

Pursuit of New Antagonist Discourses:  
Politics in Poetry of the 1980s

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A dissertation presented to the

Atatürk Institute for Modern Turkish History  
at Boğaziçi University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

June 2016

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“The Pursuit of New Antagonist Discourses: The Politics in the Poetry of 1980s,” a dissertation prepared by Gülce Başer in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy from the Atatürk Institute for Modern Turkish History at Bogaziçi University, has been approved on September 30, 2016 by:

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## Abstract

“The Pursuit of New Antagonist Discourses:  
Politics in Poetry of the 1980s”

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for Modern Turkish History at Boğaziçi University, 2016

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The thesis is about the relationship between politics and Turkish poetry in the decade from 1980 to 1990. This decade is characterized by the 12 September 1980 coup d'état and the incorporation of the country to the global economy. This study interrogates changes in the culture and literature of Turkish society in this new context. Turkish poetry of the Republican period carried political and social references - except for movements such as “Second New” - until the 1980s. The military coup, I argue, facilitated the rise of a new abstract poetry with its own micro-politics. In this poetry, political content swung towards individualism, and form changed along with the content. The present dissertation analyzes the changes in the purpose, theme and representation of post-1980s poetry along with changes in its socio-political environment.

145,000 words

## Özet

“Yeni Muhalif Söylemler Arayışı:  
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Gülce Başer, Doktora Adayı, 2016  
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Bu çalışma, 1980-90 on yılı boyunca Şiirimizin siyasi içeriğine ilişkin bir incelemedir. Söz konusu on yıl, Toplum zihniyetinde önemli değişimlere yol açan iki büyük gelişmeye ev sahipliği yapmıştır: 12 Eylül 1980 Darbesi ve küresel ekonomiye katılım süreci. Bu dönüşümler, öncelikle Toplum içindeki geleneksel kolektif bağların koparak toplumun daha bireyci bir yapıya dönüşmesi sonucunu doğurmuştur. Bu döneme kadar görece kolektif bir toplumun, dolayısıyla kolektif bir zihniyetin şiiri olup temasını görece doğrudan göndermelerle yansıtagelen Türk şiiri de bu dönemden itibaren çok daha soyut bir biçime yönelmiştir. Siyasi içerik, Değişen amaç, tema, temsil evreniyle birlikte biçim hem içerikte değişmiş, çok daha bireyselleşmiştir. Bu araştırmada Şiirde sözü edilen içerik sosyal, siyasi ve ekonomik koşullarve Dönüşüm çerçevesinde incelenmiştir.

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*To my Mother*

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## Acknowledgements

Special thanks to Prof. Duygu Köksal, Prof. Nadir Özbek, Prof. Asım Karaömerliođlu, Prof. Şevket Pamuk, for their support and lectures that provided the impetus to prepare this work. To Halide Başer, Mehmet Rifat, Sema Rifat, Melike Belkıs Aydın, and Saime Akat for the courage and support they gave. To Enver Ercan, Prof. Semih Çelenk, Özgün Enver Bulut, Orhan Alkaya, Vural Bahadır Bayrıl, Sennur Sezer, Haydar Ergülen, Metin Celâl, Ahmet Telli, Ali Günvar, Sina Akyol, Ahmet Oktay, Nevzat Çelik, Akif Kurtuluş, Metin Cengiz, Osman Olmuş, Associate Prof. Bâki Asiltürk, Ali Özgür Özkarıcı, Yücel Kayıran, Hilmi Yavuz, Prof. Hasan Bülent Kahraman, Dr. Hakkı Başgüney, and Hayriye Ünal for the sources they provided. To my friends Arzum Sunucu, Burçin Ünsal, Mehmet Batur, Evrim Uysal, and Şencan Gençerer for encouraging me at all times. To Necla Turunç, Kadriye Tamtekin and Leyla Kılıç for supporting and encouraging me. To Efe for waiting to play with me for all that time... To Fatma Yeşil, Yaprak Damla Yıldırım, and Okan Yılmaz for the motivation on the day of the jury... To the officers in the libraries of Boğaziçi University and 29 Mayıs University... Thanks for everything...

NOTE: The in-house editor of the Atatürk Institute has made recommendations with regard to the format, grammar, spelling, usage, and syntax of this dissertation in compliance with professional, ethical standards for the editing of student, academic work.

## Introduction

This study is a research of the transformation of politics of Turkish poetry in the decade from 1980 to 1990. This transformation, it is argued here, occurred hand in hand with transformations in the political, economic and sociocultural spheres in Turkey. The poetry of the period is analyzed to determine how literature interacts - or responds to social changes - if at all... The nature of these responses in the forms of affirmation, objection, or radical opposition is detected along with the language of these politics. My questions are:

- ◆ Whether a general approach to the relations of literature and politics can be developed?
- ◆ To what extent is the social transformation of 1980s are reflected in the literary works analyzed?
- ◆ What is the share of poetry, within the cultural transformation of the period?
- ◆ Whether more meaningful explanations can be provided to the poetry of post-1980, rather than simply labeling it “apolitical”?

Considering the above questions, this dissertation argues that literature and poetry are always interrelated; the poetry of the 1980s is closely intertwined with political and socio-economic transformations in society. And the impact of the aforementioned transformations can be observed among the literary products of the period, even in poetry. Finally, this study demonstrates that

the poetry of the 1980s should be read not simply as “apolitical” but as inherently political in a different sense.

This new paradigm of politics reflects an emphasis on the micro-politics of the individual, a criticism of the cultural politics of the early Republic, and a preoccupation with identity issues.

### § 1.1 A society in Transformation under the Conditions of Political Oppression and Economic Liberalization

The reason behind my choice to conduct research on the 1980-1990 decade was an observation of parallel transformations in both the socioeconomic sphere and in poetry. The decade is defined as a period of radical transformation in Turkey in both the economic and sociological senses. The military coup of 1980 violent ended the political conflict between left and right ideological extremes that had turned into street violence by sharply cutting off the extremes and pioneering a new era. This obviously enhanced a more patriotic and religious state ideology. Economic policies in the post-coup era, on the other hand, encouraged liberalization, free trade, and becoming a part of the global economy. These, among the numerous sequences of the military regime, are the critical features considerably impacted the future cultural sphere of the country.

The 1980-83 junta regime following the military coup of 12 September 1980, suspended all democratic rights to organize power groups, including the rights of unions. Military surveillance continued after the 1983 government elections in a more indirect but efficient manner up to 1990s, through the National Security Council and the stipulations of regional states of emergency. In fact, similar conditions were also present in the 1990s, but a considerable reduction was apparent in the disciplinary practices of the state, after the presidency of Kenan Evren, the junta leader, and after the lapse of martial law in all regions, except for Southeastern Anatolia. Therefore, it is more meaningful to focus on the 1980s to study the direct impact of the coup on the cultural sphere.

Turkey joined the global economy by suppressing the syndical rights and labor movements, which resulted in an immediate cut in wages and therefore

more “efficient” production in all industries. Free trade policies ushered in by the Motherland Party from 1983 elections onwards also resulted in radical shifts in the consumption patterns and cultural aspirations of the society. The cultural policies of the military regime and cultural outcomes of the economic regime together resulted in the generic that defines the 1980s - a period of a rapid transformation into a neoliberal state.<sup>1</sup>

The stunning pace of social mobility was experienced under the pressure of these various, sometimes-conflicting forces. While the junta regime was suppressing all kinds of political activities and limiting the people’s activities for political purposes; economic liberation fostered consumption, enhanced the power of media and provided opportunities for class mobilization. The economic transformation process of the 1980s, or in other words participation in the global economy was so influential that cultural transformations of the period are often explained as one result of the economic transformation.

Censorship gradually weakened after the elections in 1983. The widespread torture conducted during arrests, for example, was revealed in the media in the late 1980s. However, political oppression was still felt through the 1980s, and in my thesis, I argue that it is a major factor for describing the cultural atmosphere and interpreting literary works. Martial law was applied regionally along with countrywide practices of censorship, book confiscations, and card indexing of people in police records. Can Yücel’s poetry cassette was banned in the second half of the 1980s, for example. While there was a shift to an individualist vein criticizing modern capitalist culture in poetry, the trauma of state violence and oppression was already discernible in the poems of the first half of the 1980s. However, neither readers nor literary critics yet perceived a political trauma in poetry.

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1 Numerous social studies and analyses were conducted on this issue, and the two books cover it as well: *Vitrinde Yaşamak* by Nurdan Gürbilek and *Tarz-ı Hayattan Life Style*’a by Rifat Bali. Gürbilek highlights changes in the daily lives of ordinary people and shifts in their perceptions. She concentrates on quick transformations due to developments in the economy and in media. She explains shifts in social behavior as the rush to speech after the release from the oppression. She defines several new characteristics self-expression, a sense of abundance in spite of an inability to reach goods, and changes in consumption patterns that are easily linked to the development of market economy. Although she takes oppression into consideration, the ongoing oppression is invisible in her explanations of people’s choices.



Actually, the 1980 poems have usually been criticized for being apolitical, and this was a criticism similar to the one made against the “Second New” poetry movement of the 1950s and 60s. I will claim here that the poems certainly reflected a political attitude but the political component was quite different from the political component of social realist poetry of the earlier periods, i.e., 1960s and 1970s, in form of form and content. In other words, my main concern here is not if the period's poetry reflected any political attitude or not, but the nature of its politics.

I argue that post-1980 poetry is similar to the “Second New” poetry of the 1950s and 60s, with respect to political content. There was no direct political discourse in the poems of either of these literary currents. However, the scenes, scenarios, depictions and images in their forms and contents gave sufficient clues about the political attitudes of the poets. The political attitude of the poet was visible in his choices of subject, i.e. the existence of marginal and minority subjects, and the nature of poetic representation.<sup>2</sup> Following the “Second New” poetry movement, the dominant poetic tendency shifted back to social realism in the 1960s, followed less explicitly political, individualist poetry post-1980s. In the 1980s and 1990s there would be no turning back to social realism of the 1960s.

The present work will therefore be organized around the following questions:

- ◆ What sort of political attitudes were reflected in poetry in the Republican period? How did its audiences, i.e. the state and the public, perceive these attitudes?
- ◆ How can the poetry of the 1980s be situated within these historical relations between literature and politics?

To this end, in this assertion poetry books that represent the main poetic tendencies of the 1980s are analyzed. Outstanding poetry and literary journals of the period are studied. A representative set of periodicals are analyzed more closely to determine the poetic and cultural debates with a particular focus on politics embodied in the texts. The discourses of the various political attitudes are unearthed in this way.

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2 An analysis on this is provided in Chapter 2 and 3.

The research shows that shifts in the politics of literature in Turkey mostly parallel shifts in the status and roles of intellectuals in the eyes of society and the state. Whereas social realist tendency with its clear political messages dominates in periods when the prestige and significance of intellectuals is high, socialist themes in poetry decline in periods when popular culture dominates and intellectuals lose their prestige, as in the 1950s under Menderes and the 1980s under Evren. The decline of the status of intellectuals after 1980 cannot be simply due to conditions of state violence and oppression. We know that the oppression and state violence following the 1971 coup did not actually prevent the literary intelligentsia's involvement in political movements, nor could it stop the production of politically engaged literary works. I argue that a new perception of the intellectual appeared in the 1980s, and this study contributes to new understandings of Turkey's literary, intellectual and political history.

An initial question concerns political issues highlighted by individuals and in society from the 1980s onwards, that were also reflected in poetry. Did such social and economic issues as the drastic decrease in wages,<sup>3</sup> rapid urbanization, and the resulting popular culture<sup>4</sup> have any direct or indirect impact on "high" art and culture products? Was the intellectual becoming a homo economicus who was experiencing class mobilization? Since the junta marginalized political/intellectual identity, was the rising capitalist culture forcing artworks and literary works to choose between becoming consumable goods or becoming irrelevant?

Critics, readers, and even the state associated politics in texts with the "social realism" of the left, particularly up to the 1980s. However, the politics of poetry and the approach to politics shifted after the coup followed by a changes in vocabulary, discourse, presentation, and imagery of the poets of the post-1980 generation never considered a return to an earlier social realist

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3 Boratav highlights decreases in labor wages and urbanization in his characterization of the economic developments of the period. Korkut Boratav. *1980'li Yillarda Türkiye'de Sosyal Sınıflar ve Bölüşüm* (Ankara: İmge Yayınları, 2005).

4 The fast urbanization led to an increase slums in the cities explaining Gürbilek's observation that rural components increasingly dominate city culture.

vein of production, in fact the works of the 1970s were criticized for being too politically engaged and therefore artistically.

Since abstract poetry is much less popular than social realism, a decrease in the number of poetry readers is to be expected in such periods. Turkish poets of the 1980s experienced a similar decline in readership. Pop culture was on the rise, while intellectuals were being excluded and discredited by political suppression with little support from the masses. Therefore, the second component of an analysis of politics in 1980s poetry is the shift in the status and identities of intellectuals.<sup>5</sup> This analysis also includes the violence and threats intellectuals were exposed to as a result of 1980 coup as well as new market opportunities offered to them by economic liberalization. For example, the development of the advertising sector and media provided many authors and poets bright career with immense financial opportunities.

This research concentrates particularly on poetry, which – as the most abstract branch of literature- lost a considerable number of readers not only in Turkey but also in the whole world in the grasp of capitalist culture in 1980s. It is hoped that this study contributes to an understanding of relations between the literature and the social sciences in Turkey. While poetry is both the source and the foundation of the transformation of a society's language, the study of literary products occupies a marginal position in cultural studies, again due to their abstract nature. Interestingly in an era when “individualism” is the source of most cultural and political behavior, literature has received little attention from students of cultural studies and the social sciences. Studying the 1980s through its poetry provides a new, fresh approach to general studies of

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5 Rifat Bali, for example, concentrates on a new “intellectual class” of successful businessmen and a well-educated new generation in his work on shifts in consumption patterns and life styles. These shifts, in his approach, resulted in the cultural appreciations of financial power-oriented elite, a development indeed in harmony with Turkey's move toward global capitalism. However, this new approach to cultural consumption would pave the way for the elimination of more politically motivated, activist intellectuals. Further, these new cultural elites could hardly support much less produce a “politically concerned” art or literature.

the era by depicting its cultural vocabulary and the discourses of its politics and oppositions.<sup>6,7</sup>

## § 1.2 The Poetry of the 1980s: Abstract, Indecipherable, or Apolitical?

This research focuses on the decade from 1980 to 1990. The following two chapters present a brief historical background of the relations between poetry and politics from 1923-1980. The politics of Republican poetry is under-studied. In what follows, I account for the existing literature.

The current literature on the politics of Republican poetry is limited to articles by Ahmet Oktay and Yücel Kayıran. Hasan Bülent Kahraman and Hilmi Yavuz also provide cultural analysis envisioning the literary dimension of Turkish modernism and considering it with regard to Republican ideology and the process of Westernization. They handle it as part of an East-West dichotomy. They both cover particular poets and poetic movements in their works, as well. Bâki Asiltürk's comprehensive research on poets of the 1980 generation, on the other hand, interprets the transformation of the poetry of

- 
- 6 In the end, language was the subject of a particular debate among the literati in the 1980s, as will be seen in Chapters 5 and 6. Linguistic and vocabulary preferences have been indicators of people's political attitude all through Republican history. Pure Turkish was one of the main policies of the early Republican state. Later, by the 1960s and 70s, people's oral and written vocabulary preferences would come to indicate their ideological inclinations (leftist or nationalist). However, syllabi produced by the Ministry of Education show a gradual bureaucratic distancing from pure Turkish starting in the 1950s even shifting to old Turkish in the 1970s. However, this "observation" is in need of a more evidence. Pure Turkish was a direct indicator of being leftist by the 1980 coup, and this tendency for pure Turkish was abandoned by leftists in the 1980s, as is shown in this research.
- 7 I worked on poetry of the military regime period for my master thesis, by the end of which I concluded that the politics of these poems radically undermined the Republican cultural ideology. This finding also explained the route towards "self-politics," demonstrating the overlooked political ingredient of these poems. The Republican cultural ideology began to be challenged by the 1990s, particularly by an Islamist wing rooted in the atmosphere of 1980s. The question left unanswered by my master's thesis was: Why did post-1980 poets choose such an indirect literary style?

the 1980s, solely as a poetic tendency and does not consider social, economic and political transformation as factors in this change. In addition, Yalçın Armağan and Orhan Koçak contributes to the debates on the autonomous area of creativity of the poets and its links to the politics.

The most comprehensive works on Turkish poetry of the 1980s were produced by Hasan Bülent Kahraman, Ahmet Oktay, and Bâki Asiltürk. Kahraman defines the poetry of the 1980s as a poetry moving towards the “modernist subject”, reappraising Turkey’s modernity project. Kahraman, defining the Republican model as a project, loyal to the paradigm of late modernization, repeats the discourse of the center/periphery dichotomy<sup>8</sup> and explains the development of this modernist identity as a phase of detachment from an early Republican authoritarian/statist identity (*sivilleşme*). He points to a critical change in the poetic works of the 1980s against the “Republican consciousness” and acknowledges an underground and an Islamist poetry without going into a deeper analysis of actual works. The poet küçük İskender is the representative of the underground wave of poetry, which evolved towards nihilism and a negation of the “system.” Islamic poetry is characterized by its destruction of the delimitation of high and popular culture, its lack of utopias, tribalism, incongruity, eclecticism and embrace of the “others.” From this perspective, Islamist poetry rejects central authority, while underground poetry accepts the outsider position so both movements share this critical attitude.<sup>9</sup>

Ahmet Oktay describes the poetry of a period of military pressure and a new capitalist culture. He gives more weight to the trauma of the 12 September regime; however, he does not differentiate between the impacts of socio-economic transformation and the impact of political suppression. He evaluates

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8 The center-periphery dichotomy was Şerif Mardin’s explanation Turkish modernism. According to him, the project of Turkish modernization was initiated by a block of the “center” consisting of the bureaucracy, military forces, bourgeoisie and intellectuals. It prevented the periphery from being included in the center. The modernization of the life-styles and mentalities of the center did not really reach the periphery. This is of course a part of the Republican history and cultural life. But I object to the idea of a constant, impermeable center and Republican ideology throughout the Republican history. Intellectuals in particular should not be perceive as part of a monolithic “center.”

9 Hasan Bülent Kahraman. *Türk Şiiri Modernizm Şiir* (İstanbul: Agora Kitaplığı, 2004).

all of these as given conditions and returns to the poetry to interpret them. Further, he draws attention to boredom with the “over-ideological poetry” of slogans and the dominant, politically engaged discourse of the 1970s poetic styles. These factors conceal a deeper world of poets and Oktay’s diagnosis remains within the limits of post-modern, intellectual, melancholic, pathetic and nostalgic descriptions. He lists poets of post-1980 era Seyhan Erözçelik, Tuğrul Tanyol, Haydar Ergülen, k. İskender, Turgay Fişekçi, Vural Bahadır Bayrıl, Adnan Azar, Veysel Çolak, Seyit Nezir, Ahmet Ada, Turgay Nar, Turgay Kantürk, Kaan İnce, Nilgün Marmara, Lale Müldür, Sina Akyol, Tarık Günersel, Hüseyin Alemdar, Azer Yaran, Arif Ay, İhsan Deniz, Ebubekir Eroğlu, Cevat Çapan, Metin Celal, Şavkar Altunel, Roni Margulies, Murathan Mungan, Ahmet Güntan, Mehmet Yaşın, Güven Turan, Hulki Aktunç, Osman Hakan A., Ahmet Necdet, Sunay Akın, Metin Altıok, Behçet Aysan, Özkan Mert, Salih Bolat, Nevzat Çelik, Ahmet Erhan, Gülseli İnal, Sefa Kaplan, Süha Tuğtepe, Merih Akoğul, Oğuzhan Akay, Yıldırım Türker, Tuğrul Keskin, Necat Çavuş, Seyfettin Ünlü, Ahmet İşler, Hüseyin Atlansoy.<sup>10</sup>

Ahmet Oktay, claiming that the vocabulary of social-realism had become “bureaucratic” and “ideological,” insists that post-1980 poets, having developed a new understanding of politics, escaped from this vocabulary and did not want to establish their language in this crude, aggressive manner. However, lacking a new vocabulary, these poets had trouble building new, powerful images and metaphors. Thus, they resorted to an “archaic” language to equip themselves with the power of the history.<sup>11</sup>

Oktay’s argument, while impressive, masks the role of the state’s suppression of individual poets and the attitudes of the beneficiaries of poetry. In my work, I develop a deeper understanding of the status of poets as intellectuals, individuals, literati and political beings. Therefore, I look for the impact of their social, political, and sometimes economic and psychological circumstances in their poems to understand their political attitude and determine how their poetry reflects their politics. However, defining the impact of state

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10 He uses the term “Post 1980.” I highlight this expression because; some of the poets in his list, while present in the 1980s, became visible only in the 1990s. For example, female poets seldom appeared in literary journals of the 1980s, but became more visible in the 1990s.

11 He prefers the term “archaic” for Ottoman Turkish.

power in poems of the period is challenging, since ultimately this period's poetry was a poetry of "escape."

Ahmet Oktay analyzes poetry of the 1980s in three basic groups: The first is, imagist-semiotic poetry, in which political attitude are hardly visible or altogether invisible. This poetry had a modernist-intellectual tone. Second, social realist poetry was placed in a reactionary position, adopted a steep discourse, reflected avoiding from the society, introvertedness, but this avoiding had a militant tone. Third is the Metaphysical/Islamist poetry which emphasized spiritualism, values and a criticism of temporal/everyday life.

In fact, poetic currents did not exist as pure categories and usually overlapped within the persons of specific poets, Oktay explains this as a radical transitivity among individual poetics. These common literary choices are related to the economic/sociological/ideological circumstances of the period. Such common themes should also be seen in line with poets' personal choices. Suicide, for instance, might represent a rejection of political oppression in an ironic manner, - or simply an indicator of hopelessness. Mysticism, on the other hand, was used in the 1980s to establish a neo-classical style that updated poetic traditions as H. Yavuz, V. B. Bayrıl did, or exteriorized Islamic discourse as S. Karakoç did, or else secularized and politicized mysticism as A. Oktay did.<sup>12</sup>

Mehmet H. Doğan's analysis supports the idea that poetry of the 1980s was apolitical and introverted. Actually, Doğan is pleased with the detachment from the "hegemony" of discourses of daily politics. Being a literary critic, he is pleased to see various different veins of poetry. Doğan defines 1980s poetry in three main strains, in terms of their reaction to degenerating liberal society. The poets of the younger generations chose to settle accounts with 1980s society - as losers defending ethics and humanity, as escapists from reality and living in their abstract poetry, and/or as followers of Ece Ayhan, Can Yücel and Metin Eloğlu and making fun of this new society in ironic tones. In his approach, politics within poetry corresponds to a critique of capitalism, but this approach provides no clues about the trauma and frustration caused by state oppression. Doğan agrees with social realist critics that poetry of the 1980s should be labelled apolitical. But he mentions the social dimension of

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12 Ahmet Oktay. *İmkânsız Poetika* (İstanbul: Alkım, 2004), 71-122.

poetry's content to replace its political dimension, without rendering it political.

Doğan mentions the poets as Metin Altıok, Egemen Berköz, Güven Turan, Ahmet Telli, İsmail Uyaroğlu, Abdülkadir Budak, Veysel Çolak, Ahmet Özer, Ali Cengizkan, Enis Batur from the previous generation as well as Ahmet Erhan, Akif Kurtuluş, Turgay Fişekçi, Hüseyin Haydar, Haydar Ergülen, Enver Ercan, Behçet Aysan, Şükrü Erbaş, Mehmet Müfit, Seyhan Erözçelik, Adnan Özer, Mehmet Ocaktan, Müslim Çelik, Salih Bolat, k.İskender, Turgay Nar, Kemal Durmaz, Hicri İzgören, Metin Celâl, Yusuf Alper and M. Mümtaz Tuzcu of the new generation as the constituents of 1980s poetry.<sup>13</sup>

Other studies, articles and analyses of post 1980 poetry are by and large literary criticisms such as the one by Baki Asiltürk.<sup>14</sup> Asiltürk provides various poetic interpretations and the poets' own evaluations to defend the variety of poetic approaches and techniques in the peaceful atmosphere of the 1980s. According to him, the only principle in common to all members of this generation is their attribution of "priority to the aesthetic qualities of the poem" vis-à-vis ideological ingredients. Therefore, he chose to classify the poetry of the period in terms of a "generation." Asiltürk lists the distinctive tendencies of poets who published their first book of poetry between 1980 and 1990. This approach ignores poets of the previous and subsequent generations who are also often considered by poetic and literary journals as having emerged from the 1980s wave. Actually, Asiltürk's personal choices determines the selection of the poets to be included in his list.<sup>15</sup> He sees the poetry of the decade as one period in the periodization of the history of literature and concentrates on poetic style in literary works. Asiltürk's, like other literary-based criticisms, explain the poetic turn of the 1980s as a reaction to the slogan-like, ideologically-oriented poetry of the 1970s.

Ali Özgür Özkarcı expresses the individualist and weakened political attitude in poetry in the 1980s. He mentions Akif Kurtuluş, İzzet Yasar, Ahmet

13 Mehmet H. Doğan, ed., *İkinci Yeni Şiir* (Istanbul: İkaros Yayınları, 2008).

14 Baki Asiltürk, *Türk Şiirinin 1980 Kuşağı* (Istanbul: YKY, 2013).

15 Gülce Başer, "Türk Şiirinde 1980 Kuşağı üstüne", interview with Baki Asiltürk, *Kitaplık* No: 167, May, 2012.



Erhan, Ahmet Güntan and küçük İskender as the five poets that represent the socialist line of the period. He holds the opinion that poetry of the 1980s was weak in its political expressions.<sup>16</sup>

Yalçın Armağan envisions the claim of the aesthetic autonomy of the poet as a choice to the state policies before 1980s. He also claims that the state perceived this choice as a practice of opposition.<sup>17</sup> This is to my mind open to discussion, since no solid sanction was imposed on these poets as the case for the social realists. Orhan Koçak focuses on the individual's personal issues in his analyses of poets of the young generation of the 1980s, without mentioning the politics of the individual. However, he envisions the cultural policies of the entire Republican period as failed attempt at Westernization. The attempt failed because the idealized culture was that of the West, which was, in fact, the enemy that was fought against to establish the Republic.<sup>18</sup>

Other evaluations however, insistently concentrate on the plastic, aesthetic qualities of the period's poetic tendencies. Dossiers about post-1980 poetry in journals and periodicals such as *Varlık*, *Gösteri*, *Hece*, *Üç Nokta*, and *Sombahar* reflect the approaches above. The generic discourse surrounding the young poets of the 1980s is a claim that bring aesthetic criteria neglected since the "Second New" movement back to the poetry. Actually, they resist the idea that their works are apolitical; instead, they claim to reflect a political attitude in an aesthetic form.

Yalçın Küçük traces the antagonism among authors to Republican cultural ideology. He finds a vocabulary of "betrayal" in the choices of authors. Küçük's evaluations should be taken into consideration in the sense that he admits a political attitude in literary productions of the period. He interprets the "silence" of hot politics as an affirmation of government practices.

Finally, Yücel Kayıran's approach to 1980's poetry - in terms of its "political attitude," focuses on the immediate shift to "an apolitical mode" in the poetry of outstanding "revolutionary" poets of 1970s, namely Ahmet Telli and Veysel

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16 Ali Özgür Özkarcı, *Cetvelle Çizilmiş Dağınıklık* (Istanbul: 160. Kilometre, 2014), 19-119.

17 Yalçın Armağan, *İmkânsız Özerklik* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2011).

18 Orhan Koçak, "1920'lerden 1970'lere Kültür Politikaları," *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce: Kemalizm*, (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001): 372.

Çolak, among others. Kayıran implies that there is a self-censorship by these poets in the 1980s.<sup>19</sup> His second argument is that, the leftist movement had already lost its legitimacy by the time the coup was carried out. He refers to the Mayday events in which he observes a loss of self-confidence within the left-wing intelligentsia. He takes this as a reason for the ease with which society conformed to the military regime.

In fact, the loss of legitimacy of the leftist intelligentsia was considerable and deserves discussion. But the shift in poetry after 1980 can be more easily explained by post-coup violence. Kayıran's final thesis was that the poetry of 12 September would wait to be written by the subsequent generation of poets in the 1990s. According to this view, the real trauma was experienced by this following generation, not the immediate generation that lived through the 1980 coup and were mature enough to deal with its effects. However, there were poems and books protesting the coup and state violence during the junta regime; this approach does not explain why, for example, Orhan Alkaya, a poet of the 1980 generation, wrote or published such poems in 1990s; there were direct and indirect victims of the trauma; and finally the social and psychological conditions of the poets are disregarded by saying simply "they were apolitical."

The literature on social transformations brought about in the 1980s are particularly focused on novels. The main thesis in works about literature is the rise of a "self-politics" in literary works of the 1980s. These are mostly reflections on personal issues - specific to women or to rural migrants. These works concentrate on literary characters in the text who are most developed in terms of his or her confessions. The politics of these works lay in the definition of unique individual and their problems and traumas while defining themselves within society. These personal perceptions were indicators of the tension between the individual and the society with regard to developing identity in the face of conflicting roles and attributes. These seem to reflect the problematic

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19 Yücel Kayıran. *Felsefi Şiir* (İstanbul: YKY, 2007), 393-412. This is only a single essay about 1980s poetry. He mentions that Yaşar Miraç was the only poet to have been arrested, but later we understand that Atıf Behramoğlu was also arrested. I know that Ahmet Telli was arrested too.

of an individualizing society.<sup>20</sup> I go beyond these works to reflect the full content of these politics in both the individual and social dimensions. My contribution is to reveal the circumstances that the poets as individuals, political identities and intellectuals were working under and to determine their responses to these circumstances in their poetry.

### § 1.3 On Theoretical Questions

The interpretations of social scientists are often criticized by literary critics for being superficial, whereas the works of literary critics are criticized by social scientists for being timeless and unearthly. I overcome these theoretical questions through a multi-dimensional reading of the works of the period.

In this research, readings from the point of view of historiography provide a general context for the sources of social history and history from-the-bottom. Readings on literary theory on the other hand, provide the tools for using literary works within cultural studies research, developing a proper methodology, and determining the historical data required to support outputs acquired from literary works - namely poems, in this work.

Further, the sociology and psychology literature provide relevant tools to envision the mental and emotional state of individual in the 1980s, given the political, social and economic conditions, practices of power, as well as to detect and interpret these influences in cultural products. These also provide insight for describing poets with various sometimes-conflicting identities (as economic, social, and/or political individuals, intellectuals, etc.), - their mental worlds, relations with the society and the government, and their problems and priorities. Challenging and developing a discussion among these possible approaches has been a good test of my hypothesis and claims. The latter provide particular insights into individuals' and intellectuals' dilemmas vis-à-vis their relations with the government and networks of power, the representation of these dilemmas in their literary works - particularly in poems -, the construction of power and opposition as discourses and metaphors by both the

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20 In my master's thesis, I noted that military pressure was effective for individualization and the rise of consumer society.

wilders of power and the subjects they subordinate, and finally the relation of power and economy to the cultural production processes.

### 1.3.1 *Literature, Poetry and the Social Sciences*

Cultural studies have attempted to build a critical history of various segments of society, but literary works have yet not become an area of interest. Cultural studies have focused on popular products like fashion - trends and patterns of consumption that reflect the life-style and habits of a society. In the second half of the 1980s, literary works started to draw interest as a part of cultural production, a view affirming the idea that all cultural products are “texts open to interpretation.” The relation of literature to culture started to be analyzed. Furthermore, postcolonial studies have been a major area in which literary works have been taken as textual sources for interpretation. Literary works were again highlighted with the publication of *Imagined Communities* by Benedict Anderson, an influential work on nationalism.

But it is not easy to overcome the question of whether literary works, which are principally “fictive,” or are not dependable sources. This ambivalent status of literary works brings the nature of reality and ideology in the text into question. A social scientist working in this area claims that all texts produced in a particular time present meaningful indicators about the period and the contemporaneous mentalities. For example, Duygu Köksal presents a convincing debate in her article about reality and ends up concluding that a literary work functionally represents reality both as a document itself and as a micro-cosmos of a world of interpretation.<sup>21</sup> She further differentiates between “social” and “metaphoric,” dimensions of reality. The social category concerns social or historical changes and the metaphoric sphere deals with questions of representation. Texts enable deeper interpretation by establishing the relationship between these two dimensions of reality.

Raymond Williams claims that arts and literature cannot be separated from other social practices and should not be subjected to distinct theoretical

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21 Duygu Köksal, “Sosyal Bilimlerin Kıyısında Edebiyat”, in *Sosyal Bilimleri Yeniden Düşünmek* (Istanbul: Metis, 1998), 221-226.

inquiries. While arts and literature may have specific qualities, it is not possible to separate them from general social process.<sup>22</sup> Williams sees politics in texts as a product of class relations and practices. He notes that a society is open to analysis through any of its practices, and literature has been “a practice since the beginning” of the society. Writing is, therefore, a contribution to hegemonic culture; its components serve to fulfill this function effectively. These components include embodiment of values and meanings, animation, exposition and all other creative expressions in literary works. Hence, two major points affect an analysis of the relations between literary works and society:

- ◆ We cannot consider literature as a unique structure separate from other practices in society,
- ◆ These relations are also not constant, static and super-historical. Therefore, each literary work provides strong clues about the nature of the dominant culture of its era. And all creative styles serve to a representation of this culture.

Jacques Rancière, on the other hand, suggests a more radical approach to the factual basis of literary works, expressing that fiction in the modern aesthetic age has defined models to connect the presentation of facts and forms of intelligibility that has blurred the distinction between the logic of facts and the logic of fiction.<sup>23</sup> He notes that the aesthetic revolution of Romanticism in the nineteenth century did not set language free by breaking its bounds with reality. On the contrary, it tied language to physical traits and in that way the social world became visible to itself either by the silent language of things, or by the coded language of events. Therefore, in this new aesthetic understanding nar-

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22 His highlighting of specific qualities is a response to the New Criticism that claims literature is inaccessible to the social sciences. This style of criticism presumes that literary works should be read and interpreted only from literary theories as works of autonomous artist identities. Williams also suggests that literary readings cannot be limited to pure literary models of rhetoric, as New Criticism insists. Raymond Williams, “Marksist Kültür Teorisinde Altyapı ve Üstyapı” in *Kültür ve Materyalizm* (İstanbul: Sel Yayınları, 2013), 45-65.

23 Jacques Rancière, “Is History a Form of Fiction”, in *the Politics of Aesthetics* (London: Continuum, 2004), 38.

ration serves as a way to make history more concrete strengthening the causality among cases just as in documentary films.<sup>24</sup> Literary productions in the form of novels, stories and even – to a degree -even poetry need to build strong connections to the “happened” or to “have possibly happened” to suggest possibilities for thinking.<sup>25</sup>

Ranci re makes a critical, rarely expressed point about modern literature. To convince readers, modern literary works need to include some form of reality. However, movements such as surrealism would have difficulty to connect with practical contingencies. Ranci re himself is careful even with Romanticism. Nonetheless, surrealism was launched following World War I, a great trauma for the citizens of Europe citizens, and was also a moment of questioning “reality.” Lastly, surrealism openly declared it was from a surreal world of dreams and the subconscious. It has a substructure provided by discoveries in psychology. Therefore, surrealist works are still useful in interpreting the psychology of the individual within a given period, as we will see below. Ultimately, some sort of reflection of reality, or some feeling, image or sometimes a discourse corresponding to reality is expected in modern literary works.

Such an approach provides a theoretical foundation from which to study literary works in terms of the concerns of social science; however, the term “deep interpretation” needs to be defined and what is meant by social and historical context needs to be elaborated. The debate above demonstrates how literary texts could be relate to questions of reality in the social sciences. Below, the question of how far a literary text - particularly a poetic text - will represent the mindset of the author, its historical context and the political cross section of society is further discussed.

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24 Hayden White also draws attention to the function of narration in history writing and claims that narrative is a metacode, a human universal on the basis of which transcultural messages about the nature of a shared reality can be transmitted. Hayden White, “The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality”, *Critical Inquiry*, ( 7/1, 1980): 5-27. However, here the debate is not the form of history writing but the form of reality within literary works.

25 Ranci re, *the Politics of Aesthetics*, 36-39.

### 1.3.2 *Poetry and the Social Sciences*

Poetry's becoming a subject for the social sciences is recent. In fact, poetry has always been questioned for its “lack of narration”<sup>26</sup> and the particular poetic language of symbols and metaphors was perceived as a barrier to social analysis. As Damon and Livingston describe, neither New Criticism nor Marxism conceived of the participation of poetry in popular or mass culture, and to the extent they did, they considered it as doggerel to placate and depoliticize a potentially revolutionary public.<sup>27</sup>

Furthermore, poetry is generally assumed abstract and detached from current social issues. As Eagleton formulates, poetry has too genuine pattern and intensity to be interpreted as a symptom of anything else; it should be seen as the most history-indifferent genre of literature. He criticizes the New Criticism school for ignoring the social components of literary works. New Criticism of the 1950s suffered from heavy academic jargon by a limited number of critics reading a limited body of texts. Still, Eagleton describes poetry as the most “resistant” literary genre for political criticism.

### 1.3.3 *The Politics in the Form*

Yuri Lotman, the Russian semiotician, goes further, defining poetry as the “system of systems,”<sup>28</sup> a combination or system of various components such as meter, rhythm, and rhyme related to form, which Eagleton interprets as “over coded”. The meaning and aesthetic capacity of a poem is a result of the interactions within these systems. Although poems written in the social realist style are open to interpretation, the self-referential quality of poetry is a common presumption of most all literary scholars, shared by readers of poetry, particularly when modern poetry is being considered.

Yet gradually, poetry started to become part of discussions in the social sciences from the 1990s onwards. Poetry is an artistic formation of language and of two components as form makes it complicated to analyze materially.

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26 Modern poetry is not keen on narration. In cultural studies, however, narratives seem more explanatory, since they clearly provide the context of the narrator.

27 Maria Damon and Ira Livingston, “Introduction,” in *Poetry and Cultural Studies A Reader*, ed. Maria Damon and Ira Livingston (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 5.

28 Yuri Lotman, *Structure of the Poetic Text* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1977).

By way of a brief definition, content in poetry is a narrow assembly of images and metaphors rising from a large area of form. Form covers all the techniques used to build the content. For example, the content of a poem on a seagull is seagulls. The metaphor and meaning created by that seagull are components of form. In this theoretical context, the form is not only visual elements such as measure and sectioning, but also the poetic techniques used. Therefore, particular techniques of analysis are needed to differ from those of prose analysis.

Terry Eagleton admits the possibility of deriving a historical perspective in poetry readings. But, according to him, poetry has a genuine pattern and intensity that makes it mostly self-referential. In fact, poetry has resisted social analysis - and not only in modern times - by its natural detachment from traditional perceptions. Hence, poetry has always its genuine forms that create meanings, instead of utilizing the existing common pool of meanings or sensations.<sup>29</sup> Eagleton claims that politics in poetry could only be present in the forms in which it was created. To sum up, Eagleton further defines three main problem areas for determining the politics of a poetic text: the presumed existential resistance to mass culture or daily politics, an attitude of indifference with regard to history, and the self-referential nature of poetic language and forms. I consider that these emerge due to the nature of poetry as an aesthetic production, aiming to plasticize language itself, through utilization of genuine poetic forms. So, the forms used to (re)shape the language are actually functional and depict the politics of the text. Of course, poetic forms have their own history, as Eagleton mentions.

However, for me, labeling poetry as resistance to mass culture does not explain the power of post-World War I avant-gardism, which found its social atmosphere in the society, as a repugnant but which has been the subject of studies on political discourse in arts. Surrealism was the literary movement reacting to the violence and psychological depression caused by the First World. Although surrealism reflected a protest against pop culture, it also reflected anger on the political agenda. It did not ignore the contemporaneous politics. In fact, it produced an influential and effective oppositional discourse against the actual political agenda.

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29 Terry Eagleton, "Dört Doğa Şiiri" in *Şiir Nasıl Okunur* (Istanbul: Agora Kitaplığı, 2011), 259.



Poetry's supposed distance from history is also problematic. It suggests that poetry has always had its own history and tradition, sometimes in harmony with the contemporary culture in which it was produced, but sometimes deviating from it. I argue that the agenda of poetry often has particular links to the moment of the community, when a poem or a group of poems is analyzed and interpretations mapped to that particular period. Further, if specific, personal choices are considered there are such themes, parts or component in novels, short stories, in paintings, and even in fashionable products that are difficult to interpret or simply self-referential.

Eagleton emphasizes the difficulty of deciphering totally abstract and unique poetic language. With deference to Eagleton's reservations, the abstract quality of poetry is dealt with in two ways in this research: First, historical and literary backgrounds are provided to interpret the poetry of the period. Second, data produced by social sciences are utilized in interpreting the poetry of 1980s. In fact, poetry is useful for a social science research, as Marshall Bermann's reading of Baudelaire demonstrates.

The use of social science data from the 1980s permits me to bring together linguistic representation models of the period with the discursive representation of existing political views. Furthermore, data from social issues provide the discourses of existing social segments of the 1980s. Poetry's contribution to social sciences is neither a simple narration of the historical situation nor of individual experiences. Poetry reflects the discourses, symbols, and impressions that people produce through their experiences in society.

Eagleton admits that politics can be detected in poetry, too. Like Rancière, he suggests an analysis of form in poetry to ascertain its politics. Form in his approach denotes tone, pitch, rhythm, diction, volume, meter, pace, mood, voice, address, texture, structure, quality, syntax, register, point of view, and punctuation. Content, as the other component of poetry consists of meaning, action, character, idea, story line, moral vision, and argument.<sup>30</sup> He defends that form requires a deeper analysis and serves as an indicator pointing to historical happening. That means that poets' choices to deviate from traditional forms that had become associated with a particular discourse or meaning reflect their intention to express a new and/or antagonistic position. Or the

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30 Terry Eagleton, "Form Arayışı" in *Şiir Nasıl Okunur* (Agora Kitaplığı: İstanbul: 2011), 105.

choice to shift from a particular form to another may provide information about the historicity of a poet's concerns.

Rancière, on the other hand, highlights the importance of "utterance" along with what he calls the "nature" of the represented. The nature of the represented is "the quality of the characters represented by the poem: elevated status of their identity," whereas utterance is "the way which poet as subject relates to the subject of the poem."<sup>31</sup> The poetic forms in poems may be analyzed in terms of the lexis it links to a certain kind of representation. By lexis, he means the set of words and phrases and their meaning possibilities. The debate is not about the truth of the utterance but the quality of it. By that the experience as the plot of the poem goes further than being a subjective experience, and the senses (instead of experience) as reflect more than a physical experience, and the poem as a whole manages to reflect a political experience. For example, if something is represented with beloved things or with ordinary things with positive connotations, such as "sun" and "water," this choice reflects a positive attitude on that thing. The poet usually leads the reader to understand the subject of this statement. Therefore, the reader finds his way to understand the meaning or the attitude and its owner. Furthermore, particular political discourses may be represented directly or indirectly in a poem through similar techniques.<sup>32</sup>

Rancière admits that he considers the politics in the form of poetry as "meta-politics."<sup>33</sup> An interpretation at the "meta-politics" level can be derived from form-oriented approaches, since the qualities of the components related to form normally provides general indicators about the individual position of the poet subject with regard to his or her society.<sup>34</sup>

Literary studies usually describe poetry in terms of two basic movements: lyric poetry with conventional forms and methods of abstraction through

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31 Jacques Rancière, "From Wordsworth to Mandelstam" in *the Flesh of Words* (California: Stanford University Press, 2004), 10-11.

32 Rancière, *Flesh of Words*, 14-15. In fact, he says that modern literary works resist the representation a certain social class, adding the opposition of high and low classes as a third dimension.

33 Meta-politics refers to a political position ignoring the day-to-day issues.

34 Literary analysis often couple the biography of poets with shifts and turning points in their poetry.

metaphors and images, and avant-garde poetry with experimental, surrealist forms. Critics mostly agreed on the difficulty of interpreting poetic works in social terms. Among others, Adorno furthest to detect concrete links between form and politics.

Adorno criticizes the generic interpretations of artistic works, particularly with the technique of conceptualizing the “strange” by “familiar” terms, leading to an “overwhelming” of the main point to be explained. In his perspective, a strange metaphor or image is an alienating element in the poem. And this alienating element serves as a mediator opening a new dimension for interpretation. For example, if a sparrow hawk hovers around roses in a poem, then the bird indicates a discrete dimension for interpretation. It should not be interpreted in the context of the roses. Normally, the bird expected around roses is a mocking bird. The choice of the poet to insert a sparrow hawk shows that he wants to destroy the context of roses and create an alternative. Therefore, the existence and representation of images, metaphors, and symbols should be taken into consideration when interpreting a poem. We can also consider the existence of ideas and conceptualizations in poetry from this perspective. In surrealist works, for instance, if the artist’s intention is to produce literary and graphic illustration of Jung and Freud, they could simply copy them instead of making a metaphor of their theory.<sup>35</sup> Hence, the theories of Jung and Freud in surrealist works should be interpreted within in a particular context to understand their function. An Oedipal syndrome, for instance, may be indicating another source of power other than the father, like the state, the boss or a lover. The analysis should cover the whole poem (not only a couple of verses) to derive a more comprehensive interpretation. In other words, the “strange component” is the key to understand the context of the poem.

Adorno develops a debate on both genres revealing social components in both lyric and avant-garde forms. According to him, surrealism, as a reaction against mass production, grasped images from singular objects to obtain images, making the subjects’ inner core an external thing, in imitation of historical and social concept. This is an aesthetic and political attitude. Surrealists

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35 Theodor W. Adorno, “Gerçeküstüçülüğe Sonradan Bakış” in *Edebiyat Yazıları* (Istanbul: Metis, 2008), 109.

have tried to attribute an inner, deeper meaning to ordinary things and beings.<sup>36</sup> Adorno draws attention to the existence of criticism in the form of a poem. The criticism is of the mass production of goods through the expression of respect for the goods.

Damon and Livingston, further link poetry to aesthetic appreciation in the historical phase of embourgeoisement in the eighteenth century, taking poetic activities as social and economic events. Avant-garde movements are located at the other end of the scale, with their controversial position, either as an antibourgeois or shock aesthetic - as an opposition to the vulgar market place and mass culture. Experimental works, as a challenge to the classical works, expand the limits the definition of poetry.<sup>37</sup> Such poems are mapped in “the margin” of classical poetry forms, probably open new areas of expression and new stylistic opportunities, and perhaps a new hierarchy of priorities by the shock hey effect. Therefore, they challenged the bourgeois culture by building a new understanding and perception of arts, and these new movements may sometimes even be launched from within pop culture and art. Experimental poetry also reflects a political attitude in this sense. A poetic language is developed by radical changes in form and through visual tools that dominates the media and advertising. These efforts are clearly political as they aim to develop a language of criticism of capitalist culture.

Damon and Livingstone’s analysis opens a larger area for interpreting the poetry as a political discourse. Poetry, being a bourgeois cultural production and the emergence of the Avant-guard as a protest of bourgeois aesthetics and mass production become interesting subject areas for the social sciences. That means that poetry developed by bourgeois interests became an aesthetic protest of bourgeois culture. The shift is political. Starting with Kantian aesthetics, and shifting to anti-aesthetics at a particular moment - or challenging the order by pushing the borders of linguistic aesthetics, these are challenges to the bourgeoisie itself, which is the developer of these particular aesthetic norms. Hence, the poet destroys the linguistic “laws.”

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36 Adorno, *Edebiyat Yazıları*, 109-114.

37 Maria Damon and Ira Livingston, “Introduction”, in *Poetry and Cultural Studies A Reader*, ed. Maria Damon and Ira Livingston (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 9.

The language attacked or challenged was the language of the hegemony of its time. At that point, poetry acquires new and abundant political manifestation as Julia Kristeva points out. The ungovernable, chaotic and primordial language of poetry can easily be perceived as radical even by the lay audience which is sensitive to the patriarchal, banal and normative language stemming from the world of adulthood. According to Kristeva, poetic language's discrepancy from this language is conveyed through the symbolization of rhythms, sounds and reflexive body gestures of the pre-Oedipal stage of mother dependency.<sup>38</sup>

Damon and Livingston's argument that poetic language exists at any time and covers the intimate, complicated, ignored part of the relations with daily routine, therefore has its roots in Kristeva's arguments. Poetry is indeed an attempt to develop an alternative language, according to Rorty.<sup>39</sup> However, the fact that this alternative language reflects the public realm of the poet subject is often ignored.

These views are sufficient to claim that the Avant-guard is an attempt to develop a linguistic opposition. We can explain the politics in lyric poetry by the same conceptualization. Adorno further adopts a more conceptual terminology when he approaches lyric poetry.<sup>40</sup> According to him, lyric poems are related to the unconstrained states of the "private." This is a similar or at least a complementary approach to Kristeva's. However, the social essence of lyric poetry is not a direct result of the given conditions of the time it was written. It is, according to Adorno, a subjective expression of social conflict. This introversion and subjectivity is also the result of a dispute with a society, so a deep collective stream lies at the base of all sorts of lyric poetry.<sup>41</sup> This collective vein may be a political attitude itself, or may embody a political dimension

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38 Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 46-51.

39 Richard Rorty, *Olumsuzluk, İroni ve Dayanışma* (Istanbul: Ayrıntı, 1995), 29-30.

40 Its universal existence, according to him, is built by concentrating on a genuine form and revealing something undistorted, undefined and yet not categorized. Even the sense of isolation in the lyric poetic language is a product of atomistic society. Theodor W. Adorno, "Lirik Şiir ve Toplum" in *Edebiyat Yazıları*, (Istanbul: Metis, 2008), 115-136.

41 *Ibid.*, 124-125.

within. In fact, a direct struggle with the society or with political power is obviously, rarely evident in lyric poems. On the contrary, a lyric poem is mostly considered a bunch of subjective sentimental verses.

However, the subjective style of statements, linguistic and artistic choices and representation, as well as the poet subject's attitude towards the theme reflect political discourse if carefully handled. These politics need not be limited to a general, timeless side taking - like inspiring a humanistic worldview - but can refer to the present circumstances under which the poem is created.

#### 1.3.4 *Poetry as a Discourse*

The protest movements of the 1960s and 70s provide the foundation for the inclusion of poetry in cultural studies; however, poetry came to be envisioned as a type of popular discourse only in the 2000s.<sup>42</sup> Still, the conceptualization of poetry as a “popular discourse” in itself could be problematic because it sees poetic production as a popular event, which is rarely true.

A discourse, being a product of a particular historical period, is also a product of complex power relations. As Foucault contends, these incorporate other discourses and relations in society. An analysis of poetry in terms of discourse requires an acknowledgment of the context of social developments perhaps of other discourses and of their mediation in the particular period the poetry is produced, because a transformation in discourse or language always has strong links to a transformation in society.

Literary works, like other artistic genres have two fundamental dimensions that must be seen as interrelated: the literary tradition and political and social history. Richard Rorty defines this as the change that took place in jargon in line with scientific and social transformations. As Rorty defined the transformation in people's worldview through the French revolution in the eighteenth century the transformation of the worldview of a considerable number of Turkish citizens following the 1980 coup and the ensuing process of economic liberalization can be interpreted as having a groundbreaking impact on the daily jargon of the ordinary citizen. The shift in social discourses took place simultaneously with other shifts in life-style, political activity, and

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42 Damon and Livingston, *Poetry and Cultural Studies*, 5.

technological developments.<sup>43</sup> The poems under scrutiny need to be analyzed in light of linguistic transformation of the period.

Members of various classes started to appear as subjects in literary works, and also poems in the twentieth century. This resulted in the formation of a democratic, pluralist atmosphere in the literary world. It was as if different classes were equalized in the eyes of readers. In other words, what modern literature did was to include individuals from each segment of society in the literary works, so that the author subject is no longer a representative of a noble elite but of anybody who speaks or appears in the work. Obviously, the act of “representation” did not disappear from works but shifted from the author’s own utterance, as a person of noble class to the interpretation of the author subject and later to the reader. The weakening of the representation of the author's delete self in poetry also brought about the empowerment of the utterance, with the ability to mark other social classes and segments.<sup>44</sup>

Easthope approaches poetry as a medium to reflect on a discourse. Each poem is also a poetic discourse reflecting on a larger ideological and historical discourse, since they are produced in specific local and national contexts. He resists the presumption of conventional discourse theory about the transparency of language, by setting the only role of a discourse as communication.

According to Foucault, a discourse develops its own rules to weaken the scope of words and things to fit the discursive context<sup>45</sup> because a discourse is a form to build a particular meaning that represents a particular attitude and/or knowledge. As Foucault rightly states, it is not a simple crossing of terms but a genuine network of words and things. Poetic language is built by a similar technique. Further, poets are often eager to use or instrumentalize contemporary popular discourses or represent them in their poems.

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43 Richard Rorty, “Dilin Olumsuzluğu” in *Olumsuzluk, İroni ve Dayanışma* (İstanbul: Ayrıntı Yayınları, 1995), 27-29.

44 Anthony Easthope, *Poetry as a Discourse* (London: Methuen, 1983).

45 Michel Foucault, “Nesnelerin Oluşması” in *Bilginin Arkeolojisi* (İstanbul: Ayrıntı Yayınları), 65. “I would like to show with precise examples that in analyzing discourses themselves, one sees the loosening of the embrace, apparently so tight, of words and things, and the emergence of a group of rules proper to discursive practice.” *Archeology of Knowledge* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 48.

Poetic expressions are composed of images and metaphors constructed to be open to various readings and interpretations enriching the opportunities for expression by obscuring context. That does not mean that expressions lack context. The intention is to enrich the meaning content of the images and metaphors. According to Easthope, however, the difference between poetry and prose is the enrichment of meaning content of the signifier by repeating and condensing the expression.

Therefore, the discourse of a poem - unlike other literary genres - cannot be handled as a direct reference to the reality in which it is produced or a reality that it hopes to transcend. Poetic language must be envisioned as part of non-referential discourses. By this, he means that the signifier of the discourse does not necessarily refer to a concrete fact or reality, but instead a set of meaning probabilities. It might be transparent, but not referential. That makes the poetry "hard to interpret." Therefore, a discourse analysis of poetry should not focus on individual texts or several texts of a single author, but instead texts and passages should be checked "in terms of the discourse they participate in and exemplify."<sup>46</sup> Easthope defines his approach as a part of formalism, rather than contentism.

In this research, the poems of particular poets are in fact analyzed and interpreted. The poems are chosen mostly on the basis of their poets, and the poems are interpreted in more than one dimensions, one of which is the discourses they contain and represent. Poets are mapped according to the politics they reflect in their poems, and shifts in their discourse during 1980s, if any, are determined.

As Ranci re maintains, modern literature releases itself from direct reality and in fact provides a more comprehensive model for representing reality through abstractions. Coexistence of various perspectives and their discourses opens a place to develop a deeper insight. Easthope chases existing discourses in a poem instead of conducting a full content analysis or developing a general perspective on a single poet. For example, glimpsing the content and perhaps detecting a conflicting standpoint with the poem itself vis- -vis the discourse it includes could meaningfully make two points: the subconscious dichotomy

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46 Easthope, *Poetry as a Discourse*, 16-18.



of the poet subject and/or the impact of external political, social, or moral factors on the text.

### 1.3.5 *Behind a Deeper Analysis: Politics in the Subconscious of the Texts*

At the end of all these arguments and formal theoretical analysis, the unconscious of the text, which is mentioned all through the debates needs to be explained as a component of this research. The determination of politics as a discourse in poems is a useful point from which to start, however, the discourse of a poem is usually not open and clear, as it is constructed upon metaphors and metonymy. Poetry produces shifts in meanings of words and generic metaphors by nature; therefore, the words of daily language, which are the carriers of the political discourses present at the time it is written, may reflect a transformed meaning when they appear in a poem. Thus, the determination of the political standing point of the poem requires a deep and multidimensional interpretation.

Fredric Jameson claims that all texts include political expressions in their unconscious and political attitudes can only be determined using Marxist approaches. According to Jameson, all texts have political content so long as politics are defined in Marxist terms as the relations between oppressors and the oppressed.<sup>47</sup> The problem is to detect this matter of dialectics embodied in text with appropriate methods.<sup>48</sup> He calls the social, political, economic powers acting on the writing object as history. In his opinion, the dream of a particular moment of release from these pressures only serves to empower them under the label of “obligations.” Since the cultural products are in fact the symbolic actions in social sphere, the existing power mechanisms in the society may be seen by unmasking them. The conceptualization of the political unconscious would provide the ground to unmask the texts, according to him. This requires the application of various methods.<sup>49</sup> He is against the idea of using generic

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47 Fredric Jameson, “On Interpretation”, *The Political Unconscious* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1982, c1981), 1-4.

48 It would not be easy to determine the signs of struggle in lyric love poems and pastorals.

49 *Ibid.*, 20.

psychoanalytical methods in discovering the subconscious of the text at this level. Instead, he offers finding out the “mediator’s in the text that decipher the relations with state power and the economic base or the art and its social ground.”<sup>50</sup>

Such a methodology will detect similar symbolic processes between social life and the texts. The contrasts and discrepancies that emerge during this process may be taken as indicators of political attitudes.<sup>51</sup> Similarities of course, will be limited since the literary texts cannot be envisioned in terms of a one-to-one correspondence to the social life.

Jameson brings up six criteria for determining the validity of interpretations. Although these criteria are mainly developed mainly for narratives, they provide a useful framework for poetry, as well:

- 1 The problem of representation, particularly the representation of history
- 2 The related problem of the characters of historical narrative, or more precisely, that of the concept of social class and its availability as a “subject of history” or prime actor in such a collective historical narrative
- 3 The relationship of praxis to structure, and possible contamination of the first of these concepts by categories of purely individual action
- 4 The problem of transformation and periodization, most notably in case of transition from one mode of production into another. (This item is an issue of the previous one)
- 5 The related issue of contradiction and its formulation within the new structural framework
- 6 The notion of totality<sup>52</sup>

As we see, Jameson initially suggests following the signifier to clarify the context.

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50 Ibid., 24. “Mediations are thus a device of the analyst, whereby the fragmentation, and automatization, the compartmentalization and specialization of various regions of social life (the separation, in to her words, of the ideological from the political, the gap between the daily life and the practices of the academic disciplines) is at least locally overcome on the occasion of a particular analysis.” (Ibid., 25.)

51 Ibid, 26-27.

52 Ibid, 35.

However, Jameson warns us about the ambiguity of language as well, as an obstacle to interpreting the text. He suggests a particular psychoanalytic approach. According to Jameson, the feeling of alienation becomes inevitable under the conditions of capitalist culture. The internal world is reorganized to cope with these conditions.<sup>53</sup> Referring to Northrop Frye, he suggests that literary works have a comprehensive subconscious to be interpreted as a symbolic meditation of society.

Through a psychoanalytic reading, the symbols would be deciphered to unmask the sublimation in the text, revealing libidinal components such as desire, power, and power relations. Jameson offers three concentric frameworks to describe the social ground of a particular text for an adequate interpretation of the unconscious. These are the notions of

“1. Political history, in the narrow sense of punctual event, and a chronicle like sequence of happenings in time, 2. The society, in the now already less diachronic and time-bound sense of a constitutive tension and struggle between social classes, and 3. History, now conceived in its vastest sense of the sequence of modes of production and the succession and the destiny of the various human social formations, from prehistoric life to whatever far future history has in store for us.”<sup>54</sup>

History is a sum of the conditions that create obligations, limiting the collective praxis as well as the individual.

As the above discussion reveals, politics in the form of a poem usually lies in an image, a metaphor or an utterance that creates a shock or discrepancy in the given context. This discrepant component causes a reinterpretation of the text by the reader to decipher what the poet's political attitude is. Therefore, the political attitude of the poet subject is represented as an aesthetic form. We can see the society and the politics in form through the structure, images, and metaphors in the text as a whole. Such an analysis requires different techniques of reading and interpretation from that of the social realist literary worldview, in which references are more direct, open and correspond with outer reality. Still the politics of poetry is not easy to decipher.

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53 Ibid, 48-50.

54 Ibid., 61-62.

### 1.3.6 *The State, Culture and Literature*

The relation between cultural production and hegemonic power has been the subject of literary analysis of various kinds. Hegemonic powers are usually defined in terms of the state with its direct or indirect political power, capitalist powers - with its direct economic and indirect political power - and military power. Sometimes it is described as the desperation of the author, as in Berman's reading of the *Capital* and explaining Baudelaire's desperation and spleen. Berman tells the modern desperation during the process of being a part of the capitalist system and therefore being enforced to infinite originality and marketability in his productions, in his impressive book on modernism, culture and capitalism.<sup>55</sup> The reflection of the relations of literary products with hegemonic powers may take various forms in the texts. They may be represented in metaphors or discourses. Since hegemony may be defined as Bourdieu does, it is too complicated a concept to be found in its clear lines in a literary work:

“Domination is not the direct and simple action exercised by a set of agents (the dominant class) invested with powers of coercion. Rather it is the indirect effect of a complex set of actions engendered within the network of intersecting constraints, which each of the dominants, thus dominated by the structure of the field through which domination is exerted, endures on behalf of the others.”<sup>56</sup>

Therefore, the influence of hegemonic powers, either of the state or of imperialist or capitalist powers –or more realistically - as a complicated blend of all of them - would generally be a discourse, allegory or metaphor in a literary work, manifested as a complex, symbolic, even subconscious structure. Bourdieu sees hegemonic power owners as a “class” and believes that hegemonic powers manipulate culture and discourses.

Althusser, on the other hand, defines literature and arts within what he calls the state's cultural ideological apparatuses, reproducing state ideology

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55 Marshall Berman, *All That Solid Melts in the Air* (New York: Verso, 1983).

56 Pierre Bourdieu, in “Appendix: Social Space and Field of Power.”, in *Practical Reason* (California: Stanford University Press, 1998), 34.

through continuous practices to strengthen and settle its hegemony in a bourgeois state. Cultural apparatuses do not include violence but are complex structural institutions that function to produce state ideology everyday to pave the way for its adoption by the masses within the state's boundaries.<sup>57</sup> Bourdieu launches from this point, defines the society as a total of power relations dominated by capitalist powers, and suggests that the strategies of literary producers, the artistic style they defend, the alliances they establish, and the schools they form all are generated by passing through the particular horizon of these specific power relations – i.e., struggling to safeguard or transform these relations and the interests defined in the process.<sup>58</sup>

Combining these arguments, we can say that all hegemonic powers – whether the government in a country or capitalist powers - attempt to determine the cultural sphere in their area of domination. They do it through educational syllabi, through controlling the publication sector and media, and/or through investments and promotion of its own bureaucracy. Such powers try to influence mainstream tastes in literary works by promoting works that serve their purposes, either covertly, or openly. Hence, authors and poets are obliged to discover and develop a particular language and literary representation if they intend to oppose or resist these powers.

This study approaches the literary world in terms of two interrelated spheres:

- 1 The reproduction of the ideology of hegemonic powers (here the government and junta of the 1980s) through cultural policies, education policies, and syllabi as ideological apparatuses.
- 2 The struggle between hegemonic powers and the opposing literati in the sphere of aesthetic production.

The existing political views and representations of the poets of various political views are studied not only by analyzing their poetry but also by focusing

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57 Louis Althusser, “İdeoloji ve Devletin İdeolojik Aygıtları Bir Araştırma için Notlar” in *İdeoloji ve Devletin İdeolojik Aygıtları* (Istanbul: İthaki Yayınları, 2010), 167-173.

58 Pierre Bourdieu, “Rethinking the State: Genesis and Structure of the Bureaucratic Field”, in *Practical Reason* (California: Stanford University Press, 1998), 35-63.

on literary journals of the 1980-90 period. Furthermore, the sociological conditions of the period are analyzed to develop a deeper insight about the daily agenda of individual poets, given their personal world, in the 1980-90 period shedding light on the main discourse and worldview of their poems. The unconscious of the texts is thus described through discrepancies they embody.

I agree with the given theoretical frame that poetry requires a deeper reading than a simple symptomatic reading that defines political attitude in poems. However, I disagree with the assumption that the form as a whole is the single indicator of the politics manifest in a poem. If the mental background of a choice in form is not explained by the poetic expressions or the poets, or if it is not perceived by the readers, the choice is destined to be missed or misinterpreted, not only by lay readers, but also by the rest of intellectuals. A good example of this mis-positioning is the sonnets written by Hilmi Yavuz and his followers in 1980s. Nobody perceived their choice of the sonnet form as a political attitude, due to an unshared information that “the sonnet form” was first used in Eastern poetry.<sup>59</sup>

Psychoanalytic methods are used in the interpretation of the language in a few poems. The concept of utterance by Rancière and of mediation by Jameson, were utilized in interpreting the collective psychology when represented by a psychoanalytic element (e.g. castration or a mother/father figure).

I observe that in post-1980 poetry daily and popular discourse and phrases are used separate from their context, developing a counter discourse that particularly struggles with pop culture and the political powers that feed pop culture. This tendency was also seen in the earlier “Second New” movement, but it became a typical form starting in the 1980s. Poetry may have its own vocabulary, but that does not lead to its complete detachment from the popular vocabulary of the period. At some point, the notion of the “white language of poetry” (by Yahya Kemal Beyatlı) was popular even among poets of the early Republic. Today there are both followers and opponents of this principle in

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59 According to Vural Bahadır Bayrıl, who is a follower of Hilmi Yavuz and sometimes still uses this form for his poems, Seyhan Erözçelik, - a promising young poet in 1980 – discovered this fact about sonnets and shared it with his close milieu. He was also close to Hilmi Yavuz. Bayrıl says the choice was to adopt the tradition - a forgotten tradition. But I could not find a written argument by any of these poets about “re-inventing” the sonnet form in this period.

poetry. The notion was adopted mostly to protest pop culture after the 1980s. So the choice again had political purposes.

## § 1.4 Methodology

This study contributes to the social and cultural history of a particular period in Turkey. Broadly, culture is taken to be comprised of the cultural production of the common people, and of intellectuals as well as of state policies. Culture is reflected in the history of literature. This study is also a work of intellectual history. Considering the period it covered, this research also contributes to the literature on military rule.

Three main types of sources are utilized for this research:

- ◆ The Republican history of poetry is analyzed to depict the “politics” in its poetry, answer the question of how and why some poems were perceived as political and dangerous, by the political hegemons, governments, people, and intellectuals in Republican history, while others were not. School syllabuses, periodicals of the ministries of education and culture, and parliamentary records are scanned for these purposes. Primary and secondary sources are also evaluated to determine attempts to influence mainstream literature.
- ◆ The 1980-1990 period is analyzed in terms of its social, political, and economic conditions. Existing political attitudes are discerned through studying various interview collections cover the period, as well as memoires, journals, newspapers and secondary sources. Interviews with poets Metin Celâl, Metin Cengiz, Enver Ercan, Akif Kurtuluş, Orhan Alkaya, Sina Akyol, Ahmet Telli, Vural Bahadır Bayrıl, Ali Günvar, Nevzat Çelik, Halil İbrahim Özcan were also made. They were chosen either for their outstanding position as poets or editors within and after the 1980s, or for their critical declarations within and after the period.

Poetry produced in the period is analyzed in light of the political positions of literary and poetry journals and poets' appearance in those journals. Representative books of poetry define the various literary trends of the period. Journals are scanned especially in terms of interviews and essays they published, and the correspondence between their political and literary contents. This in-depth analysis of journals and books reveal the network of words and

discourses linked with given political attitudes. Deeper insight into the lives of poets as individuals is developed, defining the problems, juxtapositions, dilemmas and dramas of establishing their identities under the new conditions of the 1980s.

- ◆ Finally, selected poetry books published in the 1980-90 period - as a representative sample - are analyzed in terms of their themes, discourse, and content. They were analyzed particularly in terms of how various themes are handled, if their handling reflect a political attitude or not, and what is the nature of this political attitude? Are there traumas that the poetic choices reflect? The traumas that the poems reflect are then analyzed to determine their origins: either state violence or the economic transformations taking place at that time. The poems are analyzed to define their relation with reality - i.e. social/political/economic conditions of the period.

Meaningful data for sociological, political and sometimes even psychological interpretation are extracted at these different levels. Indeed, the initial determination of the social conditions of the period is helpful in interpreting the poems and discourses in their historical context.

As noted, a selected “representative sampling” of the journals and books is analyzed. This was necessary to undertake a detailed reading and comprehensive analysis of specific works. The books and journals for analysis were selected for the following criteria: their representative quality (literary quality, political attitude and perception), the number of readers, and the populations/segments they represent (the most influential journals prepared by the young generation, for example). Many journals and books were published in the period. The choice for “representativeness” was made with particular consideration for the editors of those magazines (Memet Fuat was preferred to Attilâ İlhan, for example), the representativeness of their political positions, and the reflection of the variety of the stances (*Argos* was analyzed even though it was only influential for a short period but it reflected an important stance in that period, for example).



## § 1.5 Sources

Politics in the poetry of the 1980s are analyzed with multi-disciplinary approach; therefore, primary and secondary sources of political, social and literary history are investigated. Sources for this work fit in one of four categories: the theoretical literature, the historical literature, the books of poetry and literary periodicals published in the period and field research. The sources are a combination of historical materials, literary texts and anthropological data.

Historical sources include books and articles on the history of the 1980s in Turkey. These provide contemporaneous data for understanding various aspects of the period as interpreted immediately afterwards and in the subsequent decade. Social-historical works include the books of Gürbilek and Bali - *Vitrinde Yaşamak, Ev Ödevi, and Tarz-ı Hayattan Life Style'a - interviews - 12 Eylül Konuşmaları* – and memoirs and eyewitness accounts, the most comprehensive of which are the works of Erbil Tuşalp. To further understand the sociological circumstances of the period, newspapers archives (*Hürriyet, Günaydın, Tercüman, and Cumhuriyet* to represent each political perspective), the works of Nurdan Gürbilek and Rifat Bali works, and other evaluative essays were useful. To make sense of the economic conditions, newspaper archives, the works of Şevket Pamuk and Korkut Boratav, essays on the economic policies of the period were useful. To grasp people's personal experiences, testimonies about the period, interview collections, annual evaluations in the 1980s, memoirs and newspaper and journal archives were useful, as well as essays and research on the nature of the military regime and the neoliberalization process of Turkey. And finally, mappings of the 1980s within broader context of Turkish history including works on the history of the Turkish Republic by Zürcher, Kahraman, Karpat, and Ahmad's works were useful.

The primary sources utilized for this research were the books of poetry and literary journals of the period. The real subject of this work in fact, is the relationship between poems and worldviews of the era. Of course, the poems themselves, but also essays and interviews about the poetry have been a major source for determining the political attitudes, discourses, and tendencies of the poets and of the intelligentsia more general. Literary journals, namely *Varlık, Gösteri, Yazko Edebiyat, Yönelişler, Yarın, Türkiye Yazıları, Üç Çiçek,*

*Edebiyat Dostları*, *Şiir Atı*, *Mavera*, *Düşün*, *Broy* and *Gergedan* were critical in this respect. Their representative quality was considered in the choice of the specific set of journals to be analyzed.

In Chapters 5 and 6, journals are categorized in terms of the political discourse and attitude they reflect, the identity of the poets published in them, the methods used to represent a particular political attitude and their printing policies – in so far as they are possible to discern. Debates within the journals are taken as indicators of the journals' intellectual and political priorities. Particularly, debates on language, history, culture Atatürk, intellectuals, the West, and westernization are correlated with their political standpoint. Attitudes towards these issues are keys for deciphering their political attitudes with respect to the government's and state's cultural policies, as well as with respect to the rest of society.

The other group of written materials considered are the books of poets. A number of books published in the 1980-90 period are considered to determine a set of representative books of the poetry. I have included books from a range of poets, ideological views, and generations.

## § 1.6 Problems and Shortcomings

The major problem with this thesis is the problem of "limitation." The limitations of research materials, the limitation of the analysis itself, and the limitation of the period are serious questions that have been tackled. I could not conduct a comprehensive research of the preceding periods to develop a theoretical framework, but there are plenty of essays about the politics of Turkish poetry, as well as general research on intellectuals and Turkish literature. From these, I built a theoretical framework for the preceding periods that defined the political perspectives produced by poetry in the Republican period, and explained how these political perspectives and reflections were translated in the 1960s and 70s. Many primary sources were available, since only thirty years have passed since the decade from 1980 to 1990. Working in an interdisciplinary field, I had to select from among these sources, to establish a meaningful set of data for deeper analysis. Society in the 1980s was under the influence of conflicting forces. The junta regime and ongoing military intervention

suppressed communications, and self-expression, while economic liberalization was motivating free-market, liberal ideas and an expressive, exhibitionist culture by providing financial opportunities for entrepreneurship. It is difficult to picture these forces operating together in the same situation. Instead, I considered the multidimensional identities of poets - as individuals, political beings and homo-economicus. I interpreted the poems in terms of the political attitude they reflected and interpreted these findings accordingly, in the light of their worldviews.

One observation made in the analysis of the preceding periods played a key role in the interpretation of these findings: poets tended to manifest a critical position with respect to popular culture in the periods when the popular culture is on the rise, particularly when intellectuals are marginalized by state policies and oppression, in the years prior to 1980's. Introversion in the poems simply reflected a protest against the popular culture. Another finding was that, the state's cultural policies and "ideology" was neither stable nor consistent in Republican history; it continuously shifted to the right. This becomes clear given changes in the syllabi of literature courses in secondary schools.

These findings helped me construe the given literature of the "Republican cultural ideology," more objectively and provided a wider field of interpretation given the research findings about the post-1980 period. I conclude that poets all assumed an intellectual role. The status of intellectuals and society's ignorance of the traumas of state violence determined their political attitudes and the style of reflecting those attitudes in poems in post-1980.

Determining the state's political attitude with respect to literature and poetry in terms of its being political or not, and how these attitudes shifted in the course of Republican history is a concern as are determining intellectuals' choices and expectations about reflecting political perspectives in their literary products, and determining the personal social, economic and political problems expressed in the poems, which draw a picture of the social and economic status of poets within 1980s. Choosing a sufficiently large set of works - i.e., books of poetry and literary journals - to prevent bias and provide sufficiently deep insight was also concern.

One final note concerns my choice of the period of observation. I was certain about starting with the military coup of 1980, which is an epistemological break in Republican history. And that was also problematic, since there is no

study that covers both state policies and/or practices, and reaction of poets in terms of their literary production. While 1980 was a breaking point within Republican history, and while the transformations were deep and irreversible, it was difficult to limit the developments in literature to a ten-year period. Changes had already started by the end of the 1970s and continued well into the 1990s.

The electoral defeat of the Mother Land Party by the True Path Party indicated the electorate's decision to "bring the past back" by voting for Demirel, who had been banned by the military regime. Therefore, I decided to end my work at the end of 1989.

## § 1.7 The Chapters

The thesis starts with a general analysis of Turkish poetry and its links to the Republican cultural ideology, including shifts in the cultural policies of the state, along with changing, elected governments. This part comprises Chapters 2 and 3, which analyze these developments from the establishment of the Republic to the 1950s and from the 1950s to the 1980s respectively.

The following three chapters comprise the second part, which is a comprehensive description of the social, economic, cultural, and intellectual environment of poetry in the 1980s. It is designed to provide a sufficient background for a close reading of poems of the period to detect their politics, as mentioned above. In Chapter 4, the impact of political, economic and social developments are analyzed. Chapters 5 and 6 are a brief analysis of outstanding literary and poetry journals of the 1980-90 period. In Chapter 5, the journals published by previous generations of literati are articulated. The journals are defined in terms of the political and literary attitudes they reflect. The main political attitudes are liberalism, socialism and Islamism/conservatism. Chapter 6 concerns journals by the young generation of the period, and their political attitudes.

The last part includes the final three chapters of the work, which is a close reading of a representative sample of poetry books, published in the 1980-90 period. The analysis in Chapter 7 covers the transformation of social realist

poetry in the period dealing the dilemmas those poets faced and the new understanding they developed in writing socialist poems.

In Chapter 8 the books of poets who started writing before the 1980s are analyzed as pioneers of the “imagist” poetry of 1980s. The political attitudes they reflect through their poetic choice are also analyzed. The question whether their poetic shift started with the 1980s or beforehand is also considered. Chapter 9 is an analysis of members of the young generation and their “imagist” poetry.



## Sociality, Populism or Politics? The Politics of Republican Poetry 1-1923-1950

**A**lmost all studies conducted about Republican era Turkish poetry have focused on aesthetic developments. The politics and social stance that the texts covered of been evaluated only on basis of criteria determined by social realistic approach.<sup>60</sup> The politics of literature was left, so to speak, to the monopoly of the social realistic discourse. Texts outside of socialist poetry, whether popular or abstract, were regarded as “apolitical”. Poets were regarded as of the political the view they declared publicly. That is, if poets expressed that they were leftist, they were regarded as leftist. But when they ventured beyond social realistic themes in their literary products, they were generally criticized for being in harmony with political power. In the following two chapters, the politics in the poetry of the Republican period will be analyzed in terms of content, as well as its perception by political authorities, readers and the intelligentsia.

