literary universe. This is then followed by sentences (Sentence 2 and 3, see Table 2), in which Ergenç gives information about the term “*sic*” and his wish to use this

regularly while translating Burroughs. The fact that Ergenç defines “sic” as a term that says “This should not be misinterpreted as my mistake”, and the first thing he underlines is his wish to use the very term seems to suggest that for Ergenç, in *Yok Edici*, there are elements which he does not want to be credited to him. When revisited, it can be seen that Sentence 4 further implies that Ergenç is concerned that the aforementioned elements may be read as translation or publication mistakes by the readers who are not familiar with Burroughs. In this sense, it can be suggested that Sentence 4 warns such readers that they may misinterpret the text without knowing enough about Burroughs. Considering all these, it can be argued that by introducing Burroughs, his style and works and *Exterminator!* in the preface, Ergenç mainly aims to avoid possible misinterpretations. Therefore, in a way he seeks to enable a proper reading of the text. In this respect, it can be suggested that Ergenç seeks to answer the question ‘how should *Yok Edici* be read?’ However, he does not present information on any of the elements helpful in guiding the reading experience suggested by Genette (1997) (e.g. genesis of the work, title of the work, etc. See section 3.1), with the exception of the genre of *Yok Edici*: In Sentence 4 (see Table 1), he briefly mentions that the book is a text of anti-literature. On the other hand, Ergenç does not comment on why the book should be read at all, which, in a sense, confirms that the preface does not encompass any sentences that function as recommendations.

In concluding his preface, Ergenç not only comments on his translation choices but also denies his authorship, which can be seen in Sentence 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18 (see Table 2). In sentence 13, Ergenç argues that taming Burroughs’ wild style would not be appropriate. Then in Sentence 14, 15 and 16, he discusses what he means by taming Burroughs’ wild style. For him, taming in the case of Burroughs’ style equals to creating a non-fragmented, linear narrative and censoring Burroughs’ use of obscenity in the translation of *Exterminator!*. Sentence 15 and 16 also reveal that, Ergenç believes, both censoring Burroughs’ use of obscenity and organizing his non-linear narrative can be “urges” (“itki”, “dürtü”), i.e. courses of actions that one may strongly wish to take<sup>8</sup>, for translators. Nevertheless, he asserts in Sentence 17 that complying with these urges would be a mistake, and that he avoided making this mistake and tried to retain Burroughs’ style in his translation. This means that Ergenç believes “wild” elements of Burroughs’ style should not be tamed, and that his translation choices reflect his beliefs. In this regard, it can be suggested that Ergenç, in a way, advocates the necessity of preserving unconventional elements of Burroughs’ style in the translation, while proclaiming and justifying his loyalty to the writer. However, in concluding his preface in Sentence 18, he offers “a giant ‘sic’ for the whole book” and leaves the reader alone with Burroughs. Thus, in proclaiming his loyalty to Burroughs, the translator goes a step further and denies any authorial responsibility for Burroughs’ “wild” style. By mentioning Burroughs’ use of obscenity as part of this “wild” style, Ergenç includes it among the elements for which he denies responsibility.

Consequently, it can be suggested that the overall purpose of Ergenç’s preface seems to be educating the reader about Burroughs’ “wild” stylistic elements which they may view negatively as mistakes. While doing so, he underlines that as the translator, he is not responsible for these stylistic elements. Majority of Ergenç’s preface focuses on fragmentation in Burroughs’ narrative. In comparison, only a limited part of it—a single sentence—is about his use of obscenity. The fact that Burroughs’ use of obscenity does not contribute to the fragmented narrative, which seems to be the main concern in the preface, raises a question about the reason behind the brief mention of obscenity in the preface. Considering *The Soft Machine* and *Snuff* obscenity court cases at the time and the deferral ruling that came out of these court cases, it can be proposed that Ergenç may have chosen to also deny his responsibility for obscenity to

<sup>8</sup> Definition is from Collins Dictionary, Online.