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60 Memet Fuat, İnci Enginün and even Ahmet Oktay place it under the heading of socialist poetry title. Hilmi Yavuz, starting at this point, questioned its interrelations with tradition; Bâki Asiltürk considered only the poetry’s literal characteristics. Hasan Bülent Kahraman regarded these as a modernization attempt, argued that they adopted from the West, accepted that the poets of “Second New” had a political foundation but did not particularly express that production, as a method, was *not* a part of a Westernization project.

The difference in terms of political, populist and socialist cannot be expressed in studies that address the politics in literary texts with perspective of social realistic approach which evaluates then politics of the texts only by direct references. Adoption of the social realistic perspective in the establishment era of the Republic is surely associated with cultural communication with Soviet Russia. Likewise, cultural ideology and accumulation inherited from Ottomans, too, affected this fast adoption. Nevertheless, Nâzım Hikmet, who pushed ahead of socialist literature and paved his own way, determined the borders of the “political” with his poems in young Republic. He was the first poet to be prosecuted due to his poetry. Poetry, which in one respect was affirmed by the state in Five Syllabists era for its socialist characteristic, was criticized for being “political” in the time of Nâzım Hikmet’s.

The poet’s political identification, like that of other authors, was a part of his intellectual role - an addition to his role as a person of literature. Poets were supposed to have an above-average knowledge and a cultural level and undertake the duty to provide or show something to society with their poems before they gained their social identities laborer or citizen. Therefore, the politics that poems about their other identities have covered must have been overwhelmed by their intellectual identity. In accordance with this finding, poets’ political identities had to be developed to represent their “intellectual” identity rather than their individual status (i.e., social status, ethnicity, gender). Yet poets’ individual statuses are included in poem in various ways as well as political attitude that are represented in different forms in a poem despite all kinds of suppression throughout Republican history.

In order to arrive at more significant conclusions about the politics in poetry, it is necessary to define the concepts retrospectively, and to evaluate the texts and approaches accordingly. Politics, populism and socialism should be considered respectively and differentiated. The first should be defined as agent’s (i.e. the poet-subject’s) position and stance against the political environment, regime and power; the second as conformity with mass taste; and the third as the problematizing of the collective good. Such definitions will reach a wide area in which different identities are seen in same poet or poem and social developments can be accurately interpreted in poetry.

In this section, I examine the transformations that poetry faced in terms of political and social content in periods until 1970s, as well as compare the

burdens placed on them by the policies of political powers and by intellectual identity. In this context, the communication between social developments and poet as an art producer will be researched.

## § 2.1 Political Powers and Canonization

The cultural policies, practiced in the establishment era of the Republic to develop a genuine national culture and literature, were discussed by many researchers from Ahmet Oktay to Hilmi Yavuz to Hasan Bülent Kahraman and are also covered in political history reviews. Almost all reviews emphasize the conceptualization of community that needs to be rapidly created by policies of language (the new Turkish described by Ziya Gökalp, Turkish for housewives of Istanbul), publication (translation of the world classics to Turkish and absorption of Western culture), and history (forming a national history). The divisions and secretariats related to culture were under the Ministry of National Education until 1971; the Ministry of Culture was only founded then. This is an obvious indication that state has designated cultural policies as within the scope of educational policies.

The state's willingness to determine culture in order to spread its own ideology is clear in all periods of the Republic, and culture was therefore instrumentalized as a state apparatus throughout Republican history.<sup>61</sup> The established rhetoric on the issue is that a cultural ideology based on Westernization that denied Ottoman past reigned throughout Republican history. This rhetoric is supported by the argument that Ottoman libraries became unusable due to the revolution in language and the alphabet. Educational policies in the establishment era are also regarded as evidence in this respect.<sup>62</sup>

Actually, in first years of Republic, world classics were introduced into Turkish with the support of the ministry. Communication with Ottoman libraries was irreversibly broken through alphabet revolution for the generation that started primary school in 1928. Language and historiography - especially Republican historiography - initiatives were started through TDK (Turkish

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61 In line with Althusser's definition.

62 Although Hasan Bülent Kahraman and Hilmi Yavuz are two leading ones in aforementioned debates, most researchers accept this approach almost as is.



Language Society) and TTK (Turkish Historical Society) respectively. Meanwhile, newspapers and journals were shut down or censored from time to time depending on political developments. Certain authors were encouraged to publish journals. Authors were prosecuted. To sum up, direct and indirect control of the state determined cultural life through Althusser's reward/penalty mechanism.<sup>63</sup>

Further, political powers attempted to create a canon and identify the mainstream through deterministic influence on publication. It used mechanisms like publication bans and incentives. Initiatives by ruling powers marginalized antagonistic literary productions and their authors and poets, as was experienced in the case of Nâzım Hikmet.

Nevertheless, the holistic approach of the "state aiming for a westernized culture" ignored some real policies as well. As long as the practices described by Althusser are defined as cultural investments, censorship and curricula, the cultural ideology and therefore policies - likewise the mind of the state - are updated in every government changeover and even continuously during government.

The poetry curriculum for of secondary education literature classes which were prepared within or in line with the demands of, the Ministry of National Education was updated in a "retroactive manner" in accordance with views of political power every decade. Staff turnover within Ministry of National Education and related bodies, which began with the accession to power of the Democrat Party (DP) in 1950, paralleled government changeovers and were repeated in all ensuing government changeovers.<sup>64</sup> Thus, every new political period resulted in a new curriculum, from the 1950s until 2000s. Poetry syllabi

63 Louis Althusser, "İdeoloji ve Devletin İdeolojik Aygıtları," *İdeoloji ve Devletin İdeolojik Aygıtları*, İstanbul: İthaki Yayınları, 2003, p: 170-182.

64 Hilmi Tezgör "Bin Atlı Akınlarda Çocuklar" *Ortaokul Türkçe Ders Kitaplarında Şiir (1929-2005)*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2013), 30. The poetry curriculum for each period has been provided in detail in this comprehensive work. The work necessarily examines the curriculum of primary and secondary schools because the curriculum of high school skewed to Classical Ottoman Poetry. Ottoman literature, which Kahraman, Yavuz and other sociologists often argue has been disclaimed, has comprised the literature curriculum of high schools for years. Unfortunately, there is no research on this topic. Public school graduates confirm this from experience.

did not include any poet of after the “First New.” But each period started including some poets that its predecessor had ignored, excluding others that had been adopted before and “updating” literary history. The political choice in determining the history of poetry went so far that, different canons were designated in secondary school textbooks, regardless of real literary agendas.

The weakening of the link between compulsory school curricula and real literary agendas indicates that political powers were creating a literary canon by using cultural policy. This intervention by the state has been identified by numerous researchers; however, in the works covered by establishment-period and curricula, there is no agreement on the impact of the state. Some scholars argue that state policies took the West and Western culture as the primary source denying cultural/literary tradition inherited from the Ottomans. Others argue that many different voices and approaches coexisted even within state and there was no compromise on a common canon.<sup>65</sup>

However, a complementary approach covering the fact that all governments within Republican history came up with a particular interpretation of Kemalism with respect to nationalism and religion provides a sufficient perspective to describe their intervention to the “literary canon” and the syllabus of poetry. The cultural policies of the Ministry of National Education were a structural part of the state policy for education, forming the mentality for at least fifty years.

When considered in this respect, it is necessary to identify the “political” and “unpolitical” for each period of the Republic so that transformation of official ideologies determined by various governments may be traced more easily. We determined the criteria that Althusser has identified, to be or not to be subject to an investigation within power mechanisms (parliamentary, bureaucratic positions designating cultural policies), suffering or not suffering from suppression, and being or not being included in textbooks. In following

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65 For instance, Hilmi Yavuz persistently advocates that Republican ideology try to obliterate traces of Ottoman culture. Belge has two main postulates about the role of political authorities in the easy inclusion of dissident authors into Republican era textbooks during canonization. He argues that this depends on the role of political authority or inconsistency of ideology. Murat Belge, “Türkiye’de Kanon”, *Kitap-lık*, 68, 2004. However, the intellectuals covered by the syllabus are Şinasi, Namık Kemal, Ziya Paşa, Tevfik Fikret and Necip Fazıl, all of whom are Ottoman, except Necip Fazıl, who belongs to the first Republican generation.

section, we see how the poetry has formed within this cultural policy. In brief, has an ideological transformation happened in cultural policy? If so, how and under whose influence? How have politics in poetry been defined? Which poems, movements and poets were deemed or regarded as political, and in what respect? Is there any official ideology that persists without change?

One final indicator of “political existence and representation of poetry” is the number and ways of mentioning poets in the discourse of Turkish politicians and within the Grand National Assembly. According to literature-related minutes of the Assembly compiled by Türey Köse, there are two dominant poets whose names are mentioned in the parliament: Nâzım Hikmet and Necip Fazıl Kısakürek. Nâzım Hikmet was referred to in anti-communist discourses as the image of “traitor.” Necip Fazıl, on the other hand, although sometimes quoted even by his opponents, was long the subject of speeches due to his letter asking for the financial support of Menderes to publish the journal *Büyük Doğu*. Those debates on the claim that he was paid through a discretionary fund and the confirmation by DP parliamentarian İzzet Akçal that support was provided debates took place particularly in 1960, 1966 and 2013.<sup>66</sup> However, these debates were obviously not directly about the political attitude of Kısakürek. Besides, the support he received from the prime minister was just ten years after a political prosecution for a poem he published in his journal. Therefore, the support itself shows the level of volatility of cultural policies and the ideology of the state.

## § 2.2 First Years of Republic

In first years of Republic, debates on meter and language which began in late Ottoman era continued to be the major poetic debates of literary circles. These debates, which seem literal, in fact included a political aspect: Divan literature (classical Ottoman literature), was excluded from the national literature and thus by “new” and “modern” cultural basis of Turkish Republic. To describe in its most plain form, there were three major political positions the intelligentsia of the young Republic could adopt: 1) to oppose to Republic and be last champion of Ottoman values, 2) to defend culture base on local instead of

<sup>66</sup> Türey Köse, *Edebiyat Parçalayan Nutuklar* (Ankara: İmge Yayınları, 2014).

Western sources, proposing a modern interpretation of national sources and adopting Republican principles, or 3) to create a new culture that is part of Western culture and assume Westernization as the main principle of the Republic.<sup>67</sup> In fact, these three stances within the intelligentsia were not distinct from each other; on the contrary, they often overlapped. For instance, to defend Ottoman culture in itself was not to defend an ancient version, of course. Tanpınar, who kept his poems in a classical line and maintained his life as a modest instructor at Istanbul University, considered the East-West issue to be the primary issue of our literature, defended the poet's autonomy, and mostly reviewed nineteenth century literature.<sup>68</sup> He was not dreaming of a return to

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67 Hasan Bülent Kahraman describes the Republic as a modernization project. In this respect, he articulates that the literature that developed is “engaged.” Nevertheless, he notes that its roots date back to Tanzimat. He does not make clear whether the emphasis on “modernization” which he consistently uses, includes Westernization or the adoption of Western culture as a cornerstone or not. He only emphasized that the intellectuals who articulated the term “false Westernization” are opposed to completely denying east. He made no comment about how *he* locates such intellectuals as Attilâ İlhan. In my opinion, it was not unintentional because, he must have been aware that the political powers and even the constituent power was not monolithic. According to his definition, a non-rigid “populism” principle determined the characteristics of the cultural policies of political powers. But arguing that “westernization was misinterpreted” in first place among modernization models, reveals that he believes that the cultural policies were based on the West. When his approach is examined in its entirety, his argument that modernization does not generate its own dynamics also reveals this same belief. Hasan Bülent Kahraman, *Türk Şiiri Modernizm Şiir* (İstanbul: Agora Publications, 2004), 11-37, “Türk Milliyetçi Romantisizmin Sonu: Kurucu Modernist İdeolojinin Dönüşümü ve Yazınsal Söylem,” in *Şerif Mardin'e Armağan*, Ed: Ahmet Öncü, Orhan Tekelioğlu (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2009), 105-153. Hilmi Yavuz based his discourse on the Republican ideology and policies and the existence of an Ottoman component in the Republican culture dictated by the state. We shall see if it is really the only principle, on which the cultural policy was based or not.

68 Tanpınar's essay “About Poem” published in *Görüş* on July 1, 1930, begins with emphasis on the autonomous area of poetry: “poem, an excellence which is far from concerns related to any kind of benefit and finds its purpose only within itself.” In the essay, he complains about the idea of the majority that poet/artist is “a prophet of great humanistic ideals” and “an enthusiastic apostle of social life.” Commenting about the break from rhyme and meter, he hints at the 835 *Satır* by Nâzım Hikmet published in 1929. Tanpınar seems to affirm this tendency and champions classical methods that articulate that “the look of the outsider can't find any

the Ottoman Empire. But he considered the East-West duality as key for all intellectuals and suggested this as the dilemma: a problematic. The problematizing of cultural identity obviously did not suggest adopting Eastern culture as the only source of culture. Tanpınar, who was a traditionalist about culture, was excluded from the “center” in by the government. Hasan Ali Yücel, as minister of National Education, introduced the Western classics into Turkish in the 1940s. Since this took place under government guidance, the shift in cultural politics was defined to be towards the “West.”

The poets of Syllabist movement, as the first representative movement of Republican cultural policy, were also assigned to political positions like parliamentarians in the National Assembly of Turkey (TBMM). Yahya Kemal, who championed the Divan poetry and *aruz*<sup>69</sup> as a classic of Turkish poetry, and also autonomous area of artistic choices of poet as a creation principle, was sent abroad to appointments as a consul. Yahya Kemal agreed with Ziya Gökalp on the language principle and wrote his poems in the Turkish used at the time. Nevertheless, Yahya Kemal was influenced by Western poetry as well. Moreover, it is believed that the whole of literature was under the influence of the West in the final century of Ottoman literature.

Yahya Kemal was a conservative in line with Tanpınar who was his student. Two main factors define him as conservative: He argued that Ottoman poetry should be regarded as the classics of modern Turkish poetry<sup>70</sup> and there should be an autonomous area of aesthetic choices for poets. Ottoman poetry was never completely denied by the Republican regime and was always in the curriculum, except for a few years in the 1930s. Nevertheless, the new Turkish principle, which was the basis of cultural policies, conflicted with the Divan literature tradition, which was almost in another language. Autonomy was

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relation between this [spell of the poem, GB] and conditions we call meter, rhyme, form; it considers these as a number of extensions and unnecessary conditions that have subsequently extended and had no relation with the original body; but any eye that looks closer finds order of the poem and the essential element that ensures the struggle of intelligence against matter for the spark we call excellency within all these subsequent, unnecessary extensions.” He is a classicist. Resource: Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, *Edebiyat Üzerine Makaleler* (İstanbul: Dergâh Yayınları, 2007).

69 Aruz: The meter used in Divan literature.

70 İnci Enginün, *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türk Edebiyatı* (İstanbul: Dergâh Yayınları), 31-35.

also inconsistent with the policy that all makers of culture have a mission to create the new Turkey. However, Yahya Kemal was always included in the curriculum because his political stances were of the same mind with at least part of the contemporaneous cultural policies. This also indicates that the cultural policies did not altogether deny the Ottoman cultural roots.

A major debate about secularity/religiousness was launched by Mehmet Âkif Ersoy, who was the lyricist of the Turkish National Anthem. He was the first anti-secular poet to rise against the regime, deciding to spend the rest of his life in Egypt. Ersoy's criticism of the regime falls under the label of conservatism, but was in fact more radical.

In this respect, no poet or poetry movement champions only Western culture in the establishment period. The Syllabist movement based its discourse and poetry on Anatolian pastoral themes, the traditionalists defended the classical nature of Divan literature and are thus defined as conservative like Yahya Kemal and Ahmet Haşim, and the opposition, like Mehmet Âkif, radically criticized the regime. None of them championed Ottoman culture and their language was new for their age.

Although the Republican government expect an irreversible break from Ottoman culture by means of language and alphabet revolutions, the cultural elements of the nation state in Turkey obviously have their roots in principles of Turkism set by Ziya Gökalp during the Ottoman period.<sup>71</sup>

In fact, actual policies corresponding to these cultural policies did not reflect a radical transformation compared to the Ottoman period. With respect to the economy, domestic capital accumulation policies which were the Ottoman policies in twentieth century continued until the 1929 crisis. After then, state entrepreneurship had been accepted through statism, particularly for investments with greater financial requirements. Nevertheless, this was obviously a temporary solution. İş Bank could not be expropriated in this period;<sup>72</sup>

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71 For instance, Istanbul Turkish was being based in language. Most importantly, Western civilization would be adopted only after “we improve and rediscover our national civilization.” It is obvious that “our own civilization” is the basis. According to the text, the West is considered as a component of culture which would develop afterwards. Ziya Gökalp, “Milli Kültür ve Medeniyet,” *Türkçülüğün Esasları* (İstanbul: Ötüken Neşriyat, 2014).

72 For economic policies of the establishment period, see Şevket Pamuk.

therefore, the motivation of a classless society adopted by Republic would not become an actuality.

As for demographics, the economic development rose from policies of production. Increases in agriculture did not result in an economic transformation for peasants due to policies developed with the objective to keep peasants in place. Rigid measures that prevented migration to urban areas, and education policies that kept peasants in their villages (like village institutes) caused a backpedaling of the Republican promise to enhance education for every citizen and form a classless society. Nevertheless, the village and peasants were idolized in political discourse which was impossible in the Ottoman era.<sup>73</sup> In sum, poverty and problems related to underdevelopment inherited from the Ottomans would remain in villages. Investment enhancing prosperity was carried out in cities as much as possible. Prosperity was also a problem for the majority among urban populations, and was due to ongoing inequalities in income distribution and poor social policies. There were only a few capitalist accumulations.

As a result, the most powerful transformation brought about by Republic, which had promised economic and political power in the world comparable to that of the Ottomans, might be the political independence and widespread education that accompanied a nation state identity. In fact, it provided this at the outset. The hope for “development” was related; the young Turkey would grow up through rapid education and development. It was believed that this would be possible through educational and cultural revolution.

Hence, a poet was defined primarily as an intellectual and was expected to become the pioneer of cultural development and the positive narrator of large swaths of peasants and urban citizens the conditions of whose lives actually remained similar to the pre-Republican period. Moreover, the optimistic, idealistic and model intellectual character of poets was expected to be visible to

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73 The responsibility to develop Anatolia was assigned to intellectuals and teachers like a compulsory duty of that period as suggested in Atatürk's statement, “Peasants are the lords of a nation.” Resource: A. Oktay, *Toplumcu Gerçekçiliğin Kaynakları* (Istanbul: Tümzamanlar Yayıncılık), 2000.

the government. Hence, it was hard to get along with the government, particularly for poets who defended the principle that poets should have an autonomous area of production.<sup>74</sup> The state had the expectation that its poets would educate and improve the poor and illiterate folk.

The second consequence of this situation was that there was an extra-poetic parameter of political attitude in poetry in the establishment period as well as intra-poetics: the responsibility of being an “intellectual” in an uneducated society. To summarize, the political position of poets in the establishment era was represented by his attitude towards the language and cultural policies of the government, his poetic choices about protecting and using the form of the pre-Republic poetry, his attitude towards secularism and his choice between the intellectual role and claiming “a poet’s area of freedom.”

We can compile the area of the poets along three major, complicated axes revealed by the usage of form and content within the poetry: political stance along secular/antiseccular axis, social responsibility vis-à-vis the demand for an autonomous area for poet and the origins of culture. If we compare the poets of the period, Yahya Kemal represented the continuity of Ottoman culture and autonomy of poet,<sup>75</sup> Five Syllabists represented all the values of the Republic including the “responsibility of the intellectual”<sup>76</sup> and Mehmet Âkif

74 Yahya Kemal ve Ahmet Haşim have no enthusiasm for the “common good” in their poems and themes in the establishment period. These poets, who have the same orientation and motives as Tanpınar, did not oppose all values of the Republic and their stances suggest so.

75 This point can be summarized through the considerations of two extreme approaches. According to Ahmet Oktay, Yahya Kemal “although he included elements resembling the theoretical postulates of the RPP, he has, in fact, set forth on an assumption that envisaged an Ottoman-Turkish synthesis, [...] has not seemed on the side of the independence and freedom of large sections of the community, regarding them as a dependent class.” (Ahmet Oktay, “Miras III: Meşrutiyet ve Mütareke 'Milli Edebiyat,’” *Toplumcu Gerçekçiliğin Kaynakları*, İstanbul: Tüm Zamanlar Yayınları, 2000, p: 306-7). İnci Enginün emphasizes the Five Syllabists' aim to develop a poetry which refuses to interact with any foreign culture, based instead on Anatolian culture, pure Turkish and syllabic meter. İnci Enginün, “Memleket Edebiyatı,” *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türk Edebiyatı* (İstanbul: Dergâh Yayınları), 39-44.

76 Almost all literary reviews, especially that of Ahmet Oktay -“Miras III: Meşrutiyet ve Mütareke 'Milli Edebiyat,’” *Toplumcu Gerçekçiliğin Kaynakları* (İstanbul: Tüm Zamanlar Yayınları, 2000), 304- agree that the Five Syllabist movement represents the cultural policies of the government in the establishment era. İnci Enginün’s expression that idealism was also a quality



represented a radical opposition.<sup>77</sup> Nâzım Hikmet, who appeared in late 1920s and became an influential poet, would criticize the Republic through its own values introducing poems that would require a redefinition of the mainstream cultural ideology - which was in fact in line with the Five Syllabists in the socialist sense. Nâzım Hikmet was a communist. Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, in the same period, reinforced the anti-secular policy represented by Âkif with a lyrical depth that Âkif did not possess. Kısakürek pioneered the development of an Islamist wing in literature that was antagonistic by nature. The poems of the second generation of the mainstream would more or less elude its critical social theme and move in peace with the regime.<sup>78</sup>

The political criticism in poems of the first two antagonistic poets was revealed through the discourses with which their poems were concerned. For example, Mehmet Âkif Ersoy wrote a poem of suffering from the diffusion of

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of communist literature, implying that the Syllabists were indeed leftist, is a false interpretation. The Syllabists were not only the direct adopters of Republican policies, later one even became the liberal Democrat Party's deputy and another became a liberal newspaper columnist. Her interpretation is influenced by Nâzım Hikmet, who was a leftist and became a prominent poet influential in the mainstream, as we will see. As for the Syllabists, we can say they were nationalists but not communists. İnci Enginün, "Memleket Edebiyatı", *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türk Edebiyatı* (İstanbul: Dergâh Yayınları), 39.

- 77 Mehmet Âkif was a poet who has poems with social content as well. His problem was related to social degeneration and the decline of religious values on a social scale. He could be defined as an opponent of the regime, particularly due to his emphasis on religious values and the feeling of pessimism about the future of society in his poems.
- 78 Hidayet Özcan considers Nâzım Hikmet, Cahit Sıtkı Tarancı and Necip Fâzıl Kısakürek the representatives of three main tendencies 1923-35 period in his analysis published in *Hece* (Resource: Assistant Professor Hidayet Özkan, "1901-1935 Yılları Arasında Gelişen Türk Şiiri", *Hece*, v: 53-54-55, 90-99). In fact, Tarancı earned his reputation after 1935. But if considered as a period and the early 1940s are included, I agree with Özcan. Of these three people's poems, only Nâzım Hikmet's poems were excluded from the high school literature curriculums before the 2000s. This is another hint that Tarancı was a representative of the mainstream. Indeed, Tarancı was writing the very poems that the Republic desired; portrayed meeting its lyrical, Turkish, humanistic criteria. At peace with the political regime and also including pastoral motives, it contained traces of both Divan and folk poetry but interacted with the West. Tarancı spent most of his life as a civil servant.

Islamic social structure.<sup>79</sup> The poem had a similar effect that the novel *Yaban* created of power in the establishment era of the Republic, in the sense that it pictured the Republican order as ugly because Islamist moral values started to lose their power. According to the government, on the other hand, this was a positive development. Religious dogma was being replaced by positivism. Mehmet Âkif Ersoy was a deputy in first period and was not prosecuted. In effect, it would be difficult to prosecute the lyricist of the national anthem. Instead, he was simply excluded from the “center.” His pension was cut from time to time and his letters echo is suspicion about being shadowed by civil agents.<sup>80</sup>

### § 2.3 Redefinition of the Political Area by Nâzım Hikmet's Influence

Ahmet Oktay points out that the political suppression by the state and its supporters of socialist poets never let up in the Republican era.<sup>81</sup> This suppression actually started with Nâzım Hikmet. As Oktay puts it, his poetry was the first rebellion against prevailing poetry.<sup>82</sup> The Republic was established in a poetic environment in which the main debate was between syllabic and *aruz* meters. And as mentioned above, the cultural policy of state was for the Syllabist movement. Until Nâzım Hikmet, nobody objected to the syllabic meter for a “newer one.” He was the first to express a political objection in relation to the poetic approach he suggested. He demanded the equality and real classlessness that communism provided, and which the Republic had in fact offered in the beginning. There was a remarkable harmony in his literal and political dis-

79 The Islamist poet Ebubekir Erođlu considers Ersoy as a poet who realizes one of the “purposes” of modern poetry, although he does not regard him as “modern.” According to him, Ersoy expresses the sorrow arising from the diffusion of social structure in his poems. Ebubekir Erođlu, *Modern Türk Şiirinin Doğası* (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Publications), 25-26.

80 Mehmet Âkif Ersoy, *Firaklı Nâmeler - Âkif'in Gurbet Mektupları*, Ed: Ömer Hakan Özalp, (İstanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2011).

81 A. Oktay, *Toplumcu Gerçekçiliğın Kaynakları*, 305.

82 A. Oktay, *Toplumcu Gerçekçiliğın Kaynakları*, 305.

course. He demonstrated both his political and literal position with a new conception of poetry in terms of form and content as well. He was prosecuted as early as 1930 for his book *Sesini Kaybeden Şiir*. Its poems echo a collective awareness and include the futuristic images and figures. Although he shared the progressive, enlightened and collective spirit of the new Turkey, he went further, expressing a new dimension.<sup>83</sup>

The embodiment of labor exploitation and poverty in Nâzım Hikmet's poetry disturbed the political power. In sum, the first opposition in poetry broke out with a harsh and successful tone, revealing the disappointing realities of Republic. As Ahmet Oktay points out, this tone with its desire to become proletarian was close to slang. This policy, which was revealed in discourse and tone, although formal, was not tacit or unclear.<sup>84</sup> Hikmet's poetry was not propagandist; its coverage did not directly refer to communism. However, it adopted an apparent policy by including discourses that embraced communism. And technically, it successfully implemented a method to challenge the Republic's cultural ideology through a kind of verse - called free "müstezat" - and by rejecting traditional rhyme forms. However, the mentality underlying Nâzım Hikmet's poetry complied with the Republican ideology of the establishment era (not only in *Kurtuluş Savaşı Destanı* but also in all his works). First, he was not definitely affirming an Ottoman past, imagining instead a new Turkish and a prospective modern country. And in his view of the rural, he was not suggesting a fantasy beyond the straightforward perspective that the conditions of peasants should be improved. Anyone would see an idealized society fantasy in his poems; it was a fantasy on which any nationalist could easily agree. On the other hand, when the left, socialism and the responsibility of intellectual were defined in the new Turkey, the socialist poetic tendency would be affixed to the leftist worldview - in part due to the powerful

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83 The world Nâzım dreamt of was a classless, egalitarian world. And the world he pictured was a place where "meat was eaten once a week" and "working children returned home as skinny, pale skeletons."

84 As Eagleton and Rancieré put it.

impact of Nâzım Hikmet. Non-leftist nationalists never wrote poems highlighting an idealistic position favoring the common good after Nâzım who became a role model for leftist the worldview.<sup>85</sup>

The economic crisis of 1929 struck the young Turkey in the 1930s. By Atatürk's directive, the Serbest Fırka (SF –Liberal Party) was established to cover the oppositional voices to be represented legitimately, but it was closed that same year. The authoritarian regime launched legislative measures regarding publications by means of the Press Act enacted in 1931. In this legislation, a rule requiring editors, chief authors, executive editors and managing editors to be university graduates limited the number of people who could undertake these tasks especially in the conditions of that period. The legislation also required the submission of the names of columnists, reporters, photographers, painters and editors to the government. The propaganda of the sultanate, caliphate, communism and anarchism was banned.<sup>86</sup>

The 1930s were the first significant authoritarian period in Republican history. The legislation of publication in this era is important because it identified “political” texts. It determined the framework for being evaluated as political as pro-sultanate, caliphate, communist, or anarchist. If a text included one of these four elements, its author would be prosecuted. Direct praise of the sultan in poems had not yet been witnessed. Islamist praise which deemed praise to religion and in fact it was impossible to prosecute such praise. The precise definition of anarchism was not yet clear; hostility to the state in a poem was not imagined. In fact, the government had criteria only for communist discourse, which was the social realist literary movement ushered in by Nâzım Hikmet.

The RPP (Republican People's Party-CHP) was in power throughout the period. Yakup Kadri was deemed to be close to leftism, but in fact, he was one of leading representatives of the mainstream and was among the founders of the journal named *Kadro*, which was closed in 1934. Among the poets, Nâzım

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85 Kemal Sülker, *Nâzım Hikmet Dosyası* (İstanbul: May Yayınları, 1976).

86 “Propaganda” was obviously an unclear term. Source: Hıfzı Topuz, “Cumhuriyet: Atatürk ve İnönü Dönemleri (1023-1950), II. Mahmut'tan Holdinglere Türk Basın Tarihi (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 2003), 158-159.

Hikmet and a young generation of socialists who were his followers experienced prosecution and legal sanctions. Nâzım Hikmet, after being acquitted in prosecutions related to his books in 1930 and 1931, was sentenced to imprisonment for two poems.<sup>87</sup> At the same time, he was sued on the grounds that he established an underground organization. Then, in 1935, Hasan İzzettin Dinamo was sentenced to four years imprisonment for a poem in which he described soldiers working on the construction of the Sivas-Erzurum railway.<sup>88</sup> Although all political criticism was forbidden, prosecutions were carried out only for left wing antagonists. In leftist dissident discourse, the peasant was not the person described by the Five Syllabists. He was no longer healthy, ruddy, honest and happy. Instead, he was skinny and poor. Anatolia was a desolate and poor land in Yakup Kadri's novel *Köhne*, which became the object of the government's criticism. The peasant was a kind of worker in social realist literature and workers had pale faces and were poor. They were "workers," not the ambiguous "poor" of Mehmet Âkif.

Thus, socialist antagonism appeared in poetry through the socialist ideology content of Nâzım Hikmet's poems. However, elements like a classless society and proletarian hegemony that emphasized the communist ideal were almost invisible. Elements emphasizing social injustice, poverty and hope for more prosperous days were strongly expressed in these poems. This approach focusing on poverty does not significantly differ from the attitudes, for example, of Mehmet Âkif who is not leftist. Arguably, Mehmet Âkif is more pessimist. He essentially complains that society is degenerating and losing its values. In this respect, the fear of a gloomy future is perceived in his poetry, as

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87 He was sentenced for insulting his employer's father, Süreyya Pasha, whom he regarded as responsible for his father's death in "Hiciv Vadesinde Bir Tecrübe-i Kalemîye" (A Written Experience in the District of Satire): "He is the father of a man-honorable/Sultan 2<sup>nd</sup> Hamid's/celebrated commander thief." (TR: "O bir zatımuhteremin pederi/ İkinci Sultan Hamidin/meşhur hırsız seraskeri.") He wrote "Gece Gelen Telgraf" (Wire at night) on the death of İsmail the Laz in prison: "He's a perfect mind/ perfect heart, / man in fists/ and child by eyes. /Limitless and Godless mind he was. /Comrade he was..." This poem was prosecuted on the grounds that it provoked the people against regime. (TR: "O mükemmel bir kafa/ mükemmel bir yürek, / yumruklarıyla erkek/ gözleriyle çocuktu. /Hudutsuz ve Allahsız bir baştı o./Yoldaştı o.")

88 Asım Bezirci, "Hasan İzzettin Dinamo", *On Şair On Şiir* (İstanbul: May Yayınları, 1971).

well. Social realism was already present in the debates since Tanzimat. One major criticism to Edebiyat-1 Cedide<sup>89</sup> was that it did not care for society. Similar criticisms to those of the Edebiyat-1 Cedide are emphasized in Republican era textbooks, too.

However, Nâzım Hikmet's socialist poems were backed with essays defending socialism as an ideal, providing a conscious and socialist/leftist political preference, including a basic socialist worldview.

Anti-Republican Islamist discourse of the period pioneered by Necip Fâzıl - existed in poetry with Islamic or Sufi themes and formally maintained traditional patterns. Social themes would remain under the monopoly of the left. Nâzım Hikmet thus arguably determined the criteria for both Islamic/pro-Ottoman and leftist political antagonism in poetry through his poetic brilliance and the clarity of his political position. That is, the emphasis on economics and poverty became the indicator of socialist ideology after Nâzım Hikmet, as Islamic poetry no longer used the theme of poverty, anymore.<sup>90</sup>

Such definition of the politics of poetry resulted in the prosecution of poets with insufficient knowledge of Marxism who were actually just readers and followers of Nâzım Hikmet. Ahmet Oktay highlights this “insufficiency of political knowledge” among poets of the social realist wing, emphasizing that Marxist literature had not been translated into Turkish at the time. The ones calling themselves leftist had little knowledge of socialism, in fact. In this respect, the prosecutions of Hasan İzzettin Dinamo, A. Kadir, Rıfat Ilgaz, Cahit Irgat, Niyazi Akıncıoğlu, Enver Gökçe and Arif Damar for socialist propaganda in their poems of the early 1940s, were actually an attempt to suppress criticism by Nâzım Hikmet of the regime of the Republic. Nâzım Hikmet's poetry made a deterministic impact on the government's conceptualization of “political poetry.”

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89 Edebiyat-I Cedide: A literary movement at the beginning of the twentieth century, particular for the abstract nature of the works.

90 However, Sezai Karakoç, a poet of the “Second New” movement that appeared in the 1950s, opened Islamic poetry to modern forms and imagination. As for content, his poems no longer included the economic issues. On the contrary, to him poverty should be glorified as a spiritual rank in Islamic poetry.

Noting the “Insufficiency of political knowledge” among these poets does not connote or undervalue their cultural and artistic contributions. However, as A. Oktay points out, texts on Marxist theory appeared in Turkey only after 1925, and only some political propaganda publications were translated into Turkish. None of them was Marx's own works.<sup>91</sup> Ahmet Oktay often emphasizes the theoretical weakness of the intelligentsia during the establishment period.

Finally, Nâzım Hikmet used a collective poet subject - in line with the social realist literary vein - particularly his poems on social issues. In fact, the collective poet subject had been used since the time of Tanzimat literature for the purposes of collective welfare and intellectual idealism. This idealism was even typical of the Five Syllabists. However, the collective subject found its place with socialist literature with Nâzım as we have seen above. Although he composed poems on individual matters and even represents poverty with the first-person singular, the lives he recounts thematically are not related to the individual life of a poet belonging to a notable family in Istanbul. In this respect, the poet-subject in his poetry is a collective subject.<sup>92</sup> The remarkable point is that the poet composes his love poems on his personal tragedy, but writes poems concerned with social matters using so-called socialist elements in the person of a collective identity-subject who keeps his hopes alive in poverty and misery. In letters to his lover, the personal sorrow he experiences because of being imprisoned belongs to him; the poet is a suffering subject. However, his eyes observing society are the eyes of an intellectual. This reality - which is important and could be deemed typical in that period - indicates that the poet marks out the representation of intellectual responsibility in poetry. In fact, he inherits this without question from a tradition left over from the Tanzimat. When considered from this perspective in Nâzım Hikmet, the intellectual remains one who owes society, a notion which is also in accord with cultural policies.

By the 1940s, Islamic poetry pioneered by Necip Fazıl also began to suffer prosecution and thus enter politics along with the leftists. It is arguable that

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91 A. Oktay, *Toplumcu Gerçekçiliğin Kaynakları*, 251-252.

92 Mahmut Temizyürek, “Nâzım Hikmet 19'unda Doğdu,” <http://www.siirpenceresi.com/poetikmetinler/mahmuttemizyurek2.htm> also see *Boşluktan Doğan* (Kanat Kitap: İstanbul: 1997).

the politics in Necip Fazıl's poetry represents an Islamic system with or without a moral utopia. Fazıl's *Çile* with its Sufi themes did not in fact propose an alternative Turkey under Islamic rule established by divine love. It is possible to interpret this poem as a cherishing of Islamic rule due to the journal *Büyük Doğu* which the poet started to publish in 1943. The journal was closed twice: in 1943 for religious publications and criticism of the regime, and in 1946 on the grounds that provoked people to riot. In these years, the RPP was losing votes because of its World War II policies and to the DP opposition, respectively. The first intervention in the journal was in 1946 shortly before the RPP moderated its policies of suppression. However, the journal was closed again in 1947, this time for including a poem of Rıza Tevfik Bölükbaşı, a member of the Ottoman İttihat ve Terakki Partisi (Union and Progress Party). The members of UP were known as 150s and were exiled for having signed the Sevres Treaty. Kısakürek - together with his wife - was arrested and imprisoned in this case. However, he was awarded with the RPP Art Prize for his play *Sabır Taşı* in that same year. The prize was canceled by the general administrative board of the party due to his prosecution. It is a considerable decision: the case and its collapse indicate a dissension in terms of the cultural policy within ruling party. Also, it suggests that the links between the politics the author's works reflect and his political discourse were yet weak and was visible enough to represent Islamism at the date. In other words, Kısakürek's text did not sufficiently reflect his personal political attitude, by then. This is an instance of background-politics that Ranciére has pointed out. In any case, in any case, Necip Fâzıl would remain as pioneer of Islamist poetry for the succeeding generations. Even Yalçın Küçük accepts that he did not adopt the Republican ideology, although he does not agree with Kısakürek on the clearness of his political attitude.<sup>93</sup>

Kısakürek was never prosecuted for his poetry, which is important because his successors were not considered "political" and were not prosecuted, either,

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93 Yalçın Küçük, *Aydınlar Üzerine Tezler 4* (İstanbul: Tekin Yayınevi, 1990), 122. Yalçın Küçük, in this comprehensive work about intellectuals, explains how antagonist intellectuals reconciled with the power. According to Küçük, this reconciliation resulted in backwardness through the liquidation of leftism. Through this liquidation, the restoration of Union and Progress power was ensured. But he characterizes Necip Fazıl as a real Islamist and an antagonist.



unless they were involved in politics, either. Still, Kısakürek would not be included in the literature curriculum for years - 1946-1970 - and Nâzım Hikmet was excluded until 2000s. The opposition in Necip Fâzıl's poetry to the government's cultural policies crystallizes in his vocabulary and phrasal preferences. The selection is related with to the divinity of words in the Islamic approach and especially in Sufism. Kısakürek reflects opposition to the language policy of the Republic at this point. Still his vocabulary preferences did not result in prosecution for political reasons. In Republican history, nobody was prosecuted just for using the word "God." In this respect, the finding that secularism was not an issue or principle in the poetic world or that religious elements are not regarded as political indicators in poetry is true. In fact, most prosecuted poets were the leftists; socialist poetry was seen as political opposition and prosecuted. The social realist content was treated as political, while religious poetry was not considered political. With the emergence of the journal *Hisar* in the 1940s<sup>94</sup> - as a traditionalist wing closer to the mainstream - the marginalization of Kısakürek's poetry as Islamist by overwhelming its traditionalist nature was easier.

Hence, socialism, which was regarded as an ideal approach in first years of Republic until First New movement and was encouraged by political power through the poetry of Five Syllabists Movement, fell into the category of the politically undesirable when the poetry of Nâzım Hikmet emerged. The other ideology excluded by the Republic, Islamism, escaped political prosecution since its expression in poetry was regarded as apolitical. Poets like Yahya Kemal, who declined to break from Ottoman tradition during the establishment era and emphasized the necessity of continuity, although not authorized in the "center" - i.e., not allowed to direct cultural policies were not completely excluded from the curriculum or state, either. Mehmet Âkif was prosecuted in first period of the government for his political position against secularism. However, he was not prosecuted for any of his poems. In the eyes of the government social realism - a literature initially promoted by the government - became "political" poetry in time, while other poetries were regarded as "apolitical" and their actual politics were ignored. In fact, all types of poetry continued to convey politics and political messages to their followers.

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94 İnci Enginün, *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türk Edebiyatı* (Istanbul: Dergâh Yayınları, 2009), 104-111.

## § 2.4 Defining the First New and “Second New” Movements as Apolitical

The Garip poetry of the 1940s which had been defined for years as “apolitical” was the movement most rapidly accepted and adopted by political authority. For years, Republican-era poetry in the high school literature curriculum consisted of Garip poetry while successive developments like “Second New” poetry movement were ignored. Garip poetry consisted of poems of the populist ethos which basically tells ordinary people. Because populism was among the six founding principles of the Republic, the government did not attribute political criticism to the poems of “Garip” – which included ordinary people as a subject and suggested a simple poetry understandable by everybody.

However, before defining this poetry as apolitical, it is necessary to define the mentalities that regard it as such. Otherwise, it is not possible to see the politics in the “Second New” movement that emerges just after First New-Garip wave. Like Garip, *Hisar* was also not perceived as a political threat by the state. Actually, both seem to conform with official ideology and the cultural policies of the government. The poets gathered around both the Garip movement and the journal *Hisar*<sup>95</sup> were immediately included in the Ministry of National Education’s curriculum and were not prosecuted politically. But, there is a problem in this regard: how does the *Hisar* group, which consists of relatively conservative poets find room in the mainstream? And why was Garip not regarded as political?

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95 *Hisar* is a literary journal published in two different periods: 1950-57 and 1964-80. Its principle of refusing art as a means of propaganda has allowed numerous poets from different leanings to be included. Resource: İnci Enginün, *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türk Edebiyatı* (İstanbul: Dergâh Yayınları, 2009), 104-111. But again, in that period, being “political” became almost identical with holding a leftist view. And it is also a political attitude. Among the poets involved in journal from Gülten Akin to Yavuz Bülent Bakiler and Mustafa Necati Karaer, only Gülten Akin participated in leftist literature in later periods. In this sense, we can say that poets who were not followers of Nâzım Hikmet and did not break with traditional poetry appeared in the journal. Among the founders of journal, İlhan Geçer and Yavuz Bülent Bakiler were soon included in textbooks.

The poems of the Garip or “First New” movement were published in *Varlık*, a mainstream journal. The poets introduced the movement through a manifesto in the introduction of a collective book with title *Garip* published in 1941 by the three pioneers of movement.<sup>96</sup> The only statement of manifest that could be deemed political was a claim to admire ordinary people. Thus, this movement seems entirely literary with no ideological stance. In fact, they were not the first representatives of poetic styles they brought in. Nâzım Hikmet had already breached syllabic meter and, although he did not break from the concept of rhyme (since his poetry is vocal); he had changed the traditional concept and importantly included street language in poetry. Garip’s principal deterministic attribute is the claim to address lower and middle classes. Given that their level of education was low, and that the availability of publications in Anatolia was restricted, “urban settlers” and “ones who migrated from villages to towns for education” should be included in this conceptualization.

The 1940s were the peak of massive impoverishment arising from World War II and were characterized by large middle and lower classes. In the same period, the government was applying measures to restrict rural migration,<sup>97</sup> which had not yet started. Rural people were not Garip’s readers in the 1940s, but people who migrated to cities for education were. After all, Garip’s readers were poor urbanites or those about to become urbanites.

This poetry that intended to address not the “prosperous bourgeoisie” but ordinary citizens was indeed comprised of snapshots from the daily lives of the middle class or of those unable to make ends meet. In a poetry detached from classical poetry by virtue of “the child having growing up,” the child was a new generation educated under the Republican system. For the first time in Turkish poetry, the child’s point of view was deemed worth poeticizing.<sup>98</sup> This was a civil-spirited line in literature that reflected the military dignity of that

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96 Orhan Veli Kanık, Melih Cevdet Anday, Oktay Rifat.

97 For enforced sanctions and general mentality, see Ayşe Buğra, “Tek Parti Döneminde Köylülük, Sanayileşme ve Kaynak Kullanımında Öncelikler”, *Kapitalizm, Yoksulluk ve Türkiye’de Sosyal Politika* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2010, 4. ed.), 120-128.

98 *Garip*’s in first three poems are from a child’s point of view or imply the wisdom arising from childhood memories. Orhan Veli Kanık, *Bütün Şiirleri* (Istanbul, Adam Yayınları, 1986), 40-41.

period. Garip glorified jeering, joking or childish point of view. This was also a mentality that tore down the heretofore-recognized norms of poetry. Garip was in fact not particularly consistent with regime and involved in a nation-building process.

An optimistic poetry about poverty might have been a way for readers to survive and resist the conditions of the dark years of war. Garip influenced the readers and poets of the young generation. People wrote poems under the influence of the Garip movement throughout the 1940s until the emergence of "Second New" movement. In the late 1940s, Attilâ İlhan emerged with a poetry that may be described as the premise of the "Second New" movement. His poetic language included images and metaphors. He would influence his followers, and he was primarily under the influence of Nâzım Hikmet, but his poems reflected a genuine reading of folks poetry, Divan, and Western - particularly French - poetry. He was prosecuted at an early age, resulting in obstacles to his university graduation. Although politics in his poetry are arguable compared to that of Nâzım Hikmet, İlhan would remain a political figure in poetry until the 1980s because of his writings on poetry and politics and because of his prosecution while in high school.

Attilâ İlhan maintains similar criteria as Nâzım Hikmet in determining the political nature of a poem: the criteria of the social realist approach. According to him, the "First New" and "Second New" were movements that emerged in periods of political suppression. The poems of these movements were apolitical because their poets hesitated to be on the opposing side in political terms.<sup>99</sup> Nâzım Hikmet was still in prison in Turkey in the 1940s. However, even in the early 1980s, the "First New" was still deemed apolitical poetry by Memet Fuat in the foreword to *Modern Türk Şiiri Antolojisi*, a comprehensive review of Turkish poetry.

Memet Fuat, who maintained a position as a literary authority as editor of *Yazko Edebiyat* in early the 1980s, still applied the criteria of social realism.

Not only Memet Fuat's views, but also that of critics like Asım Bezirci and Şükran Kurdakul paralleled the social realist view in poetry. Until the transformation in the 1980s, even the governments used that criteria.

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99 Most of his writings were compiled in books *Birinci Yeni Savaşı* and *İkinci Yeni Savaşı*.

Garip was not considered a political movement by the government at least until Orhan Veli resigned from the Translation Service where he worked as a translator in 1947. The poets of social realist vein were regarded as political in that period and were silenced through prosecution. Young poets chose Garip's way which was defined as "democratic" discourse by Ahmet Oktay.<sup>100</sup> The democratic aspect was getting people involved, who had not been noticed before. For instance, Süleyman Efendi found a place for himself at least as a collective subject in this poetry through his worldview. Shifting to a less abstract poetry receivable by non-intellectuals was an indicator of the democratic quality of the Garip movement. On the other hand, as Yalçın Küçük notes, Nâzım Hikmet was in prison in the 1940s, was no longer being followed by poets and would not be followed again until being published again in the 1960s. I agree that Garip - which tells about the children, ordinary people and petit bourgeois - was democratic and was essentially a political attitude in an authoritarian environment. This poetry was easily adopted by the government to look like and be democratic. The politics it reflected ignored the political agenda of the country and the democracy it intended to bring about did not criticize about the authoritarian regime.

The poets who appeared in this period and were included in the poetry curriculum were Cahit Külebi with his descriptive, noncritical poems on the rural areas; Behçet Necatigil with his poems describing ordinary men and their routine in a free verse that genuinely reflected tradition in form and discourse; Sabahattin Kudret Aksal; and Fazıl Hüsni Dağlarca a sincere adorer of Atatürk with general sympathy for – and occasional criticism of - Republican cultural policies, whose work brilliantly blended poetic tradition and creativity. Garip poets were also soon included in the curriculum.<sup>101</sup>

The Hisar group of poets had roles in the preparation of the *Hisar* journal. *Hisar* was generally deemed conservative and had two periods of publication. Launched as a journal with a pluralist perspective and the principle of being politically neutral (1950-57), it turned into a journal of conservatism from 1964

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100 A. Oktay, *Toplumcu Gerçekçiliğin Kaynakları*, 306.

101 Hilmi Tezgör "Bin Atlı Akınlarda Çocuklar" *Ortaokul Türkçe Ders Kitaplarında Şiir (1929-2005)* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2013), 181-202.

to 1980. In this journal,<sup>102</sup> varied poets such as Sezai Karakoç, Yavuz Bülent Bâkiler, Gülten Akın Talat Sait Halman and Ümit Yaşar Oğuzcan appeared. *Hisar* excluded leftist authors in its second period of publication. It was close to right-wing politics and excluded all content of social realism.

The governmental bodies of the Justice Party and Nationalist Front adopted anti-communist policies in the heyday of the Cold War. Education policies and the curriculum shifted to more traditionalist and conservative content. *Hisar* was in harmony with the government of the time. According to İnci Enginün, a right-wing scholar, *Hisar* was against literary degeneration, was closer to the classical poetry tradition and open to old Turkish, unlike the Republican cultural ideology of the first period. In fact, the second period of *Hisar* was clearly removed from the presumed cultural ideology of the establishment era. It did not progressively emphasize pure Turkish, nor a modern blend of cultivation under the influence of the West. Besides, it reflected some sympathy for Ottoman culture. But, it was not subjected to any political prosecution in the 1970s.

Hilmi Tezgör, in his book tracing the official canon of poetry in middle school textbooks, emphasizes that Social Realism which comprised the major of literary production and consumption since the “First New,” “Second New” and 1960s was not included the textbooks at all. He argues that the state itself tried to establish a canon,<sup>103</sup> an argument that is partly true. The ministry in fact had ignored movements like the “Second New” and Social Realism. However, it included the “First New”. At least one poem of Orhan Veli provided for teachers and students to study. More importantly, most of the poets in the textbooks are at least acceptable for the traditional nationalist and religious policies of culture<sup>104</sup> of every period. Mehmet Âkif, who was the most important representative of religious and nationalist identity for years despite the fact he wrote the national anthem, is included in the textbooks with multiple poems in every revision. Also, moderate Muslims like Ziya Osman Saba and

102 Ahmet Oktay ignores this journal in his study of the period *Toplumcu Gerçekçiliğin Kaynakları*.

103 Tezgör, “*Bin Atlı Akınlarda Çocuklar*”, 124.

104 The traditional nationalist, oppositional Islamist fractions identified in the beginning of chapter.

Yavuz Bülent Bâkiler, as well as the leading figures of ideological nationalism like Arif Nihat Asya and even Hüseyin Nihal Atsız are present in textbooks. The point Tezgör is right on suggesting that the deterministic risings of Modern Turkish Poetry had not been included in textbooks before the 2000s.

Presence in the curriculum is a criterion of the government's political attitude in this study. Until the 2000s, the National Education curriculum ended up with the "First New" and the poem "Türkiye" by Attilâ İlhan who appeared just after. However, great poets of the "Second New" movement such as Cemal Süreya, Turgut Uyar, Ece Ayhan, İlhan Berk and Sezai Karakoç were never prosecuted or treated as political antagonists. But they are not included in the curricula until the 2000s. Furthermore, these poets lost their halo after the republication of Nâzım Hikmet's poems and during years of the political polarization of society that characterized the 1970s. The "Second New" poetry was defined as apolitical by critics for years, as mentioned before. Asım Bezirci, Attilâ İlhan and even Memet Fuat emphasized that in their critiques. In fact, the politics of "Second New" poetry was first emphasized in the 1980s. However, as seen above, even the Hisar group could not be deemed that much apolitical with no respect of official ideology. Leaning on national sources and protecting the language tradition and the traditional load of words were not principles established independent of establishment era cultural policies. Each of these was under discussion as the basis of Republican cultural policies. The positions taken were indicators of the political position of that person. Hence, the Hisar group did not only represent purely aesthetic but also political preferences.

The "First New" was neither apolitical nor politically neutral in that sense either. If the early 1940s, when the movement emerged, are defined as the single party's authoritarian period, the First New's (Garip) position should be accepted as apparently democratic. The answer to the question of why it was defined as "apolitical" is related to the definition of "political." The political position of a poem was determined according to the criteria of social realism. And furthermore, the missionary intellectual of the Tanzimat became a pioneer working to create a more developed society. As seen above, Nâzım Hikmet not only created a pioneer intellectual identity, but also defined the representation of this identity from a leftist point of view. Such left-wing intellectuals were to be followed and kept under control according to the government and political

authorities.<sup>105</sup> These intellectuals would resist the capitalist policies of the government, inform society about a better future and pay the cost of that better future good times by suffering from prosecution.

But Orhan Veli's Süleyman Efendi had no hope for good times. Nobody whispered hopes in his ear and even the poem about him was written after his death. Süleyman Efendi lived an ordinary life, then quietly passed away in due time. Such a life does not inspire the reader to improve anything. The reader does not get the impression that the poet is guiding him to a better world.

The poet identity of Nâzım Hikmet is quite different from that of Orhan Veli. This is a transition from a poet who says "Our Women" and speaks for all of us to an individual poet who says "My Ex-wife" and speaks only for himself. It is also transition from an intellectual poet to an unemployed, middle class, ordinary citizen poet. The poetry of "First New" which is not individualistic in literal sense - the poet subject is unclear - tells of social groups through their representatives; Süleyman Efendi, the neighborhood sapling, the child. Such characters are present in Nâzım Hikmet's poems as well. However, Orhan Veli's poems lack all traditional techniques such as rhyme and meter, and uses a very low tone in voicing its characters. Ahmet Oktay identifies the imagination and sense of politics of the leftist intelligentsia of the period that the "First New" emerged as a romantic discourse confined to "hope for good times" and "aspiration for freedom." In this respect, Orhan Veli's abandonment of "semantic and literary" images and metaphors, which lessen legibility, for the sake of "directing the public," making poem of ordinary people and communicating with them with easier poetry may be regarded as an even more progressive attitude with respect to socialism.<sup>106</sup> However, Orhan Veli's intention to be progressive - which he confirms within *Garip*'s manifest - includes two conflicting attitudes: First, an apparent role for intellectuals is given in this approach. The politics of intellectuals, which is typical in post-Tanzimat literature and underpins the social realism movement in the Republican period, is given and being repeated. However, in becoming a subject for the masses that are in fact the target of enlightenment, the purpose of enlightening the reader is given up.

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105 A. Oktay, "Üç İmge: Suçlu, Kurban, Kurtarıcı", *Toplumcu Gerçekçiliğin Kaynakları*, 43-64.

106 Ibid., 31.



The intellectual draws from his intellectual role in Garip poetry and focuses on the life of ordinary citizens who do not intend to change the world order. Although it enhanced its number of readers, this shift excluded the poem from being a means of enlightenment. No one is being criticized in Garip; a wretched person in the poetry criticizes neither himself nor the state or government, and intellectuals do not criticize the order of things. Yet, as Ahmet Oktay notes about the discourse, form and content in Garip:

“This poetry addressed the people excluded from government, who are being managed and are excluded. Therefore, it goes beyond the problematic of *attitude* and *joy*. It is [an action] against the discourse of the ruling classes which have been the *consumer* of the poetry... Orhan Veli excludes both the *language and sentiment* of the prevailing poetry that socialist poets use at the time... The joy of life in a sense comprises the *counter-discourse* of war and poverty.”<sup>107</sup>

If we add Garip's tendency to appraise the “naive” point of view of “the child,” who was the one to be educated and improved by Turkish poetry, the nature of the opposition to the order of the “bureaucratic and militaristic İnönü regime” is clarified. “The First New” resisted bureaucratic, military and elitist political power through its *joie de vivre* and glorification of children and childishness. It is a politics focusing on ordinary people as mentioned by Rancière. Readers perceived this and considered it as a political representation of themselves, so the poetry immediately became popular.

That poets abandoned the representation of an intellectual position is of course not enough to distinguish the Garip: it does not mean that they merged with society or started to represent themselves. Garip is not yet an individualistic poetry; the intellectual perspective disappeared from the content but still exists in the structure. The poetry releases the poem from bourgeois tastes and to opens it to the admiration of ordinary people. It is not obvious where the poet positions himself but it is obvious that the audience of Garip's manifesto and its readers are considered different. The manifesto includes an intellectual debate on poetry. As for the poems, they are apparently aimed at literate urbanites who might be “anybody” but in fact, the literacy rate was thirty percent

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107 Ibid., 32, 33.

at the time. A large audience of literate - but not intellectual - people were addressed by the poems. However, A. Oktay notes the interest<sup>108</sup> among authors in the “little man,” - which he identifies as an iconographic figure in the 1940s. Accordingly, he argues that authors were asking “to express their individualities as both poor and intellectual.” But still, the argument that Garip poets were representing themselves is unconvincing. They were speaking in the name of the little man, who is categorically not an intellectual.

The peasantry which was subjected to socialism at the time did not draw the interest of writers whom Ahmet Oktay characterized as “liberalistic.” There was a transition point: the role of the intellectual remained, but the intellectual was eager to represent a mass of which he himself felt a part. And the borderline of individualism and collectivism, the “Second New” emerged: a generation of poets that wanted to perform the art of their individualities. They favored the individuality - in fact, their own individualities.

Before analyzing identity in the “Second New”, interest in village literature clarifies the influence of the state on the minds of intellectuals in terms of their role or mission. Why did village literature become so desirable among authors and poets? After all, poets lived in cities. Even though they undertake an “intellectual mission,” they are first expected to deal with issues of the environment in which they live and then the issues of their homelands. I disagree with Oktay who argues that authors were already under the influence of the state’s cultural policies and therefore on the same page as the government - they were being influenced by official ideology in the selection of themes and tone. Intellectuals of the time may have agreed with the government about introducing villages to the cities. Furthermore, some readers were migrants to cities at the time.<sup>109</sup> Secondly, I disagree that the Republican-era intellectual was not

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108 A rising interest in the “Little man” can be regarded as a reality of the period not only in poetry through *Garip*, but also in narratives, say, those of Sait Faik.

109 According to Ahmet Oktay, through the acceptance of history and accumulation, social and individual problems would be dealt with a broader perspective. Socialist literature which reached a higher aesthetic level in terms of form would be achieved earlier. This debate, which is within the scope of the Ottoman era roots of social realism in Turkey, starts by considering certain issues like illiteracy and poverty in the countryside - already a question in Ottoman era - without reconsidering past experiences. Furthermore, A. Oktay emphasizes that Republican intellectuals admire the people for which Tanzimat intellectuals feel sorry.

aware of the Ottoman perspective about villagers. Poverty and lack of education were two main issues transferred from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic. Given a new state still based on agricultural economics, it was impossible to ignore the issues that were especially apparent in rural areas. The first economic strategy of the Republic was to increase agricultural production. Furthermore, the bulk of the population lived in villages, and most importantly, the Turkish War of Independence was fought by soldiers the bulk of whom were peasants. In turn, urbanized history represented through Istanbul was denied. The intellectual of the Republic was keen to express gratitude to the peasants and felt the responsibility to “do something” for them. Therefore, the choice of village literature was not related to the influence of state policies but a reflection of a similar mind with the state.

Still, the argument that leftist literature as a whole was by the cultural ideology of hegemonic political power and carried into ensuing generations by intellectuals who are authors and also teachers requires analysis. This analysis accompanies a demarcation of the borders between the “Second New” movement and social realism.

According to Yalçın Küçük, in almost all periods the state influenced the media of arts and literature not only through prohibitions and prosecutions but also through financial incentives. The resource to re-release the journal *Servet-i Fünun* as *Servet-i Fünun-Uyanış* was provided by the state. Küçük makes this claim on the basis of references extracted from memoirs and letters. Besides, he asserts that people like Sadri Ertem and Alaattin Hakgüder were police spies and intellectuals at the time were tracked by their agencies. The relations of these people with the police is convincingly presented in Küçük's work. For example Sadri Ertem was responsible for examining the publications for political. Garip and the “Second New” thus emerged in fear. Nâzım Hikmet was effaced by intellectuals like Bedri Rahmi, Sabahattin Eyüboğlu, and Nurullah Ataç, who were the managers and/or authors in various major literary journals of the period. Instead, they supported *politically neutral* movements, authors, and poets such as Garip. Küçük, following these numerous arguments, points to the victory of the Russians in Germany in 1943 as a milestone of the state. According to him, the fear of a Russian invasion inspired the government to liquidate the left wing. So some leftist intellectuals

shaped their political discourse in harmony with the state.<sup>110</sup> Without acquiring a real leftist awareness, the generation of 1940 became followers of or excluded a kind of leftism which was defined by state through agency of some outstanding authors and intellectuals. Even Ahmet Oktay would partially agree with this approach.

First, until 1980s leftist intellectuals were not completely excluded from jobs in public services and the bureaucracy. Particularly in the first years of Republic - when literacy rate was very low - they could at least be employed as teachers. Their level of theoretical knowledge of Marxism was a matter of their economic means to obtain a higher education abroad, to reach source materials.

Although a kind of “cohabitation” of socialist idea and the state indeed existed, leftist views were prohibited long before 1943. The first trial regarding Nâzım Hikmet’s writings was as early as 1925. The argument that the state tried to determine the literary canon is accepted and reinforced by the examples in this thesis. That there was a fear of the intelligentsia which was continuously monitored is reasonable. However, the state did not be to or was not able to pick apart the whole of the left wing.

Garip did not experience sanction - at least until 1947 - even though it posed a denial of cultural elitism. This was due to the “boundary of being political within the limits of social realist literature” drawn by Nâzım Hikmet and his fellow intellectuals at *Resimli Ay*. The petit bourgeoisie literature of the “First New” movement can even be treated as contributing to the formation of the citizen identity given its philosophical links with democracy. However, the government ignored that impact and did not care whether poets were leftist or not. The “First New” should be regarded as the pioneer of popular poetry. The “Second New,” on the contrary, should be directly considered among the origins of the regeneration of intellectual identity in the 1980s. The government influence on both will become clear after examining the “Second New”’s politics.

The “Second New” movement was not included in the curriculum until the 2000s. A statement of Ece Ayhan, one of the pioneers of the movement,

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110 Yalçın Küçük, *Aydınlık Üzerine Tezler 3* (İstanbul: Tekin Yayınları, 1990).

reflects the politics of the movement, he claims that the poems of this movement are the first “civil” poems of the Republic. By “civil,” he means “non-militarist,” and among the “boarding scholarship students,” to whom these poems gave voice, he means all those underground people who are voiceless in politics and not involved in the social agenda - especially minorities, the sexually marginal, prostitutes and prisoners. Hasan Bülent Kahraman points out that this poetry originates from the discourses of the lower classes, and its method is to attack the language and political discourse of the hegemons.<sup>111</sup> The attack intends to destroy.

Discourse, in Foucauldian terms, is the jargon established by bodies and classes with authority in their areas. According to Ayhan, “Second New” poetry was an attack on the language of the authorities. Ayhan included Turgut Uyar in the “Second New,” which he defined through this politics. He occasionally included Cemal Süreya, Edip Cansever and İlhan Berk, who were other poets of the movement. To him, these poets have poems and periods which are not adequately “civil,” as well.<sup>112</sup> He definitely considered the “Second New” as a systematic attack on language. “Language” is the Lacanian term emphasized by Rorty: the “father language.” Therefore, the attack was on the ruling powers.<sup>113</sup> However, a political attack through language was not perceived as criticism; hence, the poems of the “Second New” wave were considered apolitical by the government and by intellectuals.

The election in 1950 changed the ruling party. The Democrat Party won the elections putting an end to the Republican Party rule that had lasted the first seventeen years of the Republic. The early periods of the DP witnessed new capitalist accumulation in certain segments and sectors, particularly in rural regions, due to the investments in agriculture. The Democrat Party was supported by the bulk of society. Migration from provinces to cities was allowed under the new government. Soon a new social segment of rich countrymen emerged in large cities as Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir and Adana.

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111 Hasan Bülent Kahraman, “Ece Ayhan Şiiri Sivillik, Etik Dilsel Kopuş”, *Türk Şiiri, Modernizm, Şiir* (İstanbul: Agora Yayınları, 2004), 306-357.

112 Ece Ayhan, *Şiirin Bir Altın Çağı* (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1993), 15-18.

113 Richard Rorty, “Liberal Bir Cemaatin Olumsuzluğu”, *Olumsuzluk, İroni, Dayanışma* (İstanbul: Ayrıntı Yayınları, 1995), 77-113.

However, the labor act in effect prevented an increase in income standards of urban workers, resulting in inflation that impoverished civil servants who had been prosperous in the previous period. This was a period of acceleration of class mobility and therefore fulfilled part the promise of the Republic. This was especially apparent in terms of development in the countryside. Of course, disparate improvements caused a gap between urbanites and provincials. In the end, country people in the city became richer as educated urban people, who were potentially leftist as well, became poorer. In the course of Cold War, political suppression of leftists was practiced by the DP, which promised democracy as an election commitment, as well.

The data suggest that opposition unsurprisingly particularly arises within educated segments. Furthermore, ongoing oppression of leftists rendered the DP's rhetoric of freedom and democracy questionable. However, these problems posed an issue for only a small portion of the population. Impoverished laborers and peasants were still keen supporters of the DP. In fact, the people only gained the hope of improving rather than solid improvement. This hope was extracted from investments in agriculture, public services, public works, and emission.

The rise of the "Second New" movement coincided with the first Democrat Party government and this should be considered together with economic recovery and increasing hope for improvement. However, an opposition consisted of more-educated teachers, academics and artists. It was leftist in its discourse, and demanded more social justice and more social rights.

In this period, Ece Ayhan's poetry focused on classes not represented before. This was the basic method of representing a political attitude in "Second New" poetry. Prostitutes, people of the underground, and the poor appear with their dilemmas and personal challenges in an entirely subjective, unique language in Ayhan's poems, as do minorities in Edip Cansever's poems and poor and provincial people in those of Turgut Uyar's. Members of these groups are represented individually in this poetry. The "Second New" is an expected development after the "First New," in this respect.

The "Second New" influenced poets immensely, and it was reproduced by young poets. It also influenced poets of the older generation such as Arif Damar. The "Second New" dominated the poetry world until Nâzım Hikmet's

poems were re-published in the 1960s. However, unlike its predecessor, “Second New” poetry did not adequately influence readers or find its main base of readers for a long time, in the 1980s. The fact that it was ignored in the curriculum - unlike its predecessors - had a part in reluctance of readers. However, the most apparent and often emphasized reason for the lack of audience was the abstract, introverted structure of the poetry introduced by the “Second New.”

The argument that poetry is a branch of literature to be sensed rather than understood have been considered since Ahmet Hâşim. Furthermore, surrealist styles, abstract images, and word plays in poetry were defended by poets for “representing the life, which is full of uncertainties as well.” However, socialist critics accused the poets of the “Second New” of being afraid of state violence and of writing obscure, apolitical poetry.<sup>114</sup>

In fact, traces of abstract images were present in the “First New,” poetry as well. Hasan Bülent Kahraman expresses this referring to the verse “If I could also be a fish in the bottle of rakı” by Orhan Veli. He defines the movement as an attempt at modernization in terms of poetic aesthetics. Among the aforementioned debates of Republican cultural policy, Kahraman locates the “First New” movement as a part of the Westernization tendency.<sup>115</sup> According to

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114 Attilâ İlhan *İkinci Yeni Savaşı* (Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1996), Asım Bezirci, *On Şair On Şiir* (İstanbul: May Yayınları, 1971), Memet Fuat, “Giriş,” *Çağdaş Türk Şiiri Antolojisi* (İstanbul: Adam Yayınları, 1997, 11. Ed.).

115 Hasan Bülent Kahraman argues that the Republic is a top-down modernization project. According to him, development in post-Republic literature was the efforts to localize the components of Western literature without regard to local dynamics. The modernism debate, because of its volume and scope, is not subject of this thesis. In short, I regard the modernism that Kahraman mentioned as an influence of West. This thesis concerns poetry’s relationship to political power, as well as its relationships with local political and economic transformations. As there is adequate local motivations for transformations in poetry, I accept Western literature only as an option for things wished to be done. Briefly: Poets of almost every period desired to change poetry and establish a new one; they sought the means to do this. It seems realistic to infer that they did this to differentiate their art and that current methods were inadequate to reflect changing life. Almost none of the intelligentsia accepts the argument that Turkish poetry broke with tradition. Then, if necessary, Modernism in Turkish Poetry should be defined with its distinctive conditions and dynamics in a convenient study.

him, “meta realities”<sup>116</sup> that the “First New” possessed despite their simplification became integrated with tradition, and this integration prevented the poetry from proceeding in a surrealist manner. Its producers were not concerned with creating a new order since they had not internalized Surrealism.<sup>117</sup> After all, Surrealism was an aesthetic rejection of social order and a specter of an alternative.

Kahraman's approach misses unique aspects of Turkey's modernization. Furthermore, if one argues that Garip is not an adaption of Surrealism, but only embodies its relevant components – as I believe- this would be a poetic “modernization” specific to Turkey. Garip was influenced by Surrealism but it did not intend to import it. Its pioneers had different objectives for their poetry. To regard the difference between the two denies this specific situation from the beginning. It is true that, the “First New” did not suggest an alternative order which Surrealism was able to do. It did not, because it was not a Turkish version of Surrealism. The very fact that Surrealism was avant-garde movement while Garip was a popular form is enough to make such a debate unnecessary. Garip used surreal motives in conformity with local traditions of tale and tongue twisters. That is the extent of its relationship with Surrealism. Garip was a populist poetry movement and an attempt to break down the poetic norms of its time, no more. In an environment of elitist, authoritarian government, this was far more plausible than importing Surrealism.

## § 2.5 Summary

In this chapter, we have seen how the state, the intelligentsia and readers considered the politics; the form of these politics in Turkish poetry, in what social conditions it was included, and how these politics was perceived until 1950s when the “Second New” emerged. The research shows that the criteria for determining political content in the establishment period of the Republic whether it conforms to the social realist principles. Accordingly, in the late

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Currently, the only book on this subject is *Modernizm, Türk Şiiri, Şiir* by Hasan Bülent Kahraman.

116 The case in which poetry is deeper and more profound than it lets on.

117 Hasan Bülent Kahraman, *Türk Şiiri Modernizm Şiir* (İstanbul: Agora Yayınları, 2004), 102-103.



1950s, the intelligentsia, political authorities, governments and readers were evaluating the politics of poetry through the benchmarks of a social realist mentality with its direct allusions to daily politics. Indeed, in the 1950s, when representatives of the “Second New” poetry movement were arguing that they had created a poetry which is an anti-populist poetry – outside of official discourse and “civil” in the sense of non-militaristic - only a few readers concurred. Since the Republic was founded, politics in poetry was contingent on an intellectual identity identified with the mission or responsibility to enlighten, inform and perfect the people. The mission had been reproduced since the Tanzimat. In other words, poets at the time did not imagine making politics for their own status or represent themselves.

Finally, when the cultural policies of the government, prosecutions of poets or their inclusion in the curriculum are considered, arguments that the Republic was a project of modernization and Westernization, that Ottoman culture was rejected as a cultural policy, that secularization was encouraged, that pure Turkish was adopted, and that governments were consistently based on these principles throughout the Republican period become questionable. First, poets who opposed the aforementioned principles and championed Ottoman tradition were always included in curriculum and were not been prosecuted. Essentially, only leftist poets in Turkey were subjected to prosecution for their poems. Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, who defended the superiority of Islam and society based on religious rule, was never prosecuted for his poems. The religious discourse in poetry was not regarded as a critical opposition against the Republican principle of secularism by the government, and Necip Fazıl was included in the curriculum in most periods.

The argument about rejection of Ottoman culture should also be revised in the light of the fact that Divan literature was never excluded from curriculum except for a short period in the 1930s. Likewise, Ottoman history was always included in the history in curriculum. The Ottoman Empire was of course reinterpreted historically and interpreted in the framework of a new cultural policy, but the Ottoman past was never fundamentally rejected or wholly negated in any period of Republican history.

In following chapter, we review the positioning of politics in poetry on social and political level from the 1950s to the 1980s.

## Emergence of Individual Politics in Poetry and Its Regression Against Collective Politics – 1950-1980

In this section, poetry of the 1950-1980 period of the Republican era is analyzed in terms of its reception and the level of politics involved, as well as links between the poetry and social and political advances preceding the military coup of 12 September 1980. Following coup of the 1960, leftist movements gained power and influence and spread throughout the country. Besides, they had a voice in parliament represented by Turkish Labor Party. This phenomenon and the re-publication of Nâzım Hikmet's poems during this period are significant factors triggering the empowerment of social realistic literature during the 1960s. This was the time when advancements were accentuating authors' intellectual status and identity. Therefore, we start with an analysis of the interrelation between political debates about the major poetry movement of the 1950s – the “Second New” - and the identity of the intellectuals.

### § 3.1 The Intellectual Identity in Apoliticism Debates of the “Second New”

Until the “Second New” movement, poets and movements that represented a dissident political demeanor were constructive approaches that provided an alternative to the existing political order. Poets, more or less could be considered as a step ahead of society. Nâzım Hikmet's socialist worldview prepared

the reader for a brighter and promising future. The “First New” movement, pioneered by Orhan Veli and friends, on the other hand, sought ways to release poetry from the boundaries of the aesthetic standards of bourgeoisie; they strove to discover a poetry that reflected the lives of the “governed” and that would be read, loved and embraced by these people.

The “Second New” poets, who followed this path, however, went further and started to portray themselves in their poetry. Although their poems were mainly individualistic, these poets were in fact representatives of their class. In other words, they simply represented civilians. Nevertheless, this movement received more criticism in terms of featuring its individualism compared to the First New. This approach in poetry had a dissident stance; nevertheless, it was criticized for harboring “weary” and “depressive” elements. Just like in other branches of art, criticizing the poetic representation of subjectivity may seem contradictory; after all, art is actually predicated upon original creation, and originality stems from individual's own creativity. Therefore, art is ultimately individualistic. However, as part of society, the individual shares issues with the rest of society; and art desires an audience and therefore it cannot remain indifferent to social issues. Concepts of “obscurity” and “imperceptibility” thus surface as a comment in criticism.

Mehmet H. Doğan responded to such criticism after the 1980s:

“With the effort of establishing a poetic language as opposed to the colloquial and written language, turning its back on the unqualified reader and ultimately saving poetry from the glib, superficial and indifferent crowds, it (the Second New-GB) can be defined as poetry that originated out of a reaction.”<sup>118</sup>

On the other hand, criticisms of the “Second New” started with its “obscurity” and “imperceptibility,” but then went on to its negligence vis-à-vis Democrat Party’s authoritarian disposition, which became apparent in the second half of the 1950s. Moreover, it was charge with escaping from politics

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118 Ibid., 174

because of its fear. The most aggressive criticisms came from social realists such as Attila İlhan, Asım Bezirci, Ahmet Oktay (in a certain period) and Yalçın Küçük (in upcoming years). They criticized the movement for conformity and for being an implicit accomplice of the government through its poetry which seemed to overlook the government's authoritarian practices. The government in this sense was criticized for making its presence tangible through oppressive legislation.

Even Memet Fuat, remained ambivalent about them. In an essay, he said that, "when handled carefully, the "Second New" poets were not in fact ignoring social issues." After which he concluded: "The 'Second New' spearheaded by young poets who appeared in the journals around 1955, not only rejected social issues, but meaning as well. Postulating messages such as 'Poetry doesn't need to incorporate meaning' and 'Meaning is coincidental in poetry,' it was a movement that did not unsettle the politicians."<sup>119</sup> Nevertheless, as demonstrated above, the nature of the "Second New" was to place forgotten crowds at the center of poetry and it had radical potential in this respect.

Later, Mehmet H. Doğan, emphasized poetry's dissidence against authority in his review of the period.<sup>120</sup> According to Doğan, the popular poetry of the preceding period - the First New - drew attention to the little man, whereas the "Second New" followed up the theme with an actual literary moment, taking poetic profoundness one-step further. According to Doğan, "Second New" poetry demonstrates its political views in an aesthetic form, developing a genuine poetry that expresses the poets' opposition in a poetic language<sup>121</sup>

As a matter of fact, two major poets of the "Second New" movement - Edip Cansever and Turgut Uyar - admitted that it was a personal quest for them to carry the tragedy of the individual and the chaos of life into poetry - taking the risk of withdrawing from poetry - in an interview in the 1980s. The third poet present in the interview also a major poet of the "Second New" was

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119 Memet Fuat, "Giriş", *Çağdaş Türk Şiiri Antolojisi* (Istanbul: Adam Yayınları, 1997).

120 In *Papirus* journal published by Cemal Süreya.

121 Mehmet H. Doğan, *İkinci Yeni Şiir*, (Istanbul: İkaros Yayınları, 2008), 13-29.

Cemal Süreya, and he did object to this opinion, either.<sup>122</sup> Edip Cansever's words in *Dönem* in 1964 reflect that the underlying reason for the “new path” in poetry was the insufficiency of the previous path to represent “personal and modern issues that preoccupy an individual.”<sup>123</sup> His statement also indicated that this new pursuit was inspired by the changes in social and daily life.

These statements point out that the Second New's origins were grounded on social transformation rather than individual intangible, indefinable personal crises or pure aesthetic pursuits. Moreover, these poets never mention their individuality to defend this poetry movement. However, they bring the aesthetic problematic back to the literary world. Regeneration of this debate overwhelmed its political dimension. The social conditions of the period included the frustration arising from authoritarianism of a DP elected based on pledges of democracy, economic transformation (high rates of class mobilization including downward mobilization), the appearance of provincials in big cities with their own sets of problems, impoverishment of blue and white-collar workers, political suppression of particularly leftist intellectuals, and an authoritarian single party regime. Mehmet H. Doğan also points out that pop culture - defined as a mean of pleasure and fun - emerged in this period.

Since the Ottoman era, popular culture independent of government's cultural ideology first emerged in the 1950s. Doğan defined “popular poetry” in this context characterized this poetry as “entertaining” and “crude” and emphasized that it was barely seen in major literary journals. He indicated that Ümit Yaşar Oğuzcan was the embodiment of this poetry. According to Doğan, its poetic language was kitsch. However, Muzaffer (İlhan) Erdost<sup>124</sup> argues that this kitsch, popular poetry was the product of “bourgeois life style and pleasures.” The middle-class evidently obtained this sensibility due to capitalism.<sup>125</sup>

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122 Resource: Mehmet H. Doğan, *İkinci Yeni Şiir*, 316. Turgut Uyar's words have special importance: “The main concern of our generation was never to write exceptional poetry. The main objective was to reflect life's chaos in poems.”

123 Edip Cansever, “Tek Sesli Şiirden Çok Sesli Şiire,” *Dönem*, February 1964.

124 An important cultural figure and founder of the *Pazar Postası* the newspaper, in which the “Second New” movement was first introduced and defined.

125 Mehmet H. Doğan, *İkinci Yeni Şiir*, 17.

Attentive critics supported “Second New” poetry against false and unjust criticism of its being “meaningless” for its time.<sup>126</sup> Turgut Uyar, in his interview in the 1980s, defended the socialist structure of the “Second New” poetry. As he described the situation in 1957, he said, “That language is a treasure of opportunities and that poetry is in fact an art of language had not yet been discovered. It was not even considered, then.”<sup>127</sup> The ones who did not know were the intellectuals.

Given the conditions in society, the “Second New” requires a more significant definition: it was the first anti-populist movement of the new Republican period. It has not yet been investigated whether this anti-populism is connected to the rage towards people who ignored the suppression exerted on leftist artists and anti-democratic legislation - or implicitly supported this oppression with their votes.<sup>128</sup>

The “Second New” could easily be defined as a political opposition movement of political opposition objecting to the government's cultural ideology, as well to popular culture itself which the government condoned because it effectively kept people away from politics. A transformation in the definition of intellectual identity and roles was a factor, along with intellectuals' attitudes towards society. As acknowledged at the beginning of this chapter, up until this period, poets and other intellectuals assumed the mission to contribute to the enlightenment of society. It is inaccurate to generalize that “Second New” poets simply wrote about their well-defined individual identities. They did have a well-defined identity and it was the identity of “the intellectual who wrote out of modernity.” They had elite tastes and preferences, though they were not necessarily from elite families of the Republic.

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126 For example, Mehmet H. Doğan, “The fundamental relation between socially conditioned poetry and its causality are definitely unknown. Social knowledge and our levels of awareness do not allow this,” *Ibid.*, 24.

127 *Ibid.*, 24.

128 With the 1956 amendment in the Press Law, limitations were imposed on the freedom of the press which was initially heralded by the same party in 1950. For example, a vague publication ban on “the sharing of particulars that would cause excitation leading to the disruption of national and domestic morals” was enforced and the provision that prevented the prosecution of journalists was removed from the regulation. Source: Hıfzı Topuz, *Türk Basın Tarihi* (Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 2003), 201-202.

There are no individual statements of “Second New” poets since they did not write their thoughts on “the state of being an intellectual” at the time. Nevertheless, it is clear that this anti-populist, pro-marginal movement was conscious of its anti-populist path and was created as a reaction to the “popular.”

The poets of this movement pushed the semantic limits of poems and words, and were not offended when they were faulted for “obscurity.” This thesis does not assert that “Second New” poets particularly adopted an opposing position against these crowds and ultimately gravitated toward an obscure, “disconnected” style. Poets of this movement, who were born after the Republic, abandoned their goals of pioneering the advancement of society and of being accessible to diverse audiences in line with predominant cultural ideology. Accordingly, “Second New” poets stopped placing emphasis on being comprehensible and ultimately useful to audiences. From this perspective, their opposing view was represented in a way that cast aside the admiration of government of the “First New” movement, which had approximated a type of populism of which the government disapproved. When it came to the “Second New” poetry emerged that turned its back on populism. It represented, it appealed to and it was produced by intellectuals raised by the poor, provincial, and invisible “others” of society - in Ece Ayhan's words those “raised in public boarding schools.”<sup>129</sup> Ostracizing both official power and the population, it demonstrated a political perspective that widened the gap between official ideology and the poets who were a part of the movement. Hasan Bülent Kahraman emphasizes that there is insufficient research on the sources leveraged in the production of this poetry. Considering İlhan Berk's remarks, Kahraman decides that the motive behind this poetry is intrinsic, not extrinsic. He also believes that this motivation is associated with an episteme that was not yet discussed but was modern. For him this episteme is the motivation to become abstract. He pivotally interprets abstraction as skepticism, the by-

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129 The pioneers of the movement - Cemal Süreya, Sezai Karakoç and Ece Ayhan - had actually graduated from public boarding schools. In others words, they took the advantage of this educational opportunity of the government via a central examination system offered to children of low-income families.

product of the scientific improvements that form the basis of modernism. This explanation is also valid for defining similar movements in Western literature.

In this context, the motive to search is intrinsic, but the state of mind that leads to the search comes from Western movements. Therefore, according to Kahraman, abstraction in the “Second New” is a method of rejecting power via secession from power, as well as rejecting of tangibility, as has been done in the West.<sup>130</sup>

Kahraman's claim that the episteme was imported from the West cannot be treated within the context of this thesis, which mainly questions whether or not political advancements are found in poetry, and if so how they are reflected and how these politics in poetry were received by readers and political authorities. Therefore, the sources that lead to change are presumed to be local; on the other hand, the tendency toward abstraction and the approximation of the Western mentality are ultimately arguments contrary to this thesis. Thus, it is essential to ascertain whether or not abstraction at the expense of comprehensibility was a goal for poets.

For instance, Orhan Koçak interpreted the tendency toward abstraction and incomprehensibility, as the outcomes of a stretch of the government's cultural policies, which were contrarily keen on drawing the context of literary productions within 1923-38. Koçak suggests that the “Second New” intellectuals gained the freedom to perform autonomous art at the expense of losing opportunities such as foreign education scholarships, holding exhibitions and being a member of parliament. He based this idea on the opinion of Ahmet Oktay, whom he regarded as a “Second New” poet. According to Oktay, the Democrat Party did not have its own intelligentsia in 1950s.<sup>131</sup>

Although this approach seems consistent and explanatory, it places artists in a pragmatic position due to their links with the government and it focuses on the government's attitude. It implies that until that time, artists renounced their productive freedom for the sake of education abroad or opportunities to become a part of the hegemony.

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130 Kahraman, *Türk Şiiri Modernizm Şiir*, 125-126.

131 Orhan Koçak, “1920'lerden 1970'lere Kültür Politikaları”, *Kemalizm*, ed. Murat Belge (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001), 406-407.



This precludes the possibility that artist or authors may sometimes be on the same page with the government vis-à-vis their intellectual identity. Nonetheless, it is disputable that the government of the 1950s focused on an economic transition rather than building a modern nation through cultural policy. But while violence and oppression were, in fact, exerted on the intelligentsia;<sup>132</sup> the government did not manipulate the attitude of all poets that had assumed the intellectual role. Socioeconomic transition, government practices and demands of autonomy also have a role in the emergence of the “Second New.”

Freedom and autonomy are the priorities of each and every aesthetic producer. That said, they were deprived of certain government opportunities in the 1950s and were excluded from the secondary education curriculum where they could have reached more numerous and active readers. As Koçak points out, the poets of this movement deliberately chose not write Atatürk poems. Their exclusion from textbooks was a recognized circumstance that even appeared in one of Cemal Süreya's poems.

A certain approach sees intellectuals as part of the Republic's founding block and does not anticipate an intellectual transformation at any point in Republican history. Nevertheless, it acknowledges that intellectuals started to question their role and position after 1980. It does not focus on intellectual identity during the emergence of the Second New. The reason may be due to the increasing influence of socialism in literature and cultural life during the 1960s. But in fact, the position and status of the 1950s intellectual anticipate the initial indicators of the questioning movement in the 1980s.

The social transformation during the Democrat Party era deeply impacted the intellectuals' life-style and caused intellectuals to question their position and role, which ultimately influenced their poetry. Following the 1960 military coup, authors and intellectuals were able to participate in politics, especially

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132 For members of press and writers that were subjected to prosecution, please see Hıfzı Topuz, *Türk Basın Tarihi*; Ayşe Elif Emre Kaya, “Demokrat Parti Döneminde Basın-İktidar İlişkileri,” *İletişim Fakültesi Dergisi*, <http://journals.istanbul.edu.tr/iuifd/article/view-File/1019004828/pdf>; Ramazan Gülendamlar, “Siyaseti Şiirde Yaşamak: Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türk Edebiyatında Sosyalist Şiir,” *Turkish Studies International Periodical For the Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic*, Volume 5/2 (Spring 2010): 212-279, [http://turkishstudies.net/Makaleler/227992852\\_6-Ramazan%20G%C3%BClendamlar.pdf](http://turkishstudies.net/Makaleler/227992852_6-Ramazan%20G%C3%BClendamlar.pdf)

through the Turkish Labor Party. However, in the 1950s, intellectuals who defined themselves as direct or implicit advocates of the left were ostracized from parliament and other mainstream political roles. Then again, Kahraman differentiates and excludes the “Second New” poets from intellectuals within the ruling block. Nevertheless, during the Democrat Party era when intellectuals were ostracized due to the evolving popular culture, even writers who were a part of the ruling block did not represent their “author” identity. For example, Faruk Nafiz Çamlıbel participated in parliament as a representative of the then-ruling Democrat Party.

The following accurately encapsulate the 1950s, and as yet unattempted, detailed period study would be necessary to comfort:

- ◆ Regarding culture, political power moved away from the approach of the establishment period. In other words, populism replaced elitism.
- ◆ Intellectuals in the ruling block did not avidly encourage traditional or Western high culture.
- ◆ The “Second New” was far from the ruling mentality and the poets defined themselves as antagonists

Kahraman’s explanations for the preference of abstraction, as revision of French and Ottoman literatures and or as simply the intrinsic preference of poets are insufficient. Taking the risk of losing readers due to abstraction and acknowledging the growing gap between the audience and the author were decisions that would redesign the role of intellectuals and their relations to society.<sup>133</sup>

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133 Finally, I do not agree with the argument that the sole origin of abstraction is Western culture. Classical Ottoman poetry - whether Divan or Sufi/Tasavvuf or even folk literature - were poetry formats that commonly used “mazmuns,” with clichéd metaphors. Mazmuns were only known by people who had received a certain education. Poetry became comprehensible for broader audiences during the period after Tanzimat, just as literature came to be perceived as a means of education. The “Second New” looked to the Western literature not for the notion of abstraction but for the method of abstraction. This does not mean that poets denied the Ottoman tradition. As Memet Fuat emphasized, Republican era poetry never entirely broke with tradition, that is, with Ottoman Divan poetry. Memet Fuat, “Giriş”, *Çağdaş Türk Şiiri Antolojisi* (İstanbul: Adam Yayınları, 1997).

Although not as certain for uncompromising as the 1980s, “Second New” poets in fact represented populations that were close to their roots (Ece Ayhan’s underground people, Cemal Süreya’s middle class people, or Edip Cansever’s minorities).<sup>134</sup> However, they represented the intelligentsia of which they were already a part, through the language of their poems. Nevertheless, considering the conditions of the period, these poets and their representations in poetry may be and were perceived as individualistic, above all because their poetic language was individualistic and personal. The reason why the younger generation of poets particularly the “Second New” lies with the social cross sections they represented in their poetry - as well as with the aesthetic qualities of the poems.

The debate over the “Second New” movement demonstrates the necessity of a narrower debate on the intellectual identity of the poets, since the poets’ identities as intellectuals influenced their work more than their individual issues. Moreover, in the succeeding 1960s and 70s, the inter-relation of poets with political movements, would provoke the 1980 military coup to violently suppress the leftist intelligentsia.

### § 3.2 Intellectuals and the Poet as an Intellectual

The two approaches to the intelligentsia that I consider below, which are mutually exclusive, help to locate Republican intellectuals in their areas of activity. This analysis makes possible to better define the role of the intelligentsia by envisioning two opposing readings.

Hasan Bülent Kahraman, while introducing Republican populism, asserts the first of these approaches: “[T]he entire debate will be on Republican ideology, an elitist project that shows and deems itself as distant from the people

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134 Cemal Süreya was a member of a Kurdish family exiled from Erzincan. Ece Ayhan's father tried to make a living and take care of his family by writing petitions on request. The family settled in Karagümrük after immigrating to Istanbul. Although there is no detailed information about his childhood, it is evident that it was characterized by poverty. Both have their university education with scholarships. Edip Cansever's father was a tradesman in the Grand Bazaar and he was initially from among the upper class. Nevertheless, as a resident of Istanbul, he included minorities in his poetry.

and surrounded by intellectuals. Similarly, all efforts will be focused on getting rid of intellectuals and attributing the project to society.”<sup>135</sup> In other words, the Republic is established with the support of the intellectuals who will are then pushed aside to assert that society as a whole is the owner of the project. According to this semi-silent revolutionary approach, intellectuals are instrumental to the founding of the new regime through their production of a genuine culture that will rest on the new state; after such a culture is created, they are removed from the picture leaving this culture as the exclusive asset of the people. The establishing elite was comprised of the military and bourgeoisie, along with intellectuals. Kahraman undertakes a convincing discussion to support his theory, the weakest link of which is the presumption of a monolithic class of intellectuals, without even distinguishing between organic and critical intellectuals.

Theoretically, between the French Revolution and Fichte and Herder, Kahraman conceptualizes culture transformed into political power as a mean for mentality formation. He portrays its function in the building of the modern nation state in European terms. As for the evolution of national culture in the nation state of Turkey, he sets its begin in the Tanzimat era but points out that the mindset that chiefly influenced the Republican era was the definitions of language and culture production by Ziya Gökalp. Kahraman sees the typical Republican intellectual as imbued with an elitist identity - someone who considers himself apart from the society that he has the mission to educate and develop.<sup>136</sup> Many authors agree with this characterization of the intellectual: from Attilâ İlhan to Mümtaz Turhan, many writers criticize “wrong Westernization,” and fault intellectuals who are personally distant from society, promote the replacement of traditional values with Western ones, and do not contribute to the scientific development of the country for the failure of

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135 Hasan Bülent Kahraman, “Türk Milliyetçi Romantizminin Sonu: Kurucu Modernist İdeolojinin Dönüşümü ve Yazınsal Söylem”, in *Şerif Mardin’e Armağan*, ed: Ahmet Öncü, Orhan Tekelioğlu (Istanbul, İletişim: 2005), 124.

136 Regarding the identity of the Republican intellectual, he begins with Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu's novel *Yaban*. The protagonist is a one-armed officer who has no idea about society calling them “the people” - and as a result - he is shunned by them as a stranger. But he feels the mission to educate them.

Westernization project.<sup>137</sup> This kind of intellectual epitomizes a number of both positive and negative characteristics. He is presumably well informed on Western culture, well educated, and has a refined taste, and a good pedigree. Among his negative traits, he disdains society, is unable to come up with a realistic reform program, and aspires to Western assimilation; instead of to a genuinely Turkish one.

This kind of intellectual was also present in the governing elite in the Republican establishment period. The novel *Ankara* vilifies this kind of opportunist intellectual. But the intelligentsia as a whole could never be defined like this, even in the establishment era, as seen before. The intelligentsia was not monolithic.

The departure of the intelligentsia from governing bodies is clear in the respect that many major poets and authors were never included in the curriculum. In effect, the argument that poets were distanced from the people weakens in the first twenty years of the Republic. With the exception of Attilâ İlhan and Edip Cansever, leading poets of the “Second New” all arose from the lower strata of society and received an education only through state scholarships. Cansever’s family was upper-middle class bourgeoisie. The poets addressed their poems to intellectual taste which was a choice, not an obligation. Thus, instead of the image of an intellectual set apart and in the hands of the state or political authorities, a suitable description for this kind of intellectual would be one who questions the mission and the role of intellectuals. They set forth a different kind of intellectual or were at least uneasy with the notion of being significantly praised.

In the same text, Kahraman notes that the cultural policies of the 1940s were under the influence of the social realism movement which were in turn influenced by the cultural policies of Soviet Russia. The influence of the Soviet Union Writers' Congress over Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu's work in the 1930s is noteworthy in this sense. According to Kahraman, the government initially remained distant from socialist ideology; the adoption of a social realistic literary approach was in fact paradoxical. This discrepancy conditions the Turkification of the term social realism as “*toplumsal gerçekçilik*.”

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137 Ibid, 105-130.

Furthermore, a number of intellectuals were prosecuted for being Leftists in the same era, starting with Nâzım Hikmet. In fact, many instances of social realistic literature - from intellectuals' assumption of social responsibilities to the glorification of society - are seen in the literature of that period.<sup>138</sup> Indeed, this glorification is explained by founding values of social realism, rather than by the notion of a distanced intellectual.

On one end of the scale of approaches, intellectuals are defined as being unaware of society and uninterested in being part of it. For its progress, they bestow upon society their own understanding of culture, but they are supposed to remove themselves from the picture in due time. At the other end, are intellectuals who do not meddle with society and have no goal to advance it? Their goal is limited to representing society and delegating their governing power. Society gives consent so long as the government does not intervene in the social order of the periphery that it represents. This postulate - which describes a relationship rather than a structure - was articulated by Meltem Ahıska. According to Ahıska, the modernization that elite intellectuals had in mind was not suited to Anatolian society, so a tacit understanding developed between elites and the society.

The government striving to establish a nation state on the ruins of an empire and trying to develop society as the basis for an immediate bright future. All the while, it sought to protect the integrity of the country. Ahıska's explanation implies that the main concern was Westernization rather than modernization, meaning that the program of the government was to create a society to showcase to the West as Western. However, participation in a project that started in an unsystematic manner with limited possibilities was bound to be improbable; hence, the gap between Turkey's propaganda for the West and the internal reality could not be eliminated. While authorities overlooked the *modus vivendi* and methods of living of the masses, they would not coerce them unless it was clear that the masses would not openly oppose the government. She mostly refers to the memoirs of literary writers, especially that of one characteristic intellectual and writer of the establishment period, Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu. Indeed, Kahraman also characterized Karaosmanoğlu as the representative intellectual of the period. In accord with the paradigm

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138 A. Oktay, *Toplumcu Gerçekçiliğin Kaynakları*.

explained at the beginning of this chapter, Ahıska approaches political authority to a typology of intellectualism with the mission to “educate the people.” But according to her, intellectuals never meddle with society, and thus, they failed to fulfill their role to educate and enlighten society. Instead, they lived a life that represented the masses, enjoyed power and adopted Western discourse and culture apart from the communities they represented. But such intellectuals still claimed to be the defender of socialism and populism.<sup>139</sup>

Such a definition of an intellectual typology presupposes that intellectuals originate from elite strata and are at the same time not obliged to coexist with society physically. Activities that require contact with the public - the use of public transit, waiting in queues, the possibility of settling in middle-high class urban areas - are delegated to others. And with regard to accommodation, the intellectual class is signified as distinct with high incomes and living standards.

The cultural analysis of this intellectual class started to transform from the 1980s onwards. However, class-based criteria were dismissed at an even earlier time, namely in the period of the “First New.” The destitution of Orhan Veli Kanık, proved monolithic descriptions of intelligentsia wrong. Likewise, as noted, the “Second New” poets are mostly among lower classes and were able to get educations only through state scholarships. It is impossible to confine these members of a movement that dominated Turkish poetry within the “intellectual who is apart from the people” conceptualizations of Kahraman or Ahıska. Neither is correct that no part of the intelligentsia were (or are) apart from the people. Intellectuals were simply not comprised of a single type, at least not for the greater part of the Republican period.

An analysis the work of an author at the forefront of this discourse in the 1950s, Attilâ İlhan, sheds light on the discourse over the role of intellectual poets. In his books *Sisler Bulvarı* (1954) and *Yağmur Kaçağı* (1955), he draws imagery and oratory arts back into poetry, paving the way for the “Second New” movement. He weakened the influence and domination of the “First New” movement, with a staggeringly powerful, impressive poetry. Nevertheless, he soon became a critic of the “Second New” movement, as well. He

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139 Meltem Ahıska, “Türkiye’de İktidar ve Gerçeklik”, in *Türkiye’de İktidarı Yeniden Düşünmek*, Ed: Murat Güney (İstanbul: Varlık, 2009), 31-58.

crafted the poetry of the city life of the petty bourgeoisie. In the first sentence of the foreword to *Gerçekçilik Savaşı* (*War of Realism*), a compilation of the polemic writings of İlhan and other poets of the “Second New” movement, published in 1980, he describes the position of the intellectual with respect to the government. The description questions the generic discourse of “intellectual as a part of political authority”:

“Often I ponder whether the war years (1939/45) or the fifteen years following the war (1945/60) were more terrible. Is it very wrong to say that between 1940 and 1960 we lived under a ruthless mandate, in egregious poverty? The “cold” war followed the war, - if anyone believes that all this ushered in democracy, let them believe so - and the execution of intellectuals went on.”<sup>140</sup>

İlhan gives date of these executions as 1945, the end of the Second World War, rather than the 1930s when the prosecution against Nâzım Hikmet began. This choice reflects his opinion that the partnership of the founding groups of the Republic - the military, the bourgeoisie, and the intelligentsia - was not broken during the first prosecution of Nâzım Hikmet, but only in the post-war period. As a matter of fact, Nâzım Hikmet still worked as a translator for the ministry when he was imprisoned, while Orhan Veli left the Translation Office in the aftermath of the 1946 elections, following a dissident route. Attilâ İlhan, who was an author continued being an establishment period-type intellectual throughout his life and never became a radical antagonist. In the statement above, İlhan implies that writers and poets in the period 1940-1960 are intellectuals. In short, for a time from the mid-1940s onward, writers and poets were - if not completely removed from the governing military-bourgeoisie-intelligentsia block - mostly excluded and irreversibly becoming a minority. Besides, no writer with a strong political position, such as the one Yakup Kadri had occupied, would be included in the government again. As seen, examples found in articles are limited; all of them are those of Karaosmanoğlu.

Attilâ İlhan strongly defended the active “role of the intellectual” from the early 1950s. As the progeny of a Republican elite bureaucratic bloodline, his

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140 Attilâ İlhan, “Önsöz Yerine”, *Gerçekçilik Savaşı* (Istanbul: BDS Yayınları, 1991), 7.



attempt to recreate responsive missionary intellectual role of the early Republican years - in Ahıska and Kahraman's terms - unlike "Second New" poets. Poets that really came from the lower strata started questioning their role, while among intellectuals that had descended from the elite there was not yet a discernible fissure with the state. More thorough study is needed to support this argument. For example, Can Yücel - who never abandoned the socialist politics and poetry, whose importance in the literary world has been attested since the 1970s and whose career reached its peak in the period following the 1980 coup - was the son of the Minister of Education in the 1940s, Hasan Ali Yücel. Nevertheless, he was arrested after the 1971 "coup by memorandum."

In fact, the debate about Attilâ İlhan's argument should be whether or not there was a fissure in the discussion of the "Second New" intellectual's role. In the course of the rise of the "Second New," the notion of the intellectual was never addressed by the movement's vanguard poets. Moreover, within the discourse on aesthetics opened up by these poets, the emergent literary products reflect a distancing from the missionary role of the intellectual, as described in the beginning of this chapter. This distance of the middle-class poets that coexist with that mass called "the people" does not refer to a rupture from the latter calls for the denial of the former's role.

Attilâ İlhan criticizes the poets of the 1940s claiming that the "First New" poets were protected by Nurullah Ataç and others - including Behçet Necatigil, Cahit Külebi, Fazıl Hüsnü Dağlarca and Salâh Bırsel - by Suut Kemal Yetkin. Both of them were close to government authorities and seemed to support the government.<sup>141</sup> Considering the structure and content of their poems, the poets that carried on under the patronage of the government can be seen as sympathetic to the goal of a founding of a cultural ideology. However, they neither significantly benefited from the government nor did they acquire positions in the government like a higher office or parliamentary position. They became no more than teachers and low-level civil servants. There was already a generation of authors present whose minds were attuned to the cultural policies of the establishment period. The only considerable benefit they received was to be included in textbooks. Thus, the most that they aimed for was to be

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141 Ibid, 9. İlhan cites from his responses to an interview given to a journal in the 1950s.

part of the mainstream. In fact, Meltem Ahıska's approach regarding intellectuals emphasizes their partnership with authority, as seen above.<sup>142</sup>

Ahıska describes tacit, pragmatic agreements. According to her description, in the distinct worlds of the practices of the mass, the official discourse and image of the society unfolded their own existence. To materialize this existence, the governing elite did not clearly delimit its powers over its realm and as a result, the intelligentsia followed suit, leaving the limits of its acquisition of power undefined. In other words, political authority forced itself on the people's life in the practical level only in appearance. Intellectuals could partner with the government as representatives of the people, although their representation did not reflect the community in fact. The intellectuals that had sufficient knowledge and capability with regard to the society and who were close to it had the opportunity to enter the administrative elite through a representative appointment.<sup>143</sup> It was a kind of partnership in crime. When the data are summed and interpreted using this approach, one sees that the political authority requested help from the intelligentsia regarding the advancement and progress of society, but the unsuitability and insufficiency of government's sources allowed it to become content with merely delegating the representation of the people to the intelligentsia. In such a reading, intellectuals who declared and criticized reality were discharged due to their antagonist identity, whereas silent ones were labeled apolitical.

Yet this approach ignores the possibility that the masses in question could choose what is best for themselves. For instance, it can either explain the fact that the masses chose to change the governing party in the 1950 elections, nor their silence with respect to the prosecutions that followed. In the end, the preferences of the people - and especially their negligence vis-à-vis the political prosecutions of the 1950s - cast doubt on the idea of bilateral influence between the intelligentsia and the "people." The problem is the fundamental assumption that the relations between the masses and the intelligentsia or between the masses and the political authorities have remained unchanged throughout the ninety years of the Republic.

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142 Ahıska, *Türkiye'de İktidarı Yeniden Düşünmek*, 50.

143 For example, during the bureaucratic procedures, the provincial teachers, bureaucrats, etc. could talk in the name of the local people.

Actually, Kahraman's approach includes an opportunity for intellectuals enjoy an area of power. For him, the intellectual - who would be discharged after the desired culture developed and would grant the honor of that culture to society - is in fact still a partner of the authority in the position of teacher, educator and developer, at least until he is eliminated. The intellectual is a kind of hero-victim in Kahraman. In both cases, the distance from the people is certain.

### § 3.3 The Role of Literary People

Among these opposing approaches are one that envisions intellectuals as opportunists who are given the mantle of representation and the other that envisions the intellectuals as victims discharged after leading the people's progress. The contradiction between these two opposing approaches has surprisingly not been addressed and an approach that balances the values and deficiencies with respect to the issue of enlightenment has never been discussed in debates about the intelligentsia. Moreover, in both of these approaches, intellectuals are presented in line with Gramsci's organic intellectual model of people of a single type, of the same social status, and even of a single profession.

The intellectual identity evidently remains a burden that influences and artist's creative abilities. There are two definite indicators of this burden. First, every aesthetic production is accompanied by debates about the autonomous area of artists. The notion of the lucidity of aesthetics accompanies this debate. Questions of the lucidity of art and literature – that is to say, of its benefit to readers or viewers - are debates entangled with the mission of intellectuals to bring about social progress. For this reason, in a period when politics and political agendas scaled the peak of social reality up until the coup of 1980, the social realist literary movement was experiencing its own peak, as well. The abstractness, which to an extent gave significance to individualist politics, always faced intense criticism, particularly during this period. In a sense, the autonomous area of artists was completely denied.

The second indicator of the burden of intellectual identity on artists and author was a series of prosecutions. The history of the Turkish Republic is rife with the prosecutions of intellectuals.

Before considering this burden, the poets that were part of the government or close to it or even holders of bureaucratic offices must be taken into account. A few examples that define their capacity to delineate a policy and therefore their political thought must be addressed. The first concerns Attilâ İlhan. With his two books published just as the “Second New” poetry was about to emerge, as early as the beginning of the 1950s, Attilâ İlhan became the vanguard of this poetry. He was a rebel against the style that had emerged from the poetic art of the First New movement. In short time, he enjoyed great popularity among the youth of the period with his rich imagery and colloquial language that successfully captured the social sensitivity. Since the theme of these poems was mainly love, they had no strong connection neither with social realism nor with the themes of the leftist literature that he also defended. However, İlhan has been classified among the literature of social realism his entire life. Due to his prosecution at the very beginning of his literary life, while still in his high school, he entered literature with a political identity. Instead of influencing successors, he was confined to being a pioneer of the “Second New” movement. Eventually, because of the gap between the poetry he produced and his discourse on aesthetics, social realism would have to wait until after 1965 for the republication of Nâzım Hikmet's poems.

Attilâ İlhan tried to develop a theory that would associate Kemalism and socialism. As Ahmet Oktay points out, this was epistemologically impossible and generated few followers in succeeding generations. Yet the young poets who were influenced by his poetry took their place beside him in the literary milieu.<sup>144</sup> As one of the earliest proponents of a leftist reading of Kemalism, İlhan was one of the first critics of the Kemalism, of the İnönü period, as Köksal mentions.<sup>145</sup>

Under a junta that had adopted a nationalist-militarist reading of Kemalism in the 1980s, İlhan was able to be a producer and scriptwriter for the state channel - TRT - at times when the state pursued a relatively moderate tone.

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144 Ahmet Oktay, “Attilâ İlhan: İmkânsız Zorlamak”, *Doğu Batı*, V: 9 I: 35 (2006), 109-115.

145 Duygu Köksal, “Attilâ İlhan”, *Kemalizm*, ed.: Murat Belge (Istanbul: İletişim, 2001), 488-495.

He was a member of a powerful family, becoming acquainted with Anatolia when his father served as provincial governor, but spent most of his life in three large cities. He did not pursue political or administrative office or any similar government position, but always had opportunities to work for TRT after the 12 September coup. However, such positions did not provide him political authority, not even an avenue to promote his opinions. Before this, at the time he first pursued a political discourse, he did not inspire sympathy from the authorities. His poetry entered textbooks only after 1980. To summarize, although he is the best example of an intellectual in the spirit of the establishment era post 1950s, he never became a partner of the political authorities or government. The reason was that he was limited to producing of popular culture to appointments such as television series producer for scriptwriter.

Cemal Süreya, on the other hand, spent much of his life as a bureaucrat, namely as supervisor and member of the Board of Inspection of the Ministry of Finance. After retiring from the ministry, worked as the director of the mint for a while. Only in the years of the coalitions when the state authority was weak, 1976-78, he worked as advisor to the Ministry of Culture. Moreover, Cemal Süreya never faced prosecution by the political authorities for being a dissenter. Though he was knocked as an intellectual partner of the state during his years as civil servant, he was no antagonist, either. Just like Attilâ İlhan, he was not in a position to posit his political views. Only after the 1980 coup, during the prime ministry of Turgut Özal, Süreya openly declared his opposition.<sup>146</sup>

There are two important milestones, in the relations between the state and intellectuals after 1950. Firstly, on the road to the coup of 1960, the Democrat

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146 For a biography of A. İlhan and C. Süreya, see *Tanzimattan Bugüne Edebiyatçılar Ansiklopedisi*, Ed: Murat Yalçın (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2010).

Given the background of the poets covered here, the process of removing intellectuals from politics had likely been completed before the 1950s. More precisely, literary writers were left out of the conceptualization of the scientifically defined intellectual. Although the reflections of intellectuals are analyzed through the authors' works on the "intellectual-people relations," in the literature of sociology, these neither describe the authors' experiences in reality, nor do they challenge the notion of a single and monolithic type of intellectual presented in much of the literature on intellectuals in Turkey.

Party distanced itself from the intelligentsia and academics, and second, the 1960 constitution was prepared by a group of academics and jurists. During periods when political authority included intellectuals, the latter enjoyed positions in the bureaucracy, influential posts in the instruments of the press, or were present in parliament. However, the poets mentioned above were rarely in government positions that would allow them to define policy, and even when they were, their influence was limited.<sup>147</sup> Orhan Veli was employed in the Translation Office until his resignation in 1946. Until the 1980s, some poets had positions in the publication departments of the Ministry of Public Education for other official institutions, while others were employed in the Turkish Language Foundation, a semi-autonomous body within the state structure.<sup>148, 149</sup>

Another debate concerns the field covered by intellectual identity. In the Republican era, “intellectual” identity covered a large spectrum of occupations ranging from teachers to local government representatives (governors, etc.) and extending to jurists (judges, attorneys, etc.). The persons included in this wide definition of the intellectual hold either significant economic means or political authority. Notably, poets whose books did not sell, authors stranded in the provincial literary circles, and local journalists and teachers rarely achieved concrete placements in government that would lead them to a status or prosperity. Although they were honored by their milieu with compliments such as “educated, knowledgeable,” their capacity to represent this same milieu was limited.

In a country where the literacy level was low in the first fifty years of the Republic – growing from some 10 to about 60 percent – opportunities for a person who has chosen the profession of writing or some derivative duty is limited. The publishing and press sector was funded by small capital until the

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147 For poets that were elected as deputies see Çimen Günay, “Taking up the gauntlet: fictionists in the Turkish parliament,” *European Journal of Turkish Studies*, Thematic Issue N°3, Being a MP in contemporary Turkey, URL: <http://www.ejts.org/document473.html>

148 For example, Enis Batur was the son of Muhsin Batur, former Commander of the Air Forces. Enis Batur became the director of the general publications and journals of the Ministry of Public Education in the 1970s.

149 The change of the status of the Turkish Language Foundation, one of the first cultural moves of the 1980 coup, is addressed later in a more relevant chapter.

1980s when it opened up to large capital investment. This limited the financial and prospects and liberty of writers who were already experiencing both positive and negative conditions in both periods.

Given all these conditions, authors and poets evidently had to limit their autonomous creative areas by assuming intellectual roles. They were sensitive to the general political atmosphere of the country, both from the economic perspective - since their means of existence were bound to be limited merely by performing the profession of writing - and from the perspective of readership - in terms of their numbers and expectations. In the end, the number of readers was limited.

In addition to these conditions, the state of being constantly under threat of prosecution strengthened the possibility of being victimized, in Kahraman's terms. In effect, given the conditions under which they exist, author and poet intellectuals led a life complicated by the obligation to choose at every political shift between being the country's hero or its traitor - and between poverty and political engagement. Their writings were under threat of being overshadowed by the actions of their authors. Indeed the "Second New" movement was considered a new and brilliant vein in Turkish poetry in the 1950s, only to be vilified in the 1960s.

### § 3.4 Nâzım Hikmet in the 1960s and the "Slogan Poem" of the 1970s

The 1960 coup and the military regime adopted many, sometimes paradoxical decisions in terms of democracy. The execution of Menderes, the president of the Democrat Party, the adoption of legislation enabling the foundation of the Turkish Workers Party, and recognition of the union rights - including the right to strike - received the support of intellectuals in part. These conflicting policies marked the beginning of a split among intellectuals along two almost antagonistic lines, the proponents of rightist and leftist approaches. The leftists had moderate relations with the government during this period until the memorandum of 1971, but this moderation should not be read as ideological affinity. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, over the course of the Cold War, the

army was anyway always involved in politics and influenced political developments.<sup>150</sup>

The peace between the military and intelligentsia in the 1960s was related to the latter's certainty that the constitution guaranteed personal rights and liberties, utmost of which was freedom of speech. Political authorities complained until the 1980s about the restriction of their action by the intervention of bureaucratic institutions and the pressures of civil society (union rights and politicization). Both of these conditions were provided for by the constitution of 1960.<sup>151</sup> Indeed, excessive power over the national will by institutions manned by directly appointed staff was a deficit of the 1960 constitution in terms of democracy. Along with a number of books of Marxist theory, Nâzım Hikmet's poems were re-published from 1965 on, in this environment of apparent liberty brought about by the constitution.

In her discussion of the question of whether or not 1960 coup was an initiative to restore Kemalism, Mazıcı argues that since it paved the way for an alliance among the intelligentsia, the bureaucracy and the military in a way that recalled the İttihat ve Terakki (Union and Progress, UP) period, it was not Kemalism, but the UP period that was reintroduced to the Republic.<sup>152</sup> She points out that in the intellectual role defined before, academics, especially jurists, supported the coup. The military wished to continue being involved in government and for the bureaucratic institutions to control the government. They founded structures to guarantee bureaucratic control of the national will. Still she emphasizes that the real issue was that academics "did not like" the ruling Democrat Party, which behaved "with the [bad] habits of the single party period." She points out that after 1960 the political environment became more rational with bodies like the DPT (Devlet Planlama Teşkilâtı – State

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150 Seyfi Öngider, ed. *Son Klasik Darbe 12 Eylül Söyleşileri* (Istanbul: Aykırı, 2005), Haşim Akman, ed. *Otuz Yıldır 12 Eylül Yaşayanlar Anlatıyor* (Istanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2010).

151 For example, Süleyman Demirel, who formed seven governments 1965-80, had expressed his discomfort with policies approved in the parliament being obstructed by the Supreme Court, the State Council and the Court of Accounts - institutions that were not designated by general elections.

152 Nurşen Mazıcı, "27 Mayıs Kemalizmin Restorasyonu mu?," *Kemalizm*, ed.: Murat Belge (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001), 555-569.



Planning Organization), more balanced with institutions like the Constitutional Court and more democratic with new liberties.<sup>153</sup>

### § 3.5 Social Realist Literature

Union rights, personal liberties guaranteed by the 1961 constitution, and the issue of having elected bodies be under the control of bureaucratic legal institutions would become the subjects of conflict among liberals and leftists, who were by and large Kemalist at that time. The empowered labor unions drew the bourgeoisie to the radical position of criticizing the level of personal liberty. The conflict paved the way for intellectuals to undertake social responsibilities once again. This time, the intellectual was proletarian arousing the consciousness of the workforce with regard to their rights.

Social realism, as a literary approach also rose to prominence in this period along with the socialist waves in the society. The TİP (Türkiye İşçi Partisi - Turkish Labor Party) founded in 1961, was an influential opposition with its deputies in parliament. Upon his death in 1963, Nâzım Hikmet had still not regained his citizenship but was published again and bequeathed to Turkish poetry the gravity of having produced a great poet, acknowledged throughout the world. The journal that for the first time published his poems in Turkey was *Yön*. It propagated his significance and was the first to attempt a leftist reading of Kemalism.

This fact is important in two respects. First, the mentality that wanted to fuse Kemalism and socialism felt an affinity for the communist Nâzım Hikmet. And second, post-1960 coup period was sufficiently free to publish the poems of a communist.

The moderation of relations between the leftist intelligentsia and the army that emerged after the 1960 coup, gradually deteriorated starting in 1968, ending with prosecutions, imprisonment and torture following the martial law imposed by the 1971 memorandum. In addition to prosecutions, speculation broke out about a “deep state” supported by the extreme nationalist Ülkücülük

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153 Faruk Alpkaya, “Bir 20. Yüzyıl Akımı: 'Sol Kemalizm'”, *Kemalizm*, ed.: Murat Belge, (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001), 497.

(Idealism) movement, which had assumed a counter-guerrilla role.<sup>154</sup> In the case of the Turkish People's Liberation Army (THKO –Türk Halk Kurtuluş Ordusu), youth leaders Deniz Gezmiş, Hüseyin İnan and Yusuf Aslan were adjudicated and executed. Many intellectuals including Can Yücel were arrested and taken into custody. Others including authors of the older generation that had been influential during the Republic's establishment period, like Sabahattin Eyuboğlu and Suat Derviş, became sick and lost their lives.<sup>155</sup>

### § 3.6 Were the Authors of the 1970s Included in Government?

How many literary intellectuals were in the 1970s state? The opinion that intellectuals played a leading role in the state bureaucracy is often accepted as given. However, the number of teachers discharged after the 1980 coup shows that most leftist bureaucrats were teachers in the 1970s. Besides, in memoirs concerning the period, the 1402 law is generally associated with academics and teachers.

Governments of the 1970s were mostly called the Milliyetçi Cephe (Nationalist Front), a right-wing coalition formed of liberals, nationalist and Islamists. The coalitions were labeled with the term “cadrist,” because they immediately appointed people of the right wing to bureaucratic positions. Therefore, most high-level bureaucrats were already rightist, by the time of the 1980 coup. However, there was an allowance for leftist intellectuals in government, particularly in the bodies of ministry publications and the semi-autonomous Turkish Language Association. For example, Adnan Binyazar's 1978 journal *Ulusal Kültür* (*National Culture*) for the Ministry of Culture in 1978, Enis Batur's journal *Düşün Bilim Eğitim Sanat* (*Thought Science Education Art*) for the Ministry of Public Education and Ali Püsküllüoğlu appointment as an expert for the press and dissemination organ of the TDK are examples

154 Seyfi Öngider, ed. *Son Klasik Darbe 12 Eylül Söyleşileri* (Istanbul: Aykırı, 2005), Haşim Akman, ed. *Otuz Yıldır 12 Eylül Yaşayanlar Anlatıyor* (Istanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2010).

155 Sennur Sezer, who was a young poet notes that the period of moderation between political authorities and the left ended in 1968, with the arrival of the sixth American fleet. Its visit of the 6<sup>th</sup> fleet was regarded by the entire left wing as American imperialism. Sennur Sezer, *68'in Edebiyatı Edebiyatın 68'i* (Istanbul: Evrensel, 2008), 73-79.

of leftist intellectuals in government prior to 1980 coup.<sup>156</sup> There were in fact leftist poets and authors in the bureaucracy, in influential positions like ones related to publishing.

### § 3.7 The Indicators of “Being of Politics”

The priority for the socialist literature of the mid-1960s was the migration of workers to Germany because the period’s emigration deeply affected the lives of especially low income and rural people throughout the country. The leftist literature again focused on the lower classes and peasants. As for actual politics, to the forefront came the prosecutions and tortures experienced starting in 1971, brought about by the memorandum, came to the fore. The execution of Deniz Gezmiş and his friends opened a deep wound in the consciousness of the left wing, and this suffering became a symbol in poetry.<sup>157</sup> Another common theme of the period’s poetry was the protest against the movement of the sixth fleet in 1968.<sup>158</sup>

During the 1960s, young poets distanced themselves from the “Second New” movement, which was gradually losing its influence. İsmet Özel, Atıf Behramoğlu, Süreyya Berfe, Nihat Behram, Özdemir İnce, and Murat Belge

156 The listing of all literary writers who held public office exceeds the scope of this text.

157 For more on this topic, see Sennur Sezer, *68’in Edebiyatı*, 38-42, 72-85.

158 In his analysis of the period, Hakkı Başgüney categorized the writing/cultural approaches under four headings: Leftist Kemalist writers (traditional intellectuals, followers of the intellectual generation of the founders of the Republic); Marxist intellectuals; idiosyncratic intellectuals; and modernist–avant-garde writers. This categorization is worth of discussion and is fruitful for any research that focuses on this period. Notably, no literary movement of the period seems to be influenced by either the “Second New” or the First New. Among the avant-garde that Başgüney describes in his categorization, literary writers that fit are - in my understanding - people like the “Second New” poet Mehmet Taner who emerged in the environment of *Tan* publications in Ankara, young poets like İzzet Yasar who was supported by Taner, and Enis Batur who at the same time was publishing the *Düşün Bilim Eğitim Sanat* journal of the Ministry of Public Education. As I pointed out, in the first issue of the *Yeni Dergi*, which is in the literary style of Memet Fuat, there is no distinction from the Social Realism movement. That said, his was in principle a literary, not political journal. Nearly everyone outside the entourage of the *Tan* publications was in any way writing poetry that echoed the social realist art. Hakkı Başgüney, *Yazarlar Çağı* (Istanbul: Yazılama Yayınevi, 2015), 225-244.

(who would soon become a major literary critic), declared this separation in their journal that appeared in the late 1960s. In lieu of a manifesto, the editorial outlook of *Halkın Dostları* was an uprising of young poets against the poetry of the “Second New.” The importance of this strategy for such a young, small journal lies in the fact that these poets soon became the major poets of their period. An editorial entitled “Attack on the Retrogressive Art” was applied to both traditional poetry - settling the scores with poets around the *Hisar* journal in its second period, which started in 1964 - and the Islamist followers of Necip Fazıl and Sezai Karakoç.

The editorial of *Halkın Dostları* was unsigned, but it seems to reflect the opinions of İsmet Özel and Atıf Behramoğlu, among its founders. In the text, traditionalists are criticized as having “completely identified themselves with order.” They further criticize the “Second New” and its followers as “retrogressive” for adopting a “passive attitude towards revolutionary struggle.” Unable to “renew themselves in life; [they] hence were weathered by life.” The authors of the journal define themselves as “the offspring of new conditions and the revolutionary struggle.”<sup>159</sup>

Hence, these young poets presumed the “Second New” école cannot completely be rejected. However, they should be removed from the picture as they are unfit for the struggle of socialist revolution. Moreover works to be produced must support the revolutionary struggle and be derived from its language. It is not sufficient to be socialist or involved in politics. What is needed is an art and poetry ready to serve the revolution. After the 1971 memorandum, the journal was shut down under martial law.

By the term “revolution,” *Halkın Dostları* implies an international revolution. Leftist politics of the 1970s were formed around internationalism. This approach which recalls Zhdanovian Soviet art politics became more radical towards the mid-1970s. The abstract literature of the “Second New” of mid-1950s lost its power given the ongoing political polarization throughout the country.<sup>160</sup>

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159 “Gerici Sanata Hücum”, *Halkın Dostları* (March: 1970), issue: 1, 1.

160 In his analysis of the issue, Hakkı Başgüneş, sheds light on Memet Fuat’s evaluation about the year 1964 in *Yeni Ufuklar*. Memet Fuat says intellectuals were focused entirely on politics

“Second New” shifted to a more socialist and open poetry, as well. Ece Ayhan published *Devlet ve Tabiat* in 1973, and Turgut Uyar published *Toplandılar* in 1974. Indeed, acknowledgment of Nâzım Hikmet's poetry opened new possibilities for the great poets of the “Second New.”

Furthermore, given the conditions of political polarization of the 1960s, a shift appeared in the reading habits of especially younger readers from literature to political. By then, Marxist political literature was being translated into Turkish; readers' expectations of literary texts were reshaped to become social realistic. The “intellectual” identity of the author added to his practical responsibilities, a fact which would be questioned in the 1980s.<sup>161</sup>

*Yön* was the journal of social realism of the 1960s, the one that resisted the 1971 memorandum was *Yeni a*. Following its 1956-1960 period with a cadre consisting of Asım Bezirci, Edip Cansever, Selahattin Hilav, Onat Kutlar, Erdal Öz, Kemal Özer, Demir Özlü, Adnan Özyalçınır, Cemal Süreya, Ülkü Tamer, Engin Günçe, Doğan Hızlan, Ferit Öngören, Önay Sözer, and Hilmi Yavuz, it began to be published again after the memorandum, with the addition of Refik Durbaş and Nursel Uğurlu. It also ran the texts by Can Yücel and Erdal Öz, who were then in custody.<sup>162</sup>

Memet Fuat's *Yeni Dergi*, the most important period of which was 1964-75, was not supposed to reflect political content. It was the only journal of the early 1960s that had links with the West and the modernist literature of that period. But from the mid-1960s, it focused solely on Turkish literature, a choice that reflected its political basis. The rejection of the West in that period also implied rejection of imperialism. Foreign literature was represented by Cuban literature and by the literatures, poets (like Lorca) and authors of other third-world countries. *Yeni Dergi* also released a special issue on the subject of

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throughout the year. In the same text, he points out that, sales of books about Marxism shot up in the same year. Başgüney, *Yazarlar Çağı*, 205.

161 In *Yarılma*, a novel by Gün Zileli, on his memories of the 1960s, the partisan youth wanted to equip themselves not with literature, but with political theory. Books on Marxism became subjects of long debates in communal readings. They tried to interpret the developments of the period, like the Prague Spring through this lens. In such an environment, it is unsurprising that the principles of the Zhdanovian proletariat literary writer found their place among this young generation of writers and poets.

162 Sezer, *68'in*, 101.

Marxist criticism. Therefore, in spite of its prioritization of literature, its political bent was evident. Egemen Berköz and Refik Durbaş were also among the young talent of the period who distanced themselves from the “Second New” and turned to social issues.

Economic crises followed the period of martial law after the 1971 memorandum, which increased street violence among polarized political groups in the 1970s. Until the military coup of 12 September 1980, there was no prospect for a significant breakthrough in either the social milieu or literature. After 1960, an opportunity to enrich the “Second New” poetry with more political content emerged. However, the young generations of the 1960s and 70s missed this opportunity as a result of the choice to sideline poetry for political aims.

Nâzım Hikmet, by that time a world poet, reached an audience among the left that the contemporaneous generation of poets could not. In this period, the socialist theme in poetry as well as in other branches of literature started to be represented by the term “revolution.” As Sennur Sezer points out, even the names of books such as İsmet Özel's *Evet, İsyan!* (*Yes, Revolt!*) (1969), Süreyya Berfe's *Gün Ola* (*When the Day Comes*) (1969), Özkan Mert's *Kuracağız Her Şeyi Yeniden* (*We will Make Everything Anew*) (1969) and Atıf Behramoğlu's *Bir Gün Mutlaka* (*Certainly Some Day*) (1970) are like slogans.<sup>163</sup> Hope and desire for revolution is evident among this group, writing the enthusiasm of communist revolutionary rebels in South America and Asia, with emphasis on Ho Chi Minh and Che Guevara.<sup>164</sup>

The authoritarian regime that evolved from the March 12 memorandum embarked on numerous prosecutions targeting this hoped-for revolution, interpreting it as an attack on the state. Indeed, the socialism of time was founded on the “belief that all problems will be solved by revolution,” to the extent that this caused alienation within society. This alienation was perhaps among the reasons society ignored the prosecutions of intellectuals during the junta regime following the 1980 coup. The popularity of the socialist poem collapsed, while the intellectual role shifted from being the savior and unifier

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163 Sezer, 65'in, p.: 89.

164 Ibid., 61-70.

of the masses to the cultural producer of a revolution not yet accepted by society. This shift in the mentality of the intellectual paved the way for his marginalization by the government after the coup.

Politics that used to address the lives of the destitute, now expressed the revolutionary goal of a politically conscious proletariat in the 1970s. The poetry engaged with political goals was labeled “slogan poetry” in the 1980s. In slogan poetry, revolutionist jargon found its way into poetry, and the poetry limited itself to its targeted audience - the political group it served to - through what Foucault calls jargonization. Hence, in the linguistic sense, poetry drifted away from the politically neutral and opposing audiences.

A shift in reading preferences in the late 1970s to theoretical texts brought about a decrease in literary production among the leftist intelligentsia. Literary annuals and annual literary evaluations had expected great literary developments in the mid-1970s, but these turned to disappointment. The grave situation in literature was expressed by complaints about political engagement and decrease in literary.<sup>165, 166</sup>

The country dragged to a political and economic dead-end after the 1971 memorandum, the 1974 operation in Cyprus, and the ensuing petrol crisis. These resulted in an increase individual interest throughout society. Literary production could not remain indifferent to political polarization, and it did not.

In the chaotic conditions the country faced in the last two years of the 1970s, interest in literature dropped. Along with other cultural productions, it struggled for existence. Interviews on the period reflect that with the 1 May 1977 event, the intelligentsia abandoned hope for a revolution and considered the possibility of another military coup. Therefore one motive of writing - “the hope for a revolution” - was removed, which along with the terror of street violence caused a decrease in literary output.

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165 Başgüney, *Yazarlar Çağı*, 216-224.

166 Başgüney, *Yazarlar Çağı*, 170.

### § 3.8 A New Islamist Poetry

The Islamist expression pioneered by Necip Fâzıl, which came to be known as Islamist poetry after 1980, discovered a modern path beyond traditional molds in the mystic poems of one important poet of the 1950s “Second New” movement, Sezai Karakoç. This genuine, beautiful poetry, which was almost abstract, united the styles of “Second New” with Sufism. Necip Fâzıl's follower Karakoç thus added a new, fruitful path and a parallel political will to conservative poetry. After him, Cahit Zarifoğlu also adopted the aesthetic criteria of the “Second New” but with a mystic content.

Nationalist Front governments of the 1970s provided scholarship opportunities for education abroad, particularly to conservative students. This was their opportunity to encounter Western culture personally, which was probably the determining factor in the formation of Islamist poetry of the 1980s, along with the modernization of Islamists.

The Islamist tradition, which paled in comparison to the leftist literature of the 1960s and 70s despite the literary legacy of Ottoman poetry, was enriched and empowered by the aesthetic paths for by “Second New” masters such as Sezai Karakoç. İsmet Özel, who was among the major poets of the left wing and was proficient in modern literature, joined the Islamist intelligentsia in mid 1970s. A younger generation of Islamist poets equipped with the notions of modernism included Cahit Zarifoğlu and Ebubekir Eroğlu.

In addition to these, Hilmi Yavuz, another major poet of the 1970s, decided in the early 1980s to revise the poetic tradition in light of the East-West dichotomy. The intellectual groundwork for Islamists to interact with Western culture and bring about a critical response to challenge Orientalist approaches was prepared in the 1970s. Islamist poetry in the 1980s succeeded in eliciting a response from the West in the 1980s and a genuine modern literature was created.<sup>167</sup> The themes and discourses that represented Islamism in poetry were never found to be “political” by government authorities.

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167 An analysis is provided in Chapters 8 and 9.



### § 3.9 Summary

In this chapter, a short history of the political content of Republican era Turkish poetry was presented through analysis and examination of concepts like the discrepancy between collectivism and individualism, the differentiation of populism from socialism and the distinction between politics and representation in the content of poetry. The literary analysis showed that social realism was the criteria for determining the politics of a text up until the 1980s; the intelligentsia, the government and even the literati considered individualism and non-critical populist approaches in literary works to be apolitical. Within this framework, the “First New” (Garip) and the “Second New” movements were considered “apolitical.” But the poets of both movements did not consider themselves apolitical. The first movement had a political statement comprising of reaching urban masses as a minimum, lifting literature out of its elitist boundaries. The second movement aimed to represent the unrepresented. The abstract, introverted poetry of the “Second New” movement was not elitist but anti-populist. This formulation must be read as a dialogue with social transformations and perceived as a political attitude. Thus, every movement deemed to be apolitical was actually shaped according to the discrepancy between the collectivist and individual identities of the poets on the basis of populism and representation. In accordance with political and social transformations, these movements approached or departed from social realist political content and the social realist notion of the intellectual role. Critics, who were applying these social realist criteria did not perceive the political attitude of these works until the 1980s.

Social realism, with its socialist principles, dominated the literary world in two distinct periods, both under the influence of Nâzım Hikmet: in the 1930s and the second half of the 1960s through the end of 1970. However, the social realist literature of the 1970s tended to have the theme of revolution, with its related discourse and vocabulary: words that hinted at crucial personas - like Che Guevara or Deniz Gezmiş - or sayings that directly addressed revolution. Social realist tendency was followed by modernist “First New” and “Second New” movements, both of which were deemed apolitical at their respective times by both the government and readers.

All of the poetic tendencies of the Republican period were closely related to the socio-political conditions of their time, as the government policies, the response of the community to these policies, and the social, economic and political transformations taking place in society. The poetic evolution can be perceived as a response or a reaction only if these aspects are read together. Otherwise, the poetry itself seems to respond neither to the political authority nor to social tendencies. Some of these factors become dominant at certain times. For instance, political polarization – sometimes even triggered by the government – led to the instrumentalization of literature to oppose the government in the 1970s.

The investments and publications of the Turkish Ministry of Culture, along with the primary and secondary curriculum of Republican Turkish literature reflect government interventions into the content of the literary mainstream including the poetry. The government tended to tout “apolitical” poets, and real leftist poets as well as the poets and poetry of the “Second New” movement were excluded from the curriculum. Only extensive research into the decision making behind the curriculum would reveal why the “Second New” movement was still not included in textbooks in the 1980s or whether or not the government considered the pioneers of this movement to be political.

Throughout Republican history, the political content of a poem has always been associated with the intellectual status of the poet. “The elite intellectual” typology often touted in studies that defined intellectuals as de facto government collaborators does not actually fit most literary personas. Additionally, only a small minority of intellectual poets managed to join the Republican elite and by the 1950s, the links between poets and governing authorities became weaker, if not insignificant. Still, until the 1980s, the intellectual identity of the poet was strongly felt either in the representation of the poet subject in poems, or in manifestos on poetry.

The real transformation in the political interpretation of poetry took place in the 1980s. This transformation was naturally related to the social oppressions and political restrictions brought about by the 1980 military coup. The role of the socio-economic transformations in a shift in literary perception - with its cultural impacts – are described in the following chapters.

## The Transformation of 1980s

The post-1980 period is distinguished by the heading “after 1980” in literature and social studies. This separation marks a transformation started that year. The concept of 1980 not only indicates 12 September coup d’état, but also socioeconomic transformation associated with engagement in the global market, as well as other economic and political conditions of the following decade. The coup d’état was the reason and key factor for facilitating numerous changes and transformations within the political, social, and of course, economic sphere.

During the state of emergency in 1980-83, the junta radically restricted citizen’s rights to political activity, limited the establishment of civil organizations and banned them from political activities, suppressed the press to the highest degree in the history of the Republic and prosecuted thousands of people, all of which created an environment of oppression and violence. The only governing body was National Security Council which consisted of the highest military commanders. Closing down the trade unions enabled the promulgation of economic measures proposed by the International Monetary Fund. Known as the 24 January decisions, it commenced participation in the global economy by enabling a decrease in actual wages. Given the dynamic changes in economics and social life accompanied by the conditions mentioned above, this process caused fast and fundamental transformation.

Political conditions created by the 12 September 1980 coup d’état are articulated and discussed in numerous publications and studies. A complementary

work on the literature of the period contributes to envisioning the social conditions of the period; however, scholars have been unwilling to undertake such an interdisciplinary study. Instead, the masses learned their superficial information about the period from popular resources as television serials and commentaries in the media.

The 1980s had a different impact on identity, which is represented in literature. The period created extraordinary conditions like exposure to violence and oppression based on political identity especially for leftist intellectuals. Economic transformation caused changes in the lives and perception of poets and authors who are also a part of the national economy. The freedom of politics concerning gender and religion would be revived and replace the fundamental political stance during the 1980s.

In this situation, we can group the factors that affected poets' lives during the 1980s under three headings: 1. state violence, 2. Rapid, radical changes in their financial conditions under the influence of economic transformation and again state violence, and 3. changes in the makeup of intellectuals and their readers which result from transformations in society due to the changes of the 1980s (This third factor is also the result of the first two).

#### § 4.1 State Violence and Authoritarianism

During the 1980-1983 period when 600,000 people were prosecuted, detained or imprisoned, some registries regarding political detainees and convicts have been removed from prison records.<sup>168</sup> In addition to fifty executions, about 800 political convicts were “lost” and 263 were reported to have died with “various” reasons.<sup>169</sup> These numbers correspond to at least 1 percent of the population of the period with an even larger area of influence. The process as a whole was an impressive practice of symbolic violence in Bourdieu's terms.

The purpose, implementation, and justification for these practices of violence were articulated even in the first statement of chief military commander Gen. Kenan Evren:

168 Ali Yılmaz, *Kara Arşiv 12 Eylül Cezaevleri* (İstanbul: Metis, 2012), 38.

169 Ibid., 36. This study, which is an investigation of the period's prison conditions, also constitutes an important source for understanding the influence of violence.

Noble Turkish Nation;

The Republic of Turkey was entrusted to us by great Atatürk and it is indivisible as a nation and country. As you might have observed in recent years, our country has been subjected to treacherous ideological and physical attacks directed against its existence, its regime, and its independence through the state provocation of external and internal enemies.

State, along with its essential bodies, was rendered non-functional, constitutional institutions were either silent or demonstrated conflict among one another, political parties were in constant dispute, and they did not achieve unity and did not take the necessary measures to salvage the state. So these destructive and separatist forces increased the intensity of their activities, threatening the safety of citizens and property.

Instead of Kemalism, reactionary and other perverted ideologies were produced; educational institutions from primary schools to universities, the government system, judicial bodies, security institutions, labor organizations, political parties, and finally even innocent citizens in many parts of the country were subjected to pressure and violence and, the country was brought to the verge of civil war in a systematic, insidious way. Briefly, the state has been weakened so as to become incapable.<sup>170</sup>

This speech expresses that political conflicts provoked by unidentified people brought country to a deadlock in terms of internal politics, if not to brink of civil war. All bodies of government became a part of the problem as a result. The state lost its power and that power was reclaimed by the state via a state of emergency.<sup>171</sup> The term “destructive and separatist forces” refers to an ambiguous group of perpetrators of street violence who are deemed “the enemy.” The scope of this “enemy” is deliberately unclear. The alleged “enemy” was defined as perpetrators that had penetrated the courts, government systems and even schools, which would clearly increase the number of enemies that

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170 Turkish Parliament Investigation Report on Military Coups, Vol: 2, November 2012. [https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/sirasayi/donem24/yilo1/ss376\\_Cilt2.pdf](https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/sirasayi/donem24/yilo1/ss376_Cilt2.pdf)

171 This sentence is identical to Carl Schmitt’s justification for a state of emergency.

society would target, causing people to classify individuals as “perpetrators” or as “victims.” The message is that any given person can only fit into one of these two roles. Politically, they are either friend or foe. Under this conceptualization, anyone who was not personally involved in street violence, but felt sympathy for the political views of agents involved in violence might be identified as the “enemy.” People had to choose a side: They were either politically neutral friend or an enemy that supported a certain political view. This challenge expanded the area of intervention area of the junta, legitimizing the level of state violence.

Although oppression and torture of the left and right wings had become common practice, the cultural ideology of the time had become consistent with the views of extreme rightist and conservative parties, so the nationalists were not completely excluded from the system in the period that followed. On the other hand, most leftists were excluded from civil services, oppressed by economic sanctions, refused appointments, and subjected to other apparatuses of violence, even if they were not prosecuted. In other words, the junta held leftists including the intelligentsia responsible for the pre-coup polarization, as prosecutions and related practices of violence show. These practices functioned as a repetitious anti-leftist propaganda for the masses. The imposition of a right wing, militarist interpretation of Kemalism<sup>172</sup> along with an

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172 Most analysts of the 1980s analysts agree on the junta’s “rightist” interpretation of Kemalism. Nuray Mert, who argues that Kemalism was defined in various ways during the development period of the Republic, says it emerged with more rightist “content” following the 12 September incident. Nuray Mert, “Darbeler Daha Çok Sağ Siyaseti Şekillendirmiştir,” *Son Klasik Darbe, 12 Eylül Söyleşileri*, Ed: Seyfi Öngider (Istanbul: Aykırı Yayınları), 49. In the same book, in answer to the question of the relationship between Kemalism and the coup, Mihri Belli supports this view saying, “The Independence courts hung only rightists. The Junta did the opposite. Its real blow was directed at leftists. The period of 12 September thus became the golden age of religious sects” (Ibid, p. 200). This view and the view that the religiousness was imposed on people is evident in many statements about 12 September 12. These views are emphasized in the discourse of the Cold War “Green Belt Project” of the United States, which created moderate Islamic states around the Soviet Union and Iran in order to prevent them from strengthening their area of influence. This thesis does not examine this “project” since it is speculative and beyond the limits of this work. However, the claim that the junta supported Islamic propaganda is important as explained in the following chapters. The junta was

added cultural framework represented in the educational curricula, resulted in the marginalization of the left wing and legitimized the oppression of leftist political establishments. The 12 September junta was relatively tolerant of the conservative fraction called the Islamists.

However, these practices and the legitimization of state violence the masses resulted in a radical conflict between the leftist intelligentsia and the masses. From presentation of books on television as criminal evidence to Evren's critical comments on writers, almost all practices of the junta deepened this conflict. Oppression and violence were carried out in various ways: arrests, surveillance, profiling, publication bans, raids on publishing houses. Publishers and publishing houses were not only discredited, but also suffered financial losses.<sup>173</sup> As a result, over 600 thousand people were taken into custody; more than 50 publishing houses were closed or they liquidated themselves; distributors avoided distributing leftist books; and ultimately readers started avoiding books with political content.<sup>174</sup>

The press was also exposed to suppression, violence and censorship. *Demokrat*, *Aydınlık* and *Hergün* newspapers were closed right after the coup. Starting on 10 October 1980, an investigation was launched against Bedii Faik and Oktay Ekşi of *Hürriyet* newspaper and against Rauf Tamer of *Tercüman*. İlhan

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relatively tolerant of the literary journals of Islamist sects. Besides, Atatürk was emphasized in every statement by the junta and religiousness was also praised in many of them. Mandatory religion courses were introduced into primary and secondary schools; textbooks emphasized that Atatürk had a strong faith. Contrary to Yılmaz Enseroğlu's (Ibid., 167) assertion, as one who took religious culture classes in high school after the coup and having read the textbooks on religion that he mentions, my first impression was that Atatürk was a believer.

173 For further information, astonishing numbers and types of examples are enumerated in Erbil Tuşalp's book, *Eylül İmparatorluğu*. For example, investigations were launched against Yaşar Miraç (for the poem "Taliplerin Ağıdı"), Cemal Süreya, Doğan Hızlan Salah Birsnel, Konur Ertop, Bedia Akarsu and Oktay Akbal (287) under auspices Article 312 of Turkish Criminal Law. Twenty-nine children's books were banned for children under eighteen years of age (287), Writers Syndicate of Turkey was sued for commemorating of Nâzım Hikmet (291), and 133 thousand books of a publishing house were destroyed illegitimately (304). Erbil Tuşalp, *Eylül İmparatorluğu* (Ankara Bilgi Yayınevi, 1988).

174 During an interview with author and owner of Belge Publishing House, Ragıp Zarakolu said that the owner of a bookstore threw hundreds of his books into the sea due to his fear of the police.

Erdost and Muzaffer Erdost were arrested, with İlhan Erdost eventually losing his life due to violence. Seven of the eight soldiers involved were later punished.<sup>175</sup>

In the period from 1980 to 1983, many newspapers were closed in certain situations for limited periods: *Milli Gazete* (4 times, total 72 days), *Cumhuriyet* (4 times 41 days), *Tercüman* (2 times, 29 days), *Günaydın* (2 times, 17 days), *Güneş* (1 time, 10 days), *Milliyet* (1 time, 10 days), *Tan* (1 time, 10 days), *Hürriyet* (2 times, 7 days). The number of investigations against newspapers was as follows: *Cumhuriyet* 28, *Tercüman* 27, *Hürriyet* 14, *Milliyet* 14, *Milli Gazete* 4, *Dünya* 4, *Akşam* 3, *Son Havadis* 3, *Hergün* 2, *Arayış* 2, *Hayat* 2, *Nokta* 2, *Yankı* 1, *Demokrat* 1, *Politika* 1, *Adalet* 1 and others 75. In this period journalists, writers, translators and artists were sentenced to a total of 316 years, 4 months and 20 days in prison.<sup>176</sup>

With the 19 September 1980 amendments made to Article 3 of the State of Emergency Act, the command was granted the authority to implement censorship. With further amendments made on 28 December 1982, the leadership of the state of emergency obtained power to control all publications and means of communication (such as letters and telegrams), through which it prohibited the printing, distribution, transportation, and owning of multiple copies of any publication. Following a change to Article 16, a sentence of six months to two years imprisonment was authorized for news and publications with “special intention” that are “not true for exaggerated” and which may arouse “emotion or agitation.”<sup>177</sup> Such ambiguous prohibitions rendered restrictions on publishing legally unlimited, allowing for the unauthorized implementation of censorship and sanctions.

Prohibitions mostly targeted the publishing sector, especially political publications. Metin Çulhaoğlu asserts that the 12 September incident abolished the freedom of communication for the ten percent of the population that was active and sensitive.<sup>178</sup> As restrictions were justified on the principle of

175 Hıfzı Topuz, *Türk Basın Tarihi* (Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 2003), 257.

176 Topuz, *Türk Basın Tarihi*, 260.

177 Topuz, *Türk Basın Tarihi*, 260.

178 This population refers to an intellectual base that tended to use civil society facilities. What is meant is creating press media as well as forming civil society organizations and associations.



“indivisible unity of the state as a country and a nation” that legitimized the coup and state of emergency, readers of political genre faced with the accusation of being “separatist.” The situation should have resulted in the estrangement of readers' from political content, rather than of the writer, but of course, it resulted in self-censorship by writers, as well.

Although the 1971 memorandum resulted in a period of relatively high violence and oppression, why was there a quick return to democracy, why did this process allow criticism in the cultural environment to a degree, and why did it not leave a legacy of the coup? Alternatively, why was the 1980 coup able to change the economic, cultural and moral structure of society? As a result, the period following the 12 March memorandum became a fodder for literature even before the end of the 1970s, but the poetry of 12 September coup and the ensuing oppression period only emerged in the early 90s. 12 March resulted in protests, but 12 September did not.

Structural differences between the 1971 memorandum and 1980 coup diversified their social impact. Political power was nominally handed over to civilians in the 1983 elections, but the regional enforcement of martial law and the authority conferred on the National Security Council resulted in military surveillance up to the early 1990s. The fact that the presidency of General Kenan Evren, the commander of the Turkish Armed Forces and leader of the coup, lasted until his resignation prior to the 1990 elections implies the continuation of the military regime.

Secondly, the 1980 coup brought about a new constitution intended to usher a new society. With the closing of the Turkish Language Association and the establishment of Council of Higher Education, previously independent institutions were transformed or merged with the centralized parent Entity. With the new constitution, all practices were dependent on legislation.

These changes made permanent through legislation in conjunction with cultural policies<sup>179</sup> clearly anticipate the government's intent to creating a new

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“12 Eylül Cuntasının Amacı Kalıcı Olmaktı”, Metin Çulhaoğlu interview, *Son Klasik Darbe 12 Eylül Söyleşileri*, Prepared by: Seyfi Öngider (Istanbul: Aykırı Yayıncılık, 2005), 109-122.

179 The curriculum was nationalized and religionized, leftist teachers were silenced or removed out of fear and opposing voices were suppressed. The author of this research witnessed many changes within a year. At a state school she was attending, religious culture and moral

society. In addition, these practices ended up being incorporated into the capitalist world system. Given widely used practices of imprisonment, torture, emphasis on psychological health and similar practices, the era resembles the transition period to seventeenth century capitalism as described by Foucault.<sup>180</sup> Moreover, from the legal perspective, administration and constitution following the 12 September were not suspended exactly but a representational dictatorship was in effect wherein the state of emergency laws were prioritized. This preserved the military administration's legitimacy with the public.<sup>181</sup> Via a referendum in 1983, a new constitution was adopted by an overwhelming 92% majority of votes, validating this legitimacy.

Under conditions of violence, sowed to create an atmosphere of helplessness and oppression among certain circles, a new genre of poetry emerged – a poetry of resistance. While Nevzat Çelik was being held in jail and awaited for the death penalty, as poems from the book *Şafak Türküüsü* were set to music by Ahmet Kaya earning acclaim. Sales of the book were boosted by the success of

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knowledge teachers were reassigned to Deputy Director posts, while teachers with left-leading views were compelled to retire or transferred to middle schools, where politics were less of an issue.

180 Foucault developed the concept of the "Great Confinement" to describe the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries in Paris. This involved the isolation of convicts in jail, the insane in psychiatric hospitals and patients in hospitals - leaving them out of the system. Before this era, there was no concept of a prison sentence. Mental patients lived among society on the streets. People were placed into dungeons to be held in custody until the time of their trial. Foucault called this era when people who could not directly participate or contribute in production were isolated, "The Great imprisonment." He suggests that people who could not participate in the national work force, which was required after the industrial revolution, were kept in isolation, tortured and punished in order to persuade them into, participate. Michel Foucault, *Büyük Kapatılma* (Istanbul: Ayrıntı Yayınları, 2005). During the 1980s in Turkey, people who did not comply with the new order of global capitalism – union workers, defenders of trade unions, and left-leading individuals generally striving to keep workers' wages up - were silenced. Trade unions were banned. In prisons, the term "correction" corresponded to torture and methods of psychological pressure.

181 G. Agamben, *Olağanüstü Hal* (İstanbul: Varlık, 2008), 47-57. This concept basically belongs to Schmitt. Schmitt defines this state as "The state of emergency in order to defend the Constitution" and finds it legally valid. Agamben debates its legitimacy and finds that it pushes the limits of the law.

the album, and Çelik became one of the recognizable names of the 1980s through his social realistic poems.

Ahmet Erhan's work "*Bugün de Ölmedim Anne*" published in 1980 portrayed the terror on the streets and constant threat of death in the 1970s. This threat was an unpleasant fact for left-leaning people in the post-coup period. Predictably, Ahmet Erhan has also become known for his first book. These books became influential and acquired a significant audience. Nevertheless, the 12 September coup and the systematically inflicted violence that followed did not find much place the subject matter of poetry in the entire 1980s. The 12 September coup was not actually acknowledged until the 1990s. During this period, poems expressly about torture were published.

## § 4.2 The Economic Transformation

The 12 September coup commenced the country's inclusion in the world economy. Indeed, the biggest trigger for the coup was the economic crisis of the late 70s. A government resolution dated on 24 January 1980 stipulating the conditions set by the IMF to enter a stand-by agreement to alleviate the crisis went into effect only when trade unions were permanently closed after the coup. Consequently, some claim that the coup was a manipulation by external forces to implement these provisions.<sup>182</sup>

The stabilization package prepared and made public on 24 January 1980 by Turgut Özal, who was the Undersecretary of the Prime Minister, envisaged participation in the world economy, requiring a reduction in public expenditures and wages, which in turn would have implication for workers and small businesses.<sup>183</sup>

182 Ahmet Oktay, for example, treats the coup as the completion of the capitalization process. In almost in all interviews on the subject, speakers appealed to South American examples and they identified the traces of imperialism and the Cold War in Turkey. Interview compilations of Seyfi Öngider and Haşim Akman also include such opinions. Accordingly, the 12 September incident is understood as the establishment of the neoliberal system in Turkey, envisaged in the 1979 Tokyo Summit.

183 This important finding is observed not only in economic and political research on the period but also in historical and sociological research. For example, journalist Erbil Tuşalp's book

The implementation of the package resulted in a freeze on wages throughout the 1980s, which meant wages actually depreciated because of high inflation. The tourism and export sectors, on the other hand were supported through subsidies. Meanwhile citizens were burdened with debt via sales on credit and other personal loans that accompanied a shift in national consumption patterns due to participation in the global economy (i.e. the import of consumption goods). Because of the weakening of small capital industries (in a highly competitive environment) and the empowerment of big capital, many sectors that had previously managed with small capital - including the press - were passed into the management of large capital enterprises. The press, that became a professional business, with the goal of high profit, spawned a media sector that was an actor and driving force for cultural transformation.

Another emerging condition was Article 1402, which was added to the Martial Law on 15 October 1980, and granted district commanders the right to dismiss civil servants. The basis of dismissals could be security or incompetence. This act was reinforced by the Special Security Clearance Act (No. 2495), the revised Act of Higher Studies (No. 2547) and last amendment to the Martial Law (No. 2766 dated December 30, 1982). With these regulations, the scope of the act was extended to include all public employees, from academics to police officers.<sup>184</sup>

The first outcome of this law was the dismissal of thousands of scholars and students from universities, as well as thousands of teachers from the Ministry of Education. The total number of officials who lost their jobs reached ten thousand. Dismissals started in the 1980, and the positions were gradually restored from 1989 onwards. Although statistics indicate a large number of reinstatements, these people suffered from this regulation for at least eight

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*Eylül İmparatorluğu* explores the practice of martial law, indicating corruption allegations against certain military executives empowered by the military regime, as well as highlighting specific examples of direct or symbolic violence imposed in order to establish the official ideology. Nurdan Gürbilek's *Vitrinde Yaşamak* makes note of actions of violence, the establishment of a culture of capitalism and essentializing of commodities and the gradually strengthening of popular media.

184 Haldun Özen, *Entelektüelin Dramı* (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, 2002). Haldun Özen, reports the dramatic outputs of this legislative rectification. In his book based on the Human Rights Association report, individual experiences are combined with statistical data.

years. These dismissed bureaucrats and scholars were also marginalized by society, and most stayed unemployed for this duration.