diminish his liability for prosecution as a result of his translation. At this point it is important to present certain aspects of the content of the expert's report written by The Turkish Prime Ministerial Board for the Protection of Children from Harmful Publications on *The Soft Machine*. Although this report mainly focuses on the "obscene" nature of the book, it also suggests that the book is non-literary by underlining that it lacks coherence in terms of themes and narrative (The Turkish Prime Ministerial Board for the Protection of Children from Harmful Publications, 2011). This means that Burroughs' fragmented narrative was also an issue discussed in the report which resulted in *The Soft Machine* court case. Taking this into account, it can be concluded that both by presenting Burroughs' fragmented style in *Exterminator!* and mentioning his use of obscenity, Ergenç seems to have sought to take a precautionary measure against prosecution, which is a possible result of the censorial conditions under which he works.

## 5. Interview with Ergenç

The interview revealed that Ergenç's preface in *Yok Edici* was the only instance of his use of prefaces, while he has used in-text translator's notes more than once for the purpose of clarification in the cases that "source text was not properly transferred into Turkish". For Ergenç, translators' prefaces and notes<sup>9</sup> should solely be limited to issues regarding translation.<sup>10</sup> He suggested:

Explanations regarding critical points in the translation of the text are important in terms of details that get lost in translation or connotations. They are useful especially in the case of wordplays. [...] A translator's preface, in my opinion, should be limited to issues regarding the translation of the text. I find some translators' wish to introduce or present the source text or the writer a bit unnecessary. This should be a job for a critic or the publisher, not the translator.

The above given statement also indicates that Ergenç does not assume the responsibility of recommending a text. For him, a translator should only consider translation-related issues in prefaces and notes and leave the discussion of the source text to critics and publishers. In line with his belief that translator's prefaces should only address translational issues, Ergenç explains that his motivation for writing a preface for *Yok Edici* was to prevent any misinterpretations regarding his translation, which may ensue due to Burroughs' style. He recounted:

William Burroughs is an experimental writer who intentionally dismantles the structure of the language and syntax, and at times ignores punctuation as part of this dismantling operation. If I had not written the preface, the intentional "dismantling", incomplete sentences or problems with the grammar could have been understood as translation mistakes. That is also why I used the term sic: "This should not be misinterpreted as my mistake."

This statement further suggests that in writing the preface, rather than merely presenting Burroughs' style, Ergenç's aim was to discuss translational issues by referring to it. The preface, Ergenç explained, targeted readers who did not know about Burroughs' style and aimed to "make them aware of the fact that the flaws with language are a part of Burroughs' style". Additionally, he stated that the preface can also serve as "a 'warning' for those who prepare the book for publication or those who do the last reading" since they may interpret "experimental items as mistakes" and therefore, try to "correct" them.

<sup>9</sup> Additionally, Ergenç believes that "translation-notes should be used as a last resort. Ideally, translation should be conveyed without needing a note".

<sup>10</sup> In the interview, Ergenç discussed that translators' notes can also be used for explaining "historical, cultural or political" issues regarding the source text. However, he thinks such informative notes are currently "unnecessary" as readers can reach relevant information through the Internet.

As mentioned, Ergenç also translated Burroughs' *The Wild Boys*, which contains experimental language as well as obscene words, and which was published in Turkey before *Yok Edici*. Although the exact publication months of *The Wild Boys* and *Exterminator!* are unclear, it is known that they were published in 2012, that is to say, after the start of the court cases. However, *The Wild Boys* was published before the deferral ruling. This is evident in Hasan Basri Çıplak's, the general director of Ayrıntı at the time of the *Snuff* court case, protest of the deferral ruling at the end of the case: Çıplak handed copies of Turkish translations of *Pygmy* (by Palahniuk) and *The Wild Boys* to the judge, and stated that Ayrıntı would be prosecuted again for having already published these two books.<sup>11</sup> As *Yok Edici* was not among the books Çıplak handed to the judge, it is assumed that it was published post-deferral ruling and the ruling might have influenced Ergenç's decision to write a preface for it. Therefore, Ergenç was asked a question inquiring the reason why he wrote a preface only for *Yok Edici*. Ergenç explained that the reason why there was no preface in *The Wild Boys* was due to a "miscommunication" between the publishing house and him, and that he in fact wanted *The Wild Boys* to be published with a similar preface written by him. Since his preface was not included in the translation of *The Wild Boys*, he wrote one for *Yok Edici* and made sure that the book was published with it.