### § 4.3 The Cultural Transformation

Cultural transformation, that resulted from the combination of interrelated political and economic transformations have often been debated, and the cultural transformation of the 1980s is often characterized as degeneration. Consumption and communication patterns were changed, forming the type of individual who is both a consumer and a producer in line with the theoretical capitalist culture.

Scholars and analysts either describe the oppressive, cruel nature of the military regime in the 1980s or the integration into the world economy. The first perspective draws attention to violence. It recalls investigations carried out by the junta, the suppression and sanctions it imposed and even its corruption. An example is the work of Erbil Tuşalp: *Eylül İmparatorluğu*.<sup>185</sup> On the other hand, the approach that highlights the economy focuses on capitalism, integration into the world economy, and its social and economic outputs. Both approaches refer to imperialism claiming that the coup was influenced by the Cold War on the part of United States. This explains why the left wing was oppressed and the Islamist wing was empowered against the left wing. The political part of the debate was based on a speculation of an American plan to establish a “green belt” around the Soviet Union, which meant empowering religious politics in neighboring countries to defend against the Communist

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185 Violence and its impact during the period do not appear in current literary works. Commentaries published on the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the coup tackle the period from a wider perspective, considering its position in global and national political agendas and evaluating the transformation of society from the perspective of capitalism and depolitisation. Nothing in these discussions concerns violence for the fear it unleashed. For example, while the practice of violence in prisons was the subject of a recently published book. The most reliable record documenting violence on the street remains *Eylül İmparatorluğu*.

propaganda of the Soviets. In the case of Turkey, inclusion into the world market was said to be part of this strategy.<sup>186</sup>

The army is often accused of manipulatively encouraging the conditions that necessitated a coup. In this scenario, it is that the military remained passive even in districts under martial law before 12 September. According to this hypothesis, the United States aimed to include Turkey in the global economy by having it adopt new liberal policies estranging it from the Eastern Block and ultimately increasing its dependence and attachment to the United States.<sup>187</sup>

The emphasis on violence in conjunction with absolute political power indicates the regime's military means of protection with reference to Kemalism. In other words, one approach handles Kemalism sympathetically, criticizing the neo-Kemalism developed during this period, whereas a second approach

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186 Those of this perspective also claim that United States agents deliberately created an inner turmoil that led the coup and authoritarian regime to crush the leftist movement.

187 This is also a widespread opinion. For example, Muzaffer İlhan Erdost emphasized the United States factor, and Erbil Tuşalp's *Eylül İmparatorluğu* follows the same plot. Doğu Perinçek agrees with this approach and interpretation. Nevertheless, his speculations about the United States focus on manipulations that led to the replacement of "national" with "religious unity." (Doğu Perinçek, "Gladyo Kendi Gereğini İmal Etti"). Yaşar Yıldırım wrote that if the state and security forces had done their part to alleviate the turmoil, the coup would not have been necessary (Yaşar Yıldırım, "Devlet ve Sıkıyönetim Gereğini Yapsaydı Darbeye Gerek Kalmazdı"). Mahir Sayın agreed that the coup was a "project of American imperialism" (Mahir Sayın, "12 Eylül'ün Amacı, Türkiye'yi Dünyadaki Yeni İş Bölümüne Mümkün Olduğu Kadar Tepkisiz Bir Biçimde Entegre Etmekti"). However, Taha Akyol strongly opposes this notion. According to him, the coup was driven by terror and politics. The 24 January provisions on the other hand, were rational and coherent with the economy (Taha Akyol, "Demirel used to say; 'You cannot make me say that nationalists are committing a crime.' Nevertheless nationalists were also committing crime."). *Otuz Yıldır 12 Eylül* Ed: Haşim Akman (Istanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2010). The prosecution of the coup and junta started in 2010, but, the leaders were quite old by that date. The final two members of the 1980 junta passed away during the investigation. The case was dismissed due to the statute of limitations, so the questions above remained unanswered.

asserts that the “tradition” of military intervention originates from Kemalism.<sup>188</sup> The basis for the latter approach is the struggle for power among political elites, the capitalists and the army. Integration into the global economy is common to both approaches. It is the most important economic impact of the period and plays a primary role in the cultural transformation of the years to follow.

There are studies focusing only on the decade’s economic and social transformations.<sup>189</sup> Cultural changes described by literary works on the subject under headings like moral degeneration, the transformation of consumption and living habits, the more conservative and nationalist political predispositions and the transformation of the understanding of professions and careers are fundamentally the result of political and economic transformations and practices discussed at the beginning of this chapter. In a sense, the violence exerted through power and the economic transformations induced a diverse cultural transformation.

#### 4.3.1 *Individualization and emergence of identity politics*

Individualization is a natural, cultural consequence of the implementation of a capitalist economy. It has been settling in Turkey since the 1950s. However, in Turkish culture where collective ties are strong, individualism had not yet been fully adopted by the end of 1970s due to the influence of certain social concepts: fellowship of townsmen in the effort to survive in cities after migrating from relatively homogenous rural areas (in terms of religion and mother

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188 This is highlighted differently by Ertuğrul Kürkçü and Nuray Mert. According to Kürkçü, the separation of military and civilian power is a tradition in Turkey. According to Mert, the military prioritized the regime before all else. When masses were inclined to exercise the extremes of their freedom of democracy - or even if the army thought so - then it is entitled to make "adjustments" using a coup d'état as leverage. Thus, since the left wing is always the dissolving part, coups always shape right wing politics. *Son Klasik Darbe 12 Eylül Söyleşileri* Ed: Seyfi Öngider (Istanbul: Aykırı Yayınları, 2005) 21-63.

189 For example, Pınar Selek and Zülfü Livaneli focus on cultural corruption, in interviews on the 12 September coup. Pınar Selek, “12 Eylül Solu Muhalefeti de Değiştirdi” *Son Klasik Darbe*, 95-108; Zülfü Livaneli, “Evren Türkiye’yi Türk Demokrasisini Onarılmaz Bir Biçimde Bozdu”, *Otuz Yıldır 12 Eylül*, 272.

tongue), minority ghettos, and strong traditions. The 1980's military coup and subsequent political and economic conditions made the 1980s a period of transformation.<sup>190</sup>

The 1980s started under the shadow of junta and the state of emergency wherein people could not even exercise their most basic personal rights. Although the destruction of the collective body and the becoming of an individualistic society seems contradictory for such an era, political authorities particularly needed individuals with free will to exert power. Foucault says that the power of authority can only be implemented on independent subjects, since the owner of authority can only govern a targeted mass by individual categorization. Authority can only come to power via individuals' submission and approval. On the other hand, the fight against hegemony requires individuals to question their own status.<sup>191</sup> Moreover, power can only be imposed on independent individuals who have an alternative. Hegemony can be exerted on a slave only if he has an alternative to escape. From this point of view, sovereignty is the ability to determine the scope of the actions of others.<sup>192</sup>

In fact, the junta regime successfully destroyed traditional social bonds, installing others in their place on the basis of economic bonds necessary for a market economy. Breaking traditional ties was triggered by two factors: individualism driven by the nature of the capitalist economy, and the severance of social ties and collapse of social structures, facilitated by snitching policies implemented that encouraged people to expose and report others by means of oppression, torture and discrediting. Act 1402 that encouraged people to report close on relatives and colleagues.

This process is estimated the redefinition of value and family structures from an individual perspective. When these definitions were merged with individuality, notions of identity and family roots had to be rediscovered.

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190 Nurdan Gürbilek defines the 1980s as a time when everything was labeled, particularly the naming of concepts. She links this tendency to the hegemony of speech and to competition among various power centers all oppression by military powers. She explains the meaning of naming something: "Naming usually determines the subject of a sentence." N. Gürbilek, *Vitrinde Yaşamak*, 40-52.

191 Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power" in *Power* (NY: The New Press, 2000), 329-331.

192 *Ibid.*, 348-348.



Each individual had to redefine themselves and their environment, discovering new social networks and sets of connections to function in the new system.<sup>193</sup>

It is often argued that 1980s ushered in identity politics. A significant example is the women's movement that aimed to redefine sexuality and the roles of the sexes. The 1980s brought opportunities to improve women's social and economic status, paving the way for a revitalization of feminist movements. The process of globalization provided women with foreign languages skills with opportunities to become business professionals and managers while they participated in politics through a woman's division established by the wife of the prime minister within the Motherland party. Various women's journals almost simultaneously emerged that addressed women's issues and social status.

A female journalist opened these issues to public debate with a feminist novel questioning women's sexuality. Although ridiculed by some, it attracted the interest of the literate masses. A poetic language that confidently expressed homosexuality was used. Debates on ethnicity emerged with onset of the Kurdish movement which was preparing for a resolute revolt, especially after the torture and persecution at Diyarbakır prison.<sup>194</sup> The reason provincialism became dominant is due to increases in the number of rural migrants that broke ties with their land, as mentioned by Karpat and Gürbilek. However, the emergence of self-assured arabesque music was due to the newly acquired right to defend one's identity or ethnicity as well as the increasing number of rural migrants, who were becoming capital holders.<sup>195</sup>

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193 Gürbilek explains how family histories, genealogies and ethnic roots are redefined in the period.

194 Gürbilek suggests that many private, unnamed concepts were discussed and defined for the first time in the 1980s. Sexuality, homosexuality, and generations (such as the 68 generation and the 60s generation) were defined and discussed in the public sphere (*Vitrinde ...*, 22). She draws attention to voluntary confessors those who responded to public investigations, run by newspapers and journals.

195 Arabesque music for example, was born in the 1970s but named in the 1980s. The music of the rural crowds made their voices audible in the city, and gained them recognition, that builds a place and that was a compass in an unfamiliar culture. It was that music that influenced and

The increased interest in history - often mentioned by Gürbilek, A. Oktay, for example - is nostalgia in light of rapid social transformation, as well as a defense against the culture of capitalism and these new definitions of identity. An individual challenged to build an identity of his own, first needed to look into history.<sup>196</sup>

#### 4.3.2 *Social trauma and the Transformation of Values*

Certainly there were people experienced prosecution, prison, and violence in addition to the dire straits of economic transformation. Among these were teachers and civil officers who endured the difficult psychological and economic challenges of losing their jobs and or being banished (euphemistically "appointed") to remote places during the state of emergency.

Thus, economic liberalization created two influential forces in society that acted to push the people in opposite directions.<sup>197</sup> Liberalization requires freedom and openness in every area. Meanwhile, the junta, its tangible impacts during the 1980s and the dire straits caused by economic transformation were all oppressive. Moreover, these influences were not only experienced by intellectuals and victims of violence, but by every faction of society - pushing it in such opposite directions to such expense that it demolished national unity.

One of the most important features of the 12 September policies was the social gap created between those who were and were not afflicted by state violence - to the extent that it cut communication between them. Dismissal of

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corrupted that unfamiliar culture - assimilating it. Gürbilek adds that defining arabesque was an effort of the city's actual "owners" to rebuff these rural crowds by labeling them.

196 Gürbilek also notes the tendency to draw interest to the past. But such conceptualization of the past did not reflect any historical or scientific truth; instead, was an image that stimulated the current needs and fantasies. It was a "consumable" past. So for the first time in the 1980s, pop history was produced in Turkey for extensive consumption (*Vitrinde...*, 24).

197 Nurdan Gürbilek mentions that the 1980s are remembered first for the prohibitory military regime and second for a "constructive," "founding," and "civil," government that provoked the people to speak out. (*Vitrinde...*, 13). In other words, Evren's junta and Özal's liberalism are a dialectic. At this point, "fractional" practices must be properly defined. Prosecutions and investigations of intellectual and left-leading fractions did not cease along with Evren's presidency. Nevertheless, it was a time of freedom for those who had no contact with the state or bureaucracy, as well as for moderate Islamists, liberals, and the apolitical.

prosecuted individuals from their jobs deprived them of other job opportunities.<sup>198</sup> Disclosure of their identities by martial authorities and the repetition of the justification that these activities had been carried out against separatists, along with the constant risk of prosecution for social connections determined the agenda both sides. This compounded struggles to survive in the face of economic developments.<sup>199</sup>

Denunciation of friends and colleagues, laying people off based on Act 1402, breaking off relationships with people who had been subjected to prosecution (due to fear or one's self-interest) turning away from physically battered or impoverished individuals, and unconditionally promoting or supporting the authority that enabled, the phenomena that prepared the foundation for the subsequent cultural transformation and the transformation of social values. These people gave approval and support to an authoritarianism that cannot be confessed alongside a will to democracy. The change in values was labeled as "cultural degeneration," by the period's intellectuals and it was deemed the result of trauma created by direct or indirect practices of violence.

As emphasized in Nurdan Gürbilek's characterization of the cultural transformation of the 1980s, the traces of a lack of conscience a social scale

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198 Those who were dismissed via Act 1402 had difficulty finding new jobs and could not get jobs in state institutions. Actually, these individuals' only experience was as civil servants, so they had difficulty in finding employment in the private sector, as well.

199 According this Gürbilek, ANAP economy and politics divided culture into two impermeable spheres. One consisted of the masses that were oppressed, banned, and not recognized by the central hegemony. And the other was the expressive, acentric, diverse, spontaneous and experienced crowd with an unprecedented desire to the 1980s. (*Vitrinde Yaşamak*, 21). That resulted in cultural duality and disintegration. In the first sphere, she defines a Turkey that in order to rid itself of conflict and paradox, detaches itself from rural people, the poor and rebels. The images, displays and 1980s media, in her opinion, succeeded in creating the impression that this ideal was possible for everybody and that the "others" could be safely neglected. In the second sphere, the residents of another world were stripped of the right to free speech, jailed and prohibited from speaking their mother tongue. Gürbilek claims that the 1980s tried to separate the worlds of identity and opportunity from the world of poverty and impossibility as two diverse poles that would never be in contact (26-27). Nurdan Gürbilek, *Vitrinde Yaşamak* (Istanbul: Metis Yayınları, 1992).

have three attributes. The first is the disassociation of the link between statement and context, which was particularly applicable to public-service news and advertising content. With improvements in the advertising sector and the transformation of the press into modern media, newspapers ceased to be a tool of communication and became a sector that “promoted” the “news” as a commodity. This ultimately caused promotional and informational texts to become metaphorical.<sup>200</sup> News headlines and bulletins were being redesigned with metaphors to draw the attention of the reader, inviting them to dig deeper into the text. This situation had brought both some change in the use of language, and also the necessity of concealing information from careless, inattentive readers by embedding essential information in the main text. Within the framework of capitalist consumer culture, this metaphorization can be assessed as an imitation and replacement of truth. Gürbilek's approach to the subject indicates a transition to the society of the spectacle in the Debordian sense.<sup>201</sup> Nevertheless, the rush of a collective society that once embraced values like protecting the helpless and staying devoted to friends - or at least seemed to emphasize these values and practice them insofar as possible - to immediately let them go, to render language meaningless with concocted metaphors and expressions and to adopt the language of the media indicates society's desire to escape from inner conflicts. This era could easily be interpreted as a period of rapid individualization. In the end the politics, that were implemented, aimed at destroying social ties to promote individualization.

The publishing of private lives through confessions, as described by Gürbilek again indicates the inability to confront inner conflicts. The phenomenon she defines as “the exposure of private lives on media through confessions,”<sup>202</sup> has a different meaning when considered together with the broad masses that were forced into confession after their arrest. Each pleaded guilty to something - some as a result of physical violence and some of being provoked to speak up.

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200 Nurdan Gürbilek, “*Vitrinde Yaşamak*”, “Adlandırılmak” and “1980'lerin Kültürel İklimi” in *Vitrinde Yaşamak*.

201 Guy Debord, *Gösteri Toplumu* (Istanbul: Ayıntı Yayınları).

202 Gürbilek, *Vitrinde Yaşamak*, 15.

#### 4.3.2.1 Trapped between Trauma & the Narcissistic Culture of Capitalism

The psychological basis of the culture established in the 1980s was predicated on these traumas.<sup>203</sup> With respect to the period's individualistic psychology, Ahmet Oktay claims that capitalist culture was a world of physical objects where any labor was turned into a commodity; thus, a certain worldview became widespread where individuals were selfish, narcissistic and oblivious to its own existence.<sup>204</sup>

The perception of culture described by A. Oktay in the same article, references Baudrillard, Raymond Williams and Guy Debord suggesting that pop culture is fed by a limited notion of history and predicated on generic information. It invests solely in the present and a superficial world of images established through social amnesia. The main reasons are the alienation necessary to own labor, the ease of rapidly reproducing any item and the resultant depreciation as conditions of mass production. In this context, he refers *The Culture of Narcissism* by Christopher Lasch, which then had not been translated into Turkish yet.

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203 For example, Ertuğrul Kürkçü describes these phenomena as "acting in one's own interest" and rejects accusations that the these masses are "unprincipled" in his interpretation of the support the 12 September coup received from masses and the public endorsement of the new constitution. The act that Kürkçü called "smart" was the choices by the masses to reconcile with the military and send the military regime, enabling them to regain the right to vote. Nevertheless, events show that the masses generally agreed with the intentions of the junta. In other words, the 1980s political scene suited the nationalist-conservative atmosphere manipulated by the military regime. In this case, the possibility of theoretical approval can be construed as "a smart choice." The main problem is the assumption that this same ideology has been perpetual and constant since the beginning of Republican era, when military regimes are the governing power. The only common characteristics of military regime in Republican history are the assumptions that the military possesses supreme power, supersedes any type or means of politics and safeguards the continuation of the system. Besides, the elections of 1983 did not end the military regime. The measures to reduce army's influence over the state was not taken for the following election. The origin of the only concern that the non-victims of the 12 September regime have is their implicit consent to violence. This was often rationalized by the state as a "fight against separatists". Seyfi Öngider (ed.) *Son Klasik Darbe* (Istanbul: Aykırı Yayınları, 2005), 21-43.

204 Ahmet Oktay, "Şimdi Üzerine Düşünceler" in *Entelektüel Tereddüt* (Istanbul: Everest Yayınları, 2003), 73. (Article published at 1988, in *Argos* journal).

Lasch refers to Otto Kernberg with respect to narcissism: "Even though the narcissist person is inclined to exaggerate his/her own intellectual abilities, his/her capacity to praise is unexpectedly minimal. Therefore, he/she expects aid from others to inspire appreciation and admiration."<sup>205</sup> Narcissism was not an essential problem of selfishness or pride, but a matter of existence and self-esteem. Under normal circumstances, narcissistic pathology results from childhood trauma and oedipal angst that originate from either being rejected by one's mother or castrated by one's father. According to Lasch, it is the characteristic psychological syndrome of the century. To elaborate, Lasch redefines the state of individuality that had been narrowed down to narcissism and reviewed the conditions of an individual's public existence against a broad spectrum of factors: the media's tendency to draw out childish instincts, the replacement of parental authority with school education, the rationalization of spiritual life with false promises of satisfaction, and the corruption of work ethics.<sup>206</sup> As a result, an environment is created where the relationship of the individual and society is determined by commodity patterns (images, indicators, and items), and the value of labor is depreciated by mass production. Even possible methods of dissidence are defined by certain templates; thus, the individual is no longer able to define himself as a unique being and lacks subjective value system.

The characterization of capitalist culture as a narcissistic disorder syndrome also includes trauma. According to Lasch, this is a coercive assimilation of the capitalist system that also triggers collective narcissism. The common findings asserted by different psychologists, including Horney, that deal either with contemporary neurosis or with the modern individual include: striving to have good relations with others, the need to shape personal life according to corporate demands, the effort to promote one's personality as a commodity with a market value, the neurotic need for affection, trust and gaining verbal

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205 Otto Kernberg, *Borderline Conditions and Pathological Narcissism* (New York: Jason Aronson, 1975), 161.

206 Christopher Lasch, *Narsisizm Kültürü* (Ankara Bilim ve Sanat Yayınları), 2006.

pleasure and the degeneration of values.<sup>207</sup> Ultimately, the masses are convinced that the interests of the ruling class coincide with the individual interests; opposing the former would only hurt the latter.

When considered from this point of view, trauma directly threatens the existence of the individual to the point that the individual cannot decide for his own interest and benefit. This situation obviously causes inner conflict for the individual.<sup>208</sup>

Three defense mechanisms were used by individuals to overcome these dilemmas in the culture of the period: distinguishing one aspect of the conflict while hiding the other (e.g., supporting the power to maintain national unity), alienation from others (individualization), and alienation from oneself (the alienation of language, society's rapid acceptance of this linguistic alienation, and its rapid response to imposed images<sup>209</sup>).

In terms of violence, does Turkey's experience differ from incidents in Europe and the United States or does the trauma in Turkey originate from direct violence by the state? The answer is both yes and no. Yes, empowered capitalist powers replaced state authority, in economic issues. Lasch suggests that after the collapse of the family ties and the domination of location by professionals and institutions, the authority of the parents was replaced by expert authority. Meanwhile, Turkey experienced the direct violence of the state. The answer is also no because the omnipotent junta weakened positive meanings attached to the state in the mind of society. And as explicated in subsequent chapters, the regime ended up redefining Republican ideology, triggering an even more radical opposition to it.

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207 Lasch, *Narsisizm Kültürü*, 111.

208 Lasch also criticizes *Kamusal İnsanın Çöküşü* by Richard Sennet for explaining that the individual overwhelms the opportunism of the sovereign class. *Narsisizm Kültürü*, 60-64. Richard Sennet, *Kamusal İnsanın Çöküşü* (Istanbul: Ayrıntı Yayınları: 2002).

209 Feyza Hepçilingirler's reference to the abundant use of English terms in business world in the 1980s (Hürriyet İK, 4 April 2010) generically exemplifies how intellectuals easily explain their social deficiencies through the lens of 12 September. A longing to escape from meaning or language as a whole, as well the career-conscious showcasing the foreign language skills... The preference to speak in a foreign language in private life may also indicate a tendency to escape from the sentimentality it demands. Source on dispute psychology: Karen Horney, *İçsel Çatışmalarımız* (Istanbul: Sel, 2012), 9-17.

Among certain fractions of society, faith in the state was destroyed beyond repair. For other reasons the answer is no because supporters of socialism during the Cold War were also subject to violence and oppression in the United States and Europe.

#### 4.3.3 *Consumption Patterns and Transformation of Lifestyles*

Economic policies became important even before 12 September due to relentless crises and economic depression in the 1970s, as well as the resulting black market, shortages and related conditions. After the 1971 memorandum, Turkey felt the impact of the global oil crisis in the form of a financial depression starting in the mid-1970s and climaxing at the end of the decade. This accompanied embargoes following the Cyprus Operation and cessations of the inflow of foreign currency. During this period, the labor movement and the politically polarized but strong structure of trade unions intensified stagnation in the private sector.

Defining themselves as the nationalist right wing and the revolutionary left wing, youth movements moved their battles to the street in a reflection of the Cold War on Turkish society. Revolutionist leftists and nationalist rightists who represented the power struggle between the capitalist West and the socialist East blocks, respectively, committed political assassinations, armed attacks on cafes and miscellaneous institutions, as well as other public offenses. In an environment where the government were weak due to coalitions or minority governments, and where political parties were poor at compromising, the implementation of states of emergency implementations were ineffective.<sup>210</sup>

Two major events took place in 1977: First, eighty-eight people lost their lives in riots that erupted during the May Day festivities in the Istanbul's Taksim Square. In elections held in June, Republican People's Party came to power under the presidency of Ecevit as a minority government, getting 41percent of the votes. Ecevit's financial policies had no effect against a second wave of the oil crisis that began in 1978, causing a rapid economic decline. Ozan draws attention to the fact that Ecevit's policies broke the relationship of

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210 The period's armed forces commanders were put on trial in 2013 based on their lack of effort to prevent incidents that led to the military coup. They were sentenced on 2014.



political power to the private sector - that all capital and landowners united as a class or community to demand that government control the working class and end the street violence. According to him, this merger favored the military coup.<sup>211</sup> Indeed, before the coup d'état, the country was in a state of poverty to the point that basics were even unobtainable through the black market from time to time. In actual fact, the depression had been triggered by the oil crisis, which caused a crisis for countries around the world.

The private sector immediately revived on the close of trade unions and mandated wage maintenance after the coup. By 1981, the assets of corporations had increased by 223.7 percent.<sup>212</sup> The 24 January decisions, which were designed to induce integration into the global economy by downsizing the public sector and wages were finally being implemented. By 1983 when Motherland Party under the leadership of Turgut Özal became the ruling party, the country rapidly integrated to the global economy: With the liberalization of imports, the selection of goods on the market were unprecedentedly diversified. Governmental incentives revived markets, making possible the quick accumulation of large amounts of capital. People who succeeded at this became an inspiration for and driving power of society. Entrepreneurship became "alluring." With the increase in foreign trade, foreign language skills, specialization, and expertise became more important. Consumption of cultural and luxury items increased. With the transformation of the media, displaying and exposure of material goods increased, an advancement that intensified consumption. And in spite of wage decrease, purchasing power was maintained with the help of paying in installments and credit cards.<sup>213</sup>

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- 211 Ebru Deniz Ozan, *Gülme Sırası Bizde 12 Eylül'e Giderken Sermaye Sınıfı ve Devlet* (Istanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2012).
- 212 Irwin E. Shick, E. Ahmet Tonak, "Sonuç" in *Geçiş Sürecinde Türkiye* (Istanbul: Belge Yayınları, 1996), 398.
- 213 Among the benefits, the most puzzling was the granting of real estate deeds to slum owners. This policy was most frequently used in Özal's period. Every authority leveraged this policy just before elections to an extent, but Özal was prime minister and implemented it on a comprehensive scale. A renowned expression that almost legitimizes bribery - "my officer knows how to handle his own business" - indicates of bureaucracy's letting loose on the subject, even after being subjected to a serious loss of income in the same period.

Poet Ahmet Oktay points out to this transformation to indicate that Turkey's transition to a capitalistic, neoliberal system was completed by the 12 September coup. Oktay regards these financial, cultural and political “by-products” as “metastasis” characterizing the period as an age of alienation and commodification. According to Oktay, the effects of alienation apply not only to intellectuals but also to the masses. He blames the media. The individual has been turned into a “good to expose.”<sup>214</sup>

In addition to rapid, constant change in the statutes and the socio-economic conditions, participation in the global economy and the ultimate adoption of international standards became imperative. Expectation of efficiency and high standards required specialization of all sectors. From a technical point of view, the prime minister formulate the situation as “stepping into a new age.” This ultimately deepened the industrial jargon as Foucault defines it, that the company rapid technological changes (transition to next-generation technologies in telecommunications and transport) and the incorporation of quality standards in the production and service sectors. Indeed, new areas of authority were formed in this context, such that intellectuals were no longer considered omniscient on each and every topic in the 1980s. For example, the press particularly deferred to businessmen on issues of the economy, since they were the experts in the field. Alternatively, in terms of natural disasters, the expert view of engineers was consulted. And in politics, the views of scholars and former politicians were considered.<sup>215</sup>

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214 Ahmet Oktay, *İmkânsız Poetika* (Istanbul: Alkım Yayınları, 2004), 95-97. On the subject of becoming an item of exposition, also see Nurdan Gürbilek's *Vitrinde Yaşamak*, 22-23. Gürbilek defines this situation as the “publicization of private life”.

215 Rifat Bali notes that to be treated seriously as expert businessmen, this new media approach switched to big capital and business networks. Rifat Bali, *Tarz-1 Hayat'tan Life Style'a* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları: 2002.2009), 20-21. In fact, in newspapers of those years, as Gürbilek mentions, news about the health of sexuality and of course other fields of culture and science increased. The 1980s were a period when the publishing of encyclopedias peaked. The escalating trends of science and possession of knowledge, particularly in technological fields are characteristics of the period.

Individualization and the conversion of individuals into “the goods to expose” increased the importance of a person’s attributes.<sup>216</sup> These can be economic, but also physical and cultural attributes. As Gürbilek and A. Oktay point out and Lasch dresses, individuals strove to maintain an appearance and image that reflected the economic class to which they belonged, as well as declared and explained their identities.

Visualization of cultural and ethnic identities together with the emergence of identity politics in the 1980s are closely associated with individualization. Collective ties (friendship, companionship, kinship, neighborhoods and general collegiality) were weakened by the junta. Nonetheless, the new individual had to question his/her identity to struggle against hegemony, and the new socio-economic reality. This constraint triggered the self-exposure. Individuals needed to emphasize identity; consequently, identities began to become representative. In this first period of Turkish neo-liberalism, the goal was in-depth knowledge. Thus, wealth and a culture of purchased items became a goal.<sup>217</sup>

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216 Nurdan Gürbilek describes the military coup period as a fog covering the all-around and making everything, rendering the people, relations and substances unable to see anything. After the dispersal of this fog, everything became a clear image onto itself and the relations became visual, even discourse became an image. Since then our lives have become window displays (*Vitrinde*, 28-29). “Shop windows hide from observers the fact that each commodity is a product of labor,” (*Vitrinde Yaşamak*, 38). Galleria, the country’s first large shopping mall, was opened in the 1980s. According to Gürbilek, it is among the indicators of new lifestyle that radically influenced the shopping concept. It is outside the center of the city; huge complex in which so many commodities are displayed. Therefore, for the most in the city reaching it requires a special trip. To Gürbilek, it resembles a fair where goods are “visited;” the Galleria customer is a “tourist” in the city he inhabits. The goods to be purchased have only exchange value, losing their consumption value. And purchasing becomes the end itself – a shift from its initial instrumental function to meet the need. The Galleria cannot be defined in traditional terms where the customer is acquainted with the shops from which he makes purchases (*Vitrinde*, 31). Besides, in those years people had the least purchasing power in history (*Vitrinde*, 39).

217 About representing individuals with objects, see Guy Debord, *Gösteri Toplumu*.

#### 4.3.4 *Transformation in the Political Culture*

In fact, the 1980's were important for political transformation. The coup, which was claimed by many political figures of the period to have been an intervention by the United States aimed at “liquidating the left wing and forming a green belt of Turkey,” effectively functioned as such.<sup>218</sup> Political power encouraged particular political attitude in society as nationalism and a religious liberalism, while the links between the intelligentsia and society were weakened.<sup>219</sup>

Despite unanswered questions the coup,<sup>220</sup> resulted in almost a decade of authoritarian rule in spite of elections – all the relevant conditions to indoctrinate and shape the minds of succeeding generations. At the end of this process, a more obedient, apolitical, nationalist, conservative society was created through a nationalistic, conservative interpretation of Kemalism. Leftist views

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- 218 Most leftist figures of the period, from Ertuğrul Kürkçü to Muzaffer İlhan Erdost define 12 September through external factors. For them the two basic consequences of 12 September are the elimination of leftist movements and limitations placed on labor rights. The first serves NATO’s strategy against the Soviet Union, while the latter serves the 24 January decisions that were in harmony with international neoliberal policies in line with those of Thatcher and Reagan. In their explanation, 24 January decisions were applied after Turgut Özal appointed Undersecretary for the Economy. They draw attention to the chronology of the Tokyo Summit in 1979, 24 January 1980 and the military coup on 12 September 1980. (Erdost: 2004, Öngider: 2005)
- 219 Kürkçü summarizes 12 September as the contamination of all the tissues of society with backward ideas. Pınar Selek claims 12 September resulted in investments in consumption culture and the entertainment sector, nurturing a neoliberal generation by suppressing political activities. She insists that this turned out to be a conservative, sexist, and militarist generation. Mahir Sayın claims the injection of individualism and opportunism into the society which would result in society unable to resist against capitalist exploitation (*Son Klasik Darbe*, Ed: Seyfi Öngider and *Otuz Yıldır 12 Eylül*, Ed: Haşim Akman.)
- 220 All intellectuals ask the questions: “Why did all terrorist actions suddenly stop on 13 September, when there were already zones with states of emergency on 11 September? Why did a state of emergency result in more unrest before 12 September, and suddenly stop with the military coup?” The idea underlying in this question is the suspicion that military forces were triggering the anarchy before 12 September to create the conditions that would necessitate a coup. This is the turning point in the relations among intellectuals and the “public” that welcomes the coup.

were effectively blocked by publishing bans, organizational prohibitions and political prohibitions; moreover, because most terror investigations were against the left wing, leftist groups and leftists effectively became the scapegoats for the events of the 1970s.

Although a generalization of all coups is beyond the scope of this work, it is already clear that, the coup of 12 September hybridized centrist democratic-liberal votes with nationalist, conservative views. In 1983, the Motherland Party promised “to unify four tenets” and secured the support that would allow it to remain in government for three terms, two of its four tenets were nationalism and conservatism. Education and culture policies supported cultural conservatism during the period of junta too. Nationalist and conservative bureaucrats had been appointed to policy-making positions, of the Nationalist Front governments of the 1970s, a trend, which continued in the 1980s.<sup>221</sup>

The term nationalist conservatism emerged in Motherland Party propaganda. It included sympathy - even nostalgia - for Ottoman history spread with the support of the media. In the 1980s, secularism as a concept was not yet open to question. But religiosity was promoted by the junta and later by the government. General Kenan Evren declared determination to draw young people's attention to religion rather than politics.

The indoctrination and transformation policies legitimized the coup goal to “save the Republic.” Indeed, the volume of street violence in 1970s forced citizens to regard the coup as a choice between freedom or security. The adoption of a new constitution by referendum in 1983 - which garnered the support of 92 percent of the electorate - indicates at least a temporary preference for safety over freedom. Questioning of the army's “failure” as a reason for the

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221 Compulsory religious education was again added to the curriculum in the 1980s. Literature and history curriculums were also revised in accord with the nationalist-conservative view. Most importantly, cadres of the MSP within Ministry of Education which assumed their positions during the rule of the Nationalist Front in 1970's persevered; furthermore, the liquidation of those with leftist views from ministry positions with Act 1402 expanded the number of conservative bureaucrats - called “Selametçi.” Many religious middle schools were opened.

coup, along with other opposing arguments were spread only among the intelligentsia.<sup>222</sup>

The makeup of academic staff was also restructured in accordance with military involvement through the implementation of Act no 1402. This made the process even more effective, especially for future generations.

When on the streets were curtailed by the military and some of those culpable were punished, the public consciousness was calmed and the process concluded without any major conflicts between the military regime and the masses. But this questionable deal – which was never openly stated - created a distance between the intelligentsia and the masses. Intellectuals subject to oppression and prosecution were more sensitive the social engineering of the government, the involvement of the army in politics and the official ideology of the Republic. A radical critique of Kemalism and controversy over the role of the intellectual appeared later in the 1980s.

#### § 4.4 The Struggle of the Intelligentsia for Existence

These events changed the lives of individuals permanently and irreversibly, and the intelligentsia became partly excluded from the ruling block, which was formulated as the military-intelligentsia-bourgeoisie. The only part of the intelligentsia that remained in the ruling block were technocrats,<sup>223</sup> which at the time meant engineers and economists.

The signals of exclusion were present in the gradual replacement of intellectuals with businessmen, particularly in the media.<sup>224</sup> The cabinet of the 1983 Motherland Party was a cabinet of technocrats, not intellectuals. In other words, literary authors, who formerly commented on political and economic

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222 Bibliography: Oğuz Dilek “Türkiye’de Kapitalizmin Zorunlu Rolü: Rızasız Bir Toplum Sözleşmesi olarak 12 Eylül Askeri Darbesi” in *Türkiye ’de Siyasal Şiddetin Boyutları*, Güney Çeğin and İbrahim Sirin (ed.) (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2014), *Son Klasik Darbe 12 Eylül Söyleşileri*, ed. Seyfi Öngider (İstanbul: Aykırı Güncel, 2005), *Otuz Yıldır 12 Eylül*, ed: Hasim Akman (İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2010).

223 The first to draw attention to this concept was Nurdan Gürbilek. *Vitrinde Yaşamak*.

224 This was pointed out in particular Rifat Bali. Rifat Bali, *Tarz-ı Hayattan Life Style'a*.

issues in newspapers and journals such as Aziz Nesin and Sabahattin Ali, disappeared in the 1980s. Furthermore, leftist authors subject to prohibitions and prosecutions were asked to write newspaper columns and journals on the cultural agenda from the 1980s onwards. Further, newspaper columns in general became even superficial in the 1980s as the press became the profit oriented “media.” Rather than being a means of communication, it was concerned with attracting broader reader profiles, in terms of their political attitude.<sup>225</sup>

This new situation was directly related to changes in lifestyle and politics, and together with accompanying loss of power, it resulted in a series of effects among the intelligentsia. The first reaction was to redefine the intellectual as an identity and to discuss his mission.

Journals' prioritization of literature or culture also indicated their perspective attitudes towards the “intellectual question.” The journals that prioritized literature, such as *Yazko*, dealt with the identity of intellectuals, but were not keen to handle social and economic issues for providing the ideas of authors and poets about them. Journals like *Varlık*, *Türkiye Yazıları*, and *Yarın* were examples of the second type.

The first essay about the role or attitude of the intellectual to be written after the coup was by Ahmet Cemal and was published in the journal *Yazko Edebiyat*<sup>226</sup>. A. Cemal emphasizes that of street violence prior to 12 September negatively impacted intellectuals and argued that the obligation of Turkish intellectuals to “educate” should continue. The polarized formulation of right and left must end and a new intellectual environment prioritizing dignified human relations must be created.

This article provides some early, clear positions. A. Cemal, who was himself a poet thought the responsibility for the violence of the 1970s falls on intellectuals to an extent. And yet he claimed that intellectual still had a mission

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225 Tanıl Bora and Levent Cantek claim that, the media have become anti-intellectualist especially since 1980. After the 1980s, also many authors of high-esteem wrote in press columns. However, the columnists of a new generation notably replaced the older one, due to the limited amount of work, Tanıl Bora-Levent Cantek, “Köşe Yazarlığındaki Değişim ve Politik Düşünce Vasatı, *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce C: 9 Dönemler ve Zihniyetler*, ed: Ömer Laçiner (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2009), 879-917.

226 *Yazko Edebiyat*, January 1982.

of enlightening the society. Attilâ İlhan, on the other hand, posits that the discourse of “educating the society” is arrogant.<sup>227</sup> According to him, this mentality depends on the “detachment of intellectuals from the people.” So what does the intellectual aim? İlhan sought to a foundation in Eastern culture while industrializing in Western sense. But this, in turn, required a re-launch of the traditional East-West debate, and he did not pursue this debate, either.<sup>228</sup> Ece Ayhan, on the other hand, emphasized that intellectuals have to be “people defending the truth.”<sup>229</sup> At the time, Enis Batur also admitted that the idea of a mission for intellectuals was disturbing and only caused them troubles and:

“I think the question of intellectuals only emerges when people think: ‘We need intellectuals now!’ An essay by Cemil Sait Barlas asked ‘Where are the intellectuals (We Need)?’ in the collection of *Pazar Postası* in 1957. He asked because he was unhappy with the Democratic Party's rule. Again, Bülent Ecevit said ‘intellectuals should write their attitudes against violence,’ I think in 1979. When intellectuals are called upon, the respond always came from someone else. We don't like to consider if is any intellectual, in fact, if they are already present or not.”<sup>230</sup>

Ahmet Cemal proposed overcoming rightist and leftist fanaticisms as a second problematic, while Ali Akay emphasized that Islamists and leftists have a com-

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227 Attilâ İlhan, “Aydınların Affedilmez Kopukluğu, *Türk Aydın ve Kimlik Sorunu*, ed. Sabahattin Şen (İstanbul: Bağlam Yayınları, 1995), 379-384. This article was compiled from the author's articles, most of which were written in the 1980s. İlhan claimed that intellectuals thought that society would develop as they taught their “Western” mentality to the “Oriental” society. “The Turks in the West, since the Tanzimat, believed that they would develop through education. The Tanzimat, Meşrutiyet and even Cumhuriyet believed that development would arise from schools rather than the factories.

228 To adopt the industry and science of West, without its culture is a question that has been discussed since the Ottoman era. This exceeds the scope of this work.

229 Ece Ayhan, Cemal Süreya, İlhan Berk, Enis Batur, “Türk Aydınlarına Şairlerden Bir Bakış” *Türk Aydın ve Kimlik Sorunu*, ed Sabahattin Şen, İstanbul: Bağlam Yayınları, 1995, p: 257-263.

230 Ibid.



mon ground since “ideologies” lost power in the 1980s. A new type of intellectual settled at the margins who considered the state not as a founding power, but as a structure of power relations. This intellectual was interested in micro politics. This choice was also related to the intellectual's obligation to self-censor due to oppression and threats by the state, in addition to new areas of employment in the private sector. They were dependent on their employers' need to be in harmony with the state.<sup>231</sup> Akay characterizes the state of mind of the intellectuals under these conditions as schizophrenic in the light of the fact that their work was obliged to distort language, ignore the social order, and push the limits.<sup>232</sup> This was indeed the position where the right wing met the left.

However, the principles A. Cemal suggested resulted in the questioning of the intellectual role among the left wing. Intellectuals, who loathed the Islamists and had sought to define and maintain the intellectual identity, began to question their mission. They also began to regard it as arrogance or pretended to do so.

Enis Batur claimed that “the intellectual has to think, at least for some time, on how to protect his existence rather than for whom he works.”<sup>233</sup> In the same article published in 1982 in *Somut*, the second journal of Yazko, Batur differentiates between the intellectual and “semi-intellectual” labeling the primary quality of an intellectual as “being antagonist.” This separation resembles Chomsky's separation of white-collar intellectuals who preserve the continuity of the system and intellectuals that develop dissident speech and action. The semi-intellectual regards himself as spokesman for the masses to which he belongs turning deaf ear to other views.

Batur's essay defends the identity of the intellectual who only “represents himself” not the masses; he also points out the matter of the “intellectual's existence.” What threatens the intellectual is an action of intellectuals whom Batur accused of replacing common sense with ideological advocacy. He defined

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231 In positions such as encyclopedia author, copywriter, or professional author.

232 Ali Akay, “Aydınlar Üzerine Bir Bakış”, *Türk Aydın ve Kimlik Sorunu*, Ed Sabahattin Şen (İstanbul: Bağlam Yayınları, 1995), 423-438.

233 Enis Batur, “Atlasın Çıkmazı”, *Alternatif: Aydın* (Ankara: Ark Yayınevi, 1995), 19-21.

these as semi-intellectuals. The point at which an intellectual represents exactly and only himself - standing separate from society - is also the point at which the intellectual rejects the mission to enlighten society, of course.

The second proposition in the article is the necessity of gathering together intellectuals with conflicting political views under an intellectual umbrella. In fact, the real debate began because this point touches on a moral concern that remains problematic today. How do intellectuals defending opposing views meet on a common ground? Will they be able to acknowledge one another's sensitivities and meet in an honest pluralist way? State violence after the coup in 1980 did not affect all groups equally; while the politics actively prohibited a leftist view, basic political arguments from the Islamic point of view could be articulated even in literary journals like *Yönelişler* without being suppressed.

For example, the language policy of the Republic was discussed in almost political terms. Among the intellectuals that started to emerge from this action, there were no qualms about the state violence to which leftists were exposed. No concerns in relation to the current atmosphere of political oppression was tangible, either. The kind of opposition described by Batur was not present among the Islamist intellectuals. Moreover, as a result of personnel shakeups, this group also had organic connections with ministries and the bureaucracy.

And article that refers to and seems to "answer" Batur's article was written by Akif Kurtuluş in *Edebiyat Dostları*. The journal was first published in 1987, long after Batur's essay and after the type of intellectuals he describes had formed. Kurtuluş claims that peace was constructed between conflicting ideological views. That this *peace* emerged in such a short time was possible due to the moral decay of leftists who wanted closer relations with political authorities: "In Turkey, people of culture aged twenty-five, thirty-five, and forty-five..., began racing to maintain close intellectual relationships with the hegemonic class to the benefit of the hegemony from the 1980s onwards."<sup>234</sup>

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234 Akif Kurtuluş, "Demokrat Şair, 1980," *Edebiyat Dostları*, No: 1, 1987.

Of course, this is a generalization. For example, Vural Bahadır Bayrıl, a young poet of the period, concernedly noted in an interview that some Islamist intellectuals were dissidents and that they could meet on this basis.<sup>235</sup> As a result, the 1980s created an environment of communication and meeting between some Islamist intellectuals and some leftist intellectuals who were involved in political movements in 1970s. They wrote in the same journals, published books with the same companies and also spent time together. Another part of the Islamist intelligentsia avoided this unity, while some leftists regard the cohesion as a complete shift to the right, at least suggested this possibility.

Enis Batur's attitude about the status of intellectuals is clearer in an interview with Ahmet Say, in *Türkiye Yazıları*. According to Batur, the autonomy of art and culture and the intellectual who only represents himself meet in the moment of being individual. After all, every text reflects a political attitude - every text is political. This discussion marks the beginning of intellectual polarizations in the left wing too. In the interview, Ahmet Say argues that exploited countries are also exploited culturally, are under hegemony, and in turn this becomes the problematic of cultural cosmopolitanism. The culture of Turkey, which is a colony in this situation, is also a culture of colonization. This thought, of course, reflects the faith that intellectuals who see the truth awaken society to its exploitation.

On the other hand, Batur gives the examples of Greece and the United States, where he thinks that economic exploitation does not imply cultural exploitation. This also reflects the tacit view that countries may instinctively protect themselves from exploitation, and it defends the autonomy of art - that art is "too important to be engaged politically." According to Say, Batur repeats the "old-fashioned art for art's sake," while Batur claims that Say is insuffi-

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235 Vural Bahadır Bayrıl was also a poet participated in leftist movements before September 12. The investigation against him was completed in the mid-80s. Although he was not jailed after 12 September, he had been imprisoned for political reasons in 1970s, when he was high school student. He was an active, promising young poet particularly in the second half of the 1980s. In contemporary literary circles, he is among "liberal" intellectuals who have links to the Islamists (His articles are published in the newspaper *Zaman*).

ciently individualized and that the dissension of artists should be at the margins of the system so as not to be appropriated for any purpose.<sup>236</sup> Furthermore, according to Batur, while intellectuals of the Republic had mission to enlighten people in line with Republican ideology, contemporaneous intellectuals were free from that responsibility since the Republic broke his promises (by which he probably meant the promise to create a classless society with equal opportunities for everyone).

Having been dispossessed of the means of political opposition after prohibitions were imposed on intellectuals, the limit for intellectuals became whether or not to demonstrate “courage” against these. The individual existence problems of intellectuals were the compensation of defeatist feeling especially for the leftist, to lose unnecessarily the public support through acts like 1402 and finally, to redefine themselves in a renewed structure. Besides, given that the “Second New” distanced itself from the mission of intellectual in 1950s, it is not the first time intellectuals were inclined to give up the notions of a mission. Because the “Second New” was determinately anti-populist and in the light of the fact that there was a revival of “Second New” poetry in the 1980s, intellectuals reacted to the society in which they lived or at least to the rise of a decadent, popular culture. In fact, defensive explanations of Turkish society in the 1980s<sup>237</sup> acknowledge conflicts with the society and note its faults. According to this scenario, an abstract, unidentified society which was not responsible for the events of the 1970s was also not culpable in remaining unresponsive to the violence of the 12 September junta. Furthermore, this society did its best to break free from the junta regime and therefore authorized the constitution prepared by the junta. Presumably, the mistake was of the

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236 Ahmet Say, Enis Batur, “Enis Batur’a Sorular”, “Ahmet Say’a Sorular”, *Türkiye Yazıları*, 59 (Feb 1982), 17-26.

237 Left-wing intellectuals adopt parentalistic tones when interpreting the 1980s and its society. They insist on distancing themselves even in terms of political arguments - such as their explanations regarding the manipulation of the United States in Turkish politics - which, in fact, many citizens already suspected. The “society” description to be deduced from the expressions above would be actually a society, open to manipulation, live with short-term benefits, highly authoritarian, etc. They take the roles of interpreters of society as social scientists, and they do not identify themselves with their attributions of the “society.” Therefore, the society is “defended” for “choosing the lesser of two evils among their options.”

omniscient intellectuals who supposed that society would back them and behave along certain ethical lines. Batur's claim that intellectuals should protect themselves also implies that society is not backing its intellectuals (recall the people's mild attitude towards the military regime, denunciation their neighbors, ignorance of state violence, adoption of the new order and acceptance of moral decay without any resistance).

Fear appeared as an element of dissidence in poetry, as colorless and dirty (Murathan Mungan) or as mockery (Can Yücel), which will be reviewed in the relevant chapters. The approach of socialist poets to active politics became individualistic. Poets adopted imagist tendencies that emerged with the demand for the autonomy of art, prioritizing individual existence, moving towards to meta-politics in the Rancièrian sense. Poets were looking for poems that would not reproduce the current order and would establish their opposition to it. Or, as Yücel Kayıran claimed, at a time when the only poet investigated for a poem was Yaşar Miraç, the poet could act somewhat pragmatically, apply self-censorship and thus become consistent with the rhetoric of power.<sup>238</sup> The poet, unable to change the order, at least, attempted to write poetry that would not reproduce it. But the writing of apolitical poems itself may have been in accordance with government policies. The junta and the regime, which maintained militarism through regional martial laws that lasted throughout the 1980s, did not desire active politics. They wanted society to lose its collective structure. The liberal government under Özal did not want the opposition to be strong enough to challenge the capitalistic order.

Poetry with an individualistic attitude emerged as a pedantic cultural criticism. Refusal of cultural imperialism evolved from post-colonial studies - from the idea of a unique Turkish modernism resisting against Western culture. Poets started to investigate the historical roots too.<sup>239</sup> As chapters seven and eight explain, it contained a radical opposition to pro-Western, pro-Turkish (pure Turkish), pro-Turkey (i.e., not Ottoman) cultural policy that had been propounded at least since founding of the Republic. But this abstract

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238 Yücel Kayıran, "12 Eylül: Türk Şiirinde Bir Moment", *Felsefi Şiir Tinsel Poetika* (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2013), 393-413.

239 Ali Akay, "Türk Aydın ve Tarihle Barışmak", *Doğu Batı*, 37 (May-June-July 2006): 37-60.

criticism was a way for intellectualist opposition within the intellectual identity to represent itself. It was not a mission.

#### § 4.5 Summary

By the 1980s, representatives of the different orientations of various generations of poetry analyzed in previous chapters were still alive: Melih Cevdet Anday and Oktay Rifat from the pioneers of the “First New”; Attilâ İlhan, a social realist poet who aids the way for the “Second New” in the late 1940's; Cemal Süreya, Turgut Uyar (who died in 1985), Edip Cansever (who died in 1986), Ece Ayhan, İlhan Berk, and - from Islamist wing - Sezai Karakoç, the great poets of the “Second New.” Poets of the 1960s, like Ataol Behramoğlu - from an influential generation of socialists - and İsmet Özel - who joined to Islamists - were also writing.

Hilmi Yavuz, who brought his power back into play through his interpretation of tradition in the mid-1970s though he began writing in the 1950s, became an important figure both as a poet and as an intellectual. Among Islamists, Ebubekir Eroğlu, a follower of Karakoç, wrote poems that pursued aesthetics in the modernist sense. The pioneers of leftist liberalism were producing works in a modern aesthetic style in Ankara, in the circle of Mehmet Taner, who was a second-generation “Second New” poet. Taner had a publishing house (Tan Publishing House) in Ankara printing the books of young poets such as İzzet Yasar and Enis Batur, which were mostly ignored in politically active literary circles. Finally, leading poets of social realism of the 1970s, like Can Yücel - who became a major poet in 1970s though he started out in the 1960s -, Ahmet Telli, and Yaşar Miraç were known and followed among readers.<sup>240</sup> The poets of the younger generations involved in poetry in the 1980s,

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240 Vural Bahadır Bayrıl pointed this out in his presentation at the Symposium on Poetry in the 1980s. The young poet of the period explained the situation as follows: “Five generations of the Republic who wrote poems gathered at same moment. This had never happened before, maybe will never happen once again; I suppose it is rare in world literature, as well. Imagine, İlhan Berk, born in 1916 and me, born in 1962, wrote in same journals. With Melih Cevdet, Dağlarca... We are used to seeing these people in person.” The poet reflected on this situation in an interview, as well. Again, a young poet of that same period Roni Margulies related the

began their literary lives under political and economic pressure as well as in the shadow of these giants of literature.<sup>241</sup>

Poetry of 1980s has generally been characterized as “apolitical.”<sup>242</sup> Young poets of the period have defended this as the re-recognition of the importance of poetic aesthetics. They placed themselves in opposition to the poetic approach of the 1970s, that neglected aesthetic concerns.<sup>243</sup> As a matter of fact, they were even supported by some poets and critics of the older generation in this respect.<sup>244</sup>

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situation from his perspective “All riders of the ‘Second New’ were alive.” Roni Margulies, *Şiir Yahudilik Vesaire* (Istanbul: Kanat Yayınları, 2004), 107.

241 In fact, there have been various classifications of the poetry of 1980s. For example, Ahmet Oktay analyses three basic tendencies of poetry in the 1980s: 1. Imaginal–semiotical poetry, wherein the political attitude is undiscernible. This poetry carries on a modernist-intellectualist lineage with esoteric tendencies as well. 2. Social realistic poetry, which hesitates to adopt a militant tone which would place it in a reactionary position. It adopts a steep discourse that avoids introvertedness. 3. Metaphysical/Islamist poetry, which has internal intentions to express an eternal material, spiritual life, and possesses possessing esoteric and political content to criticize temporal life. But these tendencies appear to blend and be interrelated with one another. A. Oktay explains this as a radical transitivity among individual poetics. In fact, these common choices are helpful to understand economic, sociological, ideological background of the period (*İmkânsız Poetika*, 76). But these common themes are interpreted in line with poets’ cultural, ideological, and personal choices. Suicide, for instance, might ironically represent rejection of pressure, or may indicate hopelessness. Mysticism, on the other hand was co-opted to establish a neo-classical style updating tradition - as H. Yavuz, V. B. Bayrıl did - or to exteriorize Islamic discourse - as S. Karakoç did -, or finally to secularize and politicize mysticism - as A. Oktay did. (*İmkânsız Poetika*, 77). Baki Asiltürk elaborates these three main groups. According to him, these trends should be supplemented by eight groupings: narrative, folklore, beatnik-marginal, traditional and neo-Garip (with reference to Hasan Bülent Kahraman). He draws attention to the fact that poetic trends are not in themselves homogeneous. The poets only seem to defend different opinions in the language of polemics. Policy is discussed along two main lines, in this work: the social realist and the imagist veins of the 1980s.

242 Baki Asiltürk, *Türk Şiirinde 1980 Kuşağı* (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2013), 37.

243 Metin Celâl, *Yeni Türk Şiiri* (Istanbul: Çizgi Yayınları, 1999), 32, Tuğrul Tanyol, “Hepsi Birbirine Benziyor mu?”, *Üç Çiçek*, (June, July, August 1983), 5, two examples of articles, written in that vein by young poets.

244 Özdemir İnce defines the imaginary and craft of poetry in an essay published in issues of *Varlık* circulated from July to November in 1983. All essential technical discussions of poetry,

However these were not the only voices in the 1980s, nor were everyday politics completely excluded from poetry. Especially Can Yücel directly or indirectly pointed out and protested the violence and oppression of martial law and the military regime in many poems of his confiscated book.<sup>245</sup> But on the whole, daily politics were mostly excluded from poetry, replaced with more radical and individualist politics,<sup>246</sup> as the society itself had become an individualistic.

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from imaginary setting of surrealist poetry to the expected indirect expression in realistic poetry was handled in this long debate. This reminiscence discussion also contained a critique of poetry in the 1970s, of course. Mehmet H. Doğan openly declares that he finds original this modern, colorful and highly artistic poetry of the young generation. “Günümüz Şiiri Üzerine Aykırı ve Dağınık Düşünceler” 1, 2 and 3, *Yazının Bir Çağı* (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2006).

245 Criticism and ridicule stroke military authority, intellectual who is "drowning in fresh water," and who is a "mackerel", and the military "uncles" "will end in a zoo history," like their predecessors. "Poetry", chronic who "caught" "the poetry" from "some Belarusian" "in a hotel in Tepebaşı" and "Char lover" poet, was the materialistic retired captain homeowner, in Yücel's poetry. Another feature of the book is that poems are written in the first person singular. The poet-subject is a person who speaks with sparrows and Judas trees, uses the bus and a boat, and is usually pessimist. His hopes sometime rise early in the morning. He lives in dirty Istanbul. The *Rengâhenk* was banned on grounds of "obscenity" shortly after it was released. For Can Yücel on that period, see Gülce Başer, "The Poetry of self-definition," unpublished master's thesis, Boğaziçi University, 2011.

246 In *İmkânsız Poetika*, Ahmet Oktay explains the nature of opposition poetry of the period: "Poetry was sometimes totally apolitical in the 1980s, and sometimes political issues were represented by metaphors, indicators and images that were never seen as significant at the time. The poetry reflects both a detachment from and a form of continuity with its predecessors - it represents a protest at the cultural, political, social and stylistic levels. But this protest generally lacks political articulations. The poems reflect anger about current conditions and present day personal relations but the monstrous images in the semiotic plane are largely chaotic." (74). Oktay draws attention to the thematic choices such as suicide, avoidance and autism as the elements of this protest as representing hopelessness in the face of a new social order of individualism, lack of communication, alienation and commodification. In a study conducted on the content and subjects of poetry during the state of emergency, I determined that poets showed no interest in daily politics, uttering only objections about the important place occupied by language and history in the political culture of the Republic especially with regard to looking at the provinces. Gülce Başer, "The Poetry of Self-definition," unpublished master's thesis, Boğaziçi University, 2011.



This situation started the discussion on intellectual identity and quality. When the links between intellectual identity and literary production in Turkey are considered, a period of individualist poetry would be expected even without the political prohibitions. Given that masterpieces of individualist poetry had appeared in the 1950s through the “Second New” movement, it is easy to understand why young and established poets of the 1980s alike turned to “Second New” poetry.

When literary criticism and the statements of poets are considered, the reason seems to be widespread discomfort with the poetry of the 1970s. Interestingly, such prohibitions were not even subject in most explanations, confirming the view that political prohibitions were not the only factor in these preferences. Still, a reasonable explanation for the shift of poetry discussions to aesthetics is needed to understand what was more influential: the violence of the coup and disappointment with the street violence in the 1970s, or the radical criticism of the aesthetic quality of the 1970s. Was it frustration resulting in a general depression among poets, as Ahmet Oktay suggests? The reason for the failure to develop a poetry like that following the post 1971 memorandum is unclear. However, the poetry appearing in the second half of the 1980s - abstract, sometimes experimental, and even beyond the “meaninglessness” of the “Second New” poetry - was not yet dominant in the period immediately the coup.

In this chapter, the impact of political, economic and social events of the 1980s were examined. The violence of the junta regime, the effects of participation in the global economy that changed the material life of society; cultural individualization, and changes to the patterns and philosophy of consumption consistent with a capitalist system all resulted in the transformation to more opportunistic, economics-driven values. The political culture adopted an authoritarian, nationalist structure. Individualization triggered identity definitions. However, while society lost its fundamental social bonds, it became sensitive to matters like gender and ethnicity due to the development of individual identity. Public debates on these topics had already started by the end of decade.

These changes also affected intellectuals working and producing in the field of literature, as discussions of the intellectual and his role began in literary journals. As a result, the possibility for literati to work autonomously and

mostly represent only themselves. In the following chapters, the results of these movements and the extent of their reach are explored in the products - that is, in poems and texts.



## Literary Journals of the 1980s-1 Journals of the Older Generation

The existence, foundation and closure of numerous short and long-lived literary journals occurred in the 1980s, which started with the 12 September coup. Many people who filled the squares and streets with political engagements throughout the 1970s and saw literature as the aesthetic witness of a revolution started to provide articles to literary journals after the coup.<sup>247</sup>

Most became the major authors and poets of the near future. Even though literature was subject to political prohibition, resembling the periods of heavy oppression by Abdülhamid and the subsequent Republic in the 1930s, this time the circumstances were different. First of all, in other periods literature enjoyed respect within the framework of the responsibility of intellectuals. In the second half of the 1970s, social, cultural and political developments led to

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247 This widespread tendency can be interpreted as efforts specific fraction within the political movements of the previous period, that were inclined towards literature as a course of intellectual production under the political prohibitions that accompanied the coup or attempt to make politics within literature. Given that in the 1970s the general inclination was that literature must be in the service of the revolution, this choice would raise expectations for a literary production of distinctive hot political content. However, as noted in the previous chapter, a more abstract literature becomes the norm; the understanding of literature of the previous, with the subject to heavy criticism. The shift was an evident call for the Second New. Besides, the poets of the “Second New” were reinstated as young poets set about rereading them.

a reduction in literary readership and production.<sup>248</sup> Most young people, who returned or who were redirected to literature after the coup, had used to be part of the political body in the 1970s. As the following chapters show, the common trend of “expertization” in the 1980s was not suitable to shelter long term those authors who joined literary circles to compensate for political inactivity due to prohibitions by the junta. Moreover, most poets of the older generations who already enjoyed respect and had a readership were alive and prolific in the 1980s. As a result, the 1980s was a difficult time for young poets to appear in the journals. There were plenty of literary journals by the emergence of many small journals by the young generation, still, to be included in the literary circles, authors were required to have interest, focus and knowledge about the active literary debates of the period. The broad content of the journals was a discourse of what poetry or literature is and what can be deemed literary. The notion of politically engaged literature (that literary works should serve the revolution) of the 1970s, was directly and indirectly opened to debate, through discussions of literary aesthetics.

As a result, shifts in the aesthetic preferences of the authors who emerged in the 1970s were reflected in the journals. Along with chief editors who change with political demands, the identities of these journals were updated. For instance, after Yaşar Nabi Nayır, who was the establisher and the owner of *Varlık*, passed away six months after the coup and Kemal Özer became the editor-in-chief and he redefined the journal's identity by directing it throughout the 1980s with his own notions about writing and publishing. The change in *Varlık* was related as much to the coup as to Kemal Özer's preferences. Hence, the journals published in the 1970s retained of the same literary principles within 1980s unless a mentality transformation was generated. In this analysis, the politics will be determined through the topics and news chosen

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248 As noted in the following chapters, the notion that literature within political structures must be in “the service of the revolution” is strengthened in this period. Countering this, the establishment of capitalism and television broadcasts increased interest in popular culture. This would become more visible in the 1980s as the discourses of popular culture departed from the morals inspired by literary works. Murat Belge, too, points to literature's loss of esteem. Actually, he nominally refuses to admit loss, but his portrayal of the interests and directions of the younger generation pictures otherwise. Murat Belge, “Edebiyat ve ‘Tenzil-i Rütbe,’” *Edebiyat Üstüne Yazılar* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2012): 488-490.

and through the form of their presentation. Besides, since the administration remained in place, the publishing practices of the journals mostly remain the same; change is neither expected in the individual attitudes of the poets nor in the preferences of the journals.

The major journals among literary publications, which were present all throughout the 1980s, were *Varlık* - the oldest literary journal of the country - and *Gösteri* - which was launched in 1980. As for the Islamist domain, we see the continuity of *Mavera* from the 1970s sends out. However, a variety of journals that were founded in this period and promptly shut down managed at times to have a greater influence than ones that maintained continuity. The two most prominent examples are *Yazko Edebiyat* and a channel for an important literary change within the domain of Islamic literature, *Yönelişler*. Still, *Yeni Düşün*, *Türkiye Yazıları* and *Broy* were influential for a considerable time with support bestowed upon them by literary masters from the moment of their founding. Apart from these, other representative examples of the period's literary journals include *Yarın*, *Üç Çiçek*, *Edebiyat Dostları*, *Şiir Atı* and *Gergedan*, which were published by the young generation poets and writers. They were not the center but were influential among various groups.

In this chapter, journals that comprised the literary authority will be analyzed, whether already present at the beginning of the period or founded at that time by literary masters or chief editors.

## § 5.1 Varlık

The oldest literary journal of Turkey, *Varlık*, did not even mention the 1980 coup. The journal founded on 15 July 1933 by Yaşar Nabi Nayır, was still directed by Nayır by the date of the coup. Being a journal of culture, it neglected most hot debates of the junta period, never used the word “coup,” has never featured any article probing the notions of democracy and freedom. In contrast, it adopted a political position through Atatürk and Kemalist discourse. Each issue included an article under the header of “real Kemalism,” by various writers; there was always at least one sentence criticizing current practices. In this sense, the journal manifested its criticism with constant reference to Kemalism to which the junta could not object.

After Yaşar Nabi Nayır passed away in March 1981, Filiz Nayır took over management of the journal until 1983 when Kemal Özer became chief editor. He led the journal for the rest of the 1980s and determined the literary and cultural episteme of the journal together with Nayır.

The first obvious change was an increase in translated content under Filiz Nayır. This can be considered typical for the period's other journals, as well, particularly due to the relative ease with which translated articles could evade prosecution, as well as that it reflected the global economy in which the country was newly incorporated. In particular, an essay portraying a European poet was included existed in each issue.

*Varlık* had supported young authors, from the moment of its inception. The literary tendency of the 1980s that emphasized a work's aesthetic quality in works also influenced *Varlık*, which had been limited to the introduction of works and books until then. In the second half of the 1980s, every issue include essays on literary and aesthetic debates. For example, Afşar Timuçin wrote a series of essays about discussions on aesthetics and modern art in 1988.<sup>249</sup>

*Yazko Edebiyat* journal published since 1980 under the management of Memet Fuat, immediately became influential among the literary milieu immediately, while *Gösteri*, offered a more colorful option for the audiences of popular literature and culture reader. *Varlık* opted to protect a social realist line. Thus, the journal offered a space for socialist poets to publish, and poets whose orientation was towards a more symbolic, closed poetry published only their relatively more open, comprehensible poems. Likewise, social issues and political discourses like Kemalism appeared in the journal. In this context, "the intellectual" was discussed not through his identity, but through his mission. Topics were included in the journal varied; for instance, Hıfzı Veldet Velidedeoğlu's essay "Din ve Toplum" (Religion and Society).<sup>250</sup> Of course, Velidedeoğlu explained that secularism as essential. And of course, *Varlık* always

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249 To give a few examples, Cevdet Kudret, "Şiir Nedir, Ne Değildir," 886 (July-1981): 3, Egemen Berköz, "Şiir Şiir Şiir," 886 (July-1981): 16, Bedirhan Toprak, "Türk Şiirine Haksızlık Edildi" (July-1983): 4-5 (Süreyya Berfe's report in *Gösteri* journal opened a polemic).

250 Hıfzı Veldet Velidedeoğlu, "Din ve Toplum," *Varlık* 941 (February-1986): 3-5.

sided with the new Turkish language in the linguistic debates, criticizing the choice of old Turkish as backwards.

The intellectual's mission, his faults and shortcomings (answering putative questions such as “where did we go wrong?”), and even the critique and response to the “state of suppression” appeared extensively in the journal.<sup>251</sup> For example, in a 1987 a dossier about caricature, Tan Oral participated entitled “How does the State of Oppression Affect my Drawing?” while in the same issue the 10 July 1986 petition of the incumbent prime minister Turgut Özal – in which he complained to the attorney general - was published together with a caricature.<sup>252</sup> (In the second half of the 1980s, “oppression” was more casually mentioned in the press and protested against.) Afşar Timuçin, in an article “The Artist's Responsibility” underscored that the artist's mission is to raise the consciousness of society.<sup>253</sup> A month later, Anna Segher's essay in the same vein was published.<sup>254</sup> Again, at the end of the decade Yusuf Çotuksöken described the intellectual as “a man of faith and action, engaged with reasoning, wisdom and humanity.” According to him, the intellectual was isolated, all but silenced and rendered irrelevant due to education policies that on training technical experts as a result of industrialization. Oppression because of the prohibition of associations was also key.<sup>255</sup>

Socialist art was not out of fashion in *Varlık*, although it was in journals such as *Gösteri* and later *Argos* and *Şiir Atı*. For example, Metin Celâl's article in the “Young Poets” dossier of 1985 identifies an imagist tendency in the poetry of younger poets. Both the contributing authors and the readers of the journal who wanted to respond criticized labelling this tendency as the “New

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251 Seyyit Nezir, “Sanatçının Güncel Sorumluluğu”, *Varlık*, 908 (May-1983): 20-21. In this essay, the writer explained that the artist needs to encourage peace and produce writings accordingly.

252 *Varlık* 953 (February-1987): 17.

253 *Varlık* 971 (August-1988) 3.

254 Anna Seghers, “Halk ve Yazar,” *Varlık* 971 (September-1988).

255 Yusuf Çotuksöken, “Aydınların Soyü Tükeniyor mu?,” *Varlık* 988 (January-1990): 5. Four months later Mehmet Serdar was again featured in the journal with an essay portraying the intellectual: “Aydın,” *Varlık* 992 (May-1990): 10-11

Turkish Poem”.<sup>256</sup> Indeed, the first reaction to the article was by İbrahim Oluklu, who criticized Celâl for not being “objective.” He claimed that the new generation of poets to which Celâl referred consisted of just Tuğrul Tanyol, Haydar Ergülen, Ali Günvar, Mehmet Müfit and Adnan Özer. According to him, they were scarcely published.<sup>257</sup> In addition, Cengiz Gündoğdu, among the regular authors of the journal and a poet from the previous generation went further. He claimed that the slogan does not stain a poem. A successful slogan would amount to a fine poem. Gündoğdu also criticized the distinction between social and individual terminology. For him they coexist in one another.<sup>258</sup> Metin Celâl responded insisting on his views. Gündoğdu labeled Celâl as ignorant in his second essay.<sup>259</sup>

In another debate, Asım Bezirci labeled the New Holistic movement “out of place [and] illicit” overall, claiming that the individual already existed in the socialist poetry.<sup>260</sup> Özdemir İnce’s essays from May 1983 to September 1984 described the aesthetics of various forms of poetry. According to him, poetry was the art of transforming words into “speech,” “the text as a whole and its language into an image”, and in the same time “objective truth” into metaphor and figurative speech.<sup>261</sup> The wording of these debates was harsh; disputing sides accused each other of ignorance, lack of knowledge, and literary inadequacy.

It would have befitted *Varlık* to produce a dossier to analyze and bring in a criticism of social realist literature. However, as shown in Chapter 4, under heavy state oppression and pervasive criticism of the left, the journal possibly found it unethical to criticize socialist literature. Nevertheless, commentary about socialist art of that and the following periods would become more frequent in the journal and did appear in a feature on cinema: “The issue is that

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256 Metin Celâl, “Yeni Türk Şiirinde İmgeci Yönelim,” *Varlık* 935 (August-1985), “Niçin Yeni Türk Şiiri?” *Varlık* 942 (March-1986).

257 İbrahim Oluklu, “Nereye Gidiyor Önyargılı Yaklaşımlar,” *Varlık* 937 (October-1985): 9.

258 Cengiz Gündoğdu, “Bir Şairseverin Notları,” *Varlık* 939 (December-1985): 6-7.

259 Cengiz Gündoğdu, “Hüzünlü Bir Yazı,” *Varlık*: 944 (May-1986): 26.

260 “Asım Bezirci ile söyleşi,” *Varlık* 968 (May-1988): 22-23.

261 Özdemir İnce, “İmge ve Serüvenleri,” *Varlık* 910-914 (July-November, 1983).



the socialist thought of today needs to be purged of two fundamental weaknesses. The first is the schema that translates into an inability to conceptualize the philosophical relationship between essence and form. While the second - tied to the first - concerns the infertility of macro-political production."<sup>262</sup> This is what Hasan Bülent Kahraman referred to in his essay in *Gösteri*.<sup>263</sup>

Texts on politics,<sup>264</sup> sociology,<sup>265</sup> cinema, and travel were published in the journal. The phenomenon of Islamist thought was covered in one dossier. The dossier underscored a shift towards a more alert Islamism pioneered by intellectuals such as Cem Murat, Cengiz Çandar and İsmet Özel. At the same time, it argued that the biggest mistake of Turkish intellectuals is their stereotypical labelling of Islamists with adjectives such as 'regressive,' 'clog-wearing,' or 'apostate,' for they themselves ignore the fact they live among a Muslim majority.<sup>266</sup> This shows how strong Islamism had become and with what attitudes its strengthening was countered. The intellectual was again accused of inadequacy. As seen in the analysis of intellectual identity, moral reproach of the intellectual was a typical characteristic of criticism at the time, even in the approach of intellectuals to one other. It is uncertain whether the intellectual writer including himself in the criticism or exonerating himself by criticizing all other intellectuals. The most significant evidence that these intellectual debates were superficial was that despite their length, social conceptualizations remained ambiguous and the arguments assumed a monolithic, type of intellectual identity.

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- 262 Ahmetcan Toros, "Toplumcu Düşünce, Toplumcu Sanat, Toplumcu Sinema," *Varlık*, 944 (May-1986): 4-5.
- 263 "The socialists' approach to events and developments through narrow, ideological windows that led them to write poetry that increasingly loses its color and voice." Hasan Bülent Kahraman, "Toplumcu Gerçekçi Şiiri Yeniden Kurmak," *Gösteri*, 103 (June 1989): 78-81 and "Toplumcu Şiirimizin Bugünü ve Gelişme Çizgileri," 95 (October-1988): 17-21.
- 264 For instance, Hasan Bülent Kahraman, "Yeni(den) Sosyal Demokrasi," *Varlık* (Ağustos-1990): 9.
- 265 For instance, the concept of the marginal appeared in that period first discussed by sociologist Sibel Özbudun, and then by poet and psychiatrist Mustafa Ziyalan. Özbudun, "Marjinaler ve Demokrasi," 964, (January 1988), Ziyalan, "Marjinal Deyince," 965 (February-1988): 10-11.
- 266 Cem Murat, "Türkiye'de İslamcı Düşünce", *Varlık*, 941 (February-1986): 16.

Dossiers on Palestine and South America were prepared in *Varlık* as in all other literary journals of the period. However, the dossier entitled “Greetings to the Resistance in Palestine,” for example, consisted of only three poems: of Mahmud Derviş and the Turkish poets Emirhan Oğuz and Şeyla Kaya.<sup>267</sup> Apparently, no other material was available for this feature.

The issue of younger poets was brought forward in dossiers in 1981, 1983 and 1985, while an issue in 1990 appraising the 1980s, all essays were by period's young poets. Poets such as Haydar Ergülen, Adnan Özer, Yaşar Miraç, Tarık Günersel, Tuğrul Tanyol, Murathan Mungan and Seyit Nezir of the young generation were often published in the journal. The journal also became a venue for female poets. The poems of Ali Cengizkan, Abdülkadir Budak, Lale Müldür, Sennur Sezer, Gülseli İnal and Gülsüm Cengiz also appeared in the journal in this decade.

Nevertheless, the major poets of the previous generations most commonly appeared in the journal. Oktay Rifat, Melih Cevdet Anday, Fazıl Hüsni Dağlarca, Behçet Necatigil and poets considered affiliated with the official ideology<sup>268</sup> - Necati Cumalı, Cevdet Kudret and Özdemir İnce - were ever present.

The journal's social realist episteme was related the enlightening ideology of the establishing period more than to Marxist theory. Thus, throughout the 1980s it emphasized ideals such as secularism, pure Turkish language, positivism and rationalism. The reason for the inclusion of translated material was to cultivate a sufficient notion of Western culture, rather than to adopt it. Providing some translated content had become common in the atmosphere of the 1980s. Its failure to represent a political position effectively resulted in a relative loss of readers. But still it managed to maintain an audience in this decade.

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267 “Filistin Direnişine Selam”, *Varlık*, 968 (May-1988): 19-21.

268 These poets, except for Özdemir İnce, were consistently included public in the education curriculum. Generally speaking, they never formulated a complaint against the regime. As noted in previous chapters, the Republic's cultural policy transformed as time went by, yet the superiority of the military was essential up until the 2000s. Atatürk and Kemalist principles were never subject to any criticism. These authors were affirming these, even as a criticism of Kemalism was generated in the 1980s. They were “enlighteners” - missionary intellectuals.

## § 5.2 Gösteri

The monthly journal *Gösteri* was launched in December 1980, months after the coup. It was a journal of the “Hürriyet Group.” *Hürriyet* is Turkey's most circulated daily newspaper. Owned by the Simavi family, the Hürriyet Group was the first publishing group in the capital market. It is neither surprising nor a matter of prejudice to expect it to prepare an apolitical journal to serve the cultural requirements of the bourgeoisie. Indeed, this was a liberal journal that distanced itself from all ideologies.<sup>269</sup>

Even its name - “spectacle” (Gösteri) - evoked Guy Debord's *The Society of the Spectacle*. Debord's work was not yet translated into Turkish but the intelligentsia was probably aware of it. According to the book, as the press became “the media” under capitalism, the news became a commodity, shifting from its nature to inform. Everything in contemporary culture, from the individual to technology, was an object of spectacle. “Gösteri” was the name of the first art and culture journal produced by big capital in the country.

Naturally, the usage of the word “spectacle” was common in the performance arts and this association was stronger than the one with the culture of spectacle. The journal was envisioned to encompass all branches of art, including opera, ballet and cinema. However, the focus seemed to be the literature, as both the first pages were and the majority of the content concerned literature. This was especially obvious with the choice of Doğan Hızlan<sup>270</sup> as editor-in-chief, who while versed in every branch of art was in principle a literary writer. But even his presence did not change the journal's initial impression to be “a device” to “turn art into bourgeois entertainment”.

The publishing policies of *Gösteri* reflected the basic intellectual tendencies in the milieu of literature at the time. Like another important literature journal of the period, *Yazko*, given a genuine principle of “balance,” it included authors and poets of all political positions. Thus, it created a relatively pluralist environment. In the first two years, it only included major poets, of whom

269 Ödül Verenler Ödül Alanlar”, *Yarın*, 4 (December 1981): 8 (without signature).

270 Doğan Hızlan (Istanbul, 1917), a major literary critic and editor who worked as the arts and literature editor in many journals and newspapers. He is chief editor of *Gösteri* and art and literature pages of *Hürriyet*.

İsmet Özel was the youngest. Namely, these ranged from Metin Elođlu to Can Yücel, Hilmi Yavuz to Attilâ İlhan, and Oktay Rifat to Ece Ayhan and Fazıl Hüsnü Dađlarca to Sabahattin Kudret Aksal.<sup>271</sup> Given that the “Second New” masters co-existed with the masters of socialist literature evidence the journal's reluctance to be involved in debates between socialists and imagists. Both were hosted in the same journal. For instance, İsmet Özel had been deprived of appearing in leftist journals because he transitioned to the Islamist community in the 1970s. Yet *Gösteri* accepted him as a major poet and included his work in its pages.

Until around 1985, the work of poets of the younger generation was scarcely seen in journal. Major poets who were believed to guarantee the wide circulation of the journal were given priority. Still, the first action of the journal was to host a competition for young poets which was a strategy to attract young poets. But *Gösteri* would not be able to compete with *Yazko Edebiyat*, which was directed by a doyen of literature Memet Fuat. Nevertheless, young, particularly imagist poets started to appear *Gösteri* from the mid-1980s.

Every month there was a dossier in the journal, most of which concerned literature. Dossiers on other branches of culture like cinema or theater produced once a year; the rest were all about literature. The topics were general such as Divan literature, folk literature, young poets, contemporary poetry,

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271 In its first issue in 1982, space was given in *Gösteri* to articles evaluating the year's art in all branches. In his article, Dođan Hızlan emphasizes that poetry gained prominence this year, but does not mention *Osmanlıya Dair Hikâyat* and *Zambaklı Padişah*, which were published in December. Neither is Haydar Ergülen's *Karşılıđını Bulamamış Sorular* included in his notes for 1981. A poetry competition was arranged and announced in the first issue. Murathan Mungan won the first place, while Haydar Ergülen placed second. The only young poet mentioned in Hızlan's reviews is Ahmet Erhan, who earned the Behçet Necatigil Award for his first book. So, among the troubadours who make “our poetry better by putting the verses of the young and old masters side-by-side,” the young one is Ahmet Erhan. Included in Dođan Hızlan's are Dađlarca's *Nötron Bombası*, the year's recipient of the Sedat Simavi Award, Edip Cansever's collected works titled *Yeniden*, Hasan Hüseyin's *Filizkırın Fırtınası*, Hilmi Yavuz's *Yaz Şiirleri*, Necati Cumalı's *Bozkırda Bir Atlı* and İlhan Berk's *Kitaplar Kitabı*. According to Hızlan, the year's most discussed book was that of Hasan Hüseyin. But none of these books was discussed in *Gösteri*. That year's journals included no article about Hasan Hüseyin's book. It was introduced in socialist journals such as *Yarın*. So where was the book discussed?

contemporary narrative, novel, tradition and classics. The topics never suggested an ideological direction; it was left to the authors to determine the context in which they would write.<sup>272</sup> At the end of every year annual reviews of praise the state of art and literature. When these evaluations, annual interviews, articles and published products are considered together, the journal's role is arguably observer and informer of the present literary scene, itself neither the center of production nor a literary representative. As such, *Gösteri* was not so much a literary journal as a journal of cultural news that prioritized literature.

An article by Emre Kongar functions as an explanation of the position and preferences of the journal: According to Kongar capital owners entered the cultural sector in 1981. This decision was related to “class consciousness;”<sup>273</sup> capital owners wanted to arouse class-consciousness among their own class by launching their own culture publications. Kongar pointed out that this sectorization threatened the nature of art and literature. If the autonomy of the publisher and the artist and the inherent dynamics of art and literature were not handled carefully, they would most probably degenerate.

A delay of such degeneration can be credited to *Gösteri*, the publishing strategy of which was based on the principles of pluralism and democracy. It responded or represented every approach in their own words. For example, an interview was published in the form of an exchange of letters with young Nevzat Çelik. Çelik, who was in prison at the time and whose book *Şafak Türküsü* had received the Akademi award, became famous when his poems were set to music by a popular protest musician, Ahmet Kaya.<sup>274</sup> Additional interviews were conducted with the poet's family members. Their working status (working class) was emphasized, in the socialist lyric jargon. Their modest economic situation was pointed out, reflecting the atmosphere of a lifestyle deemed “worker's culture.” The notion of oppression and violence in the country were

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272 For example under the platform of *Gösteri* an article title such like “Is contemporary poetry political?” would never be considered. But authors could write that contemporary poetry was apolitical.

273 Emre Kongar, “Sanat Sosyolojisi Açısından 1981”, *Gösteri*, 14 (1982): 46.

274 *Gösteri*, 56 (July-1985): 18-19.

expressed by the metaphor “age's fire.” As another example of political inclusiveness, Can Yücel's acute political commentaries were published in the journal. *Gösteri* did not represent a mainstream movement; it was not solely a literary journal. Even if it leaned towards literature, it featured all branches of art. Moreover, it gave prioritized to the already well-known and acknowledged figures rather than seeking fresh blood in the literature. It published authors that were either included in the curriculum of the Ministry of Public Education or established in the world of literature and the eyes of readers. Instead of creating an alternative to the mainstream through its culture policies, it remained a loyal agent of the literature itself. But it successfully represented authors and poets of all the contemporaneous political persuasions.

*Gösteri* was not a field for hot political debates. It became a platform for the investigation and redefinition of intellectual identity rather than featuring specific political commentary or a mandatory role for intellectuals. Expertise was the main criteria for selecting writers for the dossiers. However, it did sometimes include commentaries by representatives from other branches for particular topics.<sup>275</sup>

The notion of the intellectual was unsurprisingly a dossier topic and the subject of several articles, as the notion of the intellectual was often discussed in this period within different conceptualizations that were being brought forth. The intellectual was seen as an identity in debates in general. For example, Emre Kongar stated the mission of the intellectual was, in his essay entitled “The Intellectuals' Betrayal and Literature” in the “Intellectual Dossier”: “The intellectual's opposition to society's change and progress is an act of betrayal.”<sup>276</sup> Aziz Nesin described the “Turkish intellectual” as a “coward” who lost his self-confidence as a result of oppression and torture. According to Nesin, the press and academia were especially ineffective against the 1980

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275 For example, a dossier titled as the “Curriculum Debates”, in *Gösteri*, 59 (October 1985), another on the topic of Atatürk in *Gösteri*, 6 (May-1981), another on the topic of language in *Gösteri* 20 (July-1982), and a debate on the drafting of the constitution in *Gösteri*, 22 (September-1982).

276 Emre Kongar, “Aydınların İhaneti ve Edebiyat”, *Gösteri*, 38 (January-1984): 43-44.

junta just as they were other periods of oppression they “had failed in their exam.”<sup>277</sup>

Not only for their mission, but as a whole intellectuals were criticized, for example, for “their illiteracy about the East,” in another dossier entitled “The Eastern Question in Turkish Literature.”<sup>278</sup> The issue is beyond what the intellectual knows or does not know. In 1980s, the intellectual was portrayed as the representative of society’s social failures and incompetency.

Considering the circumstances to which intellectuals were exposed at that time, the veracity of Enis Batur's expression of the “intellectual's struggle for existence/survival” became more concrete and multidimensional. It was not only the ruling authority that squeezed the intellectual, but also his own environment. In this context, Aziz Nesin's framing of his criticism of the “press and academia” - and his emphasis on the ongoing suppression - may be considered a positive approach for that moment in time. However, considering the extensive threat of Act 1402 over the academics, how just are such criticisms? There were both “winner” and “loser” intellectuals in the junta period. These essays are effortless “self-criticism,” lack deep analysis and concrete examples, and remain abstract critiques of the “intellectual.” In the end, the authors of these articles were themselves intellectuals, hence the criticisms are presumed to be introspective. But the essays seem neither to have contributed to intellectual identity debates nor the individual intellectuals, because they are beyond limits of criticism. For instance, they mostly established a general criticism of “intellectuals' inadequacy with regard to Eastern culture instead of admitting their own inadequacy. Most of the criticisms were not addressed to any specific individual or group, and this abstraction preclude fruitful debate.

As the journal assumed expertise in linguistic debates, it prepared a “Language Dossier.” Actually, the Turkish language was among the typical debates of the 1980s. Articles included in this dossier reflect the differences among

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277 “Aziz Nesin'le Türk Aydını Üzerine Konuşma”, interview: Doğan Hızlan, *Gösteri*, 64 (March-1986): 9-12.

278 For example, Cengiz Çandar emphasized precisely this. “Türk Edebiyatında Doğu Sorunu” dossier, *Gösteri*, 57 (August-1985). According to Çandar, this ignorance rendered the Turkish intellectual a “cripple.”

poets, writers, and intellectuals in their attitudes and soon- to-be their political views. For instance, Attilâ İlhan (who would remain Kemalist) noted that the official language and culture policy changed in İnönü's period. He offers a Kemalism of his own conception. According to him, the culture policy in İnönü's period "by becoming national drifted from the modernization track onto a Westernizing one."<sup>279</sup> In this sense, language naturally needs to be open to a wider lexical range for the purposes of an unencumbered Turkish. Mehmet Kaplan, in the same dossier, argued that people do not understand the language of authors and intellectuals, describing the new Turkish as "the telegraph working from only one end."<sup>280</sup> This is the argument of particularly nationalist and Islamist groups with regard to language reform. Attilâ İlhan's conception of Turkish is the vocabulary of language in use. He links the tendency to turkify every word to İnönü's period. İlhan was not a proponent of Pure Turkish: he utilized a rich vocabulary in his poetry and used old and new words together. His language on the whole and especially in poems before 1980 appears new but the careful eye does not miss words such as "mecbur" (necessary), "vakit"(time), "berhâva"(empty) and the atmosphere they create.

As a Republican intellectual, Cevdet Kudret claimed that "the regressive press is trying to create the impression president Mr. Kenan Evren and the members of the National Security Council are against the language reform [of Atatürk]." In fact, Evren did use an old vocabulary in all his speeches. In 1983, the autonomy of the Turkish Language Foundation (Türk Dil Kurumu – TDK) was repealed and it was subjected to the prime ministry. By the date of this dossier, the TDK was the only remaining institution staffed by a cadre of leftist intellectuals who were the proponents of Pure Turkish. It gave an award to Yaşar Miraç, the price of which was that it lost its autonomy by angering Kenan Evren. Cevdet Kudret was already a defender of language reform. While Attilâ İlhan's conception of Turkish coincides with Ziya Gökalp's suggestion to use "words out of practice," Cevdet Kudret was more adamant about Pure

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279 Attilâ İlhan, "Dilin Kemiği Var", *Gösteri*, 20 (July 1982).

280 Mehmet Kaplan, "Telgraf Tek Taraflı Çalışmakta", *Gösteri*, 20 (July 1982). Mehmet Kaplan is a conservative Turcologist. He founded a school that focuses principally on Turkish literature. He was director of Istanbul University's New Turkish Literature Course from 1962 to 1983 and was director of the Faculty of Literature from 1982 to 1983.



Turkish. *Gösteri* published the opinions of these two authors along with that of Mehmet Kaplan evincing its founding commitment to the principle of representing all approaches.

Turkey revived its Muslim Eastern identity towards the mid-1980s, especially after the Motherland Party (Anavatan Partisi) came to power. The foundation for such a shift was laid by the junta's tolerance for the Islamist groups at the time. However, the shift heated up debates on the East-West dichotomy in the cultural arena. This was triggered by increased emphasis on Ottoman roots, as a result of the Motherland Party's successful courting of Islamist votes, as well as by practical cases such as the pilgrimage of Prime Minister Özal. *Gösteri* was among the actors in this new trend. In its August 1985 issue, the connections of Turkish literature with the East was analyzed in a dossier entitled "The Eastern Question in Literature." In addition to Cengiz Çandar's aforementioned commentary in this issue, Refik Durbaş<sup>281</sup> stated that contemporary authors should be familiar with Eastern literature. Hilmi Yavuz<sup>282</sup> and Enis Batur<sup>283</sup> confess that they see Eastern literature as a third language; from a Western perspective, they emphasized the necessity for more translations in this field. And Rasim Özdenören,<sup>284</sup> an Islamist intellectual who started his article with a prayer ("Bismillahirrahmanirrahim"), suggested that the West's influence over Turkish literature is basically superficial; its real source is Eastern culture. Cemal Süreya, who refused the inquisition, merely sarcastically replied to the question of why Eastern literature had been ignored up until then: "It'll probably be in fashion from now on."<sup>285</sup>

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281 Refik Durbaş, "Türk Edebiyatında Doğu Sorunu," *Gösteri*, 57 (August-1985): 74.

282 Ibid., 81-82.

283 Ibid., 71-72.

284 Ibid., 79-80.

285 Ibid., 68.

Apart from this, poets were asked to commend in the dossiers on topics such as the scarcity of readers,<sup>286</sup> advertising and literature.<sup>287</sup> But no poet was asked to participate in the dossier on “Media of Communication and Art.”<sup>288</sup>

The poetry of the 1980s was assessed in a series of interviews with the young poets of the decade. The poets chosen for interview were the entire imagist vein: Haydar Ergülen,<sup>289</sup> Lale Müldür,<sup>290</sup> Seyhan Erözçelik,<sup>291</sup> Tuğrul Tanyol,<sup>292</sup> Ali Günvar,<sup>293</sup> and Adnan Özer<sup>294</sup>. On the other hand, Hasan Bülent Kahraman published two essays claiming that socialist literature failed to attain the necessary vision and new dimensions to reproduce itself in line with the realities of the contemporary world. It alienated itself due to limiting itself within an ideology.<sup>295</sup> Kahraman further criticizes the generation of socialist after 1980 for seeking a “dysfunctional form.” Socialist poetry would advance in the ensuing years either through the nihilist, cynical and destructive poems of Küçük İskender or through Emirhan Oğuz's, open formulation what he supported and what he opposed, which enabled the recreation of a universal

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286 *Gösteri*, 8 (July-1981).

287 Egemen Berköz, “Reklam ve Edebiyat,” *Gösteri*, 9 (August-1981): 68. Berköz wrote that because literary writers had to work in advertising, the quality of advertising language improved and new Turkish found a foothold.

288 *Gösteri*, 29 (April-1983).

289 “Haydar Ergülen ile 80’li Yıllar ve Şiiri Üzerine” interview: Cezmi Ersöz, *Gösteri*, 109 (December-1989): 46-48.

290 “Lale Müldür ile 80’li Yıllar ve Şiiri Üzerine” interview: Cezmi Ersöz, *Gösteri*, 111 (February-1990): 72-74.

291 “Seyhan Erözçelik ile 80’li Yıllar ve Şiiri Üzerine” interview: Cezmi Ersöz, *Gösteri*, 116 (July-1990): 64-66.

292 “Tuğrul Tanyol ile 80’li Yıllar ve Şiiri Üzerine” interview: Cezmi Ersöz, *Gösteri*, 112 (March-1990): 76-79.

293 “Ali Günvar ile 80’li Yıllar ve Şiiri Üzerine” interview: Cezmi Ersöz, 110 (January-1990): 62-65.

294 “Adnan Özer ile 80’li Yıllar ve Şiiri Üzerine” interview: Cezmi Ersöz, *Gösteri*, 113 (April-1990): 52-54.

295 Hasan Bülent Kahraman, “Toplumcu Gerçekçi Şiiri Yeniden Kurmak”, *Gösteri*, 103 (June 1989): 78-81 and “Toplumcu Şiirimizin Bugünü ve Gelişme Çizgileri”, 95 (October-1988): 17-21.

discourse with rich content and that benefitted from global poetry and narrative arts. Hence, Kahraman believed that the sources of socialist poetry swiftly disappeared with the rise of individualism.

Although the journal rarely published works of the younger generation, a number of young poets managed appear in *Gösteri*, such as Murathan Mungan, Haydar Ergülen, Ali Günvar, Tuğrul Tanyol, Adnan Özer, Mehmet Müfit and Seyhan Erözçelik. No female poet's work was featured in the journal though Lale Müldür appeared in two interviews.<sup>296</sup> Although the politics in the essays were liberal and pluralist, the journal was grounded in establishment era language policies. An uneasy balance was sustained at this point: the journal was open to writing that included archaic words and featured debates on linguistics, but the language of its own news and editorials was new Turkish. All the time the adoption of Pure Turkish had a "leftist" connotation while the authorities' choice for archaic Turkish was rightly perceived as a sign of their rightist political position. Hence, the choice of the journal seemed to reflect a moderate political attitude. Naturally, the choice of authors to comment on linguistic debates reflected the journal's prioritization of pluralism. Additionally it stayed within the limits that the junta had prescribed in terms of political content. From 1985 onwards, it became relatively open to the East, but translated materials in the journal remained oriented towards the West. Despite the openness to Islamist authors, there was virtually no focus on religion.

As a principle, it reserved a large area for aesthetic debates, which was typical of the period. Various dossiers on the West and Latin America were published, which was also typical. Today, the publication of *Gösteri* continues by the Doğan Media Group.

### § 5.3 Yazko Edebiyat

*Yazko Edebiyat* was launched in November 1980 just after the coup, under the auspices of the Writers and Translators Cooperative. Its editor-in-chief was

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296 Even in case a journal published one or two poems by women, this would not absorb it of being sexist in a decade when tens of women poets emerged and at least and four or five became widely acknowledged.

Memet Fuat who held the same post at *Yeni Dergi*, one of the major journals of the 1970s and the history of Turkish literature.<sup>297</sup> In the introductory editorial, the catalyst of the journal was acknowledged to be the cooperative, which was comprised of members with various political positions. The journal would not limit itself to the products of authors with certain opinions from certain factions. Indeed, after the coup there was a desire - at least for moderate intellectuals - to familiarize themselves and coexist with others of disparate political view. The principally left-winger Authors and Translators Cooperative first made this existence possible.

The journal was “not the continuation of *Yeni Dergi*”, but that it still had inherited some of its principles such as the prioritization of the aesthetic quality of the works to be published. Poetry would be handled with particular care, instead of “functioning” to “fill the gaps between works of prose.”<sup>298</sup> The journal announced a literary award, as well, and it was instantly sold out. It reached a circulation of 7200 with one double edition.

*Yazko*, which brought together authors of all political positions, kept its promise not to address politics.<sup>299</sup> The only analysis that could qualify as po-

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297 Memet Fuat (Istanbul, 1926-2002): a major literary figure and poetry critic who established De Yayınevi and prepared *Yeni Dergi* (1964-1975) and *Yazko Edebiyat* (1980-1983). He was editor of domestic publications for Adam Yayınları (1985-1999), discovering many young poets who would later become major poetic figures.

298 *Yeni Dergi* 1, 1964, introductory message.

299 Was this criterion based on the prohibitions and prosecution of publishers in the period following 12 September? According to Ragıp Zarakolu, owner of Belge Yayınları, which managed to continue publishing during the junta regime, there were, in fact, considerably specific criteria. The publications of Marxism, the Turkish Left and political criticism were promptly shut down. Even classics such as those of Dostoyevski, Brecht and Nâzım Hikmet were subject to prosecution. Two high school students were imprisoned for giving Nâzım Hikmet's book to their friends after teachers informed the authorities. The album of Zülfü Livaneli was listened to in private homes in the lowest volume, as its songs were based on Nâzım Hikmet's poetry. Books and articles on the Kurdish and Armenian question were blacklisted. Interestingly Marxist literature on Latin America was free to be published, and none of Belge Yayınları's books on fascist, imperialist experiments in Latin America, Greece and Asia and their coups and practices of torture was not subject to prosecution. While open criticism of fascism was

litical was a dossier on the change of the status of the Turkish Language Foundation (TDK). In its pages, the poems of Can Yücel (one of the staunchest opponents to the 1980s regimes), Yaşar Miraç (who was self-exiled during the junta), Şükran Kurdakul and Hasan Hüseyin of the left wing and Ali Günvar, Hilmi Yavuz and İsmet Özel from the right wing were featured.

The journal gained traction among literary circles from the moment of its launch. The most up-to-date, intense debates and assessments of literature took place in it. The essays of critical authors on crucial topics were featured, as well. In its first issue Attilâ İlhan published an article on individualism in literature with the provocative title: “Be Careful of the Fraudulent Individualism Trend.”<sup>300</sup> In the end, İlhan repeated his usual arguments. But as an editor, as previous chapters reveal, Memet Fuat was more inclined to socialist literature. He thought the discussion on the existence of the individual had started earlier than the 1980s. Even if the “Second New” was not noted for being technically individualist, the criticism that it reflected solely “personal melancholy,” implied the beginning of individuality debates. The individualism of the 1950s, insofar as it existed, was quite different from that of the 1980s. But the “Second New” indeed forced the limits of the perception of a collective self in the atmosphere of the 1950s.

An interview with the poet Yaşar Miraç whom the Chief of the General Staff Kenan Evren had targeted on television a few months before was also printed in the journal. Miraç described the TDK award as documentation of the acceptance of his own poetic direction. He called this direction in which

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a peculiarity of the martial law regime, a book such as Mete Tunçay's on the Turkish Left was collected and removed.

300 İlhan describes his understanding of social realist literature as follows: “If I describe the individual, I never neglect that he or she is inside a universal/natural/social framework and the relations between all three.” Additionally, he notes that the individual needs to be explicated with his or her specific characteristics. According to him, the Zhdanovian commentary made people puppets to social influences after abstracting them from their natural internal conflicts. The individualists allegedly “were thinking of [the social] as constituting the individual's birthplace.” “Kaçamak Bireycilik Modasına Dikkat,” *Yazko Edebiyat*, 1 (November 1980): 52-54. The abstract individual propounded by the social milieu did not shelter a politics or stance. In support of these theses, Attilâ İlhan again featured in the journal in an interview upon the publication of *Gerçekçilik Savaşı* (1983).

he was trying to generate an authentic lyricism, “New Folk.” He rejected having used the elements of folklore.<sup>301</sup>

However, Memet Fuat presented some young poets, who admitted rural roots in their poems by using authentic material in them. They were featured as the promising poets of “New Folk Poetry,” in an essay of that title a few months after Miraç’s interview. According to M. Fuat, the movement pioneered by Yaşar Miraç and distributed by *Yeni Türkü* publications was spreading over young poets İsmail Teoman, Müslim Çelik, Ozan Telli, and Adnan Özer:

“In folk poetry we are in a different place than in approaches we are accustomed to and in Western-influenced poetry... Into our contemporary poetry that appears to have reached a genuine synthesis in some poets who change and develop under the influence of Western culture, the children of the people are entering - the children of the village- who have not shaken off and thrown away the local culture of the shores, corners and places where they were born. Folk poetry arises in a form to which we are not accustomed to, in opposition to our poetry that has ventured out under the influence of Western culture, in a mode that trusts itself, appears to be free from the confusion of inferiority that intellectuals have caused for centuries in poetry, and eludes monotony, presenting its superiority in the 'contemporary poetry milieu'.”<sup>302</sup>

Folk literature and the essay clearly constitute an answer to Cemal Süreya’s much-discussed article entitled “Folk is the Enemy of Poetry.”<sup>303</sup> The advantage of authenticity of this new provincialism, which eludes monotony and traditional limitations, is an alternative for abstract poetry as well, according to Memet Fuat. Rural roots and identity, along with folk literature, were topics

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301 *Yazko Edebiyat*, 1: 67-69.

302 Memet Fuat, “Yeni Halk Şiiri”, *Yazko Edebiyat*, 8 (June 1981).

303 Süreya, in his essay, that is considered one of Second New’s manifestos and that was published in *Yeni A* journal in 1957, argued that the people relied on idioms – i.e. lexical blocks - and thus related to a frozen aesthetics. There is no hope of supplementing this with poetic weight, so he defended the “Second New” poetry’s recourse to abstract metaphors.

dossiers in various journals throughout the decade.<sup>304</sup> The emergence of identity debates and of rural identity within them was a major reason for related debates in poetic and literary circles as well.<sup>305</sup>

Many journals published serial essays on language, culture, aesthetics, and literature by a single author. Önay Sözer was *Yazko*'s choice to write essay series on language and history. His first essay "The Door that Opens from Language to History," was also the first essay of the journal. It was the first step the decade's identity pursuits through language and history, is clear by now.

Sözer praised Atatürk's progressiveness in the essay, due to the linguistic politics he pursued. In the rest of the article, he provided information about structuralism and hermeneutics, posing the question of how to read Turkey's language, history and culture. He emphasized that the relationship needs to be established between scientific thought and Turkey's own culture. He drew attention to the fact that following the hermeneutic approach, language is not just a tongue, but also a formation of reasoning. The science to analyze our culture and language should be rendered local. As a follow up to this informative essay, the second issue featured an essay on the language debate entitled "Living Turkish."<sup>306</sup>

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- 304 Even the realities of contemporary urbanization were enough reason for these kinds of features to appear. In the 1980s, the urban population first exceeded the rural one. A series about the rural exodus and urbanization was featured in *Yazko Edebiyat*. Önder Şenyapılı, "Türk Yazınında Köyden Kente Göç Olgusu": 74-87; Sevinç Özer, "1960'tan Bu Yana Roman ve Kısa Öyküde Kentleşme Olgusu ve Kentlileşme Sorunları": 88-112; *Yazko Edebiyat*, 32 (June-1983).
- 305 The urban/rural dichotomy again emerged in the 1980s. Nurdan Gürbilek explains it as the discovery of and confrontation with the hidden, suppressed identity of the people. This paved the way for a new rural identity for provincials, defending their rural qualities against the West (*Vitrinde Yaşamak*, p: 97). Hence, the term rural not only refers to people living in the suburbs and beyond but also to a wholesome set of qualities undefinable in Western terms. For more on this see, Gülce Başer, "The Poetry of Self Definition," unpublished master thesis, Boğaziçi University Atatürk Institute, 2011.
- 306 After the Language Council of the TDK, there was a virtual explosion of linguistic debates. The linguistic debate in *Varlık* emerged at the same period. Two language councils of the TDK place in the period of the junta regime, in 1980 and 1982. At the last council, exactly one year later, the autonomy of the institution was and was subjected to the prime ministry.

The language issue was always on the agenda of the journal, and new Turkish proper was supported. Cevdet Kudret wrote, “As the most distinguished writers of today's generation use new words created with language reform, the Arab and Persian words so enjoyed by counter-reformists will fail in our language.”<sup>307</sup> Even if his aggressive tone is disturbing, he hinted that new Turkish had founded its own literature. According to Muzaffer Uyguner, since foreign words belonging to the old language are still in use, it implies that Turkey has not yet achieved its independence.<sup>308</sup> Mehmet Başaran argued that new Turkish side was the evolution of Anatolian Turkish and local idioms,<sup>309</sup> while Refik Yoksulabakan explicitly criticized those who opposed new Turkish for being “regressive,” praising the success of new Turkish as the language of advertisement.<sup>310</sup>

The subjection of the Turkish Language Institution to the prime ministry was tackled in one of the journal's dossiers. Various comments on this legislative practice were presented, but almost all authors agreed that the door to a generation of new Turkish was completely shut, and that new words had settled for good in the language. A return from this point to the past was not possible. Moreover, Attilâ İlhan and Can Yücel's opinion was that the Turkish Language Institution had actually already lost its autonomy. According to İlhan, the TDK had remained tied to the linguistic politics of the Republican People's Party (CHP) of the 1940s.<sup>311</sup> Yücel, who was of the same opinion, noted the damaging potential on the language of a “new state intervention” at a time when the TDK had finally “settled in its rightful place, oriented toward academia and limiting itself to scientific projects on language.” The threat was the political intervention of the state and he concluded that “language cannot

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307 Cevdet Kudret, “Türk Dilinin Karakoncolosları”, *Yazko Edebiyat*, 6 (April-1981): 93-100.

308 Muzaffer Uyguner, “Ana Dili-Halkın Dili” *Yazko Edebiyat*, 6 (April-1981): 101-105.

309 Mehmet Başaran, “Anamdan Dinlediklerim”, *Yazko Edebiyat*, 7 (May-1981): 76-83.

310 *Yazko Edebiyat*, 9 (July 1981): 127.

311 “A cultural modernism that relied on a Greek/Latin foundation, which Mustafa Kemal never considered, was kept abreast with excessive purification of the language, which Mustafa Kemal himself soon abandoned; this cultural policy from above was attempted to be spread through the device of the Village Institutes, the People's Houses, etc.,” Attilâ İlhan, “TDK İddia Edildiği Kadar Özerk miydi?,” *Yazko Edebiyat*, 35 (September-1983): 141.



be reformed,”<sup>312</sup> *Yazko*, having promised a particular publishing strategy, never posed any question to conservatives on language-related issues.

The language debates reached their apex with the criticism of language in the literary works themselves. A striking example was Asım Bezirci's critique of Enis Batur's book, *Şiir ve İdeoloji*. Bezirci criticized this newly published book from two perspectives. The first concerned the style and the quality of the essays. According to Bezirci, an essay was supposed to be more easily understandable. Batur raised wrote at an erudite level, as if “giving a speech to a few intellectuals, intimately familiar with the West.” This criticism may have been directed at the text itself or at Batur's general individualist attitude vis-à-vis in the intellectual debates of the period. Bezirci's second criticism related to Batur's vocabulary. He noted the coexistence of old and new Turkish as an “inconsistency with respect to language usage.”<sup>313</sup>

The zeitgeist can be determined from prominent literary topics like sexuality, literary awards, tradition, the inept reaction of artists to the technological advancements,<sup>314</sup> and the transformation of the social consciousness of authors, television and visual culture. For example, the authors' conceptualization of sexuality as a field of resistance against authority can be interpreted as a stance vis-à-vis the evasion of authorized patterns of sexuality, women's rejection of male superiority, and the acknowledgement of homosexuality as a human trait.<sup>315</sup> Some authors complained about increases in the number of awards and claimed that the awards system was becoming a measure of seniority, rather than quality.<sup>316</sup> Ahmet Oktay, too, discerned an increase in the number of authors with rural roots and of low socio-economic status. It is fine

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312 “Can Yücel, “Ben Kapımın Önünü Süpürüyorum,” *Yazko Edebiyat*, 35 (September-1983): 144.

313 Asım Bezirci, “Enis Batur'un 'Şiir ve İdeoloji'si,” *Yazko Edebiyat*, 11 (September-1981). In Bezirci's mind, the use of new Turkish was undoubtedly progressive and leftist, while the use of old Turkish signified regressive, rightist, or even Islamist leanings. Hovering between these, two, because of their contrast, was considered incoherent more than a compromise.

314 Memet Fuat, “Sanatta Teknoloji Düşmanlığı,” *Yazko Edebiyat*, 34 (August-1983): 82-83.

315 Ahmet Oktay, “Cinsellik, Erotizm ve Ötesi,” *Yazko Edebiyat*, 5 (March-1981): 81-90.

316 Konur Ertop, “Ödüller ve TDK,” *Yazko Edebiyat*, 1 (November 1980). It is debatable whether the community discussed the organization of awards as much it is discussed today. Perhaps we also need to ponder why we discuss awards as much as we do.

to include authors from a wider spectrum of society to witness the variety of Turkish life, unless it comes to the cost of surrendering to pop culture.<sup>317</sup> The presentations at a panel discussion entitled “Woman and our Literature” were printed in full in the journal.<sup>318</sup>

The journal provided comprehensive analysis of issues such as language and poetry with illuminating comments, even given generic topics pursued at that time. In the thirty-fifth issue, Memet Fuat transferred his duties to Adnan Özyalçınır, who was in charge for the next ten issues. The journal was closed in 1986 due to financial problems and oppression by the state.<sup>319</sup> Individual texts were preferred to structured dossiers. The journal managed to generate a literary perspective on issues such as technology, gender and sexuality and the economy, along with publishing philosophical texts laying out a groundwork for literature.

Many poets, old and young, were featured in the ample, particular space set aside in the journal for poetry. Works of young poets such as Haydar Ergülen, Ali Günvar Adnan Özer, Murathan Mungan, İsmail Uyaroğlu, Müslim Çelik, Tuğrul Tanyol, Adnan Azar, Hüseyin Haydar, Hüseyin Ferhad, Tarık Günersel, Gülseli İnal, Neşe Yaşın, and Akif Kurtuluş and female poets like Neşe Yaşın, Sennur Sezer and Gülseli İnal were featured along with major poets of the previous generation. Young poets had the chance to participate in the poetic debate via essays. Metin Celâl explicated his ideas on imagism,<sup>320</sup> while Tuğrul Tanyol discussed tradition.<sup>321</sup>

317 Ahmet Oktay, “Yazının Toplumsallaşması,” *Yazko Edebiyat*, 7 (May-1981): 74-75.

318 *Yazko Edebiyat*, 7 (June-1981).

319 “In Atilla Birkiye's essay about Memet Fuat and his memories of *Yazko* (Birkiye 2003: 95), it is said that during the years of '*Yazko*'s intensive production [...] the eye of the police and especially the military regime was fixated upon this institution,' On the side of *Yazko* as an institution ... as a place, but also its employees, publications, and artistic events were being closely watched by the military regime. It was floundering due to inherent problems as well.” Deniz Depe, “Türkiye'nin İlk ve Tek Yazarlar Kooperatifi Yazko Ve Yazko Edebiyat Dergisi”, <http://dergipark.ulakbim.gov.tr/tubar/article/viewFile/5000120696/5000111518>

320 Metin Celâl, “Şiirsel Gerçek ve Boyutları,” *Yazko Edebiyat*, 33 (July-1983).

321 Tuğrul Tanyol, “Şiirde Gelenek Sorunu,” *Yazko Edebiyat*, 10 (August-1981): 89-95. He pointed out that benefiting from tradition did not mean writing poetry in old forms. According to him, the poetry of the period was influenced by the West and it should return to tradition.

*Yazko Edebiyat* suffered more difficult circumstances than *Varlık* and *Gösteri*. *Varlık* had a long history and was ultimately a mainstream journal. *Gösteri* was the journal of a large capitalist media group. It was politically in harmony with the junta and the Motherland Party that succeeded it. It supported their efforts to legitimize themselves, staying within the political boundaries set by the junta, as well. *Yazko Edebiyat* was, on the other hand, a publication of the Authors and Translators Cooperative, founded at a time when union-like organizations were tightly supervised. The opposition it mounted was limited to including works by dissident authors. Its political attitude was reflected mostly through language debates.

With regard to the language issue, the journal was obviously on the side of new Turkish. New Turkish was a part of the cultural policy of the foundation period and was welcomed by left wing. But in the post-1980 coup era, the language policy among the left wing shifted to “spoken Turkish.” The vocabulary used by the junta was archaic, all the way up to the Chief of General Staff. They did not have any problem with the younger generation, that considered Republic’s cultural ideology to have been “from the top” and authoritarian out of touch with reality and oppressive - except for bad Turkish of Kenan Evren.<sup>322</sup> The journal represented left wing identity mostly through this tendency for new Turkish, while essays in either carefully defined language conservatism as antagonistic to the Republic or reminisced about the independence in language of the Republic, as a means to legitimize journal’s language policy.<sup>323</sup> Hence, *Yazko* seemed to be a mainstream journal in accord with the Republican regime. Although it gave the impression of being apolitical, *Yazko* suffered government oppression in the junta's most authoritarian period, as most of

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The genuine works of Tanpınar, Hilmi Yavuz and Nâzım Hikmet reflected the benefit of tradition.

322 Especially in journals published by the young poets, these debates were masked by discussions of language and tradition.

323 The journal was also open to Islamists and never generated an openly anti-Islamist discourse, but it was eager to declare its position of supporter for new Turkish. Furthermore, Islamists who appeared in *Yazko* were more inclined to the new vocabulary. Hence, as we know, the Islamists were not monolithic either.

the authors with whom the journal cooperated were leftist.<sup>324</sup> Probably, these authors intended to continue writing under the junta, too, as a part of the resistance. In the light of these conditions, *Yazko* was considered close to the left.

#### § 5.4 Maverera

*Mavera* was launched in 1976 by Erdem Bayazıt, Ersin Gürdoğan, M. Akif İnan, Aleaddin Özdenören, Rasim Özdenören, Cahit Zarifoğlu and Hasan Seyithanoğlu. The poets and authors of the founding cadre had been writing in journals such as *Büyük Doğu*, *Diriliş* and *Edebiyat*. This journal started as a “literature journal,” as noted in the description in its copyright page. Its manifesto propounded: “*Mavera* is a meeting place in the literary field for those that harbor the cause of reinstating our own civilization as a form of life.” However, *Mavera* remained a literature journal and encouraged its young authors and readers to stay away from ideology. Still, it took a position on international issues like the occupation of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union and events in Palestine and Hama. It was close to the Motherland Party.<sup>325</sup> The journal went through phases with waxing and waning commentary on contemporary politics.

The journal was not against contact with the West and benefit from it. Socialism, comparisons of the West and Islam, and the idea of a Muslim union to counter the Common Market were among regularly handled topics. In one essay, for example, Rasim Özdenören explained that the unquestioning adoption of Western science was a symptom of a “complex,” claiming that that this adoption would bring about “degeneration,” including the acceptance of the theory evolution and the normalization of perversion.<sup>326</sup> In the same issue,

324 Several collaborators in the journal are strongly criticized, but in the end, nobody denies the oppression this publication experienced. Erol Toy, *Yazko'nun Öyküsü* (Istanbul: Yaz Yayınları, 2007).

325 Ömer Lekesiz, “İslami Türk Edebiyatı'nın Değişen Yüzü”, *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce*, Vol. 6 *İslamcılık* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2014), 973-974.

326 Rasim Özdenören, “1960 Sonrası Edebiyatımız ve Bazı Nitelikleri”, *Mavera*, 38 (January-1980): 5-12.

Alaeddin Özdenören argued that socialism had lost its appeal in society, and that the popularity it garnered was nearly because it presented a “new” option. Socialism, he said, was yet limited to particular fields.<sup>327</sup> These essays were printed before the coup. Although leftist literature was included in the journal’s literature reviews of 1979, from 1981 onwards there would be none.

Actually, the journal accommodated western literature through authors such as Dostoyevsky. It focused mostly on particular authors. English versions of poems by Cahit Zarifoğlu and Ebubekir Eroğlu, to name a few, were published in the journal. In an essay in the fifty-third issue, Maraşlıoğlu replied Necmettin Türinay’s critiques in the forty-fifth and forty-sixth issues. Türinay had claimed that Muslim authors were emulating a Western “literature of depression,” “containing surreal, existential elements” that they did not represent the Muslims themselves.<sup>328</sup> Maraşlıoğlu responded in the name of the younger generation by emphasizing their will to generate a critical perspective - that these were indeed the experiences of Muslims.

However, the journal forwent a deep analysis of the West in favor of in-depth studies of Ottoman literature and Sufi philosophy, such as Mustafa İsen’s article on Divan literature<sup>329</sup> and Akif İnan’s lectures on Sufism.<sup>330</sup> Western literature was treated superficially compared to Eastern culture and literature. This, in turn, diminished the depth of the journal’s debates on the West.

With the departure of Rasim Özdenören in 1982, the journal took a more political position. Israel and the Middle East were criticized in almost every issue. The July-August-September issue was dedicated to Sufism. There was an interruption until January 1986, and after which H. R. Yananlı was the general publishing director and Mustafa Çelik was the editor-in-chief. After that time, content on international politics was rare. It was replaced by topics from the social sciences like philosophy and psychoanalysis. An example was Ali Bulaç’s article “Nude Culture in Art.”<sup>331</sup> Bulaç argued that the phenomenon of nudity in contemporary art is presented for mass consumption, producing a

327 Alaeddin Özdenören, “79 Siyasetinde Belirginleşen Bir Vaka”, *Mavera*, 38 (January-1980): 14-17.

328 Mehmet Maraşlıoğlu, “Kimin Edebiyatı,” *Mavera*, 53 (April-1981): 19-20.

329 Mustafa İsen, “Divan Şiirinde Nazire Geleneği,” *Mavera*, 54 (May 1981): 24-26.

330 His long lectures were hosted in the 54<sup>th</sup> and 55<sup>th</sup> issue.

331 Ali Bulaç, “Sanatta Çıplaklık Kültürü,” *Mavera*, 111 (March-1986): 14-16.

sexuality that suits the lifestyle of a progressive, technological civilization, on one hand, and alienating art from its fundamental function, on the other. He explained the issue of nudity and dressing in Islam and other Abrahamic religions. In Islam, the person carries the spiritual self within the body, even if he or she acts against it. In the rest of the East, clothing oneself is a “victory” against nudity. Nudity originated in Greek art, which was the basis of Christian art; hence, nudity is suitable for European culture. But nudity in contemporary use essentially delivered female sexuality up for consumption, according to Bulaç. This is how nudity was addressed in *Mavera*.

Actually, the journal was involved in a process of liberalism emphasizing the global values of pluralism, democracy and humanitarianism by that time. At that exact point, the journal *Nokta* issued a dossier on the practices of torture in the prisons of the 12 September period. The dossier and these practices became the topic of an interview in *Mavera* among Mustafa Çelik, Ali Bulaç and Hüseyin Hatemi. Ali Bulaç criticized the practices commenting: “Nobody but God has the power or right to torture a human being.”<sup>332</sup>

The importance of protecting authentic culture against cultural imperialism was emphasized in various articles throughout the decade, but editorials avoided words such as wealth and poverty, cultural imperialism itself, and citations of post-colonial literature. They protected Islamic culture from within Islamic jargon. But the modernist poet Cahit Zarifoğlu was featured prominently in the journal, so can be considered an eclectic product: gamut of cultural products generated by a usual discourse of Western criticism, coupled with the influences of the West and Islamist literature of the 1960s that reached into the present.

*Mavera* did not ignore contemporary discussions on language. Like *Yönelişler*, it was published in a considerably modern Turkish, whether consciously or not. The journal printed essays by major Islamist poets such as Cahit Zarifoğlu, M. Akif İnan, Mehmet Atilla Maraş, Mehmet Ocaktan, Mustafa Çelik and Erdem Bayazıt. There was also a section for poems sent in by young poets. When he was alive, Cahit Zarifoğlu curated this section. After his passing, it continued unsigned.

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332 *Mavera*, 111 (March-1986): 41-49.

## § 5.5 Türkiye Yazıları

*Türkiye Yazıları* was launched in April 1977 and closed in February 1983. In the 1980s, it was directed almost solely by Ahmet Say. It managed to remain on the market during the junta regime. Its affinity was with social realist literature and it maintained a pacifist stance towards the Republican regime and Atatürk without acknowledging the junta in any way. Poets being prosecuted such as Ahmet Telli were able to publish their works in the journal.

It was a journal of culture, like the others of its kind, and included other art forms and social sciences like history. But the most gravity was given to literature. Several dossiers issued with interviews, essays, and analyses of Şair Eşref, Beşir Fuat, contemporary Turkish poetry and its exigencies were the engine of *Türkiye Yazıları*. The work of socialist authors such as Ahmet Telli, Samim Kocagöz, Gülten Akın, Ahmet Ada and Ali Cengizkan appeared regularly in the journal.

The journal adopted the position of being the voice of socialist literature. Therefore, articles, interviews, or at least a suggestive paragraph or poem related to intellectual debates would be included in almost every issue. Progressively increasing doses of criticism were doled out to intellectuals in each issue, particularly concerning their failure to assume their mission. Articles by intellectuals were criticized “including errors” and generating haphazard discussion without even conducting any research on the issues they speak.”<sup>333</sup> Or intellectuals were compared to poplar trees that provide neither shelter nor fruit.<sup>334</sup> Even the topics of dossiers were chosen accordingly. Ahmet Say admitted choosing Şair Eşref as a subject for his intellectual identity rather than his poetry. The intellectual identity of Beşir fuat was handled in a distinct essay in the respective dossier on his work.

The weakness of intellectual accumulation was the topic of Murat Barkın's article a few issues later:

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333 Nizamettin Uğur, “Bir Yazının Düşündürdükleri”, *Türkiye Yazıları*, 57 (December-1981): 35-36.

334 Talip Apaydın, “Kavaklar”, *Türkiye Yazıları*, 60 (March-1982): 7The discussion between Ahmet Say and Enis Batur mentioned in the previous chapter was also a discussion of intellectuality.

“Those who try to hide their inadequacies within talk, whose ignorance forces them to rediscover even the simplest notions, turn every discussion into a fight, the blind. And as they are infested with anger for failing to convince the people they come across, they generally find salvation by reminding their audience of their 'intellectual' identity.”<sup>335</sup>

In fact, this is a characteristic of a personality, not an identity. There is no doubt that, the author of the text was describing himself, as well, but this quotation importantly shows the extent of the conflict among intellectuals already burdened with heavy oppression by the state. First, there must have been some truth in the statement, which implies that intellectuals were in need of being recognized and legitimized. Secondly, the essay shows that intellectuals were no longer respecting one another in terms of knowledge, thought, or even in general.

The writing in which authors absolved themselves openly show that intellectuals were under pressure, discredited, and uncomfortable in the period. The anti-intellectualist policies of the ruling authority and the way that popular culture excluded the intellectual identity have been shown. The eagerness among socialist intellectuals to reproduce these policies is striking. In fact, the only place where anti-intellectual discourse was not produced was in Islamist journals and among the Islamist literature milieu.<sup>336</sup> Even İsmet Özel published a critique of intellectuals in *Yazko*.<sup>337</sup> Since not all intellectuals were leftist, that the wave of criticism was seen only in the leftist media meant that oppression and disrespect were directed at the left.

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335 Murat Barkın, “Türkiye’de Aydın Sorunu -1”, *Türkiye Yazıları*, 68 (November-1982): 3-5.

336 We saw that the Islamist intelligentsia of that period deemed itself in “upheaval from the 1960s to this day.” In the end, the junta regime did not really interfere with the Islamists; *Mavera* for example, could present political content more easily. This is in part due to the fact that it adopted a line the authorities could affirm, as it was oriented toward traditionalism rather than to a regime change. Naturally, they too must have been affected by the general state of the publishing sector. However, it is certain that they did not suffer the pressure and mistreatment that the left wing of the intelligentsia did. In the end, the principal goal of their discourse was arguably to create an alternative to domination by the West.

337 This article is not remarkable for a strong expression of its theses; I point it out, because Ahmet Telli mentioned it in his poetry dossier in *Türkiye Yazıları*.



As in all journals of the period, literary and aesthetic discussions were provided in *Türkiye Yazıları*. Certainly, the authors of these dossiers and analyses were representatives of social realist literature. An article by Ahmet Say in December 1981 declared that *Türkiye Yazıları* was one of the journals criticized for printing “slogan poems” in the late 1970s.<sup>338</sup> According to Say, this was a “campaign” of “a group of talentless poets of Istanbul” generated a critique of “slogan poetry” aimed at socialist poetry. (Incidentally, *Türkiye Yazıları* was a journal from Ankara). Say emphasized that the journal would continue supporting “those poets,” whom Say named as Metin Altıok, Ahmet Telli, Ali Cengizkan and Ahmet Özer. Whether the critiques were directed at these figures is unclear, and besides, *Türkiye Yazıları* was publishing ten to fifteen poems in every issue. However, the struggle actually started before the young generation appeared in the 1980s, but since conditions for the transformation of social realist poetry were not ripe until the 1980s, abstract domination was put off. Besides, the young generation of the 1980s was responsible for this shift, as well.<sup>339</sup> Yet the criticism of “slogan poetry” started in the late 1970s, as explained in the second chapter. Young poets like İzzet Yasar were pursuing abstract poetry and publishing their books with Tan Publishing (1980-85) owned by Mehmet Taner, who himself was among the well-known second generation of the “Second New” Poets who started poetry in early 1970s. More importantly, the appraisals of social realist poetry in the late 1970s in the annual reviews of the literary journals were weak.

Ahmet Telli labelled the antagonism between the social realist and imagist veins of poetry as a struggle, as expressed in the title: “Are We as Brave as the Opponents?” in a dossier about contemporary poetry.<sup>340</sup> Indeed, imagist poets

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338 “Three or four years ago, when we boldly published the creations of young, talented, yet unknown poets in every issue, a storm broke: Bad poetry is published in *Türkiye Yazıları*.” Ahmet Say, “Şey,” *Türkiye Yazıları*, 57 (December-1981): 1-2.

339 Baki Asiltürk, *Türk Şiirinde 1980 Kuşağı* (Istanbul Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2013).

340 Ahmet Telli, “Karşımızdakiler Kadar Cesur muyuz?”, *Türkiye Yazıları*, 61-62 (April-May 1982): 3,

considered socialist poetry a target board and its authors as immediate counterparts. The use of images in poetry was discussed in almost every journal,<sup>341</sup> and socialist poetry was criticized for being aesthetically naïve in that sense.

Ahmet Telli attacked an essay by İsmet Özel in *Yazko Edebiyat*, because he probably thought the real problem was clear political references in socialist poetry. As a result of rapid politicization after the 1960s, according to Özel, poets became interdependent to readers and therefore abandoned the experimental nature inherent to poetry.<sup>342</sup> Telli claimed that Özel thought that poets need to reflect their genuine identities in poetry instead of hot button political issues, but that this just one kind of “intellectual.” In other words because Özel implied that all socialists produce Zhdanovian poetry, Telli preferred a counter attack rather than defense: social context was something more than an environment to be described. It had been alienated by the author subject as it appeared in the texts of the imagists. Attilâ İlhan also argued this in *Yazko*. Hence, it was reproducing of the generic socialist versus individualist literature debate. Telli found the authors of “counterpart” more brave and precise, and he argued that as the socialists believed in the space they occupied, their defense would be more effective.

In her essay for the “Contemporary Poetry” dossier, Gülten Akin suggested that Republican poetry, including the socialist vein, poetry did not initially utilize authentic sources, and it was nourished by Western culture. Meanwhile, a “wrong intellectualism” was generated, and “the rootless poetry based on the West called the ‘Second New’ lived its golden age.” In the 1960s, “the people's socialist tendencies were strengthened, after being just slightly liberated from state oppression.” But by then, “West” was present not only in

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341 Even if images were useful for creating deeper meaning or as a tool to transform ordinary vocabulary into poetic language, the language was rendered thoroughly abstract by the imagist poets of the second half of the 1980s such as Seyhan Erözçelik. The references became totally obscure, and such abstraction of the text evolved into an “introverted poetry.”

342 It continues: “The most definitive evidence that Turkish poetry is a parasite today is the position of poets under the intellectual shadow of ideological camps and their affiliate environments. In other words, the poem lives not by its own strength, but by a leased social position.” İsmet Özel, “Şairler İntellect'in Pençesinde,” *Yazko Edebiyat*, 18, (April-1982).

Turkish poetry's "form" and "essence," but also in its "politics." Hence, it "produced stars," and created "frail, inept, and fake movements;" meanwhile bourgeoisie adopted "all those movements that appeared to oppose one another." Poets were easily monitored by the culture of capitalism under these conditions. Media and television systems arranged monetary awards for these poets as the literature they produced degenerated.<sup>343</sup>

Was Telli in consensus with Akın regard to "Second New" movement? Ahmet Telli defended against the criticisms of the choice of Edip Cansever, a major poet of the "Second New," for the Sedat Simavi Award, saying that "Turkish poetry cannot be explained without Edip Cansever." He argued that "the award given to Cansever will not add to him, but cannot damage him either... Go and read his poem 'With the Voice of September,' and you will find Turkey." The final sentence shows that a debate on authenticity had emerged among socialist poets, as well.<sup>344</sup> This was the socialist appraisal of the imagist trend, at least in those years. Young poets who contributed to the "Contemporary Poetry" dossier were Ahmet Özer, Veysel Çolak, Ahmet Ada, and Gökhan Cengizhan.<sup>345</sup> Ahmet Özer supported the argument that artists needed to protect their pioneering position vis-à-vis the society in which they live to in order to achieve permanence with their works.<sup>346</sup> He believed that the real artist, author, or intellectual had to adopt the objective of making a better world. Veysel Çolak, a poet who began writing poetry in the late 1970s, fell victim to the criticism of "slogan poetry," but his writing was dedicated to the criticism of folkloric elements in poetry. He believed that these elements obstructed a poem from catching up to the rhythm of contemporary life.<sup>347</sup> Gökhan Cengizhan also pointed out that poetry needed to functionally by

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343 Gülten Akın, "Yoz Şiirden Diri Şiire," *Türkiye Yazıları*, 61-62 (April-May 1982): 4-6.

344 Ahmet Telli, "Edip Cansever İçin Bir Not," *Türkiye Yazıları*, 59 (February-1982): 39.

345 It is more correct to identify them as under forty years old. They were young, given that the poets of the "Second New" generation were still alive.

346 Ahmet Özer, "Sanatın Sorunsalı ve Şiirimiz," *Türkiye Yazıları*, 61-62 (April-May 1982): 13-15.

347 Veysel Çolak, "Şiirsel Bellek," *Türkiye Yazıları*, 61-62 (April-May 1982): 24-26.

serving readers a relation to life.<sup>348</sup> Veysel Öngören wrote an essay on the problems of poetry and language.<sup>349</sup> The closing essay of the dossier was an independent article by Halim Yazıcı.<sup>350</sup> He opposed the ideology of the product, suggesting poetry “has a reflection in life.” Generally, there was no direct allusion with regard to contemporary poetry in these various evaluations. Except for Ahmet Telli and Gülten Akın, poets tended to defend their own approaches, instead of becoming involved in the broader debate. As Ahmet Telli was the most prominent in the domain of socialist poetry of the 1970s and as Gülten Akın had enjoyed a gravitas for years, the young poets behaved cautiously in constructing their statements, as they were still in the process of making a name for themselves.

Other dossiers in the journal informed about other branches of art, like cinema and photography. A dossier entitled “The Contemporary Problems of the Novel” was also prepared and particularly focused on Fethi Naci’s recently published book, *Türkiye’de Roman ve Toplumsal Değişme*.<sup>351</sup> Dossiers on history reaffirmed the Republic and Atatürk.

As a serial segment from 1981-1982, the journal published letters that Muzafer İlhan Erdost wrote to his brother İlhan Erdost, who was killed in custody, after the 12 September Coup. Gülten Akın’s poem *Bir İncekara Küçük Oğlana İlahi* reflected experiences of prison and visiting days.<sup>352</sup> As for trans-

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348 Gökhan Cengizhan, “Şiirimiz Üzerine Notlar,” *Türkiye Yazıları*, 61-62 (April-May 1982): 27-28.

349 Veysel Öngören, “Şiirin Öznesi,” *Türkiye Yazıları*, 61-62 (April-May 1982): 29-32.

350 Halim Yazıcı, “Şiir Eleştirisi,” *Türkiye Yazıları*, 61-62 (April-May 1982): 33.

351 *Türkiye Yazıları*, 59 (February-1982).

352 Issue: 60, March-1982, p: 14. “They pushed to throw down his mother/ Don’t ask who... Ask not/ They pushed to throw down his mother/ In front of his eyes// - Uncle, it should not be your son/ If it is shall he not die, I can’t bear it// thin crane he is of his mother / He in man-to-man visits/ Sends regards to his father/ They pushed to throw down his mother/ In front of his eyes// - Uncle, it should not be your son/ If it is, shall he not come to visit me// He misses and he is only nine/ Burning are his sad black eyes/ His dad... This was the last time he saw/ the servant’s Köroğlu is in the mountain/ the image got on the horse sorrel/ the scarlet horse in relief [...]/ Clothes on ground as dead birds/ Growing are his sad black eyes [...].” “İtip düşürdüler annesini/ Kim kim diye sorma/ İtip düşürdüler annesini/ Gözleri önünde// -

lated writing, articles supporting Palestine against Israel's attacks or concerning Latin American literature can be understood as covert support or expressions of sympathy for the shared experience of junta governance.<sup>353</sup> These types of translated articles were typical for publications of the period.

The journal was important for the themes it reflected and represented. Socialist literature was reacting against both liberal vilification and the propagation of imagist, abstract poetry. The precise arguments of this reaction were revealed in this journal. Most young socialist poets like Veysel Çolak, Gültekin Emre, Ahmet Özer, Süha Tuğtepe, Hüseyin Yurttaş, Ahmet Ada and Akif Kurtuluş had the opportunity to publish their poems there. Socialist literature was carrying out a discussion of essentially revolutionary “authenticity,” which was thought to be folk literature –i.e., the poetry that would protest capitalist culture was expected to develop out of folk poetry.

## § 5.6 Summary

The journals of the older generations of both the leftists and liberals were at the center of authority in the 1980s. Young poets could be featured in them, but only as “young poets” or in dossiers specifically on “young poets.” But this established the criteria for being approved in literary circles.

These journals can be defined as having one of three distinct political and literary tendencies: liberal-leftist/abstract, socialist, or Islamist. The liberals identified the modern Turkish poetry with the masters and believed the variety of tendencies constitute the richness of Turkish poetry. Of course, imagist poetry reproduced and benefited from tradition as formulated by Hilmi Yavuz, as he did the hybrid form influenced by the classics, “Second New” and

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Amca senin oğlun olmasın/ Olursa, kıyamam, ölmesin// İnce turnasıdır annesinin/ O erkek erkeğe görüşlerde/ Selâm iletir babasına/ İtip düşürdüler annesini/ Gözleri önünde// - Amca senin oğlun olmasın/ Olursa görüşüne gelmesin// Özlüyor ve dokuz yaşında/ Tütüyor yaşlı kara gözleri/ Babası. Son görüşüdü/ Köroğlusu darda ayvaz/ İmge doru ata bindi/ Al at yedeğinde [...]/ Giysiler ölü kuşlar gibi yerde/ Büyüyor yaşlı kara gözleri [...]

353 It characteristic of the period, as discussed. In Turkey, the country's military junta could not be protested against, but protests could be directed to “fascist” regimes in Latin America”, and news of protests in those countries could be published here.

Western poetry. They regarded literature as an accumulation pioneered by literary masters. As journals were categorized according to this conceptualization, they were rendered spaces for exposition for various identities. Together with the fact that they altogether disregarded hot political issues, they discussed language and history as these issues came onto the agenda together with new legislations regarding the Turkish History and the Turkish Language Institutes. Moreover, as their modes of expression applied new Turkish but also leaned towards Ottoman history with which they had become familiar, they created a more inclusive field of political representation.

Generally speaking, they had trouble with the cultural politics of the Republican period. Even Islamist journals, which considered the Republic's cultural politics as a break with tradition, did not construct a radical opposition, limiting their criticism to suggest the benefit of reading Islamic classics. Thus, these journals offered a moderate perspective. As for the socialist journals, the establishment of a culture of capitalism at new echelons of the economy presented a significant problem. They emphasized that the Republic should be taken as a starting point from which intellectuals must resist and take a stand against this cultural transformation.

These journals included translated articles, dossiers on topics that they wanted to explore from a larger perspective, debates and analyses, of poetry, and debates on aesthetics, language and history that replaced hot button politics with structured interviews with relevant authors. It was a template adopted by all literary journals of the period. To reflect of the comprehensiveness of the intellectual realm was a main principle of the journals. The conduct of politics through these manifestations paved the way for a younger generation to develop their own expressive metaphors; however, it also generated an obstacle for the reception and clarification of the journals' politics. This was especially the case for *Gösteri* and *Yazko Edebiyat*, while, *Türkiye Yazıları* was able to provide clearer, comprehensible messages.

Generally, socialist journals were in harmony with the basics of Republican ideology but they in conflict with the junta. Reciprocally, the 1980 junta did not tolerate to the left wing, in contrast with the junta of 1960. Indeed, the 1971 and 1980 juntas manifested violent practices, prosecutions, and corporal punishment. On the other hand, leftist journals in the first half of the 1980s particularly viewed the Islamists as most regressive, while Islamist journals

were predisposed to oppose the leftist ideology. This cannot be considered an offshoot of the polarization of the 1970s - that the actual polarization was between MHP, the supporters of Nationalist Movement Party, and the leftists. The Islamists countered the leftist point of view to great extent due to its positivism and denial of religion. In fact, Islamism opposed the Republic's politics with regard to language and religion and managed to shift the state's discourse and practices to a conservative course on account of the National Front governments of the 1970s and their "staffing" of the bureaucracy. This is evidenced by the fact that the literature curriculum was not updated for years after 1970 while leftist literature, which was included in the curriculum to a degree in the 1950s, was completely excluded from textbooks by the 1970s. The eventual state of the curriculum is covered in the respective chapter.

This chapter accounts for a representative set of mainstream journals; a huge number of literary journals existed in the 1980s. Journals such as *Adam Sanat* (edited by Memet Fuat from 1985-1999 and Turgay Fişekçi<sup>354</sup> from 1999-2005), *Milliyet Sanat* (the newspaper *Milliyet*'s journal on arts, culture and literature, launched in 1972 and fashioned in the mode of *Gösteri* from the 1980s onwards), *Sanat Olayı* (a literary journal by Ülkü Tamer from 1981-1982, and by Attilâ İlhan from 1983-85), *Diriliş* (a literary journal by a major Islamist poet Sezai Karakoç, launched in the 1960s), along with social science journals that allotted space for literary work and/or analysis, such as *Birikim* and *Defter*.

The journals of the younger generation is analyzed in the following chapter. By the second half of the 1980s, a rapprochement and collaboration between the Islamist and liberal-leftist domains became evident.

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354 Turgay Fişekçi: (Born: 1956) A Young poet of 1980s.

## Literary Journals of the 1980s-II: The Journals of the Young Generation

The journals prepared by the young generation of the 1980s are particularly important for broadcasting the debates of young poets and of youth. Many poets of older generations - as the “masters” - were active, so young poets had difficulty getting into the major literary journals. Thus, they established their own, the strategies of which were to be nodes of self-expression for young poets. Most of these journals were folded after only a few issues. The ones backed by political structures such as *Yarın*,<sup>355</sup> lasted longer but lost their “literary” quality, becoming political journals in time.

Young poets were eager to include “master” poets in their journals and were not motivated to go beyond the typical formats of literary journals of the decade. A few journals succeeded in becoming representative of the period, managing to develop the extensive debates from the perspective of younger poets. These journals are analyzed in this chapter.

Two of these *Broy* and *Düşün*, were in fact published Seyit Nezir, who was not himself a young poet of the 1980s. He was born in 1950, hence belonged to the previous generation of poets. He was not a master producer of literary journals, like Memet Fuat and Doğan Hızlan, and had to defer to the “masters”

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355 Akif Kurtuluş said he was assigned to participate in *Yarın* by Turkish Labor Party. He was assigned to monitor its activities but he became a part of it. His support was not solely financial, but in fact included the discipline to prepare the journal.



as did the journals of younger poets in the 1980s. *Düşün* was particularly supported by two young poets of the decade - Enver Ercan and Bedirhan Toprak - who made interviews for the journal and prepared dossiers on particular literary issues. *Broy* also depended on the products of young poets in terms of interviews and essays, launching a poetic movement along with them. Neither of these journals had the self-confidence as reflected by *Yazko Edebiyat*, which is why they are included in this chapter.

The set of journals analyzed in these two chapters are selected for their “representative qualities” among the many others published in the period. Journals as *Karşı*, *Kıyı*, *Poetika*, *Olgu*, *Yaba*, *Akdeniz*, *Yazın*, *Nitelik*, and *Körfez* by the younger generation, *Milliyet Sanat* by Milliyet newspaper, *Sanat Olayı* by Attilâ İlhan, the short revival of *Papirüs* by Cemal Süreya, and *Diriliş* by Sezai Karakoç (actually launched in 1960) were excluded from the analysis for the sake of representativeness, period and time and source limitations.

## § 6.1 Yönelişler

The literary journal *Yönelişler*, launched in April 1981, represented a turning point in Islamic literature of the decade despite the existence of a literary powerhouse such as *Mavera*. Forty-three issues of *Yönelişler* were published from April 1981 to July 1985 and an additional ten work published from March 1990 to December 1990. It was established by Ahmet Yücel, Ebubekir Eroğlu and Adnan Tekşen,<sup>356</sup> but Eroğlu was the main figure determining the content and defining the identity of the journal, along with providing the editorial texts. The journal is often believed to be a reaction to the political connections of *Mavera* and the naïve, ideological Islamist literary attitude of *Aylık Dergi*, prioritizing aesthetic quality, instead.<sup>357</sup> This is as it highlights the fact that concern for aesthetic quality was not limited to the left wing and the liberal leftists

356 For issues 1-10, the owner was Mehmet Çetin of Bürde Publications, while Mehmet Ocaktan became the owner for issues 11/12-48. Finally, Ahmet Şişman of İz Publications was the owner for issues No: 49-53, and Yılmaz Daşcıoğlu was the chief editor.

357 Ömer Lekesiz, “İslami Türk Edebiyatı'nın Değişen Yüzü,” *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce*, Vol 6 *İslamcılık* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2014), 974.

of the period. A young generation of Islamists were defending the precedence of aesthetic quality as well.

The forty-eight page journal prepared was launched starting with an editorial that claimed: “Our society under a shaky transformation, in the process of simulating a despotic and injured culture,” which is politically ambiguous, unless the writer is known.<sup>358</sup> Is it a single culture, that is both despotic and injured? Is it the culture that assimilates or is it assimilated? Perhaps the author crafted the sentence ambiguously to make it more defensible in case of prosecution; even though the despotic regime tolerated the Islamists in general, it definitely prohibited opposition to the junta regime. However, the editorial clearly defined the principles of the journal:

- ◆ The previous century of the Modern Turkish Literature under the influence of West was naïve because of the weakness of its sources. This results in insufficient resources to nourish contemporary literature.
- ◆ And Islamist literature has existed since 1960 but it also suffered from a shortage of resources, for the aforementioned reasons. Hence, all genuine literary initiatives soon became exhausted and started to repeat themselves.
- ◆ The classical works on Islamic mysticism (*tasavvuf*) are in fact resources for contemporary literary works. Islamist literature can only develop by benefiting from this tradition.

The essay includes a stimulating proposal to a broad range of poets: to revise the *tasavvuf* as a source of tradition. Eroğlu should deliberately suggested mysticism because it responds to modern philosophical questions such as relativity and non-referential nature, along with flexible capacity to include the liberal intellectuals, which sharia was unable to accomplish. The *tasavvuf* had the capacity to respond to modern Western philosophy, as it was a non-teleological part of theology. Consequently, *Yönelişler* was always open to leftists, liberals, and even the Republic defenders, as Mevlana's invitation to every being - “Come on, be whatever you want,” - despite its Islamist basis. Both essays and poems of poets such as Enis Batur, Attilâ İlhan, Orhan Alkaya, and Lale

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358 Ebubekir Eroğlu, “Sunu”, *Yönelişler*, 1 (April-1981): 7-11.

Müldür<sup>359</sup> were featured in this journal. Almost all Islamist poets appeared there too.<sup>360</sup>

If the main issue for *Yazko Edebiyat* was language and for *Varlık* was intellectuals, *Yönelişler*'s main issue was “sources.” The problematic of sources in Turkish literature was the topic of a dossier to which many intellectuals of various approaches contributed.<sup>361</sup> Adnan Tekşen, the editor of the dossier, asked two main questions of the participants: “How do you appraise the relationship of current art and literary works to the output of the historical tradition considering the problematic of the “stemming?” 2. And given the emergence of an Islamist tendency in the post-1960 Turkish literature, how do you appraise use of cultural sources and contribution to recent literary work?” The structure of the questions reflected the belief that Islamist literature provided an opportunity for re-establishing links to the Islamic literature of the past that had loosened, as well as to develop an authentic, regional literature employing the Islamic tradition. Leftist literati such as Attilâ İlhan, Selim İleri and Enis Batur also participated,<sup>362</sup> and the editor presented the choice of surveying different approaches as “a more interesting and extraordinary sum, contrasting the generic dossiers of 'choirs' that we are used to seeing in our literature.”

However, almost all contributors admitted that utilization of traditional literature was insufficient, like a “choir.” In fact, the authors of the “other side”

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359 Lale Müldür born in 1956 was a major female poet of Turkish literature of the 1980s generation. Although she established herself in the 1980s, she scarcely appeared in the journals until 1990s - solid evidence for research on sexual discrimination in Turkish poetry.

360 Mustafa Kutlu, Mehmet Doğan, Muzaffer Budak, Mehmet Yazgan, Tahsin Sınav, Osman Özcan, Şakir Kurtulmuş, Seyfeddin Manisalıgil, Mehmet Çağlayan, Adnan Özer, Mustafa Ruhi Şirin, Cahit Koytak, Vural Bahadır Bayrıl, Seyfettin Ünlü, Cafer Turaç, Ali Haydar Haksal, Ahmet Kot, Orhan Alkaya, Arif Ay, Cevdet Karal, Süleyman Portakal, Kâmil Doruk, Âlim Kahraman, Lâle Müldür, Kemal Sayar, Mehmet S. Fidancı, Gıyasettin Ekici, Bedri Gencer, İ. Serhat Canpolat, Serap Ural, Müslüm Batuk, Ali Dölek, and Adem Turan. The List: Yılmaz Daşcıoğlu, “Yönelişler Dergisi hakkında Bilgi,” <http://www.kimdirhayatieserleri.com/yonelisler-dergisi-hakkinda-bilgi.html>

361 “Kaynaklanma' Konusunda Soruşturma”, Ed: Adnan Tekşen, *Yönelişler*, 5 (August-1981): 16-31.

362 The full list includes Mehmet Kaplan, Attila İlhan, Selim İleri, Mustafa Kutlu, Enis Batur, Ebubekir Eroğlu, Yaşar Kaplan, Mustafa Miyasoğlu and Aytunç Altındal.

who were chosen to participate in the dossier were themselves defenders of this approach, in terms of the tradition.<sup>363</sup> However artists and literati mostly believed to have insufficient notion of history and tradition. Most believe that only Behçet Necatigil and Yahya Kemal have a notion of the Divan literature, for example.

But Islamist literature was not gratified by İlhan and Batur. According to İlhan, the Islamists mistook prayers for literature, just as the socialists mistook slogans for literature. The former tend to “continue with the synthesis of the religious community.”<sup>364</sup> Batur did not object to Islamist literature unless tendency was “to become the ruler” or “become institutionalized”: “The people who tend to compress and monopolize meaning to fit a mold will only find withered veins in the source, *I believe*.”<sup>365</sup>

The position of the journal was crystallized by the answers of Ebubekir Eroğlu. According to him, the main problem of Turkish literature was the weakness of its links to its own culture: its inability to develop by employing its output and the absence of authentic problems. Islamist literature achieved its upheaval through the poetry and thinking of Sezai Karakoç. However, it did not benefit from the historical culture and literature as Karakoç's poetry did. Furthermore, it was impossible to develop an Islamist literature within the Western literature.<sup>366</sup>

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363 Besides, Attilâ İlhan is a *reader* of traditional literature. He reflects this in his poetry and further expresses it in the notes at the end of his books, entitled “Meraklısına Notlar” (Notes to Whom It May Concerns). I wonder why such a question was not directed to poets like Cemal Süreya. Why do people hesitate to respond to questions on - or be unaware of - texts they study for three years in high school?

364 Ibid., 19.

365 Ibid., 23.

366 Ibid., 24-26. This approach which centralized the source problematic responded to the *Gösteri* dossier with the question “Are there any Turkish classics?” in November 1981. The “Journals” part of the December 1981 issue of *Yönelişler* it was criticized for being “superficial” and “cliché” and according to the critic, Melih Cevdet Anday's comment denying the existence of Turkish classics defined the “common attitude of the contemporary intellectual in the face of old culture.” The dossier was described as an effort to “provide a comfortable atmosphere for the contemporary intellectual” because of its lack of a notion of tradition.

Essays on the art of poetry were often published in the journal. In the second issue, Mehmet Ocaktan analyzed imagery and imagism in poetry, noting that the recent attack on poetry was the sloganist techniques that instrumentalized poetry in the service of a movement or political activity.<sup>367</sup> Ebubekir Eroğlu, on the other hand, objected to the assumption that socialist poetry started with Nâzım Hikmet, claiming that Hikmet never determined the path of Turkish poetry before the 1940s. He further claimed that the theoretical texts of social realism were never translated into Turkish; and that slogan poetry had emerged due to a lack of knowledge, chaotic social conditions, and hesitation of the part of those doing the criticism who actually intervene.<sup>368</sup> In fact, all young poets - both current social realists and the liberals and liberal leftists who tended to rebuild the links with the tradition through more abstract poetry - were criticizing the “sloganist poetry” of the 1970s social realism. Thus, even the social realists were against sloganism. Hence, they met with the liberal leftists on this point, and so the Islamists continued to envision leftist realism as its “other,” - the absolute opponent.

Essays on theories and criticism of modernism, as well as related translated materials including poetry, were published in the journal. Many texts and debates were included along with Eroğlu's statements regarding the sources. In fact, increases in translated material were affirmed as early as the second issue's editorial with the reasoning that it “overcomes inefficiency.” Yüksel Kanar discussed the modern feeling of deprivation in the same issue; expressing that religious belief can contribute to the life of modern individuals. Adnan Tekşen discussed citizenship in the third issue. Translations of Ezra Pound, Lautreamont, and Perse were included in the journal.

Given these considerations, *Yönelişler* was a literary and intellectual response by Islamists to the West and the Westernized sphere of the Republic. Above all, poems from the “other side” (including those of Attilâ İlhan, Ece

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367 Mehmet Ocaktan, “Şiirin İmgeselliği ve İdeolojik Söylem,” *Yönelişler*, 2 (May-1981).

368 Ebubekir Eroğlu, “İmgeyi Boşlayan Şiir”, 13 (April-1982): 1-5. This is over-interpretation rather than a historical interpretation. Nâzım Hikmet was not the sole determinant of Turkish poetry by the end of the 1930s, but he certainly had a following of young poets who admired his poetry. In the second half of the 1940s, he was “made forgotten,” according to Ahmet Oktay. His works were republished after 1960 at which point his real influence on poetry began. However, young poets who intended to “write like him” were prosecuted for being “leftist.”

Ayhan, Edip Cansever, and Fazıl Hüsni Dağlarca) were presented in its essays. *Mavera*, on the other hand, seldom mentioned these figures other than yearly reviews, or as the subject of criticism. Islamists and leftists tended to ignore each other until the 1980s. *Yönelişler* changed this. Besides, it responded the leftists through the common reading of Western modernism, with various translated materials. The reason was to be able to respond to the West, perhaps with Occidental purposes. Another reason was that the editors admitted the hegemony of leftist literature in the cultural life of the country, though they criticized it for being distant from local sources. They tried to assign Islamists the role of reconstructing these links to historical and Islamic sources. In reality, they clearly criticize the Republican regime for secularization, the alphabet revolution, and detachment from Muslim history. But they stayed within the limits of literature and never directly mounted a political opposition.

Finally, language was not a problematic for *Yönelişler*, just as it was not for *Mavera*. Debates on language were rarely considered in *Yönelişler* – even then only as part of a general criticism about disconnectedness from traditional culture. Authors handled it only as part of a larger cultural problematic. For example, Aytunç Altındal warned that one must know the relevant language to benefit from “sources” in a dossier on the topic of “sources”, which refers to the adoption of “New Turkish” among Islamists.<sup>369</sup> Indeed texts in *Yönelişler* applied a similar vocabulary to those of *Yazko* and *Varlık* -a quite “new” vocabulary compared to contemporary Turkish. No study has been conducted, but the revisit of “sources” throughout the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s arguably resulted in the salvage of old vocabulary which is in use today.

## § 6.2 Düşün

*Düşün* was a journal of culture launched by Seyit Nezir under De Publications, which he had taken over from Memet Fuat in 1984. Although some 3000 copies were published over the course of its two-year existence, it was unable to make a mark because it did not represent any definite mentality or attitude, except that it was a leftist journal in general terms. Several dossiers on poets

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369 Aytunç Altındal, “Aytunç Altındal”, “‘Kaynaklanma’ Konusunda Soruşturma”, Ed: Adnan Tekşen, *Yönelişler*, 5 (August-1981): 16-31.

such as İlhami Bekir Tez, Tevfik Fikret, and Oktay Rifat were printed in the journal. It also included essays on hot economic and political topics.

The journal often warmed up debates about intellectual roles, criticizing intellectuals for falling short of protesting the coup.<sup>370</sup> Essays on culture and cultural depression were criticisms of capitalist culture. Translated texts of Latin American literature were often introduced in the journal. Veysel Öngören wrote an essay on poetic aesthetics in almost every issue.

The reason it reached such a high circulation was the appearance of the poems of many major poets of various generations such as Turgut Uyar, Fazıl Hüsni Dağlarca, Oktay Rifat, Süreyya Berfe, Abdülkadir Budak, Özkan Mert, Ali Yüce, Ali Cengizkan, Akif Kurtuluş, Halim Yazıcı, and Enver Ercan, along with reserved in the journal for social issues in the journal. Ercan and Bedirhan Toprak were among many young poets regularly interviewed for the journal.