In his preface, in mentioning Burroughs' use of obscenity, Ergenç uses inverted commas in sentence 16 (see Table 2 in section 4). On account of the obscenity court cases, his use of inverted commas in this particular sentence was also considered an important issue to explore. Therefore, Ergenç was asked a follow-up question about the relation between *The Soft Machine* and *Snuff* obscenity court cases and his emphasis on Burroughs' use of obscenity in inverted commas. Ergenç explained: "I used inverted commas for the word obscene because I actually do not think the books are obscene, [and] I wanted to stay away from the pejorative meaning of obscene".

## 6. Discussion and conclusion

Investigating Ergenç's preface in the light of Genette's (1997) allographic prefaces, this study established that it was a presentation rather than a recommendation. Considering the preface from the perspective of authorial prefaces, it was argued that while it answered the question of how the book should be read, it did not answer the question why it should be read. Ergenç confirmed this result by arguing that introducing a source text is the job of a critic or publisher, not a translator, in the interview. The study further revealed that the presentation was mainly concerned with Burroughs' style. However, the purpose of Ergenç's presentation of Burroughs' style was to underline the translational issues that may emerge as result of this style. In the same vein, Ergenç stated in the interview that translators' prefaces should only discuss issues regarding the translation of a text, rather than the text itself.

The sentences that function as commentary on translation choices hint at loyalty to Burroughs' stylistic elements, i.e. fragmented narrative and use of obscenity, on the part of Ergenç. In the preface, Ergenç aims to ascertain that his loyalty does not result in misinterpretations of Burroughs' stylistic elements as translation mistakes by the readers who are not knowledgeable about Burroughs. Therefore, Ergenç's presentation goes beyond the sole purpose of educating the reader, and it educates lest any elements pertaining to Burroughs' wild style are attributed to Ergenç as mistakes. Ergenç confirmed this in the interview by suggesting that his preface targeted readers who did not know about Burroughs' style and

<sup>11</sup> See: <http://internationalpublishers.org/images/pdf/freedom-to-publish/knowledge-bank/2013/Final-2013-FTP-Turkey-IPA.pdf>

sought to make them aware that what they might have interpreted as mistakes were in fact a part of the very style.

As discussed in the investigation of the preface, Ergenç mentioned Burroughs' use of obscenity among the "wild" stylistic elements that a translator might wish to tame. Additionally, he stated that taming obscenity would have been a mistake and for this reason, he refrained from doing so. In the light of *The Soft Machine* and *Snuff* obscenity court cases, these statements as well as Ergenç's use of the term "sic", and his discussion of the issue of obscenity—albeit briefly—despite the fact that it does not play a key role in the construction of fragmentation, which is the main concern of the preface, resulted in the interpretation of the preface as a potential precautionary measure and a means of reducing the risk of prosecution on Ergenç's part. Therefore, Ergenç's preface was considered to be influenced by censorial conditions under which he works.

However, Ergenç stated no such motive (i.e. reducing the risk of prosecution) behind his preface to *Yok Edici* in the interview. Additionally, Ergenç neither commented directly on the aforementioned obscenity court cases nor connected his use of the word obscenity in inverted commas in his preface to the court cases. He maintained that he used obscenity in inverted commas because he did not believe that Burroughs' books were obscene. Taking these into consideration, it cannot be concluded that Ergenç's preface is a result of the censorial conditions under which he works. However, it can be suggested that it was ideologically-loaded to some extent in that Ergenç's views clash with the views of censorial authorities in Turkey: As mentioned, his use of inverted commas hints at his belief that Burroughs' books are not obscene. On the other hand, as evidenced by their report on *The Soft Machine*, which argued that the book was of obscene nature, The Turkish Prime Ministerial Board for the Protection of Children from Harmful Publications, which can be considered the censorship authority in the case of the court cases as their reports on the two books were used to instigate the court cases, finds at least one of Burroughs' works obscene. Ergenç's preface can further be read as ideologically-loaded in that he used it to announce his decision not to tame Burroughs' wild style, which clearly is objectionable within the Turkish context. As an agent recreating *Exterminator!* in the Turkish culture, Ergenç intentionally and willingly decided to retain Burroughs' controversial stylistic elements and thus conflicted with the dominant ideology within the Turkish context.