### § 6.3 Broy

*Broy* was launched after *Düşün* folded in November 1985, again by Seyit Nezir. It was introduced as a “monthly journal of poetry”. Excerpts from the diary of Turgut Uyar, who had just passed away, were published in the first issue, along with a letter he wrote to young poets. He would probably have been the “master poet” to respond to the letters of young poets in the journal, had he not passed away. Thus, “masters” respond to young poets' letters in rotation.

Subsequent pages were reserved for a poet to declare his position on a certain issue. Intellectuals of various branches of art and culture as Ali Özgentürk and Server Tanilli appeared in these pages of the journal. Cemal Süreya was asked to explain his attitude towards “tradition” in the first issue, from which he reflected to have benefited in his poetry, as a matter of fact. But in his response to the journal, he mentioned the risk of “producing didactic poetry”, if one was obsessed with tradition. Such positioning of Cemal Süreya and Turgut Uyar, who were major poets of the “Second New” movement indicates the

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370 For example, Aşar Timuçin, “Aydınlarımız Sınıfta Kaldı,” June 1985. Essays on this topic were so prevalent that, it was as if intellectuals were acquitted for being “nonreactive, ignoring” intellectuals by writing such an essay in addition to their duty as intellectuals.

journal's poetic preference for abstract imagist-liberal poetry but also its distance from the poetic positions of Hilmi Yavuz and the Islamists, who agree on the tradition problematic.

The strategy of leaning on the major poets held up for the first year. Poets of the older generation as Cemal Süreya, Ülkü Tamer, Kemal Özer, Refik Durbaş, Özdemir İnce, Süreyya Berfe, Erdal Alover, and Sennur Sezer along with the young poets like Mehmet Yaşın, Enver Ercan, Hüseyin Ferhad, Ahmet Ada, Hüseyin Alemdar and even Tuğrul Tanyol - a young poet at the center of tradition debates - coexisted in the journal. Debates mostly focused on general issues of poetic aesthetics, such as lyrism and imagery, rather than deep problematics of sources and tradition. Young social realists started to appear in the journal from the sixth month onwards and worked to change its position. The vocabulary of the journal was consistently "New Turkish." The journal also distributed a compilation of Nâzım Hikmet's essays and poems first published in the *Resimli Ay* as a sixty-four-page supplement.

The poets of the "Second New" and their followers had disappeared from the journal by 1987. Furthermore, an appraisal of the 1986 elections by Arslan Başer Kafaoğlu published in the October issue implied that the scope of the journal would no longer be limited to poetry. The content tended to be social realist discourse throughout 1987 and finally in January, Veysel Çolak, Metin Cengiz, Hüseyin Haydar and Tuğrul Keskin published a manifesto with Seyyit Nezir under a heading of "New Holist Manifestation of Poetry." The text was also included in the poetry books of these poets published in 1988. They were suggesting an intrusive socialist poetry vis-à-vis the individual worlds. The problem was that, by the time they came along with this idea, social realist poetry had already shifted to a more individualist voice, even by Ahmet Erhan's first book, *Bugün de Ölmedim Anne*. The admission by Cemal Süreya in the book 999 that "we're all new holists," was not an approval of this manifesto but an admission of the position he already held. That was the reason why even the social realist Asım Bezirci criticized them for being "superfluous," noting that "the individual already exists in our social realist poetry."<sup>371</sup> *Broy* was closed after its sixtieth issue in 1991, during the Gulf War.

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371 "Asım Bezirci ile söyleşi", *Varlık*, 968 (May-1988): 22-23.



## § 6.4 Yarın

*Yarın* was launched in September 1981 under the guidance of chief editor Semih Gümüş. Osman Arolat was the publishing consultant. It was published in Ankara. The title of the opening editorial was “The Young Breath in Our Social Realist Literature,” which can be interpreted as hope for a bright, new “tomorrow” in line with the social realist principle, resisting the state violence to which the left wing was exposed. According to *Yarın*, “Tendencies among the bourgeoisie and petite-bourgeoisie trigger degeneration, passivity, and individualism.” The statement hints at the culture of capitalism, which exposed man to “various alienation factors,” “trigger[ed] the alienation of sexuality” by launching debates on sexuality, and “ignored humanitarian values.” “The fake intention to name the problems of youth transferred them to the sphere of fantasy, which they could never again face in their actual scope.”<sup>372</sup> These statements, probably written by a young author, are important for their emphasis on “inability” and “frustration.” Depression was a “given” in this decade, but these statements concern the direct effect of the media in creating a sense of frustration.

Secondly, the emphasis on “degeneration” – particularly of sexuality - also existed in the Islamist complaints. The increase in sexual content in 1980s poetry is connected with the emergence of debates on sexuality in the public sphere. These debates issues of sexuality, along with a change in the nature of relationship and moral values, were presented as evidence of degeneration by both socialists and Islamists. The liberals did not directly object; some even admitted to being part of the degeneration.

The introductory editorial also announced that the journal would allot considerable space to poetry and short stories. Furthermore, aesthetic problems of art, literature and culture would be discussed. That the management of the journal would be run by “young people” was particularly emphasized. The journal differentiates itself from other journals, particularly institutional

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372 Anonymous, “Sanat ve Edebiyatımızda Toplumcu Gerçekçiliğin Genç Soluğu,” *Yarın*, 1 (September-1981): 2-6.

ones. The layout is renewed in the seventh issue, along with the repeated proclamation that it is a “journal of the young people.” The journal gives a voice to young people, even those of political professions such as the law, while others herald only old, experienced, and famous “experts” as mentioned in Chapter 3.<sup>373</sup>

However, the journal shared much with others, in terms of content. For example, set aside a large section to introduce foreign literature, particularly that of third world countries which shared the similar political experiences with Turkey. An interview with Şükran Kurdakul follows an essay on Seferis in the first issue. This is the typical literary journal template of the 1980s: a foreign poet or literature is analyzed followed by an interview with an outstanding Turkish poet. An essay on other arts is placed after that, followed by a theoretical essay on literary aesthetics. Of course, this generic template aims fulfilling all expectations about what a literary journal should be.

Muzaffer İlhan Erdost wrote a column entitled “Letters to İlhan” in this journal as well, which he started here and then transferred to *Türkiye Yazıları*. This journal of young poets also printed the poetry of older poets such as Ahmet Telli and Can Yücel to add to its prestige.

Language and vocabulary were not considered an important debate in this journal. Only in one comprehensive essay, entitled “The Language and the Ideology” the policies of detachment from all things Ottoman were given the reasons of alphabet and language reforms, affirming Republican criticism of the period: “In our country, the alphabet reform in addition to the language reform - with the goal of pure Turkish and thus change daily language - were intending to create communications barrier between Ottoman era and Republican Turkey, thus defusing the weapons of conservative clergymen, which were the old script and language.”<sup>374</sup>

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373 Akif Kurtuluş, a lawyer and young poet had written an essay on the new constitution. Hüseyin Ferhad, another young poet, had written an essay on history, so he is not a historian. *Yarın*, 10 (June-1982).

374 Nilgün Gürkan, “Dil ve İdeoloji,” *Yarın*, 7 (March-1982): 22-23. The criticism of the “official ideology” started in the 1980s, with this main idea applied to both leftists and rightists. This fact is not off-limits, since neither pure Turkish nor alphabet reform originated with the Republic. Pure Turkish, which idealized the “The Turkish of the housewives of Istanbul,” had

The curriculum and children's literature were analyzed in a dossier about children.<sup>375</sup> Relations between women and men were the topic of many essays (At that time, when bureaucratic officers and police saw a man and woman together, they warned them).<sup>376</sup>

The journal of forty-eight pages occasionally included dossiers on specific topics occasionally, however, these were relatively small compilations compared to those of, say, *Gösteri's*. They did not comprise whole of the issue. Analysis and interviews on various issues of culture and other branches of art filled the journal. Intellectual comprehensiveness was attained through long, detailed interviews.

The poetry of the period was appraised in a dossier in November 1982. The dossier opened with an anonymous essay - "What's Wrong with the Poet" - claimed that poetry had become subservient to the market. It elucidated what Marshall Berman had described as the struggle of the poet to exist under market conditions. Ahmet Telli claimed that the poet had to have command of the various ideologies and forms of perceptions as materials for building his poetry. He refers to the multiple realities and chaos of the postmodern world with its pluralist philosophical atmosphere. But he does not make a deeper analysis. In the end, he also conceded to being in the "market."<sup>377</sup> Akif Kurtuluş criticized the surrender of young poets to the culture of the capitalism through book signings and prizes.<sup>378</sup> Ali Cengizkan prepared an experimental text analyzing the vocabulary of Attilâ İlhan's poetry to prove that he was writing the poetry of the petite bourgeoisie.<sup>379</sup> The journal focused on criticizing

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been on the agenda of the Ottoman State since the beginning of the twentieth century, and the shift to a Latin alphabet was also a part of the discussion at that time, only becoming possible with the establishment of the Republic. Most criticisms of the Republic claim that it disconnected from the Ottoman past, but perhaps it took up Ottoman projects so intensely that everybody forgot the facts... In other words, discourse adopts rather than criticizing the "official history."

375 April 1982.

376 The Legislation of Detriment was enacted in the 1980-83 period.

377 Ahmet Telli, "Günümüzde Yazılan Şiirin Anlamı," *Yarın*, 15 (November-1982): 12.

378 Akif Kurtuluş, "Genç Şair: Artık İsmi Neonlarda," *Yarın*, 15 (November-1982): 11-12

379 Ali Cengizkan, "Elde Var..." *Yarın*, 15 (November-1982): 13, 23.

capitalist culture through analysis of various cultural components. It discussed sexuality but treated homosexuality as a “pathology of capitalist culture.”

It also criticized *Gösteri* through the social segment it represented. An anonymous text responded to the announcement of a poetry prize of by *Gösteri* as follows: “*Gösteri*'s invitation of 'the young generation to the prize' was the best example of its boldness. *Gösteri*, awarding the homosexuality instead of the poetry, organized a contest the result of which was predefined... *Gösteri* adds a few new figureheads to the 'art and literature market.' And Murathan Mungan is no more than a new star prized for the cooperation of these spirits.”<sup>380</sup> In another essay, Orhan Alkaya, presuming that mass culture is manipulated, criticized poets who work in the advertising business for accepting the role of playmaker for the culture of capitalism.<sup>381</sup>

A feminist debate was opened in the volume of a dossier, as it was in other journals of the decade. But almost no poem by a woman appeared in the journal. The essays in the dossier mostly concerned feminist issues in cinema and general, informative texts on the issue. Only Buket Uzuner's essay concerns the practices related to being a woman in Turkey. No essay about the literary world was included in the dossier; feminism existed as a bunch of abstract theories without any context.<sup>382</sup>

Young literati, particularly those who lived in Ankara, often appeared in the journal. Ahmet Telli was a poet of the previous generation by then. Haydar Ergülen, Feyza Hepçilingirler (who was in Ankara during this period), Adnan Azar, Ahmet Telli, Şükran Kurdakul Ali Cengizkan, Hüseyin Ferhad, Hüseyin Haydar, and Akif Kurtuluş are examples of these young authors. Above all, the

380 Anonymous, “Genç Kuşağın Sahibi Kim,” *Yarın*, 3 (November-1981): 2. An essay claiming that homosexuality is a pathology of capitalism, was also printed in *Türkiye Yazıları*.

381 Orhan Alkaya, “Keşke Genelevde Piyanist Olsaydınız,” *Yarın*, 17 (January-1983): 22. The heading refers to a translated novel by Jacques Séguéla, *Ne dites pas a ma mere que je suis dans la publicite, elle me croit pianiste dans un bordel*.

382 “Feminizm mi,” *Yarın*, 21 (May-1983). The obscure statement of Osman Arolat, in editorial introduction of the dossier, caused a polemic with Şirin Tekeli, as she responded in *Somut* in June 1983. Arolat (the editorial was left anonymous but Tekeli declares Arolat was the author of it in that issue) blamed feminists of confusing the mind of young people, by unfashioned ideologies imported from the West, such as feminism and labeled them “immoral.” Anonymous, “Ne İstiyorlar,” *Yarın*, 21(May-1983): 2. “Tekeli protested his attribution of “immoral” in her response. Şirin Tekeli, “Bir Açıklama,” *Somut*, 47/21 (24 June 1983): 4.

people involved in the decision making process were young and the hot issues of the contemporaneous agenda were reflected in the journal.

The journal gradually limited its literary content becoming a political cultural journal from 1984 onwards after literary-oriented people as Semih Gümüş and Akif Kurtuluş left. The end of junta period and the elections – and the relative sense of freedom to participate in political activities - were reasons for this shift.

## § 6.5 Üç Çiçek

*Üç Çiçek* was an “anthology” established by three, pioneering young poets - Adnan Özer, Tuğrul Tanyol, and Haydar Ergülen - with the support of Taner Ay and Orhan Tekelioğlu and for the final issue Ali Günvar, who was also a young poet, who started writing at the end of the 1970s. It was published in three issues. Given that the bureaucratic process for publishing a periodical was made complicated by the junta, it was labeled as an “anthology.” All three poets were of the imagist vein. Therefore, it is not surprising that the introductory text that particularly emphasized aesthetic quality and cultural identity. The first issue was dated May 1983. This represented the first upheaval of the young imagists.

The journal belonged to young poets; however, the initial pages of the first issue were reserved for masters as Edip Cansever, Hilmi Yavuz, Cahit Tanyol and Abdülkadir Bulut. This gave the impression of the need for the approval of the masters rather than the upheaval and self-expression of a new generation, which was the intent of the journal. No evidence of a rebellion of the new generation was evident, at least in this first issue. On the contrary, Cahit Tanyol advised young poets to confront the Divan and folks literature in his essay.<sup>383</sup>

The second issue was dated June-July-August 1983 and was launched in August 1983. This issue differed from the former in many respects. First, most of the poems and essays were of young poets. In the first essay, Tuğrul Tanyol, opposes and criticizes Cemal Süreya for his appraisal in the an interview in

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383 Cahit Tanyol, “Şiirde Kolektif Heyecan ve Lirizm”, *Üç Çiçek*, 1 (May-1983): 6-9.

*Varlık* with Turgut Uyar, Edip Cansever, and Tomris Uyar in which he claimed that the young poets wrote similar poems.<sup>384</sup> Tanyol aggressively claimed that young poets were producing undeniably fine poetry. He also formulated this as a question in an interview with Cemal Süreya in *Gösteri*.<sup>385</sup> The conceptualization of the “young poet” identity had become a problematic for both socialist and individualist poets including Tuğrul Tanyol, who emphasized “tradition” and hence was more inclined to assert the superiority of older “masters.” Another essay criticized the process of choosing poems to be published in journals, for having become a practice of power relations.<sup>386</sup> These expressions protested the difficulty of appearing in the journals of the older generations, which may be labeled as the “center.” Still this was not a “rebellion.” Rather, it admitted the system of literary rulers and struggled to join it.

Socialist literature was launching a debate on the culture of capitalism, but was still able to find a medium in which to be published – i.e., a journal that survived for at least a few years – on account of the discipline of traditional leftist organizations or their direct support. The young individualist poets, on the other hand, were inclined to loose networks and hence irregular journals discontinued after just a few issues. They had much more difficulty appearing in journals. But the struggle in *Üç Çiçek* was successful: the poets featured in the journal were able to appear regularly in other journals in the following years. But young poets were burdened with a difficult task, even those who denied that intellectuals had a mission: “The young poet has intellectuals has the mission of thinking, researching poetry and producing knowledge about it along with writing fine poetry.”<sup>387</sup> Ali Günvar wrote two essays on the interrelation between poetry and philosophy in the last two issues. Also, analysis of Oktay Rifat's poetry and the problematics of rural identity and tradition were printed in the final two issues.

Adnan Özer, who was among the creators of the journal, had also taken over *Yeni Türkü* Publications from Yaşar Miraç, who had to leave the country to escape prosecution. Books of poetry by both young poets and the masters

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384 Tuğrul Tanyol, “Hepsi Birbirine Benziyor mu?” *Üç Çiçek*, 2 (June-July-August 1983): 5-12.

385 *Gösteri*, No: 44, July-1984.

386 Turgay Fişekçi, “Dergi Yöneticileri Şiir Seçerken,” *Üç Çiçek*, 2 (June-July-August 1983): 31-34.

387 Vural Bahadır Bayrıl, “Şiir ve Düş,” *Üç Çiçek-Şiir Özel Kitabı*, 3 (March-1984): 127-134.

were published by Yeni Türkü at that time, under very difficult bureaucratic and financial circumstances. Erdal Alova, Adnan Özer, Osman Konuk, Cemal Süreya, Tuğrul Tanyol, and Hilmi Yavuz were among the poets who printed books with Yeni Türkü. The poetry, essays, and interviews of poets of various generations and political persuasions such as Abdülkadir Budak, Turgay Fişekçi, Oktay Taftalı, Cafer Turaç, Mehmet Ocaktan, Ali Günvar, Vural Bahadır Bayrıl, Hilmi Yavuz, and Akif Kurtuluş appeared in *Üç Çiçek*. Migration to urban cities and the language created by this migration was the subject of an interview with Abdülkadir Bulut, which was unique among other interviews of the 1980s for reaching beyond the clichés of urban identity.<sup>388</sup> Özer, who pioneered the problematizing of rural identity, played an important role in the success of this interview.

The journal ignored feminist issues and featured no female author except for Tomris Uyar. As was typical of the 1980s, it provided plenty information about foreign and particularly Latin American and African literatures, which –as fellow Third World countries - reflected a similar protest of imperialism.

## § 6.6 Şiir Atı

*Şiir Atı* was launched in March 1986 and seven issues were published on an irregular schedule. “*Bahar Kitabı*” (*Spring Book*) which does not provide any evidence for being the eighth issue was published in 2003.<sup>389</sup> The irregularity inspired a particular meaning: the editors grouped journals as “official” or “semi-official.” Being unofficial obviously referred to Ece Ayhan's conceptualization of a “civil” position. The creators meant exactly this: “*Şiir Atı* will never toss the dice to become the center/ruler. It neither claims to be the voice of ‘young poetry’, nor does it nest the ‘noble chevaliers of poetry’ in its body!”<sup>390</sup> Various political veins were present in the journal, in which the truth was not singular.

388 “Abdülkadir Bulut'a Sorular,” *Üç Çiçek*, 2 (June-July-August1983): 66-70.

389 The second issue was in November 1986, the third in April 1987, the fourth in December 1987, the fifth in May 1989, the sixth in April 1991, and the seventh in December 1994.

390 Anonymous, “!”, *Şiir Atı*, March-1986, p: 5-6.

The founding cadre was formed of Vural Bahadır Bayrıl, Osman Hakan A., Orhan Alkaya and Seyhan Erözçelik. Alkaya was replaced by Ali Günvar in the list of management in the second issue. Haydar Ergülen joined the journal in Issue 3, replacing Seyhan Erözçelik, and Oğuzhan Akay joined just for Issue 6. The “Bahar Sayısı” was prepared by Seyhan Erözçelik.

In the opening essay of the journal, Orhan Alkaya wrote that they were in an era of “collusive reality,” in which even the limits of dreams were determined by the ruling powers. He also explained the reason why poetry is a good media of opposition: “Poetry being open to multiple readings is a good alternative to official discourse which by its nature is limited to direct expression and certain meaning. I think that is the main foundation of the mission of opposition undertaken by the poetry. ” What he called collusive reality was “staying within the limits of the allowed area,” “dissociation from creative thoughts” and “adopting whatever is dictated.”<sup>391</sup> Was auto-censorship included? <sup>392</sup> In the end, this was the issue of the 1980s. Only Can Yücel's poems reflected a direct criticism and opposition to the junta. The problem was not the demand for “pastoral poem” by the journal editors as mentioned in Chapter 3. The poets also censored themselves.

The essays in the journal interestingly complemented one another. Vural Bahadır Bayrıl wrote about different poetic opposition from that of “Second New” discourse, in a description of the sexual body from the point of view of a narcissistic eye. The opposition was established apart from the “symbolic system,” that is to say, by leaving aside official discourse as a whole.<sup>393</sup> These three essays in the initial pages of the journal covered almost all the remaining poetic domains from the socialist and Islamist tendencies: defining the ruling power and resisting it with the metaphors of sexuality (turning back to the body to struggle with the confined imagination), developing of a subjective

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391 Orhan Alkaya, “Düşler İmparatorluğunun Çöküşü ve Şiirsizleşme”, *Şiir Atı*, 1: 7-10.

392 Yücel Kayıran implies the self-censorship of poets by noting that Yaşar Miraç was the only poet prosecuted for his poetry during the 1980 junta. “Şiir Uslandı mı?” *Adam Sanat*, 176 (September-2000). He was not the only poet to be prosecuted, of course. Indeed, Ahmet Telli was jailed and tormented. But Yaşar Miraç was prosecuted directly for the political content of his poetry.

393 Vural Bahadır Bayrıl, “Türk Şiirinde Öznenin Serüveni Üzerine Bir İlişkilendirme Deneyi”, *Şiir Atı*, 1: 12-18.



poetry, and exhibiting of the poet's individual identity. The poets that pioneered this journal were trying to make a journal of poetry, that represented neither any systematic habit nor even a periodical existence. In such a journal, they manifested their individuality, hesitating to become the voice of any institution other than themselves. They envisioned a ruling power that was trying to dominate them - beginning with their bodies, which they would release from themselves in their work. Finally, Ali Günvar explained his objection to slogan poetry in a critique of Memet Fuat's essay claiming the common qualities of poetry and the slogan. For Günvar, the slogan is not a poem, because it has a single and direct meaning. A line in poetry is on the contrary open to multiple readings.<sup>394</sup>

The journal was open to all political and sociological persuasions and adopted all of these identities simultaneously. For example, a dossier on Asaf Halet Çelebi<sup>395</sup> was prepared in one issue - a sum of various analyses and essays, as was typical in journals of the period. However, Çelebi had been neglected up until then, even by Islamists, although he was a mystic. Hence, this was the first dossier on Çelebi in a journal. Similarly, Dıranas was a subject of journal, years after his heyday.<sup>396</sup> The journal compiled Ali Günvar's translations from the Quran in poetic form, debates on kitsch, Vural Bahadır Bayrıl's experimental texts, and Ahmet Oktay's analysis of poetry, and was able to reflect and represent the cultural atmosphere of the day. Forms and texts of poets of the older generation such as Hilmi Yavuz, Metin Altıok, Nihat Behram, and Ebubekir Eroğlu appeared in the journal. It was a poetry journal. And poems and essays of almost all young poets of the decade appeared in the journal, as well.

Social issues were not discussed in *Şiir Atı*. Instead, it was a journal in which woman poets could appear, for example. Lale Müldür, Gülseli İnal, Birhan Keskin, and Nilgün Marmara had their poems published in the journal. On the other hand, Ali Günvar explained his subjective perception of the junta period - full of feelings of defeat, ambiguity, and despair - in his poem "Türkiye

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394 Ali Günvar, "Slogan Şiiri' ve 'Teröristler'", *Şiir Atı*, 1: 43-45.

395 *Şiir Atı*, 2 (November-1986).

396 *Şiir Atı*, 5 (May-1989).

Aydınına Siyasal Rapsodi” (“Political Rhapsody to the Turkish Intellectual”).<sup>397</sup> And Islamist poets particularly those in the vein of *Yönelişler* such as Ebubekir Eroğlu, İhsan Deniz, and Mehmet Ocaktan comfortably appeared in this journal. Furthermore, their books were published by Şiir Atı Publications. Poets such as Hilmi Yavuz, Lale Müldür, Nilgün Marmara, Şavkar Altinel, Osman Hakan A. also published books with Şiir Atı Publications.

Should a poetry journal open to the poetic translation of Quran, and emphasizing the tradition through figures such as Asaf Hâlet Çelebi, Ahmet Muhip Dıranas and Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar be considered Islamist or conservative? Most of the young poets that prepared the journal were in close relationship with Hilmi Yavuz. Yavuz was not personally conservative or Islamist but conjured up classical poetry by evoking tradition.<sup>398</sup> Thus, these young poets - namely Vural Bahadır Bayrıl, Seyhan Erözçelik, Osman Hakan A. and Ali Günvar - were interested to determine the links between the Divan and Tanpınar-Necatigil lines of tradition that Hilmi Yavuz insistently emphasized. On the other hand, no debates openly defending Islamic culture against the Western culture was printed in the journal, as they were in Islamist journals. The goal of the journal was to produce and discover authentic literature. The concept of “authentic” had replaced the “national,” and the relation to global literature was intended to be through this authenticity. This is of course an elite culture, and kitsch was discussed in this context. Thus, the concept of “tradition” in the mentality of this journal was that of Hilmi Yavuz and his followers which is elaborated in the following chapters. This is far from the Islamist vision up to that point.

Furthermore, the poetry of women and homosexuals was published in the journal, which was never the case for Islamist journals. Homosexuality and their problems were not specifically discussed either, but the homosexual-

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397 “And abandoned the burning eyes of my spawn/ to the dissolved ambition of the cursed tulips,/ in secluded Cybele marches/ consuming the shortening life of mine/ the final parts of,/ screamed had I my pains/ to the senseless walls of dark tumulus// my noble weakness/o my noble weakness!,” “ve terkedip zürriyetimin yanan gözlerini/ çzöünen ihtirasınız ilenç lalelerinin/ kuytu kibele bataklıklarında/tüketirken son çağlarını/ azalan ömrümün haykırdım/ acılarımı duyarsız duvarlarına karanlık kümülüslerin// soylu zayıflığım/ soylu zayıflığım ey!,” *Şiir Atı*, 5: 33-48. This was among the poems of the 1980s, concerning 12 September coup.

398 His political views have been reviewed.

identity was affirmed. Sexuality was not discussed as a social issue, but poems with erotic content had no difficulty finding a place in the journal. When all of these facts are considered, it was clearly a journal of the liberal literary approach, not the Islamist one.

It is not easy to label the journal as “apolitical.” It was a journal of polyphony, with products full of abstract metaphors, designed by an advertising specialist of the late 1980s, by which time the political liberalism had settled in a Turkish-Islamic synthesis. It was a journal, in which the contemporaneous political atmosphere was not negated. What was opposed was the official ideology of Westernization adopted in the first period of the Republic. They believed in the government of the time was reproducing those policies.

However, the Motherland Party government was established by a consensus of the three main rightist tendency, liberalism, nationalism and Islamism in fact represented a more traditionalist discourse formulated as “the synthesis of Turkish-Islamic culture.” Prime Minister Özal, whose parents were members of Nakşibendi tariqa and buried in Nakşibendi's cemetery, manifested traditional, religious manners such as undertaking the Umrah pilgrimage. The general policies of the government allowed for the empowerment of religious groups and Ottoman patterns and styles became fashionable, which Ahmet Oktay interpreted to serve nostalgic purposes. However, the women's branch of the Motherland Party who called themselves “Daisies” - pioneered and supported fashion events on Ottoman styles. In fact, Ottoman history was embraced at the time.

Television series on Ottoman history started in the 1980s, with a series entitled *Murat IV*, on the reign of Sultan Murat IV (1981), followed by one on the famous composer *Hacı Arif* (1982) and a series on *Küçük Ağa*, a novel of Tarık Buğra, in which a clergyman joins the War of Independence after an enlightenment (1983). The television series of the period were particularly influential given that there was only a single channel and that they were long lasting. *Küçük Ağa* was particularly important because the protagonist was a “clergyman.” As the initial two chapters of this research imply, the government’s “official cultural ideology” no longer denied its Ottoman roots by the 1980s; indeed, it had always embraced it, except for a short period in late 1930s. In that

respect, *Şiir Atı* supported the Motherland Party government against the militarist regime, which is only explained by the claim that they were “civilian,” since the junta policies were relatively conservative rather than Western.

## § 6.7 Gergedan

Enis Batur launched *Gergedan* with the motto “the journal of earth culture” in March 1987. He resigned from its management after the first two issues and Ali Saydam took over. The journal starts with an advertorial slogan: “Smile, the days without *Gergedan* have passed,” which puts the journal on the verge of being a popular product of the period’s media. However, the content was actually intellectual-oriented. According to the introductory editorial, the cultural sphere was “tired,” and the sales of books of literature were at “shamefully” low levels. The journal was prepared for this reason. The journal included all branches of art and literature. Fine photos in the art pages were printed on high quality, glossy paper.

The monthly journal provided a program of arts and cultural events in Istanbul. Its content comprised short along with detailed news, poems and short stories, articles on literature and philosophy, and interviews. Translated materials were of particularly high quality, interesting, and up to date, as exemplified by excerpts from the final interview with Jean Genet. A typical issue was comprised of about 116 pages.

However, political and social topics of the time were appeared in the journal. Literary dossiers mostly concerned historical issues as simplified by a new approach to Yahya Kemal or analyses of the journals *Pazar Postası*<sup>399</sup> and *Servet-i Fünun*. Terry Eagleton's essay on contemporary literature and politics explained how politics was the subconscious of literary texts.<sup>400</sup>

This was not a journal on politics. It was closed after the twentieth issue. Poetry representing various positions such as that of Lale Müldür, Ahmet Güntan, and Ebubekir Eroğlu appeared in the journal. Pragmatically, the journal represented liberalism, as *Şiir Atı* did. However, this was not solely a poetry journal, but a general journal of culture. The language and content served only

399 The journal that launched the “Second New” movement.

400 Terry Eagleton, “Günümüzde Edebiyat ve Politika”, *Argos*, 9 (November-1987): 41-43.

intellectuals. It was relatively expensive. It reflected the zeitgeist of the 1980s, through its content and intellectualism; however, the casual reader of the 1980s would find little material to explain his daily cultural experience. Even literary dossiers were not on up-to-date topics.

## § 6.8 Edebiyat Dostları

*Edebiyat Dostları* was launched in May 1987, by a small group of literary people who chose a collective identity to resist the capitalist order. It was owned by Adalet Çutsay and the editorial board was not publicized in the journal. But a common group people who supplied material in each issue suggests de facto editorial board: Kemal Durmaz, Adalet Çutsay, Osman Çutsay, Akif Kurtuluş, Hüsamettin Çetinkaya, Murat Yetkin, and perhaps Yalçın Küçük (whose work was featured in each issue of the first year), and Cihan Oğuz (in the following years).<sup>401</sup>

The introductory editorial expressed a reluctance to be part of any “settled institution.” The statement evokes *Şiir Atı*, but with a small difference: *Şiir Atı* radically opposed institutionalization. *Edebiyat Dostları* was just against being part of current institutions. They were socialists so they opposed individualization in favor of collectivism: “We are on the side of a new social organization project, an organization of society with new values.”<sup>402</sup> These values were obviously socialist. They were “tested by isolation.” Individual ventures were failing; hence, the journal was eager to create “together, not individually.” But unfortunately, its pages were filled by a limited set of authors. Although they promise to increase the volume of contributors in the following issues, the number of new authors remained limited.

Another principle of the journal was to be “aggressive.” Aggression was not addressed per se, but they claimed that struggle contributed to creativity and that the aesthetic was “struggle and cohesion.” Therefore, the addressee of their aggression were factions and people who disagreed with them and who were content with the existing organization. The journal emphasized that

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401 Some members of the editorial board authorized this cadre, but it was not announced in the journal. Therefore, the list is given in this way.

402 Anonymous, “Sanat Çatışmadır, Birleştirir”, *Edebiyat Dostları*, 1 (May 1987): 1.

its goal was to “change and be changed,” hence the struggle was for the sake of change.

The first essay in the journal was by Yalçın Küçük, who introduced two stereotypes of the “official author” and the “vulgar writer.” According to him, the official author slants reality in a manner in which the ruling authorities will approve. He was reincarnated in the Republic of the 1940s displaying properties as a “superficial populism, malevolence, [and] shamming love for the masses.” Orhan Veli, Nurullah Ataç, Sabahattin Eyüboğlu, Baltacıoğlu İsmayıl Hakkı, Ruşen Eşref, Yahya Kemal, Melih Cevdet Anday, and Oktay Akbal were major examples. These people were bureaucrats and authors simultaneously, by which Küçük meant they were paid by the government to work on its behalf.

The analogous, new generation were “vulgar writers.” A vulgar writer was the columnist of the day. He provided only a useless, superficial, “dead crust” of reality that blocked any deeper investigation on it. He surely served the current system, too, <sup>403</sup> that of a monopolist, capitalist era. In line with Küçük's aforementioned views on organic intellectuals, the new term he chose for current intellectuals was “vulgar writers.”

Intellectuals assumed a predefined role - a mission to enlighten the society. But in this case, the debate involves authors, the literati themselves, releasing them from a general intellectual role but burdening them with a new one that questions their level of conformity with the order of things. An attack on liberals was attempted through this new discourse.

The second essay of the journal by Akif Kurtuluş concerned how the “democratic poet” was “liberalized.” According to Kurtuluş, when Hürriyet Group wanted to sway literary people over the right, it assigned a leftwing editor like Doğan Hızlan to launch its literary journal. It planned to generate right-wing authors through this journal in which leftist authors would write for the sake of its editor. Therefore, young authors would automatically adopt the system. He interpreted Hüseyin Ferhad's acceptance of the Enka Prize as his adoption of the system (Kurtuluş saw Enka as the holding company of 12 September), as was Tuğrul Tanyol's denial of the relationship between ethics

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403 Yalçın Küçük, “Resmi Sanatçı ile Vulgar Yazıcı ve Tırnak Altı”, No: 1, May-1987, p: 4

and the aesthetics. Kurtuluş believed that aesthetics - as an artistic reshaping - also covered moralities. So, “criticism of the regime is a common experience of democratic poets and artists all over the world.”<sup>404</sup>

The intellectual mission was replaced with the antagonist identity of the artist, author, or poet in line with the position of the journal. Liberals were criticized for failing to fulfill their roles as creative people. This criticism included *Şiir Atı*, as well since again it did not deny being a part of the current regime. They denied institutionalization, but in an abstract and superficial sense (only by practices like rejecting a periodical existence and including every political and social attitude). Their only criticism was of the cultural policies of the establishment era, which seemed monolithic. However, the *Edebiyat Dostları* would probably agree with them on the criticism of cultural policies of the Republic.

Topics like gender and history were analyzed through the following issues, essays on referent authors for Islamists - such as Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar and Cemil Meriç - were printed. Their repugnant characteristics to Islamism were emphasized as well: Necip Fâzıl's bohemian period, his inferiority complex that emerged when he visited the West, or Cemil Meriç's period of atheism.<sup>405</sup> The reason behind this editorial choice is unclear. They probably considered Islamists among to be among the reproducers of the system and intended to attack them, but there was no response from the Islamists to these attacks. The expression of male discourse as the source of power was criticized in various texts and envisioned as a sign of degeneration. This is creditable to the success of women's movements of the period, and the presence of women in *Şiir Atı*, in the second half of the 1980s. However, no poem by female poets was printed in *Edebiyat Dostları*.

Confrontation with the 12 September coup and with socialist literature was always on the journal's agenda. Its main thesis was that 12 September created a process from which emerged of a generation of organic intellectuals. The journal implied its importance for having identified this, generating a new opportunity for socialist criticism. But the editors were unsatisfied with the poor

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404 Akif Kurtuluş, “Demokrat Şair, 1980”, *Edebiyat Dostları*, 1: 5-7.

405 *Edebiyat Dostları*, 2: 6-10.

response they received, complaining from that: if it had launched with “Bab-1 Âli fathers and the young authors whom they support,” it would “be more popular.”<sup>406</sup> The journal chose to be critical. No major poet or critic was among the core team, nevertheless it continuously criticized the journals owned by capitalist groups, capitalist culture, and the literati who had adopted the cultural system of capitalism. But it failed to create a compelling criticism to which addressees could not avoid responding. Nor did it create a uniting debate that could produce a collective spirit.

A debate about the source of social realist literature was one of the topics of the journal, particularly discussion of whether or not folk literature is its only source. According to Gürsel Korat, both folk literature and world literature contributed to social realist literature in Turkey. For example, Nâzım Hikmet was also influenced by Mayakovski.<sup>407</sup> Gülten Akın responded in the grant issue claiming that the main source was folk literature.<sup>408</sup> Along with theoretical debates on modernity, a discussion of prisoners’ poetry was launched by Halil İbrahim Özcan. According to him, texts with high literary value would be written by the prisoners, but current works were naïve. He was in jail himself, when he wrote this essay. (Prisoners’ literature is discussed in the following chapter.)<sup>409</sup>

In the first year of the journal, even general cultural issues were handled from the perspective of literature. However, as the variety of topics increased, culture was covered independently in a particular issue in which with new authors participated. Enis Akın, who was of the younger generation, started to appear. Old journals such as *Sanat Emeği* and *Halkın Dostları* were introduced and analyzed in dossiers. But with the June 1989 volume, the number of pages were decreased and the cadre shrank. From then on, criticisms were addressed to targeted poets. The journal closed in January 1990.

In fact, the journal had started in a promising manner, improving the status of socialist literature. However, it was unable to develop a medium of communication to improve socialist discourse by adding to its content, scope, and

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406 Anonymous, “Hesaplaşmanın Neresindeyiz?” *Edebiyat Dostları*, 5 (September-1988): 1-2.

407 Gürsel Korat, “Kaynak’ Halk Edebiyatı mı?” *Edebiyat Dostları*, 12 (April 1986): 8-10.

408 Gülten Akın, “Dolaşık Bir Sorgulama,” *Edebiyat Dostları*, 13 (May-1988): 12

409 Halil İbrahim Özcan, “Cezaevi Ürünleri,” *Edebiyat Dostları*, 13 (May-1988): 14.



consequent area of influence. This failure is related to its delimited cadre and the dissolution of the Soviet Union. But the further discrepancies it reflected – such as with woman issues, the abstract, ambiguous nature of its political suggestions - were evidence that it would keep the promise to be aggressive and offensive. But it was not structured enough to develop an alternative mentality. They attacked intellectuals, columnists, and young poets but neither inspired anybody to adopt an alternate mentality nor create an influential, structured, antagonist strategy. The journal produced two young poets: Cihan Oğuz and Enis Akın.

## § 6.9 Summary

The young people, who had newly emerged in the literary world, were eager to establish their own journals. In the past, some had succeeded, some even managing to develop successful publications as *Yaprak* and *Halkın Dostları*, which influenced the literary agenda of their dates. However, the young literati of the 1980s had a particular reason for establishing their own journals: the business of publication was rapidly becoming an economic sector. Young writers therefore had difficulty making it into the existing journals either due to editors' preference for less risky famous contributors who guaranteed sales, or the requirement of approval by literary authorities in journals like *Yazko*. Another reason of demanding their own journals was to create a center of political resistance against capitalist media.

In the 1980s many small literary journals were established and soon closed: *Antoloji* (January 1981- April 1982, 16 issues), *Yaşam İçin Şiir* (January- November 1983, 10 issues), *Üç Çiçek* (May 1983- January 1983, 3 issues), *Yeryüzü Konukları* (January 1984, 1 issue), *Poetika* (1984- 1985, 3 issues), *Üçüncü Yeni* (April 1984- March 1988, 39 issues), *Broy* (November 1985- 1990, 60 issues), *Şiir Atı* (March 1986-2005, 8 issues), *Karşı* (January 1986- October 1997, 112 issues), *Kıyı* (1986-), *Yeni Olgu* (1982- 1984?, 24 issues?), *Yaba* (1979- 198?), *Akdeniz* (1982-83?), *Yazın, Nitelik* (1983?, 6 issues?), *Körfez* (May 1983- February

1984, 8 issues), *Yazko Somut* (1983-89), *Yarın* (September 1981- November 1987, 75 issues)...<sup>410</sup>

The analysis in this chapter covers only some of these, which are representative. Most of these journals did not revolt against the authorities of the literary world; indeed, they were eager to be noticed and approved by them and were eager to publish their own products. All of these journals, be the socialist, liberal, or Islamist, adopted an intellectualist manner and launched aesthetic debates with deep theoretical analysis.

The journals of young authors and poets attracted the readers through translated material, discussions on culture, arts, literature and theory, and comprehensive dossiers. Their content mirrored the journals of the center. Even the journals as *Yarın*, which claimed to be the journal of the youth and differentiated itself from the others, and *Edebiyat Dostları*, which criticized all literary world for being part of the capitalist culture, reproduced this template.

Even a journal that hesitated to focus on daily politics, like *Şiir Atı*, reflected a political attitude by radically rejecting “authority status,” the hierarchical structure of language and history, the consciousness of the establishment era, as well as the culture of the current, free market society, and its content was prepared in accordance with these oppositions. And this choice is an evidence that particularly the journals emerged in the second half of the 1980s deliberately attempted to represent a political position, unlike *Üç Çiçek*, which was among the journals by young poets started in the first half of the decade. It reflected an eagerness of young poets to be approved by the authorities, and represented an identity debate. *Yarın*, which reflected the struggle for survival of the young generation but without the demand approval from the literary authorities, but rather it represented a collective struggle of young, socialist authors and poets against a newly emerging capitalist media.

*Şiir Atı* and *Edebiyat Dostları*, journals started in the second half of the decade, openly rejected the present authority structure. *Şiir Atı* demanded an “anarchical powerlessness, whereas *Edebiyat Dostları* sought a reorganization for the system. This reorganization targeted “collective welfare.” *Edebiyat*

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410 For more information on the literary journals, Mehmet Can Doğan, *Türkiye'de Şiir Dergileri Şairler Mezarlığı*, Ankara: Hayal Yayınları, 2008; Erdal Doğan, *Edebiyatımızda Dergiler*, İstanbul: Bağlam Yayınları, 1997.

Dostları emerged together with a demand for socialist system - without naming it -, and defined itself as a critic of culture, in a society undergoing the process of integrating into the capitalist system. Yet it limited itself to a narrow cadre. It disappeared around the same time as the Soviet Union - like an unlucky coincidence. *Şiir Atı*, on the other hand, was a free, harmonious platform for the representation of any contemporary identities.

Journals of the left wing and Islamists, particularly expressed complaint about the degeneration of society, though the Islamists shared an emphasis on the tradition with the liberals. The socialists also started to pursue cultural sources, finding themselves closer to folk poetry and Latin American literature. Islamist intellectuals tended to fall in line with the conservative veins of American and British literatures which confronted modernist literature.

In sum, the literati of the young generation had many issues in common on their agendas - even the socialists and Islamists - such as developing resistance against the Western culture of capitalism. The difference between them was their references: for the former group it was Marxist-humanist values socialists and for the other it was the belief in Allah traditional Islamic values.

All these young people felt the need for an intellectual basis and mastery of Western philosophy to establish their literary existence. But Islamists also believed that Islamic culture should be mastered, whereas socialists appreciated folk literature. In the end, they shared the intent to generate an authentic culture, which they defined in terms of a political attitude. In fact, they coexisted in the same journals vis-à-vis these common principles. The two journals that managed this in the widest sense were the liberal ones: *Üç Çiçek* and *Şiir Atı*.

As the 1980s ended, most of these poets had settled into their respective literary circles, becoming recognized to publish their works in any literary journal. Furthermore, they had become the editors of major publishing companies and journals. Their accumulated experiences in their own, smaller journals played an important role in these successes. But now, they were players in the media sector, in which capital had been invested with the expectation of profit. In short, they became the part of the game they once protested.

## The Status of 1980s' Social Realism: A New Socialist Poetry Movement?

Even though social realism lost its influence to some extent with the 1980 coup d'état, it did not disappear completely. In fact, it was less effected by a decrease in the number of readers than imagist poetry in the same period. The representatives of the social realist movement did not give up on their ascribed collective oriented intellectual identity.<sup>411</sup> The socialist literary approach with its goal of collective welfare through the improvement of society was commonly encountered in literary debates and journals as well as various themes of poetry in the 1980s.

After the 1950s, tensions which sometimes became discussion and quarrel between two types of intellectuals - those who assume the role of enlighten the society and the others who established their relationship to the state, politics and ultimately the world as an individual - started to peak again during the 1980s. One of the most significant results of this conflict was the revival of the cliché of the “intellectual disconnected from society” and their respective “introverted literary works” – both in society and even among intellectuals themselves. The genre of “imagist poetry” became more dominant in this period,

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411 As previously discussed the disintegration of collectivist and intellectual identities are emphasized. The downfall of social realist poetry also had huge impact on the redefinition and transformation of intellectual identity.

penetrating the literary world toward the middle of the decade. It was acknowledged as a new incarnation of the “Second New,” and was targeted with the same criticism as in the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>412</sup>

Prohibitions and prosecutions intimidated socialist authors, who assumed a public mission. Therefore, politics were mostly purged from socialist literature, as well. The main issue of the period's intellectual debates was representation –i.e., answering the theoretical question, “for whom does the intellectual speak in the public sphere?” Ahmet Say and Enis Batur's interview in *Türkiye Yazıları* openly clarified this conflict. The interview was not a questioning of “art for art's sake” versus “art for society's sake,” per se; nonetheless, it lays out Batur's favor of “art for art's sake” opinion and his rejection of Say's assertion that art serves as a propaganda tool. Ultimately, both writers' political positions were best defined by Ahmet Say's opinion; the intellectual is responsible for identifying universal elements in a nation's cultural legacy and internalizing these advanced elements.<sup>413</sup> The intellectual is obviously the decision maker that designates certain concepts on behalf of his or her society. Batur, on the other hand, emphasized that the primary objective on a writer's agenda was to overcome the process of being an individual. He pointed out his expectations of being an individualistic author; “What more could I want, if I am occasionally able to slightly open a window for people, using my own individual experiences?”<sup>414</sup>

Indeed, if contemporary politics are removed from socialist literature, the thesis of intellectuals, who consider themselves the spokespeople of society, must have been perceived as social engineering or anti-democratic, at least to

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412 I argue this is a new perception or interpretation not an appendage to its predecessor. The “Second New” had significant impact on the two imagist generations. Although I do not completely agree, I consider Tuğrul Tanyol's statement during one of our conversations; “Our generation has released Turkish poetry from the Western complex.” A diverse range of materials and literary works were produced during this period, as indicated in the chapters on journals. Nevertheless, the pursuit and emphasis for the “traditional” indicates a longing for native poetry created with the tools of “Second New.” In retrospect, the revival of poets like Asaf Halet Çelebi and Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar - who were overlooked or even forgotten - for their eagerness to benefit from patterns in Divan poetry clearly indicates such desire to go back to origins.

413 Enis Batur, “Ahmet Say'a Sorular,” *Türkiye Yazıları*, 59 (February-1982): 25.

414 Ahmet Say, “Enis Batur'a Sorular,” *Türkiye Yazıları*, 59 (February-1982): 20.

a degree. Nevertheless, considering the popularity of some socialist poets like Can Yücel through the 1980s, abstract and imagist poetry did not completely defeat socialist literature. Socialist literature was restricted by oppression and prosecutions and it inevitably had to arrange its context according to present circumstances. Furthermore, the rather radical criticism of the Republic of some socialist poets resonated with certain segments of the people, although those socialist poets previously accused the same crowd of being individualistic. This radical criticism of the system was, as Enis Batur highlighted in the aforementioned interview, the argument that the Republic had not fulfilled its promises.

Additionally, individualistic politics and debates on identity politics became more common during the second half of the 1980s, along with economic transformation. Under these new circumstances, literature created with a collective approach could not counterbalance the country's changing conditions. The problems caused by capitalism, unlike the 12 September regime's restriction on blue-collar unionization and decreases of absolute incomes, were not one-dimensional. The twin possibilities of becoming wealthy through free ventures or entrepreneurship, and enslavement or perishing in the relentless market emerged simultaneously in this new economic environment. Market stalls were filled with an increasing number of objects of ever-higher quality because of free trade. The rapidly growing world of commerce and new products were changing national consumption patterns, which the media was promoting via advertisements and a newly emergent commercial approach to journalism. The capitalist economy was established rapidly via the growth of mass production and media enterprises that ultimately triggered a kind of transformation in public life styles and values.

As individualization was triggered by destruction of the collective bonds of society by the violent practices of the junta, the desperation of isolated individual became more complex than the healthy settlements of capitalism. The theme of collective welfare could not encapsulate. As consumption culture came to be more and more acknowledged, culture and cultural products transformed into consumable commodities in Turkey, as in the rest of the world. Moreover, as mentioned, huge capital enterprises started to invest in the press like newspapers and journals, tearing the media out of its identity as a "civil service," and transforming it into a circulation- and sales-oriented sector.

Concern for sales necessitated appealing to the average mass culture, which is to say, promoting popular culture. Popular culture provided an easy means to blow off steam,<sup>415</sup> which was one of the main factors contributing to the downfall of socialist literature. As seen below, the urban city satirized in the works of Ahmet Erhan, Ahmet Telli and even Can Yücel, was the way it was due to the economic system and its ambiance.

Given these advancements, we can review how socialist literature and mindset of traditional intellectual transformed in literary and poetry discussions.

### § 7.1 Socialist Themes in Poetry

The 1980 coup d'état and concomitant violence, torture, executions and government propaganda of death sentences<sup>416</sup> were themes neither found a solid place in poetry nor any other branch of literature. Continuous prohibitions and prosecutions were undoubtedly effective in this context. When Yaşar Miraç, one of period's most popular poets, was granted the TDK (Turkish Language Association) award for *Trabzonlu Delikanlı* in 1981, he was targeted by Kenan Evren, the Chief of Army Staff and leader of the junta, on Turkey's national television station, TRT. Following the incident, Miraç had to flee abroad and could not return for many years. Furthermore, when the award was bestowed, the state filed an official investigation that ultimately resulted

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415 Arabesque culture immediately comes to mind. Meral Özbek's studies are informative in terms of arabesque's characteristics and its ability to provide a mental outlet. Put briefly, arabesque provided a medium of self-expression for people who had migrated from rural areas. Such an expression of poverty was superficial, yet convenient, and set a harmonious tone with the capitalist system and the regime. Poor masses who had been poor "because of the wealthy who were exploiting them" in the 1970s were now poor "because of a misfortunate fate." Meral Özbek: "Arabesque Culture: A Case of Modernization and Popular Identity", *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*, edited by Sibel Bozdoğan and Reşat Kasaba, (Washington: University of Washington Press, 2016).

416 In addition to the executions, the junta regime promoted the death sentences as a necessity. The Chief of Staff of the Army, General Kenan Evren identified offenses as acts of terror, anarchy and separatism and justified death sentences with treason. Evren's words "Asmayalım da besleyelim mi" ("Should we not hang them but feed them?") is often quoted to enunciate the violence of the 12 September junta regime.

in the change of the status of TDK. On top of all this, Can Yücel's *Rengâhenk* was impounded, immediately after its release in 1982.

Thus, poets, who wanted to emphasize the violence specific to the period, sustained the concept of socialist art by resorting to a timid poetic style in which meaning was disguised under metaphors. This strategy would be adopted by many writers: in the form of protest against an undefined violence and of the fear of death in Ahmet Erhan's first book; in the form of a more explicit protest of violence in Can Yücel's works; in the form of fear, protest of violence, and the changing urban culture tackled by Şükrü Erbaş; in the form of waiting for an execution sentence depicted by Nevzat Çelik; in the form of criticism of the current Junta resistance, the portrayal of being a fugitive and lamentation for lost comrades by Akif Kurtuluş and portrayals of torture and urban degeneration by Ahmet Telli, who was among the most outstanding young poets of the 1970s.

Considerable numbers of poems depicting state violence did not emerge before 1990s. The period's socialist, dissident poetry movement can be distinguished by looking into the works of poets of the period.

## § 7.2 Can Yücel's "Master-poet" Period

During martial law, the boldest and fastest protest through poetry came from Can Yücel, with verses that directly criticize the violence exerted by the junta; "Galata Bridge trembles like an aspen leaf / If they would hang me like a suspension bridge."<sup>417</sup> Yücel was the poet most frequently published in journals during martial law. As Cemal Süreya puts it, Yücel was the period's "master poet."<sup>418</sup> However, studies of the poetry of the 1980s' rarely include Yücel's

417 "Galata Köprüsü tir tir titriyor/ Bunlar beni de asma köprü yapar diye."

418 Cemal Süreya calls him the "Master poet". In *Varlık* journal's October 1981 issue, Konur Ertop defined him as "the poet accountable for his era." Ertop suggested that Yücel accurately expressed the failure of human relations and social structure, by means of an alert, informative style of poetry. He also created new formats and enjoyed the use of language. Considering these, Yücel symbolized quality and dissidence in poetry. Gülce Başer, "The Poetry of Self Definition", unpublished master thesis, University of Boğaziçi Atatürk Institute, 2011.



name, since they generally focus on the younger generation of poets. In fact, poetry typifies the transformation of the 1980s was influenced by the “Second New” and Hilmi Yavuz, the period's acknowledged master. But it is impossible to ignore Can Yücel, a protest poet with a considerable audience. Studies that analyze poetry of the 1980s' acknowledge Can Yücel as the influence on young poets but assume that his influential work were from his previously published books. To the contrary, he was still productive.<sup>419</sup>

The main reason of this perception is that these studies concern young poets; they were written to unveil the pasts of these young poets who emerged as a result of the period's turmoil, rather than focusing on the actual experience of the period. In other words, these studies were in fact analyses of the literary development of the young generation of poets rather than a study of the period itself. Considering reviews by the period's major journals (including *Varlık*, *Yazko Edebiyat*, *Gösteri*, and *Düşün*) reviewed, it is clear that Can Yücel was featured frequently. The poet's tone of protest was powerful enough to make him the “master poet” of his era. Yücel was influential enough to strike a blow at the notion that socialism had died in one day, only to be replaced by an abstract, “Second New” like poetry. The preface of Nevzat Çelik's first book *Şafak Türküsü*, which attracted intense attention upon its release, was also written by Can Yücel.

The most significant one of the comments about the social realist poetry of the 1980s is that from the 1970s its format was subjected to change with

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In her study of the poet, Jale Gülgen Börklü mentions that there was neither promotion nor criticism of *Rengâhenk* when it was first released. The book was impounded by the state as soon as released so it would take considerable courage to print a promotional article about it. Jale Görgen Börklü, “Can Yücel'in hayatı, edebî çevresi ve şiirlerinin incelenmesi,” unpublished doctoral dissertation, Gazi University Institute of Social Sciences Department of Turkish Language and Literature, *The New Turkish Literature*, 2012.

419 In his study of the period, Bâki Asiltürk mentions Can Yücel amongst the influential group of masters that influenced the young generation of poets that adopted “slang articulation and subculture” (p. 69). He also recognizes Can Yücel's influence on K. İskender, in whom he detects the same poetic style (p. 404). He draws attention to Yücel's effect on a specific group of poets he calls “*Yeni Garipçiler*,” in reference to Hasan Bülent Kahraman (p. 421). According to him, Oğuzhan Akay - a young poet of the period - also reflects the influence of Can Yücel (p. 425). Bâki Asiltürk, *Türk Şiirinde 1980 Kuşağı* (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2014).

imagery, metaphors and poetic qualities becoming accentuated. In terms of socialism in the 1980s, semantic crafts like metaphors and metonym were always used to convey social and political elements.<sup>420</sup> As for confusion regarding the period's politics and trends, these cannot be completely eliminated; this is partly due to insufficient consideration of A. Oktay's article in which he assesses and defines the period's trends. In any case, it is difficult to comprehend socialist poetry's semantic arts without considering their political meaning. Can Yücel's poetry is the most striking examples of these arts.

*Rengâhenk*, published in 1982, explores many themes including history, religion, poverty, love and politics while feelings of irony, rage, and death are also present in almost every poem. The book embodies the pessimistic spirit of the 1980s' as highlighted by Ahmet Oktay. Despite oppression, Can Yücel defied the junta regime, insisted on being leftist and announced this in a poem containing the verse "with my left side." His political criticisms were crafted in so intelligently that they could not be used as evidence in case of an investigation against; thus, it is difficult to ascertain why this book was impounded. The prohibition of the book was justified by labeling the book "obscenity," which can either be expressed as a success of his refined poetics or a symbolic act of violence on the part of the junta.

Aside from the "left side," the book includes of references reflecting political protest<sup>421</sup> that are detached from context, just like Oktay's description. He had only one poem that included an explicit protest. A. Oktay asserts that semantic arts in socialist poetry exist as an extension of political elements, and he also believes that protests against the period's poetry lacked context. These two statements sound contradictory and positioning Can Yücel in terms of a literary genre is more difficult as a result. For some, Yücel's poetry is an extension of the *Garip* movement while for others; it is the precursor of underground poetry. Nevertheless, the poet was a leading representative of socialist literature and was perceived as such by the authorities, as evidenced by his prohibited books.

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420 Ahmet Oktay, "1980 Sonrasında Şiir", *İmkânsız Poetika* (İstanbul: Alkım Yayınları, 2004), 80.

421 A. Oktay, "1980..." *İmkânsız Poetika*, 74. A. Oktay draws attention to the existence of political protest in poetry without offending political pinpoints.

However the politics in Can Yücel's poetry is reflected through images and metaphors just like Orhan Alkaya's verses quoted by A. Oktay:<sup>422</sup> "On the day that sun was arrested/ Besides it's eve of bairam,"<sup>423</sup> "Appeared to play zither/ they threw the legislation on the floor,"<sup>424</sup> "If only a sound was the rain/ Would the lands accept labor agreement,"<sup>425</sup> "As I cannot get out of my mind/ How killed was İlhan..."<sup>426</sup>

Among the other poems, the only one that openly protests is actually politicized through images. Without a doubt, these verses refer to death sentences executed during the period: "Galata Bridge trembles like an aspen leaf / If they would hang me like a suspension bridge."<sup>427</sup> The word "dayı" (Ottoman for rascal or ruffian) in the line "So many ruffians have you seen by now"<sup>428</sup> refers to the idiom "Köprüyü geçene kadar ayıya dayı demek" ("To call the bear a rascal until the bridge is passed." In Turkish ruffian is "dayı" and bear is "ayı", which rhyme with one another). The junta is characterized as both a bear and a bear charmer in the following lines: "All dragging their bears in tow."<sup>429</sup> The junta will hopefully "wind up in history's zoo" passing over the poet subject with their "imposingness and fur caps." Political ideas are evidently conveyed through symbolism since it was impossible to make

422 Ibid, p: 74. A. Oktay cites Orhan Alkaya's verses "My darling, the childhood of mine you are / And our lives, mentioned in a public notice of whatisitsnumber," ("Sevgilim, çocukluğum benim/ Bilmem kaç numaralı bildiride adı geçen hayatımız") noting that we perceive their historical/social meaning through symbols. "To declare a public notice" was a typical concept of the day, and the symbol that A. Oktay is highlighting here must be "bildiride adı geçmek" (being mentioned in a public notice).

423 "Güneşin tutuklandığı gün/ Hem de bayram arifesi." Can Yücel, *Rengâhenk*, (Istanbul: İş Bankası Yayınları, 2010, 1. edition: Yazko, 1982), 121.

424 "Kanun çalacağız diye çıkıp orta yere/ Kanunu çaldılar yere." Ibid., 99. In Turkish, zither and legislation, and to throw to the floor and to play are homonyms. Hence, there are word plays here.

425 "Yağmur bir ses olaydı sırf/ Toplu sözleşmeye oturur muydu topraklar." Ibid., 60.

426 "İlhan Erdost'un nasıl öldüğünü/ Kaç gündür aklımdan çıkaramadığım gibi..." Ibid., 55. İlhan Erdost had been beaten to death in custody, after the coup d'état.

427 "Galata Köprüsü tir tir titiyor/ Bunlar beni de asma köprü yaparlar diye." Ibid., 56. The junta executed 49 political prisoners.

428 "Sen böyle nice dayılar gördün bugüne kadar."

429 "Hepsi de yedeklerinde sürüye sürüye ayılarını."

direct reference, as Ahmet Oktay pointed out. In 1982, when the book was first published, was still in the period of martial law when the junta' oppression and violence was in full force.

Most of the poems in the book had already been published in journals. Although the poems seem to an attack against religion, these are in fact directed against symbolic sanctity, not against faith and Allah. To the contrary, the poet is engaging in conversation with Allah.<sup>430</sup> To be more accurate, Yücel attacks anything that is symbolic, which is his method of protest against junta regimes that consolidates their power through symbolic violence, as mentioned before.

On the other hand, Yücel's dissidence against military power was palpable through not only his poetry, but also his strong, patois statements, and comments. This played a role in his punishment for producing detrimental material. His response to the 1982 constitution and the appropriation of the TDK (Turkish Language Association, published in *Gösteri*, was provocative: "In a document where our mothers are being 'satisfied,' it would be a shame if our

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430 "Oh God, how mercury is the air/ Bang here, bang in Çatladıkapi/ Temperature's crazy to the utmost/ A minute pole, and equator in the other/ A minute quarreling with you/ And picking you up in another" ("Allahım nasıl cıvalanıyor hava/ Çat burda çat Çatladıkapi'da/ Derece farımış son derece/ Bir Kutup, bir Hattı-üstüva/ Senlen küsüp küsüp/ Seni yeniden getirdiğe tava") can be considered a controversial passage. In her evaluation of the poem, Jale Gülgen Börklü ignores the stanza itself, highlighting instead, that in "Havaî Civa" the intensity of love is depicted through comparison to mythological elements and connotations of sexuality. According to her; the intensity is expressed in "the fire ignited by Prometheus" while lust is portrayed by the line "... nibbling Holy Eva my Adam's nipples, for over a week" (p.118). (Jale Görgen Börklü, "Can Yücel'in hayatı, edebî çevresi ve şiirlerinin incelenmesi," unpublished doctoral dissertation, Gazi University Institute of Social Sciences Department of Turkish Language and Literature, *The New Turkish Literature*, 2012, p: 259. ) Nevertheless, in the aforementioned passage, 'farımak' refers to getting hot and 'hattı üstüva' means the equator; if 'kutup' (pole) is understood as the highest of the evliya (Muslim saints), then it could refer to a bridge between the love of Allah and the physical love on which Börklü focus. The poem possesses certain tasawwuf references, as well. However, the fact that he does not stop using slang even when talking about holy things provided the foundation for banning the book. In any case, after the 1980 coup d'état, obscenity was brought under control via a regulation concerning "detrimental context."

language were overlooked.”<sup>431</sup> In *Yazko*'s inquiry about the autonomy of the TDK, Yücel stated that from its foundation the TDK had always been an ideological rather than an autonomous organization; however, it was on the verge of scientific functionality when the state intervened.<sup>432</sup> This statement is significant since it projects Yücel's stance in terms of the state's cultural politics. He acknowledged that the TDK was an ideological organization, and must have agreed with the notion that language was used as an ideological tool even in the Kemalist founding period. His opinion regarding the recent functionality of the TDK involves a criticism against state cultural politics at the beginning of the Republic era. Ultimately, the purpose of this organization was to conduct scientific studies of language; the fact that the organization was run by ideology called for dissidence for the sake of science and democracy. What is attitude projects is a critical stance against not only the junta, but also the setup of the Republic.

Can Yücel's poems dedicated to the period were far more complex with respect to social realist poetry in general. This is due to his radical position during that time which is not easily explained.<sup>433</sup> Interpreting a poem with its images, symbols and metaphors itself requires significant intellectual knowledge; Yücel's poetry harbors many references, including not only region- and period-specific idioms but also mythology, scriptures, political jargon and slang. Semantic shifts, attribution of new meanings to words,<sup>434</sup> and the technical richness of the language (which can be perceived as diversity or the resources in hand) were aimed at changing the world,<sup>435</sup> and they can all be considered a radical criticism of the Republic even before the 1980s.

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431 *Gösteri*, June 1982.

432 *Yazko*, September 1983.

433 Konur Ertop, a renowned literary critic of the period, praised Yücel's book for the poems' extraordinary format and content, the latter of which included the degeneration of personal relations and social structure. He defines Yücel as “a poet who takes his social responsibilities very seriously.” “Çağdaş Sorumlu Bir Ozan: Can Yücel,” *Yazko*, 24 (October-1982): 4.

434 Doğan Hızlan, “*Gece Vardiyası Albümü* (Can Yücel), *Şiir Çilingiri* (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2010), 212.

435 Cemal Süreya, “Can Yücel'in Şiirinde İroni,” *Şapkam Dolu Çiçekle* (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2006), 142.

Interestingly, Yücel's poetry was associated with the *Garip* movement. The most important characteristic of *Garip* (First New) poetry was its populism – that it lacked images and metaphors and, was comprehensible by everyone. This characteristic was attributed to the poet based on his first few poems, especially due to the way he used humor. As a matter of fact, Cemal Süreya had understandably implied such regarding this poetry during the 1960s. In the same article, it was also asserted that the poet was in the process of creating a unique language specific to himself.<sup>436</sup> Nonetheless, it is not accurate to associate Can Yücel in the 1980s to the *Garip* movement. In this context, it is evident that Yücel's process of constructing a unique language was long completed.

These poems would definitely pass as examples of socialist poetry since they pursue the notion of common welfare at any cost. Poet-subject feels sorrow due to the ill will and violence around him. He speaks in the voice of common sense; in other words, his comments come from the perspective of the intellectual. As a representative of a socialist poetry in the 1980s', the main indicator of Can Yücel's socialism is the poet-subject's collectivist nature; he speaks in the interest of collective welfare, not the individual. The concepts against which he protests are violence, exploitation, abuse and an oppressive state order.<sup>437</sup>

During this period, intellectuals who obtained wealth by changing lanes along with the transformation in media and were ultimately the focus of Yücel's protest. Yücel satirized the advertisement profession and the accompanying cultural approach.<sup>438</sup> Then again, the Islamism that started to appear

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436 Cemal Süreya, "Can Yücel'in Şiirinde İroni," *Papirüs* (March 1969), *Şapka Dolu Çiçekle* (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2006), 139-144.

437 "Oh my people, so many fall-years have passed by/ Since your companion without a ceremony wedding," "Kaç güz-yıl geçti bre halkım/ Sen düğünsüz kamber olalı" (p: 119); "See these kids dying/ For you for me for the world..." "Şu ölen çocuklar var ya/ Sana bana dünyaya..." (p: 53); "I devoted myself already/ To the Second Slam Siege/ Being a laborer myself," "Adamışım ben kendimi zaten/ İkinci Veryansın Muhasarası'na/ Orada bir işçi olarak şahsen," (p: 51). Can Yücel, *Rengâhenk* (Istanbul: İş Bankası Yayınları, 2010, 1. edition: Yazko, 1982).

438 "Reklamcılık" (Advertising), *Ibid.* p: 95-97. "Neither his name, nor himself is worth to mention/ He was Revisionist in 1967/ Yet televisionist/ Has full ablution with OMO/ Such maximalist in 1955/ though has no boots on/ Meow once a month/ In a steam room of mahogany/

during this period was subject to his satiric poetry as well.<sup>439</sup> The urban city was pictured as ugly or as artificially beautiful in the atmosphere of autumn, throughout the book. The poems defined people either as victims or as indecent, and, their ethical values were questioned.

To summarize, with his impounded books of the 1980s' and an extraordinary poetry style (with respect to the socialist movement of the 1970s), Can Yücel was positioned as a master of socialist poetry. In a form of distinctive images, metaphors and ironies, he covered implicative meanings. The socialist worldview is only captured by the poet-subject's "common welfare" approach and his questioning of ethical and moral values. The poetry of Ahmet Erhan (one of the period's next generation poets) and Ahmet Telli's (a poet who gained a reputation in the 1970s) are reviewed in the following section to see

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And continuously of good will/ in İZOCAM/ But "malign" said the doctor for the/ Tumor he took out from his gall bladder in Etiler/ So with KALEBODUR he brushes his teeth/ Sucker!/ But however in these times he is/ Opponent to Socialism, he aggresses." "Adı da kendi de lazım değil/ Revizyonistti 1967'de/ Artık televizyonist/ OMO'yla gusül abdesti alıyor/ 1955'deki bu maximalist/ Çizme giymese de/ Ayda bir gün pisipisi pist/ Maunalı saunada/ Ve niyeti mütemadiyen halis/ İZOCAM'da/ Oysa habis dedi doktor durup durduğu yerde/ Etiler'de aldığı safra kesesindeki kist/ Onun için KALEBODUR'la dişlerini fırçalıyor/ Keriz!/ Ama nedense bu son zamanlarda/ Sosyalizme şiddetle muteriz." (OMO is a brand of detergent, İzocam is a brand of insulation, and Kalebodur is a brand of ceramic tile). Along with the transformation of media in the 1980s, immediate criticism of the left began. Writers of the younger generation and some journalists like Ertuğrul Özkök who previously positioned themselves as a part of the left, suddenly began criticizing the leftwing and renouncing their previous affiliation with the left. The disintegration of the leftist movement actually started right after the Mayday event. Both Orhan Alkaya and Vural Bahadır Bayrıl mentioned that 1977 massacre affected their general view of events. They added that they questioned their political stances in a practical, rather than a theoretical sense. After the coup d'état, changing lanes from the leftist point of view to comply with the junta for financial gain was, of course, a controversial undertaking.

On the other hand, given the tone of protest throughout the poem, the socialist content is not depicted through slogans or a direct expression of intent. The protest is sensed by metaphors such as "gusül abdesti" (ritual ablution of the whole body) with Omo (a brand of detergent), illustrates the destruction of the sacred with a commodity of capitalism and accentuating the severity of the degeneration.

439 "In necking finally/ we turned to be Muslims both," "Sarmaş dolaş olunca nihayet/ Meğer sen de ben de Müslümanmışız," *ibid.*, 113.

whether or not such plasticized poetry deprived of populist qualities were present in other examples of the period's socialist literature.

### § 7.3 Ahmet Erhan: Socialism of the Young Generation

Ahmet Erhan's<sup>440</sup> book *Alacakaranlıktaki Ülke* is among the most selling and influential books in the period under consideration.<sup>441</sup> The book was published in 1981, and it immediately attracted the attention of Doğan Hızlan, executive editor of *Gösteri*. Hızlan mentioned Erhan in his 1981 review of that year's poetry. Erhan was also granted the prestigious Behçet Necatigil Award with his debut that same year.

These poems theme are from daily life and reflect an expression of inner conscience and common sense, and in this respect are among the successful examples of socialist literature. The opening poem of the book, “Alacakaranlıktaki Ülke,” describes Turkey in the late 1970s. It portrays fear of death in an environment where all sense of security is lost. The public was restless, in pain, and tired like “a fish caught in a fishing net.”<sup>442</sup> The poem is long with 16 stanzas and discusses many aspects of life in an atmosphere where “brothers shoot one another.” Injury, losing a loved one, or staying at home in the times of unrest are all part of this life. The emphasis is on the public's ordeal of poverty and desperation, and each stanza reflects this at a certain time frame during the night.

Intriguingly, the verse “my books are now burning my hands” is a vague, painful reference to the psychology of intellectuals. The subsequent lines do not indicate why the books now burn the poet-subject's hand - either they do not possess the necessary information to prevent fratricidal struggle or they

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440 Ahmet Erhan (1958, Ankara) was one of the renowned poets of the generation of the 1980s'. His first poem was published in 1976 and his first book was widely acclaimed. He acquired an instant reputation in the world of social realist poetry with his unique voice.

441 As the junta settled, the social trends and issues of the 1980s could be traced. Given the purposes and scope of this thesis, I refer to Nurdan Gürbilek's book *Vitrinde Yaşamak*, which particularly deals with Turkey's social trends, in the 1980s, and tracts the predefined “post-fog” trends and arguments in poetry.

442 Ahmet Erhan, *Bugün de Ölmedim Anne* (Toplu Şiirler 1) (Istanbul: Everest Yayınları, 2001), 5.



were held responsible for it. The verse that follows is “comes the sound of successive gunshots from outside”.<sup>443</sup>

Books are again mentioned in the twelfth stanza and this time they are being packed. “Banned” books were separated from others. Martial law was already in effect across many regions of the country even before the coup. During this period, various books on politics books were banned; in the case of such books were found one's possession, not only the owner but also the whole household faced prosecution. This book talks about hiding and handling of such banned books which contemporaneous readers would find significant and directly with the directly with the post-coup situation. The poet mentions violence throughout the book and complains about bloodshed.

The second part of the book is entitled “Bugün de Ölmedim Anne” (“I survived Today too, Mama”), which in the near future would be the name the first volume of his collected poems. The poem was originally written in 1979:

“...Closed were the doors, drawn were the curtains/ Gun reports aloof  
hoarse/ One my face staring at separation the other at life/ Today too  
I survived mama...”<sup>444</sup>

This passage projects the spiritual devastation caused by death, being killed, or loss of someone dear. The date of the poem again indicates the pre-coup period which is significant: Martial law was in place when the book was published and almost all politics was prohibited. State violence was rampant with arrests, prosecutions, raids of people's houses and bans; criticizing or even mentioning these oppressive practices was unthinkable. These poems show how the left wing felt about street violence long before the military coup. But the timing of the book allows for two opposing interpretations. First, it was commonly believed but not articulated one that the book implied a criticism of state violence by condemning violence as a whole. Second, the book justified the military coup since the coup finally put an end to street violence.

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443 “Dışardan zincirleme silah sesleri geliyor,” *Ibid.*, 6.

444 “...Kapalıydı kapılar, perdeler örtük/ Silah sesleri uzakta boğuk boğuk/ Bir yüzüm ayrılığa bir yüzüm hayata dönük/ Bugün de ölmedim anne...”

### 7.3.1 *Socialism with First Person Singular Pronouns*

*Bugün de Ölmedim Anne* is an example of socialist poetry. Nonetheless, the poet uses the first person singular.<sup>445</sup> His commitment to the socialist approach is only sensed in the reflections of his hopes, expectations and pursuit for consciousness, equity, humanity, and common welfare (“best interest for us”). Hot political topics and the political agenda were often themes of the pre-coup period. This is why the publishing of this book was not grounds for prosecution. The reason this book was affirmed by the junta regime is due to its timing. The poems do not discredit the military coup, in the end; the military coup did end the street fights and the mentioned pain and fear of death mentioned in the book seem to be the outcome of such fighting.

An article, indicating that *Alacakaranlıktaki Ülke* was “inaccurately interpreted” was published in *Edebiyat ve Eleştiri* years later. The poet used this article as the prologue of the second edition of his fourth book *Ölüm Nedeni Bilinmiyor* in 1998. It is stated that *Alacakaranlıktaki Ülke* is a pioneering work of art in terms of representing a “dissident-oppositional” attitude in terms of

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445 The fact that it is written in first person singular is appraised by Metin Celâl, a young poet among the individualists, not socialists of the 1980s: “In my opinion, Ahmet Erhan’s poetry closed the 1970s era and was a precursor of the poetry of the 1980s. Ahmet Erhan was never part of the jargon; in fact, the attitude he adopted was against it. He distinguished himself from the slogan-chanting crowd and preferred to speak with his own voice.” “Ölüm Nedeni Bilinmiyor,” *Fanatik*, 2 (April-1980.) The bottom-line is M. Celâl’s emphasis poetry have its “own voice.” He is unmistakably referring to authenticity, although slogans can be authentic as well. What is being emphasized is the individuality of the poem.

M. Celâl’s message about “abrupt slogan chanting” recalls the ongoing conflict with poets with an old-fashioned approach to socialism. As far as the period’s journals are concerned, I have not come across any polemic that directly refers to serious figures. On the other hand, given debates on intellectual’s identity started by socialist writers, I find the articles of individualist poets very intriguing. They support the art of poetry vis-à-vis slogan poetry. Since socialist poems were already transformed, I presume they did not have much to object. That is why their articles were about concepts like the role of intellectuals. In his article in *Sombahar* journal’s July 1992 issue, M. Celâl asserts that social realist poetry came to a “bizarre” halt along with the 12 September coup. Social realist poets were either buried in silence or started to talk about “flowers, birds, particulars of everyday life and the occasional longing for the beloved.” My research does not bear this out.

protesting street violence of the 1970s. The article highlights that the “function of the book became an instrument of judgment for the past, when it was released after the military coup, rather than a warning based on past experience” and added that the “ones who cursed revolutionary practices and wanted to become affiliated with fascism had clung onto this poetry like an addict to drugs.”<sup>446</sup> Here, the “ones who want to become affiliated with fascism” are former socialists and sympathizers who rapidly embraced liberalism criticizing the left movement and relevant organizations before the 12 September coup. The writer found A. Erhan's objection genuine and accurate, but the book unfortunately consolidated people's tendency rightist views. In his own words, this caused the socialist writers to agitate in their approach toward A. Erhan.<sup>447</sup>

This hesitant approach was also caused by the book's individualistic poems. As far as the publication date is concerned, criticizing the left was a questionable at a time when the junta's practices of violence and torture were common; thus, it posed a very controversial position for the book.<sup>448</sup> It reflected

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446 Adnan Satici, “Ölüm Nedeni Bilinmiyor Üzerine Bir Otopsi,” *Edebiyat ve Eleştiri*, 17 (Winter-1994), Ankara.

447 Adnan Satici, “Ölüm Nedeni Bilinmiyor Üzerine Bir Otopsi,” *Edebiyat ve Eleştiri*, 17 (winter 1994). A late and hard-to-respond-to example to this hesitant approach was produced by Yücel Kayıran: “The poem 'Bugün de Ölmedim Anne' supports the justifications that have been asserted to legitimize martial governance - the same state that exerted violence against Yaşar Miraç.” Yücel Kayıran, “Şiir Uslandı mı?” *Adam Sanat*, 176 (September 2000).