In sum, it can be suggested that the purpose of and reasons behind Ergenç's preface was to (1) inform the readers about Burroughs' style (i.e. presentation) (2) to underline translational issues that Burroughs' style may cause, (3) to highlight his loyalty to Burroughs' stylistic elements, and (4) to prevent misinterpretations of Burroughs' stylistic elements as translation mistakes by readers who are not knowledgeable about Burroughs. However, it is not clear whether Ergenç's preface might have been motivated by the censorial conditions under which he works since the results of the investigation of the preface and the interview differed from each other on this matter. Nevertheless, Ergenç's use of the term "sic" for *Yok Edici* is a way for him to detach himself from Burroughs' "wild" style resembling the tone of a morphine user and consisting of fragmentation and obscenity and to underline that he is not responsible for these stylistic elements. This indicates that Ergenç in a way denies any authorial responsibility that Tahir-Gürçağlar (2002) attributes to translators. However, at the same time, he claims some textual responsibility by acknowledging that it was his decision to remain loyal to Burroughs' style. Consequently, it can be put forward that Ergenç willingly embraces invisibility as a translator by using a tool, i.e. prefaces, which, in fact, gives translators visibility, and by doing so, he paradoxically also becomes visible as a translator.

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## Appendix: Interview form sent to Ergenç

### Katılımcı için Bilgi Metni

**Giriş:** Çevirmen notları ve ön sözlerini, *Yok Edici* (William S. Burroughs) isimli kitap için yazdığınız "Vahşi Üslubu Ehlileştirmek" başlıklı çevirmenin notu örneği üzerinden inceleyen çalışmamıza katılmak için davet edildiniz. Çalışmamız için aşağıda size bir takım sorular soracağım. Bu sorulara verdiğiniz cevaplar sadece akademik yayınlarda kullanılacaktır. Bu yayınlarda, röportaja verdiğiniz cevaplar kapsamındaki görüşlerinizle birlikte adınız da belirtilecektir Soruları yanıtlamaya başlamadan önce sormak istediğiniz bir sorunuz varsa, bana e-mail yoluyla ulaşabilirsiniz. Çalışmamıza katıldığınız için çok teşekkür ederim.

Saygılar,

Dr. İlgın Aktener

### Sorular

**İsim:**

**Tarih:**

Bu çalışmaya katılmayı  kabul ediyorum /  kabul etmiyorum.

- Çevirmen notları ve ön sözleri hakkındaki genel görüşleriniz nelerdir?
- Çevirmen notlarını ve ön sözlerini şu ana kadar hangi durumlarda kullandınız ve hangi durumlarda kullanmayı tercih edersiniz?
- *Yok Edici* için çevirmenin notu yazma tercihinizin sebepleri nelerdir?
- *Yok Edici* için yazdığınız çevirmenin notu aracılığıyla okuyucuya aktarmak istediğiniz iletiler nelerdir?
- *Yok Edici* için yazdığınız çevirmenin notu aracılığıyla okuyucu haricinde ulaşmak istediğiniz bir hedef kitle var mıydı? Varsa, detaylandırabilir misiniz?
- William S. Burroughs tarafından yazılmış *Vahşi Oğlanlar* ve *Yok Edici* kitaplarının çevirilerinde, yalnızca *Yok Edici* için çevirmenin notu yazmanızın sebepleri nelerdir?