448 A. Erhan specified that nothing legitimized killing somebody, in an interview in *Yarın*'s first volume. He persisted that his book was not pessimistic, although he supported the view that such a “young man” profile described in the book was common at the time. Almost all analyses of Erhan were written after 1990, so, it is evident that such polemics were not reflected in literature journals, at the time when the book was first released. Ömer Ateş, “Ahmet Erhan: “Çağımızda toplumcu her yazar güncelliğe girmek zorundadır,” *Yarın*, 1 (September 1981): 39-40.

This interview reflects the social realist literary approach and the paradox of the intellectual's role. A young poet (23 years old at the time) assumed the role of intellectual a title, position, and responsibility since the Tanzimat. He created a book of poetry for the purpose of capturing a state of mind and identifying a problem; nonetheless, he shamefully admitted that he failed to suggest a solution. He emphasized that poetry had to do more than designate a situation or a historical testimony; he admitted that his style needed to involve a more imagist quality. On one hand, he tried to reflect the period's individual being beyond his own self. On

the subjective impressions of the individual. As identified by Ahmet Oktay, the poet shared the suicidal pessimism of the period's young poets in the nostalgic atmosphere of *Ölüm Nedeni Bilinmiyor*, wanted to return to his family home (and ultimately returned there, as acknowledged in his second book *Akdeniz Lirikleri*<sup>449</sup>) and desired death. These were the typical properties by which Ahmet Oktay depicted political concepts or states of mind in the individualistic form.<sup>450</sup> Hence, certain comments assert that A. Erhan gravitated towards and even more individualistic approach, after *Akdeniz Lirikleri*.<sup>451</sup> In fact, Ahmet Erhan personally admitted that he was writing individualistic poems.<sup>452</sup>

This book evoked a sense of protest, though subtle, against post-coup violence and was a first in this respect. The “milestone” mentioned in the book's third chapter “Milattan Önceki Şiirler” (“Poems before the milestone”) in fact refers to poet-subject's migration to the Mediterranean, not to the 12 September case. In the meantime, the 12 September military coup is mentioned in a poem indirectly; “Geceyarıları Söylenen Ninni” (The Lullaby Sang at Midnight) is a bold piece of art due to the fact it was published under martial law: “...Yet everything's over, don't cock your ear to the streets/ Yet everything's over, the fear's patrolling/ Yet everything's over, did you burn the books?/ Yet

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the other, he thought poetry was the product of the poet's own individuality. In a sense, he was defining the issues and dilemmas of social realism of the 1980s. Although there were no contradictions among his statements, the proximate, consecutive allusions to personal and social elements risked a dilemma. More importantly, it shows that it was possible to clarify the situation during this period. Ömer Ateş, “Ahmet Erhan: “Çağımızda toplumcu her yazar güncelliğe girmek zorundadır”, *Yarın*, 1 (September 1981): 39-40.

449 This book entirely constructed in a vacation-like atmosphere in a Mediterranean town; it is book of escape. Some speculate this book was actually the poet's first book and that its release date was delayed. The poems in the book tell the story of returning to a small town on the Mediterranean shore.

450 Ahmet Oktay, “1980 Sonrasında Şiir”, *İmkânsız Poetika* (Istanbul: Alkım Yayınları, 2004), 71-90.

451 Metin Celâl regards his poetry as a transition from 70s to 80s. *Ölüm Nedeni Biliniyor*, *Fanatik*, 2 (April- 1980).

452 Ayhan Şahin, “Söyleşi – Ahmet Erhan”, *Varlık*, 1195 (April 2007).

everything's over, starts the curfew..."<sup>453</sup> If it not for the mention of suffering caused by the violence of the 1970s' and the anticipation that it should stop no matter the cost, the book could have led to an investigation or even prosecution due to this poem. Aside from it, there is no reference to the junta. The book merely talks about burning books, quitting writing and returning back to the Mediterranean. Also, an ambiguous concept of death is mentioned without a specific cause.

Of course, "Geceyarıları Söylenen Ninni"<sup>454</sup> is important, as it is the first poem to refer to 12 September. The phrase "Artık her şey bitti" ("yet everything's over") is repeated at the beginning of each line across four stanzas. The succeeding part of each line is a phrase attached to this main refrain. The first line ends with "don't go out at nights." Following this line indicating the curfew is "hug your duvet tightly," "don't look into my face," and "go over to sleep, man," which mean that along with the curfew, fear will start to dominate, one will have to hug his duvet, avoid looking in the mirror and shift into a state of sleep, in pursuit of shelter. It is almost like left wing politics being silenced after the military coup.

The second stanza starts with "The weak ropes you let to shear off were sheared off."<sup>455</sup> This line refers to the "just to stop bleeding" theme depicted in the previous passage. The chips actually fell, "in the end we paid the price." The third stanza mentions the poet-subject's fear while roaming the streets and that there are books to be burnt. Curfew hours were coming. The final two parts mention that friends were "gone" then - the only ones at the door were beggars and letters had ended. Furthermore, everyone became stranger to one another. The usage of "pretending not to know someone" refers to the theme of the previous part, which is the severance of social ties. (Filing a complaint against or reporting someone was encouraged during the junta regime. Even acquainted with someone who was politically stigmatized was risky in those days.)

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453 "...Artık her şey bitti, dinleme sokakları/ Artık her şey bitti, korku devriye geziyor/ Artık her şey bitti, yaktın mı kitapları?/ Artık her şey bitti, sokağa çıkma yasağı başlıyor..." Ahmet Erhan, *Bugün de Ölmedim Anne, Toplu Şiirler*, (Istanbul: Everest Yayınları, 2001): 83.

454 Ahmet Erhan, *Bugün de Ölmedim Anne, Toplu Şiirler* (Istanbul: Everest Yayınları, 2001), 83.

455 "İnceldiği yerden kopsun, dediğin şeyler koptu."

The poem is in the second person singular; nonetheless, the poet-subject was actually addressing himself. The last verse of the first stanza, “Yet all’s over, go over to sleep, man,”<sup>456</sup> and the concept of loneliness in the final three stanzas hint at this. This atmosphere of monologue renders the poem more dramatic, but that is all. The poet subject complains about fear and loneliness. The torture, interrogations, and deaths that friends and loved ones endured were not mentioned. They are not even implied through metaphors or images. This is how the poet-subject experiences the 12 September incident.<sup>457</sup>

Ultimately, this is a socialist poem. But the poet's willingness to undertake the intellectuals' mission and to pay for or share in the pain of the society is open to debate. He was a socialist who tended to sacrifice<sup>458</sup> and assume responsibility<sup>459</sup> for an ambiguous scope; his political attitude is clear by his portrayal of laborers and ghettos.<sup>460</sup> The poet-subject's socialism can only be

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456 “Artık her şey bitti, yat uyu adamım.”

457 Ali Özgür Özkarcı defined Ahmet Erhan's as “autobiographic poetry.” He stated that the poet created it in a period when the left still had links to populism. Nevertheless, the poem qualifies as autobiographical due to the disintegration of the relationship between the left and populism after 12 September. Unfortunately, Özkarcı does not lay the details of how the left wing lost its connections to populism. He presumably supports the idea that popular culture and the leftist point of view were on the same page in the 70s, favoring collective welfare, but through apart in the 1980s with the transformation of values. Nonetheless, I dispute the association of with this with A. Erhan's poetry. What norm does A. Erhan represent... a person who resists or revolts against the 12 September coup or just someone who was harmed spiritually as a result? Does he talk in the dialect of the intellectual? These primary questions need to be answered. Ali Özgür Özkarcı, “Geriye Otobiyografisi Kalan Toplumculuk: Ahmet Erhan,” *Cetvelle Çizilmiş Dağmıklık 80'lerden 2000'lere Şiir ve Siyaset* (Istanbul: 160. Kilometre Yayınları, 2014), 19-29.

458 “I don't want to die but I can now/ If my death redounds to the world,” “Ölmek istemiyorum ama ölebilirim şimdi/ Varsa ölümümün bu dünyaya bir yararı,” Ahmet Erhan, *Bugün de Ölmedim Anne, Toplu Şiirler* (Istanbul: Everest Yayınları, 2001), 51.

459 “I'm the one who wakes up for all the world/ Who dies all the deaths, who is born all the births,” “Bütün uykularından uyanan benim bu dünyanın/ Bütün ölümlerini ölen, bütün doğumlarını doğan,” *Ibid.*, 90.

460 “Happiness is when a laborer turns home with a bread in hand,” “Bir işçinin, elinde ekmekle evine döndüğü o yeredir mutluluk,” *Ibid.*, 138, “Kenar Mahallede Bir Pazar Günü,” “A Sunday in Slums,” 145.

sensed from his conscience of aiming common welfare<sup>461</sup> and his desire of ending bloodshed. He implied that he is not the first person to criticize the leftist movement; in fact, he declared that his generation has been murmuring to themselves for some time.<sup>462</sup> He criticized his generation by criticizing himself as an individual, and the collective purpose welfare and progress. Lastly, Ahmet Erhan is a socialist because he writes poetry that can easily be understood by the average audience. In other words, he writes in a lucid manner rather than “incomprehensible” manner ignores the society. Although this property does not determine anything by itself, the fact that “incomprehensibility” paralleled with the characterization of “the intellectual is detached from society,” makes it moderately significant.

He continuously defines himself as a cicada, and speaks in the name of a definite poet-subject. Quitting writing as an option for the poet mentioned in

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461 Ahmet Erhan highlighted conscience as the fundamental principle of his poetry. In his 2007 interview in *Varlık*, he declared that he relied on the trinity of ethics-esthetics-conscience, rather than ideological concepts. Ayhan Şahin, “Söyleşi – Ahmet Erhan,” *Varlık*, 1195 (April 2007). Bâki Asiltürk defines this poem, as “what really reflects from the text [of this poem] is a conscientious socialism *Türk Şiirinde 1980 Kuşacağı* (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2014), 335.

462 Two poets of the young generation, Orhan Alkaya and Bahadır Bayrıl both pointed out in interviews that they lost their faith in the left movement, especially after the Mayday massacre, which was one of the most violent incidents of the Republican period. During his interview on the 12 September coup, one founder of the Turkish Labor Party, Selim Mahmutoğlu declared that it made him realize the severity of the upcoming military coup. *Otuz Yıldır 12 Eylül Yaşayanlar Anlatıyor*, Ed. Haşim Akman (İstanbul: Doğan Yayınları 2003), 39-63.

Indeed, this incident not only caused more aggressive political actions, but also transformed attitudes, unleashed feelings of defeat and generated a loss of faith amongst members of political organizations. The number of political victims in 1977 was 230, skyrocketed to 1200 to 1500 in the next two years. After this event, political assassinations were no longer confined to small political groups, but they were extended to key figures in society like politicians, authors and journalists. The destination of journalist and writer Abdi İpekçi, former prime minister Nihat Erim and former of DİSK Kemal Türkler all occurred in this period. Eric Zürcher, *Modernleşen Türkiye'nin Tarihi*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2010), 380.

the poems.<sup>463</sup> Going back to the Mediterranean to a rural lifestyle - was referred to as a rebirth. <sup>464</sup> Such themes obviously belong to an "individual's world."

### 7.3.2 *The Poet-Subject Who is Part of an Agonized and Exceptional Generation*

Another theme that emerged in Turkish poetry with *Alacakaranlıkta Ülke* is the poet-subject's characterization of his own generation and the common fate. Although it seems insignificant, the attributions reflect a heavy burden on this generation's shoulders or at least subjectively: "My generation, painful peers/ Nobody lived so intense/ the joys and the griefs. / granted to us to pave the way of history/ For the children to be happy/in future/ My generation, painful peers/ We tried on all clothes/ Of Bravery and restlessness."<sup>465</sup> "The children of the bitter age/ Know the life and the death."<sup>466</sup> Ahmet Erhan was talking about a generation that "paved the way of the history," and possessed

463 "And my hands/ Were ready to burn at once all poems," "Ve ellerim/ Bütün şiirleri bir çırpıda yakmaya hazırdı," (p:86); "May be I don't write anymore, not a word even," "Bakarsın bir daha yazmam, tek sözcük bile," (p: 158); "I'd like to read each of my poems once and then burn them/ Or to go away, leaving only one poem behind," "Her yazdığım şiiri bir kez okuyup sonra yakmak isterim/ Ya da son bir şiir yazıp bırakıp gitmek," (p: 72); though there is a prediction that his whole life will pass by writing poems (p: 129), Ahmet Erhan, *Bugün de Ölmedim Anne, Toplu Şiirler*, İstanbul: Everest Yayınları, 2001.

464 "I'm familiarizing myself to reincarnate," "Kendimi yeniden doğmaya alıştıyorum" Ibid., p: 93; "May be an escape from myself is each separation/ Though nowhere is abondoneless/ (...)/ The train goes, as a black snake, wobbling," "Her ayrılık belki de bir kaçıştır kendimden/ Bırakıp gitmelerin durulduğu bir yer yoksa da/ (...)/ Tren ilerliyor, kara bir yılan gibi, yalpalayarak," 122-123; "Returning to Mediterranean, adjusted to the winging/ of the fall birds," "Akdeniz'e dönüyorum, güzkuşlarının/ Kanat vuruşlarına kendimi ayarlayarak," Ibid., 99.

465 "Kuşağım, acılı kuşağım/ Acılarla sevinçleri böyle yoğun yaşamak/ Kimselere nasip olmadı./ Bize düştü tarih ırmağının önünü açmak/ Gülsün diye geleceğin çocukları/ Kuşağım, acılı kuşağım/ Biz sınıadık üstümüzde, yiğitliğin ve tedirginliğin/ Bütün urbalarını." Ibid., 55.

466 "Acılı çağın çocukları/ Bilirler hayat nedir, ölüm nedir." Ibid., 54.



a destiny that was “granted to nobody else.” They “knew” life and death, experienced both pain and happiness to an ultimate degree. Ultimately, their “bravery” and “restlessness” were put to the test.

This “brave” generation portrayed by Ahmet Erhan was openly identified with Prometheus in *Ateş Çalmayı Deneyenler İçin* by Emirhan Oğuz, to be analyzed below. This approach is quite different from the epic tone of *Dövüßen Anlatsın* written by Ahmet Telli, an important poet of the previous generation, who will be considered in under the next section. The defeated *commander-subject* of the young generation of the 1980s cannot be seen in the preceding generation. For example, Ahmet Telli was a poet who usually kept a very “sloppy” “score” of his period.<sup>467</sup> However, for Ahmet Erhan, this pain is depicted in the verse: “Let the children be unaware/ of the pains we had”.<sup>468</sup>

*Ölüm Nedeni: Bilinmiyor*, dated 1988, also features poetry of a certain generation, but one that does not seem gallant. This poem gives the feeling of being hung-over and die villages that the poet-subject sometimes feels contempt for himself and disgust for the world. At the end of the poem, the poet states that this solitary, hopeless generation had aged prematurely.<sup>469</sup> Nevertheless,

467 Ahmet Telli, *Dövüßen Anlatsın* (İstanbul: Everest Yayınları, 2011), 30.

468 “Çektiğimiz bunca acıyı/ Varsın bilmesin çocuklar.” Ahmet Erhan, *Bugün de Ölmedim Anne, Toplu Şiirler* (İstanbul: Everest Yayınları, 2001), 60. This poem was written in 1979.

469 “Even the rains stop, old chap/ One day we wouldn't watch the sky/ I was born as a sum of three drops of water with a handful of soil/ So I got slough in these days/ Have you ever listened to Bob Dylan/ Have you ever last night/ With a blend of wine and rakı/ The hours, old chap, hours... what's wrong with them/ shall we not set the clocks someday/ I lived a life counting on the fingers/ My head was never up due to acrophobia/ I even disgust myself sometimes/ The world always this// I go down the privateness of the night with my high necks/ With the bitterness of men who come home late/ How badly we lived, old chap/ Left windless when a bird closes his wings/ So lonely, so desperate we were/ -The past tense mode misfit here but alas// I say old chap to my peers, yet...” “Yağmurlar da diner moruk/ Gökyüzüne bakmayiveririz bir gün/ Zaten üç damla suyun bir avuç toprakla çarpımından doğdum ben/ Bunun için çamura kestim son günlerde/ Sen hiç Bob Dylan dinledin mi/ Hiç dün gece dinledin mi/ Şarabı rakıyla karıştırıp/ Saatler moruk saatler... ne olmuş saatlere/ kurmayiveririz bir gün/ Ben parmak hesabıyla bir ömür yaşadım/ Yükseklik korkusundan başım hiç dik durmadı/ İğreniyorum kendimden bile bazan/ Dünyadan her zaman// Kaldırıp yakamı inerim gecenin ayıp yerlerine/ Eve geç gelen adamların hüznüyle/ Biz ne kötü yaşadık be moruk/ Bir kuş kanatlarını dürünce rüzgârsız kalmak gibi/ O kadar yalnız, o kadar umutsuzduk/ -Geçmiş

there is neither an affirmation nor condemnation of this generation; even alcoholism (if it can be interpreted as such) is not a negative attribution. What is portrayed is enormous anguish, referring to the psychology of trauma indicated by Ahmet Oktay.<sup>470</sup> The author uses this sentence to explain the historical inclination for nostalgia. The effects of this trauma must be considered from a broad spectrum.

Trauma exposes itself along with an apparent feeling of disgust. The poet's disgust with himself and his world and his attempts to escape from both (i.e. alienation/isolation) are common characteristics of the period's imagist poems. This attitude is easily received as anti-populism culled from the Second New; thus, noted in previous chapters, "Second New" poetry can be acknowledged as a reaction to popular culture. Following 12 September, politically and socially ostracized intellectuals embodied the most suitable foundation for an anti-populist artistic approach. Indeed, this is the foundation of imagist poetry.

The symptoms of such alienation and trauma are observed in socialist poetry, just as in the work of Ahmet Erhan. The fact that he was both a socialist and in conflict with society generated a dilemma. This disposition was a common trait of this generation, observed in all of the period's young poets. Nevertheless, the previous-generation's socialist poets were not as radical as the young generation of the 1980s. As a comparison, two different books by Ahmet Telli - one written before and one after the military coup - are reviewed in the next section. Born in 1958, Ahmet Erhan was a part of the young generation of the 1980s with respect to age, but he wrote his first poems in the mid-70s. He has generally been associated with the 1980s because his poetic themes had more in common with those of this generation.

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zaman kipi gitmedi burda ama neyse// Moruk diyorum artık benimle büyüyenlere..." Ahmet Erhan, *Ölüm Nedeni Bilinmiyor* (Ankara: Bilgi Yayınları, 1998, 2nd edition, 1st edition: 1988), 50.

470 Ahmet Oktay, "Siyaset ve Siyaset Dışı," *İmkânsız Poetika* (Istanbul: Alkım, 2004), 106. A. Oktay indicates certain aspects of transformation and specific events as examples of such trauma, mentioned in previous chapters. Political trauma, political transformation and alienation caused by the development of a collective culture.

## § 7.4 End of Hopes for Revolution: Ahmet Telli

Born in 1946, Ahmet Telli was one of the most remarkable representatives of the young generation of the 1970s'. *Dövüşen Anlatsın* was published in May 1980 just before the military coup and should be interpreted primarily vis-à-vis late 1970s. In this respect, it could be compared with *Su Çürüdü*, dated 1982.

*Dövüşen Anlatsın* was a book of a collective poet-subject.<sup>471</sup> The poems address and make declarations to a presumed audience. The message delivered from “us” to the addressees includes a verb in compound tense. Thus, “us” is positioned at a high rank.<sup>472</sup> The pronoun refers to those people that fought against chauvinism, imperialism and fascism, as can be understood from the chapter entitled “Şiirime Dair” at the beginning of the book.<sup>473</sup>

Thus, an epic atmosphere is created as if making note of history - directly addressing history itself at times and the makers of history at others.<sup>474</sup> The war mentioned is either lost or on the verge of defeat. This is typical of the period; Telli's book may be the early indication of such defeat. Orhan Alkaya, Akif Kurtuluş, and Ali Günvar are among poets of the young generation who

471 “A turn out time has taken us to,” “Bir yol ayrımına getirdi bizi zaman,” (p: 16); “We, those tired kids,” “Biz ki yorgun çocuklardık,” (p: 18); “Amber beads of bitterness in our hands,” “Elimizde acının kehribar tespihi,” (p: 30), “Oh history, open your book of pale pages/ and read the fragmented story of our lives,” “Ey tarih, aç solgun yapraklı defterini/ ve oku hayatımızın parçalanmış hikâyesini,” (p: 31), Ahmet Telli, *Dövüşen Anlatsın* (İstanbul: Everest Yayınları, 2011, 10th edition. 1st edition: 1980).

472 “There we are, any mountain in sorrow/ all that ruined is ours/ become a rain we do for any river dries up,” “hangi dağ efkârlıysa ordayız/ perişan edilen her şey bizimdir/ yağmur oluyoruz hangi ırmak kurusa,” Ibid., 37.

473 “... And/ I say/ if my poetry could be a bullet shot to/ the imperialism, fascism/ chauvinism/ if it could downgraded the pain and cruelty...” “...Ve/ derim ki/ emperyalizme, faşizme/ şovenizme sıkılan bir mermi olabilmişse şiirim/ geriletmişse acıyı ve zulmü...” Ibid., 9.

474 “...Oh poet/ again in fragments you told/ beggared something...” “Ey şair/ yine bölük pörçük anlattın/ yine eksik bıraktın bir şeyleri...” (p: 30); “Oh history, open your book of pale pages/ and record the story of the warriors,” “Ey tarih aç solgun yapraklı defterini/ ve kaydet dövüşenlerin hikâyesini,” (p: 17); “Oh history, open your book of pale pages/ and read the fragmented story of our lives,” “ Ey tarih aç solgun yapraklı defterini/ve oku hayatımızın parçalanmış hikâyesini,” (p: 31). Ahmet Telli, *Dövüşen Anlatsın* (İstanbul: Everest Yayınları, 2011, 10th edition. 1st edition: 1980).

always depicted the state of losing a war. However, Telli's works were about a “resistant fighter subject”; he described defeat as a gallant act from a hero's perspective. The state of “witnessing” has already been encountered in Ahmet Erhan's works; the poetry of Akif Kurtuluş is about “the last person standing,” after all that has happened.

Either a divergence of paths or an act of betrayal is being depicted in the book; however, the war is not yet over.<sup>475</sup> Poems do not reflect a submissive attitude just yet. As expected, they were written in the period before the military coup. There were some Sanctus concepts specific to this period. For instance, love and struggle against oppression were both sacred. In this context, these poems were probably perceived as political by both readers and the state. On the other hand, resistance is manifested as against “oppression” rather than against an individual or opinion.

#### 7.4.1 *The Gallant Intellectual Who Lacks a Personal Life*

A different Ahmet Telli is observed in *Su Çürüdü* published in 1982. The poet was arrested under martial law in 1981 and sentenced in 1983 (under Article 142) for his article “Cigerhun'un Şiiri” published in the newspaper *Kurtuluş*. The fact that 12 September torture and state violence were not widely reflected in the period's poetry is commonly acknowledged, but the book *Su Çürüdü* was an exception. As shown below, the atmosphere evoked by this book is very similar to that of Ahmet Erhan's poems. They are poems of desperation. Both poetry styles differ significantly from Can Yücel's, which portrays rage and caricaturizes the period.

*Su Çürüdü* is the book of an acknowledged defeat. Along with a mentioned defeat, it seems like some others of the past is about to be discovered, which

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475 The book ends with the following verses: “(...) And the most enthusiastic rhythm of this symphony are the march of hope/ As the life would write the history/ and so the days expected/ would be reached as the world had been waiting for// Say/ The tyranny of history/ has only created itself as power// And/ say/ *what's been waited for*/ is not far away.” “Ve bu senfoninin en coşkun ritmi/ sevdanın, umudun yürüyüşleridir/ hayat böyle yazacaktır tarihe/ ve öylece geinecektir/ dünyanın beklediği günlere// De ki/ Tarihin zoru/ kendinden başka güç yaratmamıştır// Ve/ de ki/ beklenen/ uzak değil.” Ibid., 75-77.

they were not felt in their time.<sup>476</sup> This poet-subject's life was always a “fire ground” and he was always “solitary.” So the book starts with verses about the poet-subject. The subject expresses himself in the third person singular.

Such a setup accommodates the waiving of the collective subject and the praise of the poet-subject. In Turkish, when eminent people, especially people in administrative positions make a public statement, they refer to themselves with third person singular pronouns. This puts distance between the person's position and their personality, giving the audience the impression of impartiality. From the audience's perspective, this creates the illusion that they are worthwhile given that they are important enough to be mentioned by such a high-ranking individual. This in turn adds to the significance of the speaker. Such a manner of address - with or without dual communication - is frequently used in political jargon. The fact that the poet talks about himself in the third person singular should be perceived as a mixed sentiment that includes both confusion and a real belief of heroism. The confusion originates from the poet's desire to keep his distance from the heroic subject. In Turkish, hiding behind third person singular is a definite meaningful choice the poet is aware. He uses it regardless since he sincerely believes he is paying on behalf of the people for whom he fights. Given their timidity in terms attributing heroism in the first person singular, period's poets took shelter behind third or second person singular pronouns while writing poems with epic elements. From a psychoanalytic point of view, this situation is a rejection of defeat by giving up or waiving the heroic role - by designating “you or him or her as the hero. In any case, the subject of the poem is the same warrior from the previous book and he is some kind of defeated hero.

In the following passages the passion for adventure and weariness of the monotony of life are emphasized, associating the subject's tendency to become a warrior with his personal adventurism.<sup>477</sup> If read carelessly, this could easily

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476 The book starts with; “He all failed and was defeated.” Ahmet Telli, *Su Çürüdü* (Istanbul: Everest Yayınları, 2012, 11th edition. 1st edition: 1982)

477 Neither an address had they on earth/ nor a shelter than love,” “Ne bir adresleri vardı onların yeryüzünde/ ne de aşktan başka sığınakları,” (p: 26); “Do they fall shot in every siege/ just adventurous they are, never die,” “Vurulup düşseler de her kuşatmada/ serüvencidir onlar ve hiç ölmezler,” (p: 27); “The pains would end whenever he set off,” ”Ne zaman yollara düşse

create the impression of a protagonist like Lucky Luke or Don Quixote. On that note, the poet makes a sudden correction: The hero is neither a tramp nor a daunted warrior. He is just someone with his “own mind.”<sup>478</sup> Even so, he returns to heroic qualities: this person loves in an insane, reckless manner and “battle suits him.” He does not get engaged with anything. He is crazy, and therefore he knows neither the value of his own life nor how to live a personal life.<sup>479</sup>

Although evident, it is worth articulating again: only a crazy man who has no personal life can assume a burden on behalf of others... The person being described is a “warrior,” while Ahmet Telli is an intellectual; therefore, the intellectual who strives on behalf of his society is no longer talking about war or struggle, but his own personal venture. He is alone, as seen at the beginning of the poem. The group, army or whatever was referred to in *Dövüşen Anlatsın* has dissolved in this book, replaced by a gallant knight who roams alone and fights whenever he encounters tyranny. The hero is independent and boundless - or at least, he becomes this from the beginning of this book.

This heroic character – who stands for the intellectual - is very to Enis Batur's intellectual, who is constantly on the edge and speaks his own mind. The difference is that this hero fights for the oppressed, while Batur's intellectuals defend their own truths and fights primarily to sustain their own existence. Without a doubt, Batur's characters who defend the oppressed if it were necessary to do so; nonetheless, they prioritize the battle for their own existence, and therefore reserve their right to remain exclusive.

This was the main difference between the approaches of socialist and individualist imagist poets during the 1980s. The next chapter further explores imagist poetry. Socialists strove on behalf of an audience that they thought they represented. As for individualists, they represented themselves and only themselves. In fact, the socialist poets no longer shared a common habitus with the oppressed that they once defended. The loneliness of Ahmet Erhan is

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biterdi acılar,” (p: 16); “Absolutely must change something every/day,” “Mutlaka bir şeyler değişmeli her/gün,” (p: 17); “They that sentence to be/ a hero in this world,” “Onlar ki bu dünyada/ kahraman olmaya mahkûmdurlar,” (p: 28); A. Telli, *Su Çürüdü*.

478 Ibid., 19.

479 Ibid., 19.

discussed previously. Akif Kurtuluş - who says, "Everybody is gone" - and Orhan Alkaya - searching for ethics - are all alone. How can they speak on behalf of the oppressed, then?

The lost connection to the represented masses, called the "oppressed," also need to be questioned. Ahmet Telli's poet-subject leaves the masses, immediately upon accomplishing his mission. However, as people who were prosecuted for political reasons and exposed to torture; they did not have a solid supportive audience behind them. In other words, even if Telli had not left and had remained a hero, he arguably would not have found any people around him. The constitution prepared by the junta in 1982 was accepted by a staggering 91percent rate of approval and Kenan Evren was elected as the next president of Republic on 17 October 1982. The times were characterized by a new public disposition whereby people tended to report their neighbors to the police. Above all, it was a period of transformed moral values and changed priorities.<sup>480</sup> So, we can conclude that the hero would remain alone even if he did

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480 As noted in previous chapters, ownership of the press had passed to large capital owners and popular culture was rapidly gaining speed. Additionally, popular culture was turning into a culture of consumption, under the influence of capitalism. From the time of Özal onwards, economic policies (especially interventions in foreign trade and tourism) created an unprecedented environment of opportunity. Ultimately, a class of business entrepreneurs evolved who became wealthy in a short period ("köşe dönme" - slang for getting rich - was a common figure of speech at the time). As these success stories were shared in the tabloid press, these businessmen became household names, similar to Bali's assessment. A new idea penetrated the public perception that wealth was a significant indicator of success. Thus, money and all that is associated with it replaced traditional values. When popular culture stopped featuring traditional elements of "good" - like kindness and integrity -, the artistic and philosophical ties between audiences and socialist literature (featuring left-leaning values like sharing and cooperation) were broken.

Just after this period, in a 1992 article published in *Defter*, Ahmet Oktay discussed politics in poetry. Following a similar introduction, he emphasized that the culture of the laboring class had been overtaken and dominated by pornography - in both a narrow sense and a broader sense - meaning the showcasing of commodified objects of passion. Ahmet Oktay, *İmkânsız Poetika* (Istanbul: Alkım, 2003), 90.

not leave. This is the loneliness that led Ahmet Erhan to alcoholism and started a period which Ahmet Oktay called "the big alienation."<sup>481</sup>

A. Oktay implies that these conditions were induced by economy, but society's indifference to intellectuals' legal battles was also to blame. Under such circumstances, intellectuals inevitably became alienated and isolated, even if they persistently produced socialist literature.

Akif Kurtuluş, born in 1959, is renowned for his confrontational political position. Nonetheless, his farewell to his audience should not be overlooked. With his farewell, Kurtuluş was enunciated what Ahmet Telli could not. His tone included common heroic qualities and he was spoke from a higher position on behalf of his people.<sup>482</sup> As acknowledged, Ahmet Telli left upon the completion of his mission, while Ahmet Erhan took refuge on the Mediterra-

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481 A. Oktay distinguishes the severe, diffusive disintegration among laborers and the intelligentsia, associating alienation with capitalism. In a period where even the individual is commodified, poets would either have to accept commodification or find ways to escape, including suicide. As either natural or compulsory act to adapt to conditions, the acceptance by both left and right-leaning society of this situation deepens this depression. A.O, *İmkânsız Poetika*, 97-103.

482 According to Ali Özgür Özkarcı A. Kurtuluş preferred a kind of poetry that confessed his weaknesses, differing from the socialists of his generation. He distinguished himself by his intrinsic reckoning while maintaining support of the left movement and a dissident position against the junta. (P: 53). Of course, remaining devoted to the left at that time was a success indeed and striving to change things along the way required preservation of ties with the audience. Parallel with Özkarcı's observation, the time frames in Kurtuluş's poems embody a feeling of loneliness - except for the past. (P: 58). I do not agree with Özkarcı's interpretation of the "crowd" as the left wing base, since his poems are not limited in that way, he was eager to represent the *people* as well. Ali Özgür Özkarcı, "Akif Kurtuluş: Artık Vicdaniyla Başbaşa", *Cetvelle Çizilmiş Dağınıklık* (Istanbul: 160. Kilometre, 2014). Eventually, Kurtuluş was a king who had bid farewell to his subjects: "For the last time I watched by the top of a well/ my subjects, with hesitate to throw a stone in it/ to save the image on." "Son kez tebamı seyrettim bir kuyunun ağzında/ görüntüsünü bozmamak için suya taş atmaktan korkan tebamı." The kingly poet-subject will live at the bottom of a well from now on, meaning that he will retreat underground... This is really an abandonment... Akif Kurtuluş, *Herkes Gitmiş* (Istanbul: Yasa-kmeyve, 2009), 60.



nean only to wallow in alcohol. In these examples of socialist poets, they assume the role of hero, in line with Orhan Alkaya's assertion that his generation was eager to become everything at once.<sup>483</sup>

During the following period, socialist poetry lost readers, relative to other genres. The loss to this popular genre was due to the poets' persistence to be the spokespeople for their audience. These poets assumed they knew this audience well, but ignored the fact that their ties had been severed by the social transformations. Also, negative characteristics of sloganism and monotony were attributed to socialist poetry. As socialist poets became more and more disconnected from public language and the contemporary agenda - both of which used to be the main resources of for the poetry - they ran out of things to write about. Of course, they must have known about current events, but they were nonetheless contemporary enough to come up with the next, improved poetic expression of socialism.

#### 7.4.2 *First Photographs of Torture and Prison*

Torture was first tackled in Turkish poetry in 1982 in Ahmet Telli's "Veba." In the first stanza of the first part, called "Acıya Alışılmaz," torture was variously connoted,<sup>484</sup> while in the second stanza it was described in a generic fashion.<sup>485</sup>

483 Orhan Alkaya, "Şiir Yazmak, Bana Anlaştığımızı Zannettiğimiz 'Kelime'nin ve 'Sentaks'ın Aldatıcı Cazibesiyile Başa Çıkabilmek İçin Gerekli Direnci Öğretti," interview: Gülce Başer, *Yasakmeyve*, 67 (May-April 2014): 8-17.

484 "The scream cuts the night whichever/ the stretched abdomen at this hour/ the pain's is over, exhausted there/ full naked is this page of the history," "Hangi çığlık bir çığ gibi yarıyorsa/ gecenin gerilmiş karnını bu saatte/ acı tükenip bitmiştir orada artık/ çırılçıplaktır tarihin bu sayfası," A. Telli, *Su Çürüdü*, 35. The words çığlık (scream), gerilmiş karın (stretched abdomen), acı (pain), çırılçıplaklık (nakedness) and tükenme (exhaustion) symbolize acts of torture in which victims are hung naked (stretched abdomen) in order to inflict more pain. The torture victim realizes one becomes numb to pain after a point; the moment defined as the "exhaustion of pain".

485 "These strains, as a gift of physics/ as felts my sex organ/ I shout that I'm a human/ and is cracked the stretched strain of forehead the most," "Fiziğin armağan ettiği bu teller/ keçeştirirken cinsel organımı/ haykırıyorum insan olduğumu/ ve çatlatıyor alnımın en gergin teli." Ibid., 35, "so a scream is the way that a man goes/ struggling at the edge of the

The reason the poet shared his experience was the hope that one day “all this pain [would] be accounted for.”

This poem does not imply heroism. The protagonist went through many battles, saw so much pain, but could not hold back his screams caused by bare wire and was left in desperation. The degree of pain encompassed by the poem is most intense in the desperation depicted by these two verses.<sup>486</sup>

The rest of the poem was set “outside.” The first impression of the poet was that the city was “getting older.” Of course, the poet himself had gotten older. His senses comprehended the decadent appearance of the city in, which was typical of the period. Its “mouth” and “tongue” “smelled like death” and “every piece of it” “pump(ed) into” an “adolescent boy” like a “hard-bitten hooker.” It is intriguing that the femme fatale is portrayed. Following this description of the tempting nature of the city, a furious leer is directed at intellectuals and at poets specifically.<sup>487</sup> Certainly, life still went on, while the subject was in prison and continued upon his release. The poet subject used to be a part of it before his imprisonment; however, he would no longer be able to join in after through what he had been. His words “cowardice and incompetence” refer to his rage toward his former self now that he had reached a new level of perception.

Considering the psychology of someone who has just been freed from imprisonment and that the period's interrogation rooms were machines of murder, seeing obituaries and pornographic movie posters side-by-side was a trauma for the poet. The 12 September torture was largely sexual-oriented: victims were fully stripped, their genitalia were electrocuted and they were raped. Interrogations were implemented with sexual torment and such acts were often publicly showcased. Pornographic movies are also a showcase of sexuality. In short, the poet is re-living his trauma every minute of his life. While not

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strains naked,” “ne ki çıplak tellerin ucunda çırpınan/ bir çığlıktır insanın katettiği yol.” Ibid, 36.

486 “So a scream is the way that a man goes/ struggling at the edge of the strains naked,” “ne ki çıplak tellerin ucunda çırpınan/ bir çığlıktır insanın katettiği yol,” Ibid, 36.

487 “Coward poets,” “Korkak şairler,” “Untalented authors” are backing each other/ as the death was all around the slums,” “Yeteneksiz yazar çizer takımı” koltuklayıp duruyorlar birbirlerini/ ölüm kol gezerken varoşlarda.” Ibid, 38.

exactly a woman, the city's landscape was attributed with femininity. The city is a hooker, journalists look like harlots with "too much make-up," and an alcoholic homosexual undergoes a face-lift and remains indifferent to death. A "rape victim" was then "[covers] his or her face with trembling hands," in the place that used to host public meetings.<sup>488</sup> Since time cannot be reversed, the public meeting place is probably as desperate as the poet is.

In the fifth poem, the city is personified as a sphinx. It is the underlying reason for ending friendships and burned books.<sup>489</sup> The portrayal of the city in such dreadful - even terrifying - manner is due to the fact that the poet refers to his city of residence, the capital city of Ankara. In the meantime, martial law was felt and experienced more intensely in urban compared to rural areas. Command headquarters were generally located in large cities. Higher populations necessitated more squads to patrol the city. Cities that were centers of communication and economy were more prone to become areas where ruling powers were demonstrated. As a matter of fact, Ahmet Telli's poems generally involve rural/urban dialectics.<sup>490</sup>

In the seventh poem, the city again became the background of a decadent picture. In a city that was "Killed" - "Executed by gunfire," number of suicides, hookers and smugglers was going up. Fraudulent bankruptcies, stock market tricks and Russian roulette had become common and a spring would not come for this reason.<sup>491</sup> However, the following passage mentions that eventually, spring always comes.<sup>492</sup> The rest of the poem continues in anticipation of

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488 "Kirli Su." Ibid, 38-39.

489 "Sfenks." Ibid, 42-43. The sphinx is the spirit that confiscates the body of the city. Thus, the city is killing, degenerating and demolishing what it encapsulates. The poem starts with "Bir sfenksten söz ediliyor durmadan" (a sphinx is mentioned all the time) and continues with "salyalarını akıtarak soluyan bu kentin" (this slobbering breathing city). This is a metaphor of the atmosphere of the junta and martial law that in Ankara.

490 According to Asuman Susam, Telli uses cities to show malignance and the rural to depict decency/beauty. Asuman Susam, *Yangın Yılları'ndan Nida'ya Ahmet Telli Şiiri* (Istanbul: Everest Yayınları, 2010), 13. I think Telli sees the rural as a space where the struggles take place fairly: the city is the compulsory destination after defeat. Poems of defeat pass in the urban city, and he envisions the city as the embodiment of capitalism.

491 "Bu Kent Öldürüldü Diyorlar," A.Telli, *Su Çürüdü*, 46-47.

492 "Yeniden Yaşanacaktır," ibid., 48-49.

spring and ends with a definite hope: “That means the spring to this city /will come in boomingly, boy.”<sup>493</sup>

Considering what has been said about the city, it becomes evident that junta-governed Ankara cannot deliver the urban feeling conveyed by the poet. This city is either sphinxified or suicidal - either murdered or becomes a prostitute. Considering that prostitution refers to selling-out and that the junta was the absolute ruler of the period, the “city” represents not only the junta, police, and ruling power, but also those who choose to be dependent on it. Telli generally talks about an isolated place when he talks about the rural the city should also be perceived as the opposite - the place where people reside. In other words, the poet’s anger is in fact at people who reside there. Authors and poets (even if they are incompetent) have a name; nonetheless, the city-dwellers for he fought and endured torture are not even mentioned. They either committed suicide, were murdered or became prostitutes.<sup>494</sup>

Again, society and intellectuals were mutually alienated from one another. The delusion of socialist literature was that the movement’s poets assumed they still had the right to speak on behalf of the public.

The prose poem “Su Çürüdü,” which starts with “I’ve been locked in a closet for 72 days” derives its power from its genuineness. It talks about being imprisoned for 72 days. “I don’t know anything, other than my name” is repeated at the end of each page, implying the context of an interrogation. He repeats this line during interrogations to emphasize his resistance to being an informant and to depict the amnesia caused by the injuries inflicted in a vicious torture session.<sup>495</sup>

The poem was set in a dark ambiance; the prisoner’s cell had probably been dim. Since he is blindfolded, the interrogation room is completely dark, as

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493 “Demek ki bu kente bahar/ gürül gürül gelecek oğul.” “Beklenen,” *ibid.*, 56.

494 As stated, the option of suicide is also mentioned by A. Oktay.

495 “I destroyed everything in my mind. Burned with an electrical appliance, scratched with a razor blade...” “Bütün belleğimdekileri yok ettim. Elektrikli bir aygıtlı yaktım, jiletle kazıdım.. .” “Su Çürüdü,” *ibid.*, 69.

well. The state of losing human feelings is portrayed with striking transparency. The poet senses that his body is decaying.<sup>496</sup> Indeed, what is really decaying is the water that he has been given in a milk bottle to be cautiously consumed over seventy-two days. Even water loses its essence, it loses its taste and decays.

This poem, which is written in first person singular, is a testimony of the torture endured by the poet vividly reflected through impressionistic language. With his next book, the poet shifted to the poet-subject of a “leading prophet” who is distinguished for his wisdom, an oft-used poet-subject in socialist poetry in the 1990s. Hence, Telli would no longer scrutinize state violence and would crawl back to his sorrowful corner.

Despite this, he is always recalled as a socialist poet. *Su Çürüdü* is definitely not a book about revolutionary pursuits or leftist discourse. Interestingly, the text is stripped of ideology and only a perplexed warrior is left behind. There is no confrontation like in Akif Kurtuluş's book. The rest of the book is full of impressions of prison life, from where the poet “gazes upon others” with affectionate glance. He was furious as he left the prison, angry at the city and its poets and writers. “City” refers to more than the governing junta including the people living in it for whom he used to speak, nonetheless, in this poem society is an abstract concept that rarely comes up.<sup>497</sup>

## § 7.5 Poems of Imprisonment

The Akademi Kitabevi Award was granted to Nevzat Çelik in 1984 for *Şafak Türküsü* and to Emirhan Oğuz<sup>498</sup> in 1987 for *Ateş Hırsızları Söylencesi*. Both

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496 The smell of a decaying body was the color of the walls.../ I don't know anything other than my name.” “Çürüyen bir beden kokusu duvarların rengi.../ Adımdan gayrısını bilmiyorum.” Ibid., 71.

497 To this day, Ahmet Telli's books maintains the highest press volumes. In terms of audience, he lost fewer readers compared to other socialist poets. Nowadays, political powers no longer prosecute poets or make political allegations over poetry at the same time.

498 A young poet of the 1980s, whose reputation is based on only a single book after which he did not publish any other book for almost thirty years. He was born in 1958 and was in prison for years.

poets had been in prison for a long time as political convicts. In this sense, prison poems were appreciated by the jury of this award.

Ahmet Kaya, a protest musician, set Nevzat Çelik's poems in *Şafak Türküsü* to music and launched the album called "*Şafak Türküsü*" in 1986, to wide acclaim. Meanwhile, Çelik also received considerable recognition through this album. He was in the penitentiary from 1981 to 1987 and even stood trial with a potential death penalty.

Çelik and Oğuz were renowned poets, and their poems written in prison were regarded as socialist, without an exception. The poem "Ateş Hırsızları Söylencesi," which occupies most of the book, mythologizes the revolution and the revolutionary process. From the beginning, reader is overtaken by a feeling of sorrow, since this, too, is a poem of defeat.<sup>499</sup> Prison, tortures, deaths, near-death experiences in the interrogation room, and battles of revolution and resistance against tyranny worldwide (including Palestine) were among the themes of this epic poetry. Other issues tackled included the death of a friend, envisioning a city that is now far away, prison life and the poet's state of mind.<sup>500</sup> The poet roams the city streets and dwells among society like a

499 "I went to steal the fire from Prometheus's wrists chained to the mountains/ .../ a chained splitting the Gods' lightning with my feeble hands// I went to steal the fire/ and I was defeated tidying my flags as I withdraw through the roads of regress," "ateşi çalmaya gittim promete'nin dağlara zincirli bileklerinden/ .../ ateşi çalmaya gittim tanrıların yıldırımlarını çelimsiz ellerimle yararak// ateşi çalmaya gittim/ ve yenildim ricat yollarından geri çekiliyorum bayraklarımı toplayarak," Emirhan Oğuz, *Ateş Hırsızları Söylencesi* (Istanbul: Cem Yayınevi, 1988), 43.

500 "If you don't know/ Tellme someone who knows/ said the man," "Sen bilmiyorsan/ bilen birini söyle/ dedi adam," p: 29, "I insisted along long nights behind a darkening curtain long an iron hanger and a piece of copper string," "diretmişim uzun geceler bir karartma perdesinin ardında demiraskı ve bakırtel," p: 53, "it's a tale of the age I sometimes forgot my appearance in it," "bir çağ masalı buzaman zaman içinde eşkalimi unuttum," p: 65, "you waited by the morgue along purple mornings," "mor sabahlar boyu beklediniz morg önlerinde," p: 85, "the night was milked through the plunger of the moonlight silently/ died the first fire stealer," "ayışığının bakracından usulca sağılıyordu gece/ öldü ilk ateş hırsızı," p: 85, "his groins passing through his eyes burnt in a magma of electricity," "kasıkları bir cereyan mağmasında yanarak geçiyorlar gözlerinden," p: 90, "after that in a deck of Bosphorus boat/ is a pain to think of the moment we smoked," "bir boğaz vapurunun güvertesinde ardından/ ağırdır, sigara içtiğimiz anı düşlemek," p: 111. E. Oğuz, *Ateş Hırsızları Söylencesi*.

ghost. Prometheus is enchained and fire is stolen from him. This expression highlights the essence of the book: the lost struggle is in fact a struggle against enchainment. The book also encompasses the theme of “collective welfare.”

Çelik's *Şafak Türküsü* is truly the poetry of defeat. The distinguishing characteristic is its mythicizing or heroicizing of the deceased. There is a distinct sense of “them” in Çelik's book and “they” are the ones who died while fighting the revolutionary battle.<sup>501</sup> Although the actions of these people are referred to in the simple present tense, the poem proposes that it is time that the flag is taken over from “them,” therefore “they” must be dead.<sup>502</sup> Ultimately, the poet-subject roams the city and especially its poorer districts like a ghost, just as in *Ateş Hırsızları*.<sup>503</sup>

The book is a requiem for the deceased and a medium to muster the courage to die by execution. Secrets were kept all along, so torture and death are, hence, a kind of victory. The protagonist bids farewell to his mother and walks towards death without ignoring the grief of untimely death. Thus, the certain hope of revolution is preserved throughout the poem.<sup>504</sup>

501 “Only they drain the sun from their chins/within barricades/ only they bounce their lives/naked in moonlight/ they bath without reservation/ Friends to their death each.” “çenelerinden bir onlar akıtır güneşi/ barikattan barikata/ bir onlar sektirir canını/ ayışığında çıplak/ çekincesiz yıkanır/ Ölümüne dost her biri.” p: 27. Reference indicating these people were deceased, Nevzat Çelik, *Şafak Türküsü* (Istanbul: Alan Yayıncılık, 1987, 7th edition. 1st edition: 1984).

502 “They are that/ ran to the front of sun/ before the blue eyed girl/ was not hung on the branch of / an olive tree/ were the flags to the peace// take the flag/ take the fight/ RUN,” “onlar ki/ bu yoldan/ mavi gözlü kız/ zeytin dalına asılmadan/ güneşin alnacına koştular/ barışa bayrak oldular// bayrağı al/ kavgayı al/ KOŞ,” ibid., 19.

503 “A blue whistle in my lips/ stars by my wither/ bullet burns on my back/ I'm stepping along the streets of gültepe,” “ağzımda mavi bir ıslık/ omuz başımda yıldızlar/ sırtımda kurşun yanıkları/ gültepe sokaklarını adımlıyorum,” p: 11, “my death warrant in one hand/ my passion in the other/ I walked along/ may hands clamped/ sometime around midnight,” “bir elimde ölüm fermanım/ bir elimde sevdam/ birbirine kenetleyip ellerimi/ yürüdüm/ gecenin bir vaktidir,” p: 13, “keep my nights warm/ I will come off from under-snows,” “sıcak saklayın gecelerimi/ karlar altından çıkıp geleceğim,” ibid., p: 16.

504 “the young girl laid on the table/ she's resisting/ to give off her secret,” “genç bir kız masada serili/ direniyor/ vermiyor gizini,” p: 37, “rose drops are the corps/ if you say rose pain/ they leave to the life/ come on/ take over the pain,” “ölenler gül damlası/ ağrısı/ bırakırlar yaşama/

These prison poems received diverse responses from different audiences. For instance, in his prologue to Nevzat Çelik's book, Can Yücel drew attention to the poem's capacity to "historicize time," praising both the poems and the poet's heart (which he defined as "an instrument's tight string"). By defining them as "war of honor, even if it ends with defeat," he referred to the construction of the poems atop of a conception of "struggle," rather than aesthetic pursuits. Or maybe Yücel was conveying a mild criticism about this debut without offending the poet, whose poetry was promising. In any case, it is evident that Yücel supported the poetry, describing Çelik as "a refined poet," in the prologue.<sup>505</sup>

These poems were referred as "Jailhouse Poems" at the time. They became the focus of the criticism of a faction that favored modernist, imaginist poetry created by young poets. Aside from this faction, another critic found the poetry arabesque and weak. These were socialist poets who believed that the left was in need of self-critique vis-à-vis its current position. These critics found

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diyorsan/ durma yüklen ağrısı," p: 39, "lending their shirts to the win red red/ blowing they are/ not walking," "al al gömleklerini vererek rüzgâra/ yürümüyor/ esiyorlar," p: 40, "I was for the bullets," "kurşunlara göreydim," p: 45, "welcome death," "hoş geldim ölüm," p: 50, "don't call me from here mama/ don't ask me by these doors/ stars dropped over your hair/ don't pick them up mama/ don't cry/ (...) / I missed the death mama/ within a passion to live," "beni burada arama anne/ kapıda adımı sorma/ saçlarına yıldız düşmüş/ koparma anne/ ağlama/ (...) / ölümü özledim anne/ yaşamak isterken delice," p: 52, "a land they'd bring of flowers/ to lean their heads to your knees/ keep your knee ready mama/ to that wonderful day," "çiçekler içinde bir ülke getirirler/ başlarını koymak için yorgun dizine/ sen hazır tut dizini anne/ o mükemmel güne," *ibid.*, 67.

505 "As that string tings, as if planned before, not a poem but a war begins. A war of honor, even if the result is a defeat..." From this expression, I deduce that having such style - even in his naive poems - is honorary. Since this specification is made with the word "war," it may also mean that some of his poems were naive and others were not. Nonetheless, some people argue that the criticism in the first book emphasizes a revolutionary battle that is already lost and that there are no specifications emphasizing the poem's quality. I quote this sentence as a whole, so the readers can determine the meaning at their own discretion. Can Yücel, "Tamburanın Teli," *Şafak Türküsü*, written by: Nevzat Çelik (Istanbul: AlanYayıncılık, 1987, 7th edition. 1st edition: 1984), 5-6.



the poems mediocre and asserted that their popularity arouse from public compassion evoked by the fact that they were written in a penitentiary cell.<sup>506</sup>

“Jailhouse Poems” were controversial in the debate between imagist-individualist approach and the socialist movement. Indeed, they were one of the main areas of debate for these two communities. They were deemed good poems by Can Yücel and Vedat Günyol; nonetheless, the younger generation found them weak. On the other hand, these young poets had mostly never experienced imprisonment. Seven editions of Nevzat Çelik's book were published in just a few years, while Haydar Ergülen would wait until the 1990s. In

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506 There are two articles concerning the popularity of jailhouse poems and their impact on other poets. The first is by Halil İbrahim Özcan, one of period's young poets, published in *Edebiyat Dostları* journal dated May 1988 and republished in his anthology of jailhouse poems written from 1980 to 1990. He considers these poems and the reputation they achieved by them as "exploitation." In the retrospective work, Nevzat Çelik and Emirhan Oğuz are mentioned. Özcan draws attention to opinions that “Nevzat Çelik had outgrown Ahmed Arif and was approximating Nâzım Hikmet,” while he personally argued that Nevzat Çelik's works poems were but a loaded “motherly” literature and that he was a lousy copycat. His exact words were: “His statement in an interview that 'it was my privilege to be on trial for execution.' paves the way for such appraisals. The 'privilege' he mentioned was awarded in the environment where jail houses became a focus of resistance to the backwardism and silencing of democratic powers.” Halil İbrahim Özcan, “Cezaevi Ürünleri,” *Edebiyat Dostları*, 13: 14. In our interview, Özcan also stated that he was prosecuted because this book included poems in Kurdish. He had not even received the copyright of the book. In his article dated 1992, Metin Celal, another young poet of the period, stated: “As a society, we have a pity on and treat with affection someone who is solitary, poor, disabled... I think that numerous good-bad characteristics that make the prison-originated poem anonymous can be epitomized in Nevzat Çelik's poetry. He writes his poem without abstracting. He attaches importance not word to saving words but to extravagance. He likes to be influenced and to write like famous poets...” These statements are devastating criticisms. While justifying this review, Celâl politely explained why he felt it was necessary: “Although he believes himself a poet, he is aware of the peculiarity that his works rarely featured in the literary journals and his books are not mentioned in the annual appraisals.” Metin Celâl, “Şiir Okulu Olarak Hapishaneler,” *Sombahar* (July-August, 1992). Although these poems were easily compiled into books to become popular rapidly, they were deemed aesthetically poor in, according to M. Celâl. That is why they were not promoted or published in journals. This article was published 1992 and the journal was issued by Orhan Kahyaoğlu, another individualist, young poet of the 1980s. Assuming that M. Celâl's facts about the annual evaluations in the 1990s are accurate, the literary power centers were in favor of individualism.

other words, jailhouse poems yielded a significant audience and volume of sales. It took time to acquire a solid base of readers for the young imagist poets. As the next chapter reveals in detail, the politics and dissidence of the period's abstract, imagist poetry were neither recognized by the public nor noted by the ruling power.

## § 7.6 Poetry and the Identity Problematic of the Intellectual in the 1980s

Jailhouse poems are generally evaluated in the context of socialist literature. Nonetheless, these poems lacked an intellectual perspective just like other examples of the period's socialist literature. The experiences related in these poems were generally individual and the perceptions were subjective. Only a few connections linked these poems to the socialist movement. One of them was simply to witness the era - to record and reflect the current situation (of prison and torture). Also, the notion that pain was endured for the sake of everybody else is evoked by the end of Nevzat Çelik's poem "Şafak Türküsü," when a mother is asked to embrace all revolutionaries. The third connection was the poetry's clear, lucid language and metaphors.

But we cannot speak of political criticism. While one justification is the poet's fear of being prosecuted, being prosecuted at the time did not exactly require the enunciation of political criticism. One of the period's targeted books *Trabzonlu Delikanlı* includes neither "revolutionary targets" nor "state criticism."<sup>507</sup> Its criticism is actually directed against the "rich man who exploits," - referring to the middlemen (brokers) or capital holders -, which could be a common opinion. When considered in this context, Can Yücel's

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507 Miraç's three books -*Trabzonlu Delikanlı*, *Gül Ekmek* and *Taliplerin Ağıtı* - were prohibited. Yücel Kayıran assumes that the reason was the poem "Nurhak" in the book *Taliplerin Ağıtı*, due to the following verses: "...gendarme gendarme/ regurgitated death/ by a sweeping fire/how many medals/ did you receive on your chest/ to boast/ how many medals have you on?..." "...taratmasından/ölüm kusturan/ jandarma jandarma/ kaç ödül aldın/ göğsüne övünmeye/ kaç nişan taktın..." "12 Eylül: Türk Şiirinde Bir Moment," *Birikim*, 198 (October-2005). When Miraç received the TDK award for his book *Trabzonlu Delikanlı*, he incurred the wrath of the Chief of Army's wrath. Evren pointed to Miraç as a target on TRT (national television channel).

*Rengâhenk* is a metaphorical protest: these poems' reaction against the ruling power is resistance.

Hence, the martial power decided what was “political” in poetry based on their assessment of the poet. Ataoğlu Behramoğlu was compelled to live abroad for most of the 1980s, through his two banned books actually did not include any direct criticism. At the same time, the socialist poetry started hiding political positions behind metaphors. Ultimately, socialist poetry of the 1980s lost its connection with the social realist approach that characterized that of Nâzım Hikmet.

This socialist poetry reflected poet-subject's experiences. Nevertheless, to claim that it excluded the idea of collective welfare or ignored intellectual's role renders it meaningless to describe the new disposition as socialist poetry. In fact, the typical qualities of socialist poetry in this decade, which are to mythologize the poet-subject and bear witness to the era, were a means of adapting the intellectual-subject and “collective welfare” to the period's conditions.

## § 7.7 The Heroic Persona

Indeed, mythology that was involved in poetry in the 1980s was reasoned with the poet's will to integrate his knowledge into the poems.<sup>508</sup> And, it was explained within the period's typical quality of intellectualism. Melih Cevdet published *Kolları Bağlı Odysseus* in 1962, but Odysseus was a tale of the search for wisdom rather than a tale of heroism.

Prometheus and mythological characters that appear in socialist poetry in the 1980s were definitely heroes. Also, kings and brave knights were used in place of mythological heroes, as this chapter reveals. These evoke the fights of the revolution in the 1970s by metaphors and the problematic of victory and defeat. May be, *Dövüşen Anlatsın* had not influenced the young generation,

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508 In his meticulous study, Ahmet Oktay does not particularly emphasize a disposition for mythology. He mentions intertextuality and the ancient, old lexicography, and archaism that may indicate such a predilection. He associates such a disposition to intellectualism. Nevertheless, I argue this intertextuality is not predicated on a simple, modest public character; it is clearly based on a leader or hero like Prometheus. A. Oktay, “1980 Sonrasında Şiirimiz,” *İmkânsız Poetika* (Istanbul: Alkım, 2004), 71-89.

being a poem of the 1970s. But, poets interfered with leftist movements were intimidated by the military coup and started to tell heroic stories.<sup>509</sup>

In the atmosphere of the 1970s', people who defined themselves as "intellectual" were all part of some political activist group or another, particularly if they were leftist. Thus, all young and middle-aged poets were engaged in some political organization on 11 September 1980. Faith in leftist movements progressively weakened after the massacre on Mayday of 1977 demonstrating that the defeat obviously started long before the military coup.

Secondly, intellectuals and masses severed the ties with each other after the 12 September coup, as mentioned in the previous chapter. During this period, the masses did not stand behind intellectuals who were prosecuted, politically oppressed, fired from their jobs and discredited. Hence, intellectuals became completely isolated. The poet-subject did not have the potential to become a hero through his identity as a poet, however, the intellectual who suffered the torture of the ruling power and paid a price for the sake of the whole of the society for which he fought. Such situation explains the hero's solitude, as well.<sup>510</sup>

Proclaiming or portraying the intellectual as a hero was a defense mechanism against the period's trauma.<sup>511</sup> The war had definitively ended with de-

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509 In addition to the others, two verses from Orhan Alkaya; "Here Sparta wins again, not Spartacus/ the Gods of growing modes: us," "Spartaküs değil işte yine Sparta kazandı/ biz büyüyen kiplerin tanrıları" and "we were defeated again friend! They won," "gene yenildik muhip! onlar kazandı," Orhan Alkaya, "Yenilmişler için birinci parça," *Yenilgiler Tarihi Cilt 1* (Istanbul: Everest Yayınları, 2011, third edition. First edition: 1994), 4-9.

510 I will not emphasize it again since there are many citations throughout the chapter that illustrate the characterization of the "solitary hero."

511 According to Oğuz Cebeci, a completely unconscious or subconscious train of thought can be part of the poetry-writing process; they structure a distinctive, metaphoric affiliation system in terms of associating different events and situations. When this state of mind kicks in, it enables the individual to escape the tension and exhaustion of the outside world. (P: 312). These metaphors are a "solid" representation of the unconscious or subconscious fantasy world. It is a part of both artistic works and daydreaming. (P: 344). The metaphor's function

feat; hence, the leftist movement lost its prestige and credibility, and intellectuals lost their previous status. But, ultimately, the battle was fought and the poet-subject was behind it. He was a hero, because he fought this battle for the sake of collective welfare, rather than for himself. The poet-subject defended this hero not only against the junta regime, but also against the society for whom he sacrificed himself in the previous period. This society ignored the damage caused by junta described in, say, Akif Kurtuluş's poems.<sup>512</sup>

## § 7.8 The Socialist Poetry of the 1980s

In fact, the boundaries between social realism and imagism were dissolving. Poets k. İskender, Murathan Mungan and Haydar Ergülen cannot be regarded as socialists; nonetheless, their poetry bears witness to the era. Socialist poetry started to poeticize first person singular experiences and impressions and this was an irreversible move. For example, Adnan Özer wrote a type of poem in which he admitted his rural roots, though his poems cannot be defined as exactly socialist. What renders a poem socialist is reduced to the issue of whether it is comprehensible from this perspective.

In the second half of the 1980s, relatively comprehensible metaphors and images were perceived as socialist vis-à-vis an overly abstract, individualistic disposition. Optimism, hope for tomorrow, collective welfare, and even the collective subject, which used to be the distinctive qualities of socialist literature, no longer existed. The only remaining characteristic was the poet's tendency to speak on behalf of the society. However, the fact that poet-subject became an individual was an obstacle for this representation.

The main source of the problem that emerged was social transformation. The demolition of collective ties via the junta's practices led to a society that

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to represent the subconscious is important for preserving the balance of the inner world. Metaphor eliminates tension by a mechanism of relocating or replacement. (P: 348). Oğuz Cebeci, *Metafor ve Şiir Dilinin Yapısal Özellikleri* (Istanbul: İthaki Yayınları, 2013).

512 “For the last time I watched by the top of a well/ my subjects, with hesitate to throw a stone in it/ to save the image on,” “Son kez tebamı seyrettim bir kuyunun ağzında/ görüntüsünü bozmamak için suya taş atmaktan korkan tebamı,” Akif Kurtuluş, *Herkes Gitmiş*, Toplu Şiirler (Istanbul:Yasakmeyve: 2009), 60.

was forced to become individualistic; a simultaneous economic transformation induced by measures to integrate with a global capitalist market also contributed. Thus, the poet became an individual with individualistic features, espousing individual themes such as a laborer in the business market, a person with Turkish or Kurdish ethnicity, a producer of art, and a woman or man as a heterosexual or homosexual. He lived in an individual world with its own components and economy. Secondly, the society or masses on behalf of which poets spoke abandoned them at the time of the junta. For one thing, the crowds supported the junta which in turn held books against their authors as evidence of offenses, discrediting them. Many intellectuals justified the overwhelming approval of the 1982 Constitutions either as fear or as a strategy to manipulate the junta into fulfilling public will to hand governance over to civilian rule. However, the military coup was legitimated by the masses, which even cooperated with the junta. Along with the liberal economy, intellectual products lost their audience, demand for popular culture increased, and the discourse of popular culture and literature diverged in terms of theme and content. Hence, poets lost the audience that had conferred on them the role of the intellectuals.

Bearing witness to the era and contemporaneous politics are among typical qualities of social realist literature throughout the Republic, which always criticized and sometimes protested breaking events. But a break in the ties between the audience and poets during the 1980s triggered the introversion of socialist poetry. Moreover, the discourses of socialist literature and popular culture were separated. They became disconnected as common values became scarcer. A result of this introversion and avoidance of open criticism was a failure to generate an effective style of poetry that could broadly tackle pain and to make associations with others' pain. This failure was similar to that Edward Said suggested for Western literature circa 1968. In other words, the language of an effective, dissident poetry or attitude could not be generated.

As a result, the junta implemented propaganda against intellectuals. It imposed an authoritarian, traditionalist interpretation of Kemalism grounded on religiousness which had been understood as antithetical of positivism in Turkey since the time of the Tanzimat.<sup>513</sup> In fact, what was happening in Turkey

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513 The issue of religiousness is discussed in a more detailed way in the review of identities.

had already been experienced in the West in the 1960s. Said emphasizes that in an environment of mass media and gigantic media corporations, intellectuals had to integrate with popular culture.<sup>514</sup> According to him, intellectual should bear witness to this era and simultaneously capture a feeling of calm robbery in terms of a common experience.

This specific situation was not easy. Intellectual identity was at stake. Aside from opposition to junta, martial law and state of emergency rules that were enforced regionally until the 1990s, a group from within the left movement demanded that the left should turn inwards and make self-criticism.

At this moment, a new socialist poetry emerged that attracted public attention. After the release of Ahmet Kaya's album, Nevzat Çelik gained a reputation and a solid reader base before being released from prison. Çelik was standing trial with the death penalty on the line as he published Şafak Türküsü. His poet-subject resisted the junta with an optimistic attitude, accepted death as a possibility, and bid farewell to his mother. With this acknowledgement, death could not be perceived as defeat. A hope that "good days" would come would endure. 650 thousand people were subjected to prosecution. If these people each deeply impacted ten people, this amounts to 6.5 million people. This book shared the language of a process experienced by 6.5 million people, serving them all.

Meanwhile, attempts at self-criticism by Ahmet Erhan and Akif Kurtuluş (in *Yalan Şiirler*'s "Tören Provası" which starts with "hiding the broken arm in the sleeve")<sup>515</sup> found some acclaim among certain groups, though never became as popular as Nevzat Çelik.<sup>516</sup> Besides, criticism by socialist poets of the

514 Edward Said, *Entelektüel* (Istanbul: Ayrıntı Yayınları, 2011), 51, 70. Said, in fact, mentions universalizing the pain. I limit the scope to Turkey by considering there.

515 Kurtuluş's first book tells about the poet-subject's effort to establish an individual identity after another defeat by thinking about lost friends, his youth and childhood, and his body parts like his forehead, hand, and neck. Gülce Başer, "The Poetry of Self Definition", unpublished master's thesis, Boğaziçi University Atatürk Institute, 2011.

516 The proverb "don't let it out of this room" means to conceal self-criticism or resentments and hostilities within a family or group from outsiders. Kurtuluş tells about guilt, assuming responsibility, and paying the penalty: "I was behind windows in every shower/ guilty I am, as the life waiting for the rain to stop/.../ I would not know how my heart would pass to blacked out nights this much," "Patlayan her sağanakta camların arkasında kaldım/ suçluyum

“prison poems” was published in *Edebiyat Dostları*, of which Kurtuluş was a major figure. This journal sought to improve the leftist movement by remaining left wing and conducting self-criticism.

Ahmet Telli, Şükrü Erbaş and Nevzat Çelik were socialist poets who undertook the reflection of pain, and social transformation. They had their own criticism of the socialist poets eager to bring self-criticism to the left. For them, criticizing the left wing in a period when almost everything was banned implied coming to terms with the ruling power. Though no open debate arose, this was mentioned in interviews.<sup>517</sup>

Almost all poems that could be perceived as antagonist tended to undermine official ideology predicated on principle of language (pure- Turkish), history (discrediting the Ottoman Empire) and urbanity. If the poet's dream came true and the system crumbled, it was unclear what would be implemented in its place. The poets neither suggested a solution in their verse nor in declarations outside of poetry.

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yağmurun dinmesini bekleyen hayat kadar/.../ bilmezdim kalbimin karartma gecelerine bu kadar uyacağını,” p: 55; “I left an army to the castle doors of my “cesetlerimden bir ordu bıraktım kale kapılarına,” p: 54, “the sky even touched by lightning flash is mine,” “bir şimşek çakışından bile incinen bu gök benimdir,” p: 56, “I was the last to leave the boat forgetting the logbook,” “gemiden son ayrılan bendim unutarak seyir defterini,” p: 58, “Is it the only condition to leave a child orphan to love him,” “Şart mıdır bir çocuğu sevmek için yetim bırakmak,” p: 62. Akif Kurtuluş, *Herkes Gitmiş Toplu Şiirler*, (Istanbul: Yasakmeyve, 2009. *Tören Provası*, first Edition: 1987).

517 Nevzat Çelik emphasized that the criticisms directed at him were personalized and they were not impartial. He especially referred to criticism in *Edebiyat Dostları*, published when he was in prison and unable to respond. The journal's most significant criticism targeted at Çelik was in 1988, around the time Çelik was released (in December). Nonetheless, there are debates about the left in the second issue (1987) and the fifth issue (1987) of the journal. In his complicated and carefree article, Kurtuluş asserted that the gap between the ideologies of the right and left did not originate from actual, literary reasons, but was grounded on the desire to “preserve the status quo.” He added that socialist poets were familiar with the concept of capital and money through reward, award, and incentive systems.

The self-criticism of the left was not the main theme in Akif Kurtuluş's first book. In my opinion, the book reflected on the pain of lost friends and the degeneration of the system in general, rather than a criticism of the left wing in particular.



This chaotic, blurred picture was the result of the fact no proper alternative system could be founded among various ideological movements that could be endorsed by these poets. Ultimately, even critical reviews were in the form of chaotic essays.

## § 7.9 Summary

It is evident that government's political prohibitions and violent practices limited the creation of antagonist art and literature during the 1980s. The implementation of these prohibitions through practices of symbolic violence made it even more difficult to produce solid dissidence. For instance, *Rengâhenk* was banned for obscenity not political content.<sup>518</sup>

An antagonist aesthetic form of discourse in an aesthetic form against the mechanism and practices and the ideology of the ruling power - that is to say, one that would evoke restlessness within the government, even if not officially prohibited, and one which society would perceive and sympathize would not be generated in this decade. The hot political issues in poetry were limited to prison torment and only a limited segment of poetry engaged even that. A verse in Hüseyin Haydar's<sup>519</sup> "Bir Ölü için" published in the June 1981 issue of *Yazko*, seems like a confession: "The country you were killed in is our country as well/ -are we complying a little?" As Yaşar Miraç expressed in his interview in *Gösteri* in July 1987, journal editors at the same time were demanding pastoral, lyrical poems that stayed far away from political themes. This, of course reinforced the accusations that poets who were therefore reluctant to write poetry on political issues were "apolitical."

This chapter demonstrates the transformation of social realist poetry in the 1980s, the tendency and nature of politics reflected in different texts and the experience of distress in this domain. Just as the left encountered crisis and started to dissolve in the 1980s, the understanding of social realist poetry was torn between self-criticism, protesting of the period, and bearing witness of the era. The divergence created dispositions the proponents of which were incapable of communicating. In fact, each position was reasonable. The left wing

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518 Obscene Publications Act.

519 Hüseyin Haydar (1956) was a young poet of the 1980s.

needed self-criticism, to confront and reckon with its mistakes and weaknesses in the past, to adapt to a new and changing public order, and come up with a compatible dissident movement. On the other hand, because leftist groups were subject to oppression and violence by the state, criticizing the left during the time could easily indicate cooperation with the ruling power.

This particular period's competitive and jealous, and personal debates were no more common than in other periods. However, there was friction between poets that served time in prison and those that did not - a friction similar to Ahmet Telli's depiction of what he witnessed upon release from prison. It is also possible those who did not serve in prison felt underrated or shamed in the face of the sacrifices made by the imprisoned. As for those who were imprisoned, they may have thought the poets who remained free did not assume the necessary attitude towards current events and the state out of "fear."<sup>520</sup> Even so, if not for the tremendous physical oppression implemented on certain poets, different outcomes was possible.

Ultimately, a battle for survival and rapid individualization were imposed on the poet, simultaneous with the rest of the society. What evolved was a new socialist poetry that highlighted advocacy (considered generically) and which sometimes questioned the scope and function of collective welfare.

The next chapter looks further into the "imagist" poetry of individualist literature and its political themes.

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520 In interview with Ahmet Telli, I learned that some people were afraid to greet him upon his release for fear of prosecution.

## The Politics of Individual 1: The First Generation and the Masters

The existing literature on poetry of the 1980s does not take into consideration poems related to social realist poetry. While socialist poetry changed in scope in the 1980s and while politically engaged intellectuals lost in the eyes of the public, social realist poetry of the 1980s was still assumed to reflect the social responsibility of intellectuals and their political reactions. As described in the previous chapter, while social realist poetry lost part of its audience, it maintained a stable number of readers throughout the 1980s. Since the junta and state mainly accused the leftist intelligentsia and writers for the street violence that led to the coup, the social realist intelligentsia lost prestige and status in Turkish society in the 1980s.<sup>521</sup>

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521 As Metin Celâl expressed, the exposition of books as evidence of a political crime on television and in the media, in addition to prosecutions and police raids of bookstores, were all parts of defamatory propaganda against authors and readers. Another propaganda was run by the intellectuals themselves... Historians, authors, and journalists admitted blaming intellectuals for the street violence of the 1970s. One of them was Kemal Karpat. In his analysis of the 12 of September coup he states, "It is a particularly uncomfortable fact that in Turkey the foundations of democracy collapsed not due to the opposition of the people against democratic principles, but because of the extreme positions of the intelligentsia overpowered by the selfish maneuvers of liberties brought about by democracy." This is a typical discourse against intellectuals from the 1980s. (Kemal Karpat, *Türkiye'de Siyasal Sistemin Evrimi* (Ankara: İmge Yayınları, 2007), 284.

On the other hand, starting in the 1980s, a more abstract poetry by the younger generation, which was a product of the reinterpretation and revision of the poetry of the Second New, was criticized for being apolitical and incomprehensible. In the 1950s, at least some people argued that the poetry of “Second New” reflected a political attitude. But the abstract poetry of the 1980s was rarely understood or defined as political.

Ahmet Oktay developed the most serious debate presenting the political content of imagist poetry. Other critics who defended it argued that, “poetry is an autonomous field and need not be political.” Mehmet H. Doğan was an example of these critics, who also defended the imagist poetry by the young generation of the 1980s as follows: “The author and poets in our society are loaded with more social responsibilities than their peers in developed countries. The author and especially the poets are seen as pioneers in the social battlefield, and this perception is rooted in an earlier tradition that started when Ottoman society was challenged... Every artist who is upset by social disharmony is trying, to the extent allowed by his or her own conscience and status, to bring artistic reflections to these social discontents - except for a small right-wing minority whose works cannot be called art and who are hard hats.”<sup>522</sup> But still, he admitted that after the 1980s “certain” poets “distanced themselves from the real time and world and enclosed themselves in the plastic construct of poetry.”<sup>523</sup> Doğan's main argument was that the poetry of the 1980s abandoned politics in order to handle intra-poetic problems.<sup>524</sup>

According to Ahmet Oktay, the new poetry of the 1980s “represents a protest on intellectual, cultural, political, social and all figural and stylistic levels.”

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522 Mehmet H. Doğan, “1990'ların Eşiğinde Şiirimiz” (2), *Yazının Bir Çağı* (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2006), 189. This essay was written in 1989.

523 Mehmet H. Doğan, “Günümüz Şiiri Üzerine Aykırı ve Dağınık Düşünceler,” *Yazının Bir Çağı* (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2006), 209. The essay was written in 1992. As an example of this poetry, Doğan gives Seyhan Erözçelik. In the first part of his essay he mentions Akif Kurtuluş was conscious of the problems and responded to them from his position. “I think, the regime with spectacular violence, the gallows, and torture, and a group that rested on this kind of authority, each had their share in this escape by the poets.”

524 “...I see today's poetry as pursuing a poetics that does not ignore but instead pays attention to the problems of poetry, as well as the social and individual discontents, thus achieving a much higher level than the average poetry of the 1970s and early 1980s.” (Ibid, 181.)

But this protest is “most of the time” “devoid of points of political articulation.”<sup>525</sup> “A rage against the present time, against the human relations is apparent.” He said, “Literature’s relation to political content at times became weakened, or began to be articulated through the device of expressions and signs that remained insignificant to that day.”<sup>526</sup> Connection, escape, suicide and related themes were a sort of political protest. These themes especially protested the irreconcilable popular consumption culture brought by capitalism, as well as, the difficulties of life under these conditions. Indeed, this protest developed in an unfamiliar political context and devoid of the common political vocabulary of earlier decades.

The two defining characteristics of this protest are aestheticism and intellectualism. A. Oktay underlines intertextuality and archaism as the characteristics of this poetry, while the cultural background it requires defines it as an extension of intellectualism.<sup>527</sup> The aesthetic, intellectualist tendencies did not first appear with Republican poetry; the “Second New” movement of the 1950s, as noted, proposed aesthetics in opposition to the popular and was based on abstract thought and knowledge of art. A. Oktay states that an “idiosyncratic lyricism” which is personalized and implying subtlety became “a model” for the young poets of the 1980s. He points particularly to Ece Ayhan adding Ahmed Arif, Hilmi Yavuz and - at the end of his essay - Fazıl Hüsnü, İlhan Berk and Melih Cevdet, as exemplars of the young generation.<sup>528</sup>

Bâki Asiltürk mentions Ece Ayhan, İsmet Özel, Hilmi Yavuz, Cemal Süreya and Enis Batur as the masters that influenced the period's young poets.<sup>529</sup> He underlines the influence of E. Ayhan, in particular. Two of these masters, Ece Ayhan and Cemal Süreya, were pioneers of the “Second New” movement. Hilmi Yavuz was another poet who was inspired by the “Second New” for a time. As for Enis Batur, represented the second generation of the movement and was more influential in the 1980s than the others for two reasons other

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525 Ahmet Oktay, “1980 Sonrasında Şiir,” *İmkânsız Poetika* (Istanbul: Alkım Yayınları, 2004), 74.

526 Ibid., 74.

527 Intertextuality is the textual content of references to the various literary texts with which it is interrelated. Archaism is the poet’s choice to use the archaic vocabulary and figures.

528 Ibid., 79, 89.

529 Bâki Asiltürk, *Türk Şiirinde 1980 Kuşağı* (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2013), 91.

than his poetry. His debates over intellectuality and intellectual identity carried out during the period, and the journal *Gergedan*, which he published in the late 1980s, inspired a young generation of poets and readers.

By the 1970s, the socialist poet İsmet Özel had already joined the Islamists. He was expectedly more influential in this domain; still, young leftist poets had not given up on his poetry even if they did not mention him by name. The rest of the aforementioned poets are the sum of the inherited response of the young generation to poetic tradition. For instance, Asaf Halet Çelebi, who was featured in the 1986 edition of *Şiir Atı*, was not an influential poetic figure of the 1980s, yet featured in a journal belonging to the young generation after a long period of obscurity.

One more reason for the influence of the aforementioned masters was that they were still alive at the time. As we saw in the previous chapter, Can Yücel wrote a preface for the book of a young poet. *Birikim*, which was begun at the end of the 1970s, was still publishing poetry in the 1980s, and Can Yücel was on its editorial committee. Cemal Süreya participated in literary meetings in which the young poets also joined. Moreover, he was writing regularly for journals, at times pointing out and praising younger poets. As for Hilmi Yavuz, he taught at universities where he had direct access to the younger generation. Similarly, Ece Ayhan was another poet who made himself accessible to the youth.<sup>530</sup>

But most importantly, these poets and their poetry were meeting the aesthetic and intellectual exigencies and pursuits put forward by young poets. Ece Ayhan and Hilmi Yavuz, in particular, influenced a number of young poets throughout the decade and beyond. This chapter shows the scope and the context of their influence and the political protest in their poetry.

Hasan Bülent Kahraman argued that in the 1980s two tendencies - namely Islamist and underground poetry - opposed the understanding of poetry that abided by the ideological framework of the founders of the Republic - or as he termed it, the tradition of "Republican epistemology." Kahraman suggests that after 1980, poems written in accordance with the Islamist epistemology were in open or covert opposition to the founding principles of the Republic, while

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530 Recently the correspondence between Akif Kurtuluş-Ece Ayhan was published as a book.

underground poetry not only “criticized the institutions and laws of an authoritarian system,” but also dismissed this system's “categorized” notions of “person-citizen-individual-intellectual.”<sup>531</sup> Both underground poetry and the identity politics embedded in poetry of the 1980s are radical protests of the Republican worldview’s failure to establish plurality, as Kahraman suggested. Naturally, Ece Ayhan influenced underground poetry in the 1980s. The protest in underground poetry was conveyed by representing the kinds of people that the mainstream did not want in the country - convicts, the destitute, provincials, drug addicts, homosexuals and even women who escaped the roles defined for them. Non-Muslims and minorities were also marginalized. These people criticized the Republican middle-class model from their standpoint, as they were ignored and unacknowledged by the mainstream worldview.

Actually, it is difficult to define a homogenous cultural ideology throughout the Republican era as the second and third chapters show. Furthermore, the educational curricula had not been denied to poets who propounded Islamist poetry, such as Necip Fâzıl Kısakürek. The emphasis on pure Turkish, partial approval of the Ottoman cultural past, and the ideal of an educated, urban, bourgeois citizen defined the contours of the Republican ideology. Policies concerning the “construction” of the Republican citizen and charging intellectuals with the duty to develop and educate society continued up until the 1980s. The underground thus represented the “other” of the Republic.

There was a crisis of intellectuals when the “Second New” movement emerged. This chapter tackles the poems of poets, who, after 1980, started to read the “Second New” poetry and the classics again, and underwent an identity crisis. While their poetry did not openly reflect a political attitude, they did openly question the sixty-year-old principles of the Republic. Namely, they opened the language to old [Ottoman] words and certain features of Ottoman poetry; moreover, they adopted or postulated identities such as provincialism, womanhood, homosexuality, and ethnicity. They also used slang.

A poetry of religiousness - emphasizing the world of belief - underlining spirituality as an identity, and proposing Muslimhood as an identity - emerged, as well. It differed from its counterpart in the 1970s, that it ushered a religiousness that was suitable to a new understanding of politics. With a

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531 Hasan Bülent Kahraman, *Türk Şiiri Modernizm Şiir* (Istanbul: Agora Kitaplığı, 2004), 173, 177.

deep, intricate, and realistic orientation toward philosophy and consciousness, it paved the way of interpreting secularism as antidemocratic and coercive.

As a result, imagist poetry of the 1980s embodied a politics that diverged from the earlier politics of poetry, challenging the latter's ideological foundations.<sup>532</sup> Not only the Islamist and underground poetry, as Kahraman proposed, but all poetry of the period - except for that the social realist vein - that chose to question the cultural values of the Republic.

In the following section, the period's poetry is compared to the "Second New" in terms of its general qualities and the particularities of the period. And then traces of these politics are sought in the works of poetry.

### § 8.1 The "Second New" Movement of the 1950s and its Reappraisal in the 1980s

Comparing the political context of the 1950s with the 1980-83 junta regime and the ensuing period of martial law is difficult. While the 1980s are characterized by political leadership of the military and military pressure on parliament and the government, both periods were similar in terms of their economic policies and social transformations.

Historians of literature explain the tendencies in the 1980s as a of return to tradition - particularly to the masters of the Second New - in reaction to the hegemony of the weak social realist poetry of the previous period, which was labeled as the "slogan poetry." Indeed, vital aesthetic patterns of poetry had mostly been abandoned by the late 1970's. In some sense, the "Second New" movement also emerged after its popular predecessor; the "First New" (*Garip*) reached the aesthetic "limits" of poetry.

In 1983 and 1984, Özdemir İnce<sup>533</sup> published essays in *Varlık*, *Yazko* and *Üç Çiçek*, that questioned the concern for aesthetics in poetry. It was significant debate of its time, such that young poets felt the need to defend their poetry.

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532 For further discussion, see Gülce Başer, "Poetry of Self Definition, Turkish Poetry During the 1980-83 Junta Period," unpublished thesis, Boğaziçi University, 2011.

533 A poet and critic born in 1936. He was close to the mainstream, as his work for the TRT indicates. He is important particularly for his essays on poetry, in the 1980s.



In the interviews about their first books, they precisely explicate the quality and nature of the poetry<sup>534</sup> essentially informing society about how to approach a poem. It was as if someone had bumped into them and asked what they knew about poetry, or as if they assumed society had no knowledge about poetry whatsoever.

I argue that, social and political conditions trigger such literary movements and waves. The First New poetry of the 1930s was not just populist, but popular. If it not for the political and social conditions that deprived the people of literature and culture in the 1950s, threatening them with prosecutions in the late 1950s, would poets so easily have refused the *Garip* poetry, which already had a loyal audience? It must have been a difficult decision to set the *Garip* and adopt the aesthetics of the “Second New,” which was difficult to comprehend and served many fewer readers. The poetic move actually resulted in reduced book sales and more difficulty for the publishing of poetry.

The 1950s were a period of alienation and capitalist change. The alienation of intellectuals due to the capitalist transformation of society, the rise of popular culture, and shrinking democratic rights are discussed in Chapter 3. The fourth chapter shows how social bonds were broken by violence introduced by the junta in the 1980s, followed by economic change and the rise of individualism. The previous chapter detailed how this alienation in the 1980s paved the way for a change in social realist poetry. The young generation of the 1980s - including the young poets of the late 1970s - were forced to develop their individuality vis-à-vis oppressive practices of the coup regime.

Varying degrees of alienation are evident in almost every poem with the subject of an isolated, epic leader. Many poems were established with an eye toward this epic leader subject, sometimes referring to a mythological character such as Prometheus, as illustrated in the previous chapter, or sometimes without a specific reference. The intellectual is distinguished by his desolation in this struggle; therefore, the young poet generation of the 1980s had stronger reasons compared to the “Second New” poets for being inclined toward anti-populist, anti-social realist poetry, considering the depth of the social trauma

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534 The debates are reflected in Chapters 5 and 6. An instance of self-defense was that of the social realist Ahmet Erhan, as seen in the previous chapter.

they experienced. Individualism became a social reality for the first time and this renders the situation impossible to be compared to the 1950s.

The alienation of the 1980s intelligentsia was highlighted by Ahmet Oktay. According to A. Oktay, the depth, composition and volume of alienation varied from the working class to the intelligentsia but was experienced in all strata of society due to the capitalist transformation. I believe the alienation and isolation of the intelligentsia was also related to the fact that it was often the “usual suspect” under the junta. The poetry of alienation did not reflect the isolation of its readers, who experience a parallel but different feeling of alienation. The reader was alone, but for different reasons. The reader was not a defeated hero. As a matter of fact, the reader was partly responsible for the isolation of intellectuals. On the whole, just like in the 1950s, a new popular culture was on the rise.

It is possible to argue that Ece Ayhan was the poetic idol of the young generation of the 1980s because of his detachment from both society and the ruling order. After his dismissal from public office, he became a “Second New” poet, bringing up the most marginal, radical criticism against the state apparatus and ideology from the perspective of the Republic's “others.”

## § 8.2 Language, History, and Identity Politics: Opposition

The deep epistemological break in the 1980s was at the same time a coalition of various opposition groups representing various identities and movements that stemmed from earlier periods of the Republic. Themes such as Abdühak Şinasi Hisar's defense of Ottoman Istanbul, the critique of Westernization developed in Cemil Meriç's debate of East-West, the criticism of the Republic's lack of pluralism, and the execution of Mustafa Suphi came together.

The major developers of this broad criticism in poetry were Ece Ayhan and Hilmi Yavuz. Ece Ayhan wrote the poetry of the Republic's “others,” using slang copiously and assaulting grammatical rules from the beginning. He was

the first underground poet of the Republic.<sup>535</sup> On the other hand, Hilmi Yavuz,<sup>536</sup> with a poetic phase launched by his *Doğu Şiirleri (Poems of the East)*, opposed the Westernization policies of the Republic. As early as the 1970s when he was adopting a leftist identity, Yavuz already affirmed the culturally conservative Peyami Safa and Hilmi Ziya Ülken in his Analysis. Already in the 1970s, Yavuz was an intellectual bringing forward his identity as an Easterner and his Eastern roots.<sup>537</sup>

The Republic's mainstream cultural politics did not actually refuse an Eastern/non-Western identity, as argued in the chapter analyzing the Ministry of Education's curriculum and policies. Even so, the Republican regime basically followed a Western model. The reason why subsequent generations of the Republican regime astray of early Republican goals was, their effort to look Western, revamping cultural policies with each government in an inconsistent, unbalanced way, oscillating between the East and the West. Meanwhile, a criticism of Republican ideology - beginning with the principles of language and history - had started to appear in the 1970s, especially Islamism empowered by the politics of MSP (National Salvation Party). In the 1980s, it established itself in the larger cultural field. Pioneered by figures such as Hilmi Yavuz and Enis Batur, this cultural and literary criticism spread among leftist

535 For detailed analysis, see H. B. Kahraman, "Ece Ayhan Şiiri: Sivillik, Etik, Dilsel Kopuş," *Türk Şiiri Modernizm Şiir* (Istanbul: Agora Kitaplığı, 2004): 306-358.

536 Hilmi Yavuz is among the major poets and critics of Republican poetry and culture. His poetry had different eras influenced respectively by social realism and imagism. He became a pioneer of traditionalist pursuits within 1980s.

537 In 1988, a compilation of Yavuz's works in *Gökyüzü ve Politika (Sky and Politics)* journal in the 1970s was published along with his other writings in the 1980s and early 1970s. The compilation shows that his problematization of tradition existed even in the 1970s. Both Hilmi Ziya Ülken and Nâzım Hikmet exists in these texts. As early as the 1970s, Yavuz desired the protection of cultural heritage as a whole and of tradition (p: 34). In his writings after 1980, he transformed into an intellectual proposing a close relation between the intelligentsia and the state: that the intellectual parallels his Tanzimat counterpart (p: 64). He notes that in the West, positivism was rejected in favor of tolerance for religion (p: 57), and he discusses the expressions of language. But Yavuz cared for consistency and did not reject the West. He cared enough to produce a criticism that did not revert to the opinions expressed in his writings in the first period. Hilmi Yavuz even criticized the Sun-Language theory as far back as 1975 (p: 110-113). Hilmi Yavuz, *Denemeler Karşı Denemeler* (Istanbul: Bağlam Yayınları, 1986).

poets, too. Their criticism of the Republican ideology particularly crystallized with respect to linguistic, historical and identity issues.

One young poet of the 1980s, Osman Hakan A., wrote an aggressive critique of a symposium on the poetry of the 1980s, held at the end of 2013, in which he expressed the absence of an analysis of the linguistic politics of the period. “Unfortunately the question ‘What changes were effected on language and poetry?’ was not answered at the symposium... The poetry of the 1980s cannot be understood without considering the language perspective of the poet generation and their cultural concerns.”<sup>538</sup> Osman H. is explicit: vocabulary usage and debates on language were the indicators of political persuasion in the 1980s. In fact, language was always a political issue in the Republic, but this was the first time that a young “leftist” generation created a political opposition through radical changes in language.<sup>539</sup> Representatives of the “Second New” movement did not tend to use old Turkish in their time.

This opposition was not a rebellion about vocabulary. It was not even an opposition from the onset, but a sought out a history, a language, and roots

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538 Osman Hakan A., “Türk Şiirinde 1980 Şiiri Sempozyumu,” *Mühür*, 53 (July-August 2014) 10. Osman Hakan A. was a young poet of the 1980s, born in 1959, and was a follower of Hilmi Yavuz.

539 In the April 1982 issue of *Gösteri*, Murathan Mungan states that language reform made Turkey “the first nation in history to change its own language.” He continues that the problem is that his generation could not access the old texts, only the ones that could be simplified. The first essay in *Yazko* was Önay Sözer’s “The Door that Opens from Language to History.” In the second issue Sözer again discussed the “living Turkish language.” In that issue, Sennur Sezer highlighted two conflicting approaches (pure Turkish vis-à-vis new Turkish and Turkish including old terms) in her essay on Adnan Özer’s poetry. She comments that “like his followers, he uses the Ottoman Turkish dictionary.” In the ninth issue, Refik Yoksulbakan argues that the language in commercials shows the engagement with pure Turkish in his article “Advertisements are an Interesting Display of a Turn towards Pure Turkish.” Various essays and poems reflect a struggle and defense of manners, putting forward arguments for enriching the language by the inclusion of old Turkish, for freedom in language, and for accessing literary tradition. Some leftists joined conservatives and Islamists like Murathan Mungan, making similar arguments, while others are insisted on new Turkish from a progressive, secular perspective. The vocabulary was freed from ideology to an extent. This was in fact a radical criticism of Republican cultural policies. These antagonists were not just discussing language - but through language - history and identity of the Republic itself.

for the poetry of the 1980s. It emerged along with issues of individualism and identity. The issues of language, history, tradition and identity are analyzed below in various poems of the era after 1980.

### § 8.3 Hilmi Yavuz and the East

Hilmi Yavuz, one of the influential masters of the period, did not publish his dossier *Mustafa Suphi Üzerine Şiirler*, written in 1980 until the publication of his *Collected Poems* in 1989.<sup>540</sup> But he published four other books in 1980s: *Yaz Şiirleri* (*Poems of Summer*, 1981), *Gizem Şiirleri* (*Poems of Mystery*, 1984), *Zaman Şiirleri* (*Poems of Time*, 1987) and *Mit Şiirleri* (*Poems of Myth*, 1989). His choice of not to publish *Mustafa Suphi Üzerine Şiirler* was self-censorship; after all, Mustafa Suphi was a communist, killed by the government. The choice of Mustafa Suphi as a subject was probably not related to Yavuz's leftist convictions, but to his conceptualization of Republican ideology.

In his first book, *Doğu Şiirleri* (*Poems of Orient*, published in 1977), he explored nostalgia, emigration, love, urban life and philosophy in the “East,” as well as the Eastern women. Eastern culture refers to the “other” of Western culture, along with tradition and practices. Importantly he highlighted Eastern roots long before the 1980s. Right after the publication of this book, in *Yaz Şiirleri* published in the year following the coup is easily deemed apolitical. The book consisted of two chapters - “Last Summer” and “This Summer” – and it was considered by Doğan Hızlan as a good example of “contemporary traditionalism” manifesting “the living components of tradition.”<sup>541</sup> In its poems, pain stemming from an unmentioned source or sources is plasticized and “descends to the underground” in the poet's terms. In the verses “I am a poet: I am underground I/ am pain/ digging/ and descending deep” the poet merges his pain and throws it to the underground.<sup>542</sup> The verses “you found papers

540 Mustafa Suphi was an early communist executed by parliament during the War of Independence.

541 Doğan Hızlan, “Yaz Şiirleri (Hilmi Yavuz)”, *Şiir Çilingiri*, Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2010, p: 203-205, date of writing: 1982.

542 Hilmi Yavuz, *Büyü'sün Sen* (Toplu Şiirler) (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2010), 129. “ben şairim: bir yeraltıyım ben/ acıyım/kazdıkça/ ve derine indikçe.”

offended/ their gloom frozen, their ashes tanned/ and all of a sudden/ as their pain touched yours”<sup>543</sup> gives the sense that the resentment papers are the poems and that their poet is dancing a “frozen,” “ashen” gloom. What remains in suspension is the moment when “their pain touch[es] yours.” And evidently, that is only a moment.<sup>544</sup>

These are summer poems, but obviously not of a joyful summer. A melancholic atmosphere that heralds autumn is obvious in all the poems. Like the force of a dam against a “water that does not flow and leave,” the atmosphere that prevails is a summer day’s “exhaustion,” “tiredness,” and broken hopes (“a bird is now a sour elixir.”)<sup>545</sup> In the poems “Kalp Kalesinden” (“From the Heart’s Castle”)<sup>546</sup> and “Ney” (“The Reed Flute”),<sup>547</sup> he creates the atmosphere of spirituality by using Sufic and religious poetic tropes. A “reed flute” represents the wise human, a rose the Prophet Muhammad, and carnelian a praying stone. In the verse “The autumn is a reed flute, blows a rose and a carnelian,”<sup>548</sup> Sufism goes beyond being a stylistic element in Yavuz’s poetry (which it generally is) and becomes internalized as content. He does not try to create a spiritual aura, but rather his poem expresses a stage of his spiritual journey.

A later poem is dedicated to A. Rıza Ertan,<sup>549</sup> and an ensuing elegy is dedicated to Lorca. By paying homage to Lorca, he is not sending a political message. It is a monument erected in memory of a great poet. In this respect, the only poem that can be read as related to the 12 September prosecutions is “Bunkers.”<sup>550</sup> The protest is similar to that described by Ahmet Oktay regarding Orhan Alkaya’s poetry: a protest that reflects the overwhelming nature

543 Ibid. “kırgın kâğıtlar buldunuz/hüznü donmuş, külü meşin/ ve birden/ acısı acınıza değdikçe.”

544 Hilmi Yavuz, *Büyü’sün Sen* (Toplu Şiirler) (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2010), 129.

545 Ibid., 130. “bir kuştur şimdi buruk bengisu.”

546 Ibid., 131.

547 Ibid., 132.

548 Ibid., 132. “güz bir neydir, bir gül üfler ve akik.”

549 A promising young poet passed away in 1979.

550 “Where are the poems? where are those bunkers of a tired tongue?// I am now the poet/ of a darkened cloud randomly turned away from the road:/ in my tongue the moon turned gray and pains came out/ over me/ who knows where it is being sought.// I am now and always a poet/ turned in on his heart by sorrows:/ say where is it, come on say it with those bleeding words/ the pearly beauties?/ who knows where they hide// I am now a convicted poet/ who

daily life with the terminology of everyday politics. A. Oktay claims that terms such as the police, the state or the economy in the esoteric elements of poetry invariably reflect a protest, albeit through retreat or overall exasperation.<sup>551</sup> At the time of the production of the poem, which starts with the verses “I am now the poet/ of a darkened cloud randomly turned away from the road: / in my tongue the moon turned gray and pains found/on me/ who knows where it is being sought,” the world of poetry was marred by investigations, prosecution, searches, hiding, betrayal, and interrogations by the police. The poem ends with a stanza that invites a rereading of the entire book: “I am now a convicted poet/ who for his safety/ make a love poem from a rose/ this is what I do!” This was a confession that he is “convicted” for “transforming” a “rose” into a “love poem,” in fear for his safety, implying that the various words and forms used in the book express something entirely different from what they seem. The real feelings and issues could not be openly stated or implied openly due to anxiety for his life. The poet is unable to fight against oppression but at least records his anxieties for future reference.

But the articulation in this final line is problematic, because it opens the poem up to a Sophist reading, too. Through one reading of Islamic Sufism, the poem tells of the poet's reluctance to claim himself a partner of Allah. According to the Sophist thought, the claim of existence is an illusion: a kind of claim to co-exist with the infinite “Allah,” which challenges the presumption of an eternal, absolute being. Thus, the poet does not exist as a subject in a place for situation - in other words, in knowledge. But Yavuz reflects the discrepancy of the condition where the writer appears to be a subject. Accordingly, the rose, which exists, is made into the metaphor of a love poem, or a spiritual love,

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for his safety/ a rose transformed to a love poem, this is what I do!/ stop the question, shut the roads and forget/ his writings and poems/ who knows where is the writing one,” “nerde şiirler? nerde o dili yorgun koruganlar?// ben şimdi karartılmış bir bulutun/ rastgele yoldan çevirdiği bir şairim:/ dilimde ay ağardı ve acılar çıktı/ diye üzerimden/ kimbilir nerde aranan.// ben şimdi ve daima kalbine/ hüzünler ihbar edilen bir şairim:/ söyle nerde, haydi söyle o kanayan sözlerle/ sedefli güzeller?/ kimbilir nerde saklanan// ben şimdi bir gülü/ kendi güvenliği için/ bir sevda şiirine dönüştürmeye/ yargılı bir şairim, yaptığım bu işte!/ soru sarma, yolları kapat ve unut/ yazları ve şiirleri/ kimbilir nerde Yazılan.” Ibid, 135.

551 A. Oktay, “Siyaset ve Siyaset Dışı,” *İmkânsız Poetika* (Istanbul: Alkım Yayınları, 2004), 91-92. Original publication: *Deft* journal, 19 (Winter-1992).

while the rose in Sophist poetry represents the prophet. So, he means that he is in love as the prophet, who is the worldly appearance of “truth.” If the poem is considered in the Sufi context, the worry for safety would include the peril of a dervish challenging Allah, which deserves a punishment like Hallac-ı Mansur.

But the evident, multilayered nature of the poem surely overshadows the possibility of its being a protest. In any case, the poem openly conveys a contrast. Hilmi Yavuz is thus described as the poet of the 12 September period, who suffers the dilemma of the social responsibility of the poet vis-à-vis fear of prosecution.

The second chapter “This Summer,” is comprised of abstract poems that contained notions of a Sophist quest, but they salvage the decorative, formative setting of *Poems of East*. For instance, in the verse, “what I called 'writing' is concealing,” we are made to think that the concealment is the Sophist belief that the sphere of action - all beings we perceive - is a “curtain” of the holy absolute fact or being. But the line that follows, “I harvested the universe by poems,” strongly emphasizes on the poet-subject in action - namely the worldly existence of the human- through the activity of harvesting. The active meaning of harvesting the universe or sky ultimately clashes with the idea of concealing. Within its conception of poetics, the poem includes a notion and idiom borrowed from Sufism; hence, Sophist terminology is for ornamental purposes rather than for creating a deeper meaning.<sup>552</sup>

The latter chapter of this book is close to A. Erhan's escapist poetry in *Akdeniz Lirikleri*. Indeed, it can be understood as escapist poetry according to the definition of A. Oktay.<sup>553</sup> And atmosphere of an intense return to nature and tradition is created, and the tendency to escape modernism and the setting of capitalist society is a valid interpretation. But the date of publication of the book was 1981, when the economic transformation of the 1980s had not fully unfolded.

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552 Hilmi Yavuz, *Büyü'sün Sen* (Toplu Şiirler) (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2010), 140, “örtmek-tir 'yazmak' dediğim,” “şiirden gök ekin biçtiğim.” In his *Gizemli Şiirler* dated in 1984, the poet admits for Sufism that he “wants” to “look at [Sufism] from the outside.” Hilmi Yavuz, “Ara-gon 'Zaman Sensin' Diyordu Elsa'ya, Ben 'Zaman Bendim' Diyorum,” interview: Hâmi Çağdaş, *Gösteri*, 79 (June 1987), *Şiir Henüz* (Istanbul: Est&Non, 1999), 37.

553 As given in chapters 4 and 6.



Therefore, the search for tradition is unrelated to the nostalgic attitude hinted at by A. Oktay. Indeed, Yavuz had already given signals of a return to tradition in his book dated in 1977 dealing with themes of the East. He received the support of the period's youth, his readers, followers, analysts and even fellow poets. With regard to Hilmi Yavuz's book *Geçen Yaz*, Ali Günvar, whose first poem was published right before 1980, wrote in the twenty-second issue of *Yazko* that Yavuz's poetry was "reproaching tradition by gaining from its brightness and meaning."

These poems are evidence of the leftist group's interest and return to the aesthetics and themes of traditional poetry. Moreover, Sufism started to be handled from "inside," as in the case of *Yaz Şiirleri*. Likewise, religious faith - which was only a motif in *Doğu Şiirleri* - became a "Geist" fulfilling the persona of the poet-subject. This philosophical content spread to poets of the young generation, like Lale Müldür. Spiritual content became a method of resistance and existence: an individual identity for left wing poets and of a reaction against capitalist culture for Islamists. Yavuz approached Sufism as one of his strongest links to traditional poetry.<sup>554</sup>

In *Zaman Şiirleri*, published in 1987 by Şiir Atı Publications, Yavuz declared that he had come to terms with Bergson's conceptualization of time: experiencing yesterday, today and tomorrow as one. He refers to many figures that embodied this approach - from Şeyh Galip to Yunus Emre and from Heidegger to Dostoyevski.<sup>555</sup> He was attracted by Islamic Sufism's universalism, its ability to interact with the principle of "binary oppositions," and the poetic character of its notion of the unity of existence.<sup>556</sup>

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554 "For me, tradition is an issue of relation... Our literature has relations with tradition, as do other literatures. But ours has its roots in Sufism." Hilmi Yavuz, "Gelenek, Değişen İçinde Değişmeyi Bulmak ve Bugüne Ulaştırmaktır," interview M. Emin Açar, *Zaman*, 26 December 1987, excerpt: *Şiir Henüz* (Istanbul: Est&Non, 1999), 58.

555 For a detailed treatise on this subject, see Pınar Aka, "Hilmi Yavuz Şiirine Metin Merkezli Bir Bakış," unpublished master's thesis, Bilkent University, June 2002, <http://www.thesis.bilkent.edu.tr/0002028.pdf>

556 Hilmi Yavuz, "Ben Şiirde 'Felsefe Yapmayı' Hiç Denemedim," interview: Tuğrul Tanyol, *Cumhuriyet*, 18 December 1987; excerpt: *Şiir Henüz* (Istanbul: Est&Non, 1999), 54.

In *Zaman Şiirleri*, which won the Sedat Simavi Award for Literature, Yavuz interpreted the tradition in a post-modernist manner with an almost experimental mindset, much more strategically than he did in *Yaz Şiirleri*. He expressed this saying: “This book is a reproduction of Divan literature that internalizes the tradition and was built on tradition by changing objects without disrupting poetic relations.” The aim was to produce poetry about the concept of time in Islam.<sup>557</sup>

The book consists of three chapters, the first of which is entitled “Yesterday.” The names of the poems are patterned by adding the words “and Time” to the words to prefixes like “Word,” “Language,” “Questions,” “Poem,” “Shadow,” “Bursa,” or “Ashes.” The aim is to make readers feel that “today” is built on meanings contained in these words from the past. “Word” for instance must have been both scared and clarified, in time, and it makes sense to the contemporary individual through notions brought forward from the past. These notions in the poems either complement or exclude one another; the moment they carry is presented together with their condition, and the aura of their time (within their archaic atmosphere). For example notions introduced in the second chapter “Today,” include birds, summers, snow, mirrors, roads, a garden, the Judas tree, and evenings. The Judas tree strives for continuity and is present in almost every poem. It is a spring flower of Istanbul and is among the symbols of the city. It is as if tradition is represented by the Judas tree. “Tomorrow,” the third chapter consists of just one poem: “Death and Time.”

The individual appears only under certain conditions in these poems. Interestingly, in a time when everybody was writing about themselves, Yavuz himself appears only in his love poems. He hides his own individuality through his choices of notions and words in rest of his poetry. He says this is related to the return to tradition, since Divan literature does not allow for the existence of a poet-subject.

Yavuz, who notes that he is a poem-maker, wrote this book to reproduce a cultural continuity with what he calls tradition. He chose the concept of “time,” the universal and local definitions of which are emphasized and about

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557 Hilmi Yavuz, “Şiir Yazma Eylemi Cehennem'in Ta Kendisidir,” interview: Orhan Alkaya, *2000'e Doğru*, 19-25 April 1987, excerpt: *Şiir Henüz* (Istanbul: Est&Non, 1999), 41-45.

which much has been written. He refers to tradition even in the book's title. The book, which was written in 1987, certainly attracted the interest of particularly a younger generation oriented towards imagist poetry. Interviews on the book were carried by Vural Bahadır Bayrıl and Tuğrul Tanyol,<sup>558</sup> poets in his entourage, but also by Orhan Alkaya, from among the social realists of the period. More importantly, Bayrıl and Alkaya produced the works that would establish their respective poetic identities after the publication of Yavuz's book. With this book, Hilmi Yavuz provided the defining example of abstract, elitist, intellectual poetry of the 1980s.

In fact, this type of poetry already existed, but compilation in book form and the major literary awards it won triggered its spread among poets. From that moment forward this poetry was no longer considered apolitical, at least among the intelligentsia it addressed. In an interview with Doğan Hızlan about *Yaz Şiirleri*, Hilmi Yavuz had already emphasized the politics of the book: official Republican ideology denied both Western and Eastern identity, adopting instead a culture of the "hoi polloi," a "lumpen culture." His poetry reflected a cultural choice against this "lumpen culture." He was aiming at a "real Turkish poetry" which was possible precisely through the repossession of innately traditional forms.

In the same interview, Yavuz stated that relying on history or turning to the tradition was sufficient for constructing "a poetry for a period of transition," or "a narrating epic." He was not writing like the famous poet Yahya Kemal, from a position within late Divan poetry that was about to end, only to be replaced by a Turkish poetry of an indeterminate and closed future. His aim was not to face tomorrow in order to supplant it. On the contrary, he inhabited modern Turkey, a moment already separated from tradition and suffering cultural loss. His aim was not for tomorrow, but for his present day. An epistemological transition includes the assumption of a tomorrow. Yavuz aimed to create a contemporary poetry, the form of which would benefit from

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558 Vural Bahadır Bayrıl (1964) and Tuğrul Tanyol (1953) were young poets of the 1980s. Bayrıl was in the second wave due to his age, appearing mostly in the second half of the 1980s.

tradition. He did not seek to praise the past, an epic poem could not be written today. It was not the case of an all-out struggle, after all.<sup>559</sup>

Yavuz's choice was a realization of meta-politics (as described by Rancière) in the poetic form (as pointed out by Eagleton). According to Yavuz, the reproduction of tradition as a network of relations and imagery implies the inclusion of contemporary, new objects in the network of old, genuine relations.<sup>560</sup> The politics that are interjected should not overshadow the aesthetic quality of the work. Furthermore, the politics of the text should be independent from the social and individual status of the author. It should even above the day-to-day politics. Yavuz was reluctant to reflect any personal political attitudes within his work.

This choice enabled Yavuz to draw lines between his personal life and the life of poet-subject. Thus, Yavuz, who was not a conservative succeeded in becoming an influential poet among Islamists. Among these Islamists, who started producing influential writing in the 1980s, utilizing Divan tradition was a means of protesting what they perceived as a Westernized Republic. At the same time, young leftist poets who were preparing a more radical criticism of the Republic for its failure to uphold its pledges established a healthy connection with tradition through Hilmi Yavuz's poetry, finding a common artistic ground that suited their leftist identity.

Claiming an Eastern identity as a basis for criticizing Orientalism on the basis provided by Hilmi Yavuz. Thus, the personal identification problematic could be solved, in tandem with an effective criticism of Republican ideology and capitalist culture. However, such political content did not resonate among average readers. In the end, this was also a poetry of reaction against popular culture.

Indeed, the intellectualism, anti-populism, and detachment from the masses that defined Hilmi Yavuz's poetry were also the qualities of imagist poetry of the 1980s. It was not a third generation of the "Second New," but a

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559 Hilmi Yavuz, "Ben Şiirde Rastlantının Yeri Olduğunu Düşünmem", interview: Doğan Hızlan, *Gösteri*, 3 (February 1981), excerpt: *Şiir Henüz* (Istanbul: Est&Non, 1999), 16-17.

560 Hilmi Yavuz, "Gelenek Değişen İçinde Değişmeyi Bulmak ve Bugüne Ulaştılabilmektir," interview: M. Emin Açar, *Zaman*, 26 December 1987, excerpt: *Şiir Henüz*, (Istanbul: Est&Non, 1999), 59.

re-interpretation. All young poets of the 1980s analyzed poetic tradition. Indeed, the traces of Eastern identity presented by Hilmi Yavuz are found in the work of almost all poets that started writing in or that were influenced by the atmosphere of this period. Though figures like Vural Bahadır Bayrıl, Osman Hakan A., Seyhan Erözçelik, Ali Günvar, and Tuğrul Tanyol seem to be closer to him, poets such as Haydar Ergülen, Murathan Mungan and Lale Müldür must also have been inspired by Yavuz's poetry.

#### § 8.4 The Language of the “Others” in Ece Ayhan's Poetry

Ece Ayhan published two consecutive books, in the early 1980s. Additionally, Enis Batur prepared an analysis of Ayhan's poetry (*Tahta Troya*, by Yazko books). According to Ahmet Oktay, Ayhan is the “syndrome” of the 1980s.<sup>561</sup> Truly, the defining characteristics of Ece Ayhan's poetry can be seen in the individualist, imagist poetry of the young generation of 1980s: the use of historical, geographical, and scientific knowledge as poetic sources, the narration of the Republic through the lives of those cast out from society, the lowest statuses, or even the so-called underground; and the use of subjective language. Intellectual equipment - or to put it simply, the use of data as a poetic source - was a characteristic of Hilmi Yavuz's poetry, as well. The definitive difference between the two was that the knowledge Yavuz embedded his poetry was philosophical and literary, while E. Ayhan was interested in history. E. Ayhan was a poet that used ample historical material.<sup>562</sup>

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561 Ahmet Oktay, *İmkânsız Poetika*, 119. Actually, Hasan Bülent Kahraman endorses this approach, as well: H.B. Kahraman, *Türk Şiiri*, 306-358.

562 Orhan Koçak, using the poet's own statement as proof, propounded that from 1975 onward; Ece Ayhan added historical continuity as an accepted theme to his poetry. He added world history and the institutions and traditions of different religions to poetry to escape from Turkish connotations and to be unique. In the end, Turkey's dark history is narrated through external elements in his first two or three books. Certainly, with *Zambaklı Padişah* Ece Ayhan mines a definitive, local history for material. Orhan Koçak “‘Sayıklar Bir Dilde Bilmediğim’ Ece Ayhan'ın Şiirinde Dil ve Bağlam,” *Mor Külhani Ece Ayhan Şiiri*, Ed: Orhan Kahyaoğlu (Istanbul: Nokitaplar, 2004), 257-282, original publication: *Ludingirra*, issue: 1, 1997.

A second aspect of Ece Ayhan's poetry was the inclusion of groups excluded from society. In his poetry, oppressed and impoverished identities became more pronounced in the 1980s. Although Ece Ayhan was one pioneer giving a voice to the "others" of society - particularly for reflecting their difference and marginality - other poets like Edip Cansever and Attilâ İlhan also reflected on marginal, outcast characters and non-Muslims in their poems. In the 1980s when identity and its definitions became critical issues, now marginalized intellectuals as *usual suspects* found themselves inhabiting the new identities represented in Ece Ayhan's poems. The young poets of the 1980s, particularly leftists, lost their intellectual identity and perhaps lost readers, together with their own struggle against exclusion. In other words, they struggled for existence with feelings of alienation. Furthermore, poets with political criminal records were marginalized, while those not yet prosecuted were at the margins of society. If we add the general debate about young poets to these factors, the young poets' sense of being trapped and framed and their existential drift in the literary milieu is clear.<sup>563</sup> Their pluralism is expressed by the

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563 In the years 1980-83, young poets were a particular subject in literary world. The first insight on the issue after the coup was published in *Varlık*. In October 1981, Işıl Özgentürk interviewed with a group of young poets - namely Ozan Telli, Barış Pirhasan, Ahmet Erhan, Turgay Fişekçi and Adnan Özer. In July, the topic had been revisited in an essay titled "The Contemporary Issues of our Poetry." Cevdet Kudret focused on the techniques of poetry, in essay making the argument that young poets wrote "prose-like poetry." Arslan Kaynaradağ, in another essay, pointed out that the discovery of new poets was the mission of the publishers. The October interview were unique for leaving the floor to the young poets. Egemen Berköz also had analyzed poetry of the new generation, but he partook in their attitude and emphasized that they bestowed works that enriched poetry. The October interviews three months later included Ozan Telli in the list of successful young poets. However, Özgentürk's interviews were less structured, with questions such as from where the poems were derived. Four poets that had just published their first book were interviewed, but the conceptualization of the "young poet" is not highlighted. In the December 1981 issue of *Gösteri*, a dossier on the young poets was published claimed to be the most inclusive so far. While the "masters were evaluating" the young poets, the latter were asked questions such as what they wanted to bring to Turkish poetry. Reviews of the young generation by M.C. Anday, Attilâ İlhan, Kemal Özer, Hilmi Yavuz, Memet Fuat and Ataoğlu Behramoğlu were harsh. By defining poetry as something that cannot be taught by its masters and by claiming that a poet's first poems draw the limit of his capacity, M.C. Anday refuses the concept of the young poet. Attilâ İlhan argues that

young poets babble rather than produce poetry. Kemal Özer claims that the poems of the young poets look alike; the issue is not a single-type revolutionary poetry, but that they have a problem of authenticity. He leaves eight to ten figures outside this generalization. As for Hilmi Yavuz, he suggests that with youth awards, the young have more opportunities than the previous generations. He points out that in his youth, it was practically impossible to be published. With the existence of journals that focus on youth, there is no necessity for young poets to seek the approval of an authority. Hilmi Yavuz was following the journals of the new generation. He criticizes the Istanbul “authorities” for not following publications such as *Dönemeç*, published in Izmir, and *Türkiye Yazıları* in Ankara. He talks about an “authors’ regime,” - understood to be Istanbul - and points out poets that are removed from this authority. Yavuz ends by mentioning several young poets. He is the “master with the most affirming attitude who follows younger poets and criticizes the journals for not addressing them. Moreover, he spent time with younger poets.

The “young poets” do not seem eager to give an actual response to the question of what they want to bring to Turkish poetry. They generally divert to the question: “What I want to bring to my own poetry.” The differences between Yaşar Miraç, Ali Cengizkan and Ahmet Erhan – all of the next generation poets - is clear; Y. Miraç, by adopting a social, national ideal, desires a better position for Turkish poetry in the broader world of poetry. Neither A. Cengizkan nor A. Erhan are enthusiastic about adopting nationalism in this sense. Ahmet Erhan admits that it is easier for young poets to be published in journals, yet feels uneasy with the notion of the “young poet.” “In Turkish poetry there is a youth factor. But as for the “young poet” wording... I am beginning to consider it a belittling expression.” Naturally, this sentence is not itself a rebellion against authority; he only feels uncomfortable with the labeling. In the November 1982 issue of *Yarın*, Akif Kurtuluş criticizes the concept of the young poet. With reference to Fahir Onger, he describes how the notion of the “young poet,” has been in use since 1939, and has “escalated into a fact” from the beginning of the 1980s. It is a method to commodify the young poet and thus insert him into the system by “assimilating,” or adapting him to it. This process is the danger of “become assimilated by a central literary authority with its intimate connection the political authority.” The young poet, accepting this process, constantly needs to prove himself through the identity of another. In Kurtuluş's article, attention is drawn to developments expected from the liberalizing process such as the poet being directed to mass communication and receiving the system's blessings. Already by the end of 1982, he pointed to the shift to a free market economy and to the advertising sector, but for now the chief objection of Kurtuluş was that the literary authority attributed a systematic and “corporate identity” to the young poets under its auspices. This opens the way for the eventual shattering of identity.

The next striking attack by the masters against young poets and their works came in an interview by Tomris Uyar with the poets of the “Second New” movement - Cemal Süreya, Turgut Uyar and Edip Cansever. The masters complained that in their search of perfection, the young

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do not write poetry from their own personality. The writings resemble each other. “There is no poem or poetic development to write about” (TU). “The poets are after the latest movement of Turkish poetry without evaluating its entirety (EC), (with CS siding with this opinion as well.)

Long before this interview was published in March 1983, Cemal Süreya had evaluated the young poets in the May 1981 issue of *Gösteri* as “on a certain level, experimental, but there are too many resemblances with one another.” In July 1984, Tuğrul Tanyol emphasized young poets' reaction to that interview, as if calling him to account for it: “You said that there are no tendencies whatsoever in young poetry. We know that in every period, some poets inclined to lean on social sensitivities become popular quickly, while old poets play with overripe fruit... When older poets mention names of young poets they like, they act ecstatic... two things draw my attention: the figures they name are either writing poetry close to their own vein of poetry or are persons very familiar to them. As an old journal writer yourself, can you say that you act objectively with respect to this topic? In response, Süreya admits that poets of advanced age do not sufficiently follow the youth. However, this generation was a “lucky” one. For example, Arif Damar brought him A. Kurtuluş's book. He concludes by saying that he finds it natural that poets will prefer poems that are close to their own. Years before this interview, Hilmi Yavuz was Tanyol's thesis advisor, and between them, there was the familiarity of a “teacher-student relationship turned friendship.” He was also among the good young poets declared by Yavuz in the 1981 *Gösteri* dossier. There was affinity between their poetry, as well. The period's young poets obeyed or established methods of which they were critical, at least to a degree. In major journals, mainly the old and middle-aged masters wrote about literature, but several young poets like Tuğrul Tanyol, Ali Günvar and Hüseyin Haydar had access to *Yazko*. In fact, the essays in dossiers about young writers did not reflect a new trend. *Somut*'s August-September 1979 issue was dedicated to “new writers.” In his article “Our Literature gets Younger” in his journal, *Yusuçuk*, Tuncer Uçarol gave an unhealthy report on the degree to which literature was becoming younger, but in time the number of young poets submitting their poems to literary journals increased. Uçarol notes that Necatigil's *Dictionary of the Names of our Literature* included twenty-eight authors in the age group 24-34. The percentage of authors under the age of 39 was 9.4 percent and the largest group was 39-58, with 51.5 percent. He concludes that our “living” literature is represented by the pre-1941 generation. According to Uçarol, little place is afforded to the young writers among the literary establishment (journals, literary journals, and literature dictionaries). “So, it is difficult to be included in the dictionaries, be a significant writer before the age of 24. It needs effort... it requires a published book... even before the age of 35 the possibility to enter the dictionaries is small: 3percent (p. 7-18).

Two points: *Gösteri* had launched a poetry prize for the young generation. *Yarım*, too, upon its inauguration initiated a competition oriented toward the young. With the entrance of



appearance of the invisible people of the Republican history - namely the prostitutes, perverts, destitute, antiquarians, non-Muslims, and orphans - in Ece Ayhan's poetry. In his "dark poetry." Decadence was defined through the praise of prostitutes, with the representations of the state's limitless violence, and through indication that this violence was the defining characteristic of the lives of these people. Sexuality is also a form of violence in this poetry.

In the end, Ece Ayhan's individualist voice becomes subjective through metaphor enabling the poet-subject to unite with this otherness in the poem - or at least to reach its boundaries.<sup>564</sup>

But Ahmet Oktay discovered another relation and common ground between his poetry and the 1980s. According to Oktay, this sensitivity and attitude is the zeitgeist of the period, present in the poetry of Hilmi Yavuz, Osman Hakan A., and İhsan Deniz, (under the influence of Yavuz) and even of K. İskender. This is the formation whereby abstract and concrete, enthusiasm and sarcasm, situation and appearance, and reality and the surreal are presented

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*Yazko* to the world of publishing, the 1981 poetry award was given to İsmail Uyaroğlu, one of the period's young authors. The propagation of awards fueled debates among the older generation about the impact of competitions and the place of young poets in the journals. Literature was searching for fresh blood. There was no consistent opposition. For example, *Yarın* journal started as a reaction to *Gösteri*'s competition, but in its very first issue, it organized its own prize. In the first issue of *Yazko*, Konur Ertop argues that the increase in the number of awards reduces the differentiation among writers. In the November 1982 issue of *Türkiye Yazıları*, Ali İhsan Mıhçı informs intellectuals that while they were talking about competitions and they neglected issues that are more important. Besides the fact that journals criticized competitions while hosting their own, poets that won these awards were those who would become representative of their respective periods. Even if subject to criticism, these competitions were legitimized and attuned to poets' goals. In a sense, the competitions were the hunting grounds for young poets.

564 "Never mind 128! in the free boarding cadet schools of suicide/ in every child's heart there is a child bigger than himself," "Aldırma 128! İntiharın parasız yatılı küçük zabıt okullarında/ Her çocuğun kalbinde kendinden daha büyük bir çocuk vardır," (p: 123), "Meçhul Öğrenci Anıtı," "Monument to the Unknown Student", *Devlet ve Tabiat*, "We talk about civil death crumbling dark green/ friends, thick master carpenters of Macedonia," "Sivil ölümden konuşuyoruz dağılan neftikler/ arkadaşlar Makedonyalı kalın usta marangozlar," (p: 126), ("Orta İkidem Ayrılan Çocuklar İçin Şiirler," "Poems For the Children Expelled from the Middle Two," *Devlet ve Tabiat*) Ece Ayhan, *Bütün Yort Savul'lar! 1954-1997* (Istanbul: YKY, 2004).

simultaneously, and whereby the verses tend to break apart and approach prose.<sup>565</sup> Interestingly, this opinion was not debated.

The tendency towards prose as a poetic shift is open to discussion, but co-existence of conflicting word pairs in this manner is evident in Ece Ayhan. More precisely, this manner destroys tale-like realism, implying something apart from the poet's words. The poet uses the abyss between conflicting terms to cause the reader to suspect his expression. "Birds without envelopes" is a good example of this style. A bird cannot be sent by envelope; however, both notions allude to a letter and they are used together. The envelope, too, is treated with irony through the suffix "-siz" means "without." To put it simply, the poet is trying to say something else with the notion of the letter.

This technique which creates the sense of a border between existence and absence, also expresses a world of perception of the limits of schizophrenia or the atmosphere of fairy tales. It represents the conflicting components of "official" reality: appropriateness and moderation. When this atmosphere is created through vocabulary, archaic words come together with contemporary ones; if it is created through history, the official with the "interpreted." If schizophrenia is an expression of psychological escape - a rebellion against the linguistic and historical accumulation called the official ideology - it must be interpreted as a method of opposition for the insecure individuals whose wholeness has been destroyed.<sup>566</sup> This phenomenon may be labeled postmodern, as it shatters the absolute reality by contingency. Antonyms do not function to highlight one another in these texts.

*Zambaklı Padişah* is a "timeless" book; the sultanate, the sultan's bath and the sultan exist in its poems, but the atmosphere and notions are modern: "When I become a sultan with lilies in hands/ I will give you a city of long syllabi/ When entering the doors will wither and emptiness".<sup>567</sup> The poem numbered IX refers to "Meçhul Öğrenci Anıtı" ("Monument to the Unknown

565 A. Oktay, "Siyaset ve Siyaset Dışı", *İmkânsız Poetika* (Istanbul: Alkım Yayınları, 2004), 113-117, original publication: *Defter* journal, 19 (Winter-1992).

566 The definition belongs to A. Oktay, *Ibid.*, 117.

567 "Ne zaman elleri zambaklı bir padişah olursam/ Sana uzun heceli bir kent vereceğim/ Girilince kapıları yitecek ve boş," Ece Ayhan, *Bütün Yort Savul'lar! 1954-1997* (Istanbul: YKY, 2004), 155.

Student”): “We heard that, if once again/ A bird is brought to the class/ Suicide will be the punishment/ In the regulation of behavior.”<sup>568</sup> (Some deaths in prisons over the course of the decade were reported as suicides.) In the same book, the word torture is used openly: “Torture!... This word, first in Karagümrük/ We heard, it was heard.”<sup>569</sup>

*Zambaklı Padişah* is a single poem comprised of twenty-two parts, a prologue and an epilogue. The “Zambaklı Padişah” (“Sultan with Lilies”) was created from the poet’s idea of a philosopher who carries a lily on his collar. At the time of the poem’s writing, according to the poet, he thought to title it “Oğlan dönencesi” (“The Tropical of Boyhood”), but he entitled it “Sultan with Lilies”.<sup>570</sup> As a result, the idea relates both to a philosopher and to the sodomite “sultan”. Homosexuality was not deemed repugnant in the Ottoman palaces. In the following sections, through representations of violence – a dervish who “voluntarily” has his “head cut,” or the killing of a child - poets who compromise with the state as organic intellectuals are stigmatized with negative labels of homosexuality.<sup>571</sup> In the end, veiled accusations appear in verse in the form of aphorism: “As the state’s dwarfs are forced to stand up twice/ the dwarfs of nature as well must have found a passage within themselves”<sup>572</sup>

Obviously, hot political issues were hidden among the words and idioms in these poems. To be precise, a protest against torture inhabits in the midpoint between existence and absence. For instance, Ottoman historians appear as blonde-haired people. Blond hair is a Western characteristic. As for whiteness, it is a sign of nobility. Thus, Ayhan alludes to the fact that our own history has been read through an orientalist mindset or through the eyes of the state. Anyone not familiar with these notions will not understand what is being said

568 “Duyduk ki, bir daha/ Kuş getirmek sınıfa/ İntihar olurmuş cezası/ Hal ve gidiş tüzüğünde,” *ibid.*, 159.

569 “İşkence!.. Bu sözcüğü ilk Karagümrük’de/ Duyduk duyuldu.” *Ibid.*, 165.

570 Ece Ayhan, *Dipyaşılar*, 44-45. Translator’s note: the word “Oğlan”, meaning pansy plays phonetically with “Oğlak”, for Capricorn.

571 “Devlet ve şairleri, iki kaşık gibi içiçe uyurlarken,” “The state and its poets, sleeping within each other like spoons”, *Bütün Yort Savullar*, 158.

572 “Devletin cüceleri nasıl iki kez ayağa kalkmak zorundaysalar/ tabiatın cüceleri de bir dehliz bulmuşlardır kendi içlerinde,” *Ibid.*, 161.

even though the verses are relatively. The political attitude is barely detectable. Undoubtedly, as is often pointed out, Ece Ayhan developed a language of antagonism. But whether it was perceived by readers remains questionable.

The second book of Ece Ayhan in the same decade, *Çok Eski Adıyladır* (*With Its Old, Old Name*) was published just after *Zambaklı Padişah*, in 1982. The book has a mostly experimental literary style with inter-textual references. The poems “Padişah ile Aslan” (“The King and the Lion”), “Kapaklı Saat” (“The Chain Watch”), and “Ah Tanzimat! Ah Tanzimat!” are instances of text transformation,<sup>573</sup> along with references to various historical characters and events, throughout the book.<sup>574</sup> But the majority of these references are indecipherable to people unfamiliar with the particular events and texts. The poet, by labeling Atatürk “V. Mustafa,” treated historical events as tools for opposition and the victims of the state as subject in his poetry.

In this way, political content that surpasses daily issues transformed into an aesthetic, even experimental form; it lost clarity but without reducing aesthetic quality, manifested the poets' identity as a marginal figure. These literary techniques released the poet from censorship and military surveillance, enabling the construction of an antagonist meta-language. Apart from this, it permitted the creation of a desired intellectualist poetry.

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573 Erdoğan Kul, “Metinlerarası Dönüştürmeler Bağlamında Ece Ayhan Şiiri,” <http://www.ussuz.com/2012/06/metinlerarasi-iliskiler-baglaminda-ece-ayhan-siiri/>.

574 Yahya Kemal Beyatlı (as “Şair Yahya,” “Anka,” p. 207; as “Sepici Kemal,” “Deniz Kıyısında Bir Otağ,” p. 219), Namık Kemal (“Sefineler ve Mektuplar,” p. 221), Şinasi (“Sefineler ve Mektuplar,” p. 221), Yunus Emre (“Sefineler ve Mektuplar,” p. 221), Tevfik Fikret (as “Yelekli Tevfik,” “Melankolya Çiçeği,” p. 203), Nurbanu Sultan (“Bir Hamam Aranıyor,” p. 189), Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (with the epithet “V. Mustafa,” “Kör Bir Çeşme,” p. 204), Talat Paşa (“Anka,” p. 207), Enver Paşa (“Pes Ben de Cumhuriyetçiyim,” p. 210), Barbaros Hayrettin Paşa (“Nigârî Böyle Yazdı,” p. 215), Mehmet Akif Paşa (“Ortaoyunu,” p. 216), Halet Efendi (“Kapaklı Saat,” p. 218), Fatih Sultan Mehmet (“Deniz Kıyısında Bir Otağ,” p. 219), Cem Sultan (“Deniz Kıyısında Bir Otağ,” p. 219), II. Beyazıt (“Deniz Kıyısında Bir Otağ,” p. 219), V. Murat (“Marmara Şehzadeleri,” p. 200), the events of 1971 (“Görmedik!,” p. 177), the death of Fatih Sultan Mehmet and related events (“Deniz Kıyısında Bir Otağ,” p. 219). Erdoğan Kul, “Metinlerarası Dönüştürmeler Bağlamında Ece Ayhan Şiiri,” <http://www.ussuz.com/2012/06/metinlerarasi-iliskiler-baglaminda-ece-ayhan-siiri/>.

However, Ece Ayhan's tendency to historicize does not overcome political stillness and inaction, as A. Oktay emphasized. Nor does it reflect “nostalgia” as a “field for escaping from the present.”<sup>575</sup> History is employed in his poems to reveal the realities not voiced in mainstream history. The downside of this history, the corruption, manifestations of authority, violence and homosexuality of which went unacknowledged, is thrust in the reader's eye.

E. Ayhan's sexuality and its manifestation in poetry is noteworthy. He describes the state violence in terms of sexuality,<sup>576</sup> a feature missing from the poetry of his followers, according to Ahmet Oktay.<sup>577</sup> Ece Ayhan spent his childhood in extreme poverty in a relatively marginal family, but the idea that his followers' lack a traumatic, marginal background is a consequential for their poetry is open to discussion. They suffered the trauma of a violent coup, economic transformation and an ensuing loss of status, as described in the fourth chapter. The young generation of 1980s manifested sexuality through violent, sometimes even disgusting and malignant metaphors, mostly reference to the authority of the state. Not only K. İskender, who used sexuality as a device for ridicule, but almost all poets abstracted sexuality from lyricism in their poems. The representation of struggle with the authorities through themes of sexual relationships and love was a typical trope of the period.

575 A. Oktay, “Siyaset ve Siyaset Dışı,” *İmkânsız Poetika*, (Istanbul: Alkim Yayınları, 2004), 106. Original publication: *DeFTER* journal, 19 (Winter, 1992).

576 *Zambaklı Padişah* ends with a poem “Balaban Onu Beslemeden Öncedir” (“Before the Bittern Feeds Him”). Bittern in Turkish also means husky man, which refers to the ruling power: Two monks stirring ashes praise a beautiful boy (with homosexual charm) in the first part. The abbot asks him to “have the night together.” The boy falters. The abbot wants to give him a golden turnip. The child refuses and “does not bat an eyelid that night.” “In the morning a monk he meets in the yard asks him the time.” This narrative poem is obviously an allegory of the present. The monks, like the military forces, have uniforms and their order is similar to military forces. Sexual relation is an allegory of the practice of power. The boy is a yet not assimilated civilian with a yet indefinite sexual identity. Assimilation may be referred to by sexual relations. The story does not relate what really happened that night, but all other “monks” are sure that he has been assimilated. The case is similar to military intervention. The child's (civilian's) destiny is not clear at the particular moment (and date) of the narration (when the poem was written). Hence, the book's difficult verses end up expressing the position of civilians. (Gülce Başer, “Poetry of Self Definition, Turkish Poetry During the 1980-83 Junta Period,” unpublished master's thesis, Boğaziçi University, 2011.)

577 *Ibid*, 113.

Hence, young poets were inspired by Ece Ayhan's poetry, but had their own reasons, traumas and experiences of marginalization. They were attracted to his methods as a relevant formulation of their own conditions.

Both Hilmi Yavuz and Ece Ayhan were accessible masters of their period, whose poetry expressed a political attitude and/or a radical protest of what they interpreted as Republican ideology. They were influential and illuminating for many poets of the young generation - from socialists to Islamists, from homosexuals to women - in their quest to produce in their own poetry a criticism of the system. By looking at their poems, the question of how politics developed in this more abstract poetry and what it protested become accessible to analysis.

### § 8.5 Murathan Mungan – An “Other” Identity

The issue of history as a part (or not) of identity definition was addressed by Murathan Mungan<sup>578</sup> in one of his interviews of *Gösteri*.<sup>579</sup> This is the precursor of the historicism of the 1980s. In other words, “resorting history as a consolation” under the stress of the military regime - or as a psychological shelter against its shocking violence - must also have been a tool in identity definition. Ahmet Oktay defined the era's historicism as a linguistic reaction to the process of individualization, changes in language, and consumerism; along with a trace of history in searching of the roots for building an identity. This historicism particularly developed a criticism of official history.

In *Osmanlıya Dair Hikâyat* published in 1981, an indisputable “other,” who has been ostracized for his ethnicity and sexual orientation (like Mungan), has poeticized the unofficial history of Ottoman culture and society. Mungan started his opposition with Ottoman history, because the Republic never fully rejected its roots in Ottoman state or the Ottoman society as a whole. The Ministry of Education consistently affirmed the classic, Ottoman past in its cultural policy. However, Murathan Mungan's description of a decadent Ottoman history is a protest against this officially affirmed history.

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578 A young poet of 1980s, who emerged at the end of 1970s but earned a reputation in the 1980s. He is among the most popular poets and authors of the 1980s generation.

579 *Gösteri*, April 1982.

In his first book, Mungan depicted sexuality as an indicator of decadence and violence, as Ece Ayhan, did. He mentioned sultans who were killed and heroes who fell from grace, defying society's embedded perception of national history and referring to tortures while in custody. The book is the story of "the Ottoman Empire, the sodomite of enormous lands," where "a pansy of the royal palace whose was body defiled by a ruffian" wandered around accompanied by "Esma Sultan's lesbian laughter." According to the book, "Istanbul narrates itself"; "officers with a coup d'état mindset" "would be eliminated from" "being the goldsmiths of genuine exchangers of time" and "despite the objections of" "military pashas/the compradors from Pera/and the collaborating cast," "Ottoman Empire would have to be justly appraised".<sup>580</sup> It narrates itself "from the armistice years that started with a long September."<sup>581</sup>

This is the story of "a motionless state's challenge to history," "even though the caftan of conquests is palpable through many eras."<sup>582</sup> In a manner of speaking, the Ottoman Empire was an unchanging ruler in an ever-changing history constantly in contradiction with history. The rest of the poem tells of the strangulation of an overthrown sultan. "Us" refers to the poet-subject, as the public - the "spice" of history. The public has "lived through each constitutional monarchy under an oppressive prosody."<sup>583</sup> Both constitutional eras of Ottoman Empire ended with periods of despotic rule, the first by Abdülhamit II and the latter by the Union and Progress Party. All successive juntas that came to power during the Republican era had promised to return to democracy, soon.

Each poem in the book was entitled "Kıssa" (Parable) and numbered. The book consists of thirty tales. The second concerns the enthronement of Selim III the Kabakçı Mustafa riot; the third relates Mahmut II's sultanate; the fourth

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580 "saraylı bir oğlanın külhandan bozgun bedeni" dolaşır, "darbeci zabıtlar" "hakiki zamanın sarraflığından" "elenecek"tir, "askeriye paşaları/ Peralı komprador/ ve işbirlikçi eşhas" "karşı çıksa da" "Osmanlı doğru değerlendirilmeli." Murathan Mungan, *Osmanlıya Dair Hikâyat*, (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2000, 6. Edition; first edition: December 1981), 12-43

581 "Anlatır İstanbul kendini. Anlatır ki kocaman/ bir eylülle başlayan mütareke yıllarından." Ibid., 44

582 "Fütuhat kaftanı her dem belirgin," "kımılıtsız bir devletin tarihle tenakuzu," Ibid., 5.

583 Ibid., 6.

is about the poet Bâki, the architect Mimar Sinan, the illustrator Levnî and Muhibbî (Süleyman I), situating them unchronologically against the verses of Tevfik Fikret's, embodying all the corruption, lies, and treason of the Ottoman Empire.

The book is the story of entrenched characteristic of the empire the violence it experienced and pain it caused. The power practices of the rulers are portrayed in the form of homosexuality, especially through metaphors of sodomy. The Ottoman Empire is defined as “the nomadic master of foster-lands,” thus not the genuine owner of these lands.<sup>584</sup> In this country, especially women buried their grief underneath their sorrowful homes.<sup>585</sup> All attempts at revolution are challenged by the government; thus, they are a kind of suicide.<sup>586</sup>

Each sultan executed his brothers when he assumed the throne. Although the Ottoman cultural legacy embodies many unique works of art and an authentic cultural history, its values are imprinted with the dark mark of an “execution decree.”<sup>587</sup> Sultans retained their throne through successful wars (the income of the Janissaries was predicated pillage), therefore the enthronement gratuity of the sultan always rested on the deaths of people through wars or

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584 “That is the nomad sir of the step-lands”, “yani üvey toprakların konargöçer efendisi,” Mungan, *Osmanlıya Dair Hikâyat*, 25.

585 Ibid., 29, “and they exist with rattles of candy sellers/ misty streets he minds/he the sliding fringes of wretched mansions/ .../ persistently hidden has the echoes all the sounds/ persistently hidden the pains,,” “ve şerbetçi çingiraklarıyla vardırılar/ puslu sokakları geçirir hafızasından/ kahırlı konakların sürmeli pervazları/.../ inatla bütün sesleri saklamıştır yalnız yankılar/ inatla saklanmıştır acılar.”

586 Ibid., p: 35. “You, the ottoman, with the young Turks within old your beard weighty/ dying for revolution is not/ a suicide/ the gracious state you fight/ beware/ will eat you/ as you persist in young Turkness.” “sen ey jöntürk gençliğini hâlâ yaşlı sakallarında taşıyan osmanlı/ devrim için ölmek başka/ başka şey intihar etmek/ savaştığım kerim devlet/ bil ki/ sen jöntürk kaldıkça/ seni de yiyip bitirecek.”

587 Ibid., 46-47. “Each sultan as he comes to throne/ the countryless land behind/ a sea to depend/escapee from earthquakes/ .../ the gate of happiness in Ottoman skies/ in the most baki(immortal) poems and the levnî miniatures of its/ even the most sinan's mosques/will exist the charts of death,” “Her padişahın tahta çıkışında/ başını koyacak bir deniz arayan/ deprem-lerden firar/ülkesiz toprak/ .../ osmanlı arzında dersaadet/ en bâki şiirlerinde ve levnî minyatürlerinde/ en sinan camilerinde bile/ölüm yazan fermanlarıyla varolacak.”



executions, despite their initial contentment with obtaining additional income.<sup>588</sup> The book ends with the passing of power from an individual to a social class. A new era was commenced by Mustafa Kemal.<sup>589</sup>

In fact, three important elements of the book portend the upcoming poetry movements and political demeanor of the young generation of the 1980s: the use of Ottoman Turkish, manifestation of historical or scientific knowledge in poems, and the exposition of the dark aspects of the values and symbols promoted by the Republic. Mungan had to justify the archaic language and words he preferred to use in this book.<sup>590</sup>

Choosing archaic words worked to create a historical atmosphere, and it is appropriate to accept this aspect of the book in such a context. Nevertheless, the *Sahtiyan*, dated 1985, also includes such vocabulary. This means that the objective was not just to create a historical moment. The poet's books of the following decade - the 1990s - were not written in such archaic language. If the poet was pursuing a historical atmosphere, his attempt to go beyond the limits of the Republican era symbolically is palpable in the work. Considering that Ottoman Turkish vocabulary was not as common during the period the book was published, compared to its contemporary usage; the poet presumed that he had an intellectually more sophisticated audience.

588 Ibid., 51-52. "Because the price of sultans to the people/is a duty of each penny-man he'd pay/and circumcision of infidel lands/ because each man needs a raven/ and each sultan reserve his throne/ with a war therefore/ the most mortal fest is an enthrone/ remolding the plaster of a beauty," "Çünkü her padişahın ümmetine hüllesi/ ödeyeceği her kuruş erkek için farzdır/ gâvur topraklarının sünnet edilmesi/ çünkü her erkek bir kargıya muhtaçtır/ ve her hünkâr saltanatına bir seferle tutunacak// bu yüzden her şenliğin en ölümlüsüdür cülûs/ kaniyla bir güzelliğin harcını yoğuran."

589 Ibid, 69. "Put a heading to a new page Mustafa Kemal," "bir yeni sayfaya başlığı koydu Mustafa Kemal."

590 Murathan Mungan mentioned in the *Gösteri* interview that he needed archaic words because they embodied the cumulative meaning that a poet may naturally need and use to create layers of meaning. He draws attention to two aspects of using archaic words: First is the diversity of meaning and profoundness these words encompass. Ultimately, the more ancient a word, the more it is encountered in proverbs, old sayings, poems, and idioms. The connotations it evokes and its profoundness will be more and deeper. Secondly, he mentions their function to create layered meaning. It is evident ancient words create a historic atmosphere. That said, *Sahtiyan* was not on history.

*Osmanlıya Dair Hikâyat* cannot be understood without some conception of history, art, and cultural history. For example, one metaphor refers to the Kabakçı Mustafa riot, but there are no clues as to what this incident was, who was involved or how it first started. The following lines neither provide the context nor the nature of the riot; “When a riot emerges from the passage of an interregnum/when a country drifts with the guiltless pale sun/neither Kabakçı Mustafa/nor Alemdar Paşa/are the unbound from such incident.”<sup>591</sup> It is not even clear what the interregnum refers to, since the Ottoman Interregnum dates to the first half of the fifteenth century.<sup>592</sup> Furthermore, the choice of old words that indeed have direct equivalents in pure Turkish (muhavere, levent, sükûn, esvap, and hikâye), again requires an intellectual audience.

Thirdly, murders in the palace, the insignificance of the imperial subject and state violence are emphasized almost in every story. Sodomy is often revisited in the poems, sometimes in the context of love. The state is seen as the source of violence. Sexuality is linked to power and hegemony, even when it involves love.<sup>593</sup>

The theme of a homosexual love affair appears for the first in time in the history of the Republic in Mungan's book *Sahtiyan*, released on 1984. It included a poem entitled: “Ahmet and Murathan.” Hence, the book was the projection of homosexuality as a natural and ordinary theme of poetry and is a small and significantly delayed revolution in Turkey's cultural life.

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591 Ibid, 8. “Bir isyan başlatılırken bir fetretin deheninden/ sürüklenirken güneşin suçsuz ağırtısıyla memleket/ ne Kabakçı Mustafa/ ne Alemdar Paşa/ bu hadiseden mücerret.”

592 Ibid.

593 “a magic, mastery for the nature/ sodomy is a sand fortune, tortuous instruments/ the governors fight/ the weapons pulled out forever,” “bir sihir ki tabiata maharet/ sodomita bir remil ayasofya çalgılarda çetrefil/ birbirine düşer beylerbeyleri/ kahırlı silahlar çekilir teknil,” p: 21, “bully as a one-night love/ a dervish burning in a fire by hostility/ would still love eyes of a poison,” “bir gecelik sevdanın saltanatından belalı/ bir aleyhin yalımında tutuşan derviş/ hâlâ bir zehirin gözlerini severmiş,” p: 39, “shines in eyes the machete of a vulgar lust/ starts the invasion of earth, the conqueror night's,” “parlar gözlerinde yırtıcı bir şehvetin palası/ başlar cihangir gecelerin yeryüzü istilâsı,” p: 16. There is an obvious indication of either the potent or the potency/power, whenever sexuality is mentioned; this could either mean the passion of the governor or the sultanate and conquering or invasion. There is a direct correlation between sexuality and potency/power.

The poems in the book were first written in the 1970's. The first poem "Sahtiyan," after which the book is named, is the poem of a poet-subject whose lover is imprisoned after having committed an honor crime. The feudal identity is clear: "Which of its traces will this tangled identity trail/like a feudal, branch fine/climbing into my mustache."<sup>594</sup>

In spite the confrontation with history to unmask exploitation, the impact of the feudal tradition that intrinsic marks on individual personalities. For example, it rendered the poet-subject as the hegemon (the source of hegemony - either seniority or the male identity - is not clear in the poem). Therefore, the subject became someone with high, almost disdainful self-regard.<sup>595</sup> The language of the poem evokes a man addressing a woman. Sexual and particularly homosexual references are not present; nevertheless, in the second poem, "Ahmet ile Murathan," the protagonists of the love story are clearly male.

The poem emphasizes "the early pains and bleeding of a yet unwritten sexuality." Concepts of power in this book are situated against love, just as they were in *Osmanlıya Dair Hikâyat*. Feudalism, ideologies, theories that conflict with practice and capitalism are all set against love.<sup>596</sup> Ultimately, Ahmet and

594 Murathan Mungan, *Sahtiyan* (Istanbul: Metis: 2000, 8. edition, 1. edition: 1985), 12. "Hangi izini sürecektir şimdi bu dolaşık kimlik/ feodal, ince bir dal gibi/ bıyıklarına tırmanan."

595 Ibid., 18. "if deprived of little things, the daily details/ my life and poems/ if my heart's living/ each love as a tale, each tale as love/ if bothering my eyes, the shadows of the grids of jails/ must be wandering my sensitivity/ around those proud peaks/ hence though we resist my dear/ though with history we confront/ the fight will last, and this hurricane feudal," "yoksunsa küçük şeylerden, gündelik ayrıntılardan/ hayatım ve şiirim/ her sevdâyı bir masal, her masalı bir destan/ gibi yaşıyorsa yüreğim/ gözlerimi sıkıştırıyorsa demir parmaklıkların gölgesi/ duyarlılığım mecbur geziniyordur şimdi/ o mağrur dağ doruklarında/ demek ki ne dirensen de sevgilim/ tarihle yüzleşsek de/ bitmeyecekbu kavga, bu feodal kasırğa."

596 "Hey you theory merchants/ the tragedies that don't fit to practice/ .../ and when will end this suicide long/ of the class digging his own tomb? / .../ look the icy waters of selfish accounts are seeping /to the temple of a class sinking," "Ey teori tacirleri/ pratiğe uygun düşmeyen tragediyalar/.../ ve ne zaman son bulacak uzun intiharı/ kendi mezarını kazan sınıfın/ .../ bakın çökmekte olan bir sınıfın şakağına/ bencil hesapların buzlu suları sızmakta," p: 36. Here, the mentioned class is obviously the hegemonic capitalist class. The social classes effect love directly: "and those apolitical theories say/ "what the hell has the love with class/ see the pages of history on bustards," "ve de ne ilgisi var sevdaların sınıfla/ diyen bütün apolitik teoriler için/ bkz. tarihin piçlerinin bütün sayfalarına," p: 36. "The fancy of Dadaloğlu and Köroğlu;

Murathan do not unite due to capitalism and class conflicts. Furthermore, the poem “Azatname,” which was written in 1978, indicated that hope for a revolution preserved and that the war against the bloodthirsty god of capitalism was deadly. People who suffer capitalism may shamefully suspend the war against it; nevertheless, “each milestone” would still be rewritten.<sup>597</sup>

The rest of the book is predicated on relationships and it contains poems that do not admit sexual identity. An important taboo of the Republican era's poetry was being demolished once and for all, and homosexual love became the theme of a poem for the first time ever. Later, in 1988, k. İskender would publish his first book and describing homosexuality in an underground world and portraying homosexuality as a form of protest, continuing the themes of sexuality-power relationships used by Mungan and Ece Ayhan. This time the protest would not merely be against the political power - that is to say, the authoritarian state - but against capitalist culture itself.

## § 8.6 A Modernist Transformation in Islamic Poetry

12 September military coup did not target Islamist group, as long as they did not oppose secularism. A conservative attitude was always present in state's cultural policies. Conservative figures were never entirely secluded from middle school syllabi. During the Nationalist Front governments of the 1970s, primarily Islamist figures were recruited into the Ministry of Education.

The National Salvation Party claimed to represent Islamism, and it was positioned within the center right/nationalistic bloc during the 1970s. This makes the argument for a monolithic Islamist line problematic. In fact, Islamism harbored many diverse opinions and ideas concerning secularism and

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the mountains/ Banaz long ago lost its power/orders the night/ a mineral that lost its name initial/ metal is its shape new/ and a mystic page in our history is Blonde Anastas/ what history denied from Köroğlu is ‘Das Kapital’/decomposes the elegy, it's feudal,” “Dadal'ın Köroğlu'nun muhabbetlisi dağlar/ epey devrandır ki yitirmiştir önemini Banaz/ buyruk verir geceye/ bir maden ki yitirmiştir ilk adını/ yeni şekli metaldir/ ve mutasavvıf bir sayfadır artık tarihimizde Sarı Anastas/ Köroğlu'ndan tarihin esirgediğiye Kapital'dir/ çürümüştür ağıt. Feodaldır,” p: 114.

597 Ibid, 51.

pluralism. Hasan Bülent Kahraman's assertion that Islamism produced a radical opposition against Republican ideology as a whole creates two debates. First, as mentioned, was there even an unchanging Republican ideology that persisted since 1923?<sup>598</sup> And secondly, did all the Islamists defend the same arguments as a bloc or not.

If yes, should liberal, religious people and institutions (that is, religious cults and communities) all be classified under the title "Islamist," or not? The reason why Islamism was transformed into a type of political representation was that it began being acknowledged as an identity in the 1980s. The actual criticism was directed at the principle of secularism which constituted an obstacle to the expression of belief in public spaces. The expression of one's personal beliefs was emphasized as a democratic right.

When Islamism started being represented politically as an identity, a series of further provisions were demanded surpassed basic freedoms of expression. Reconsideration of broad areas of regulation; the liberalization of religious apparel, worship, dress; and an updating of discourse were required. In other words, actions for beards for men, the prohibition of alcohol consumption in official areas and the arrangement of work hours to enable worship were all perceived as issues of ostracism. The Islamic life-style was being interpreted from the perspective of an individual's personal preferences and daily life. Still, under the military junta - when the subject was formulated as a democratic subject - Islamist liberals interacted with the democrat and liberal-leftist intellectuals of the era. Works of leftist poets like Orhan Alkaya were published in the Islamist *Yönelişler*, while Islamist poets like İhsan Deniz were present in the literary journals of young poets like *Üç Çiçek*.

The young generation of the 1980s, which was attentive to issues, related to poetry, prioritized aesthetic quality over ideology, and there was a consensus with Islamists in this respect. The modern style and content pioneered by Necip Fâzıl of the Islamic fraction opened a path by Sezai Karakoç and his successor, Cahit Zarifoğlu. İsmet Özel transitioned to Islamism in the mid-1970s contributed to its philosophical framework, and provided another aesthetic aspect for young Islamist poets.

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598 The chapter 3 and 4.

The political views adopted by the Islamist intelligentsia of the 1980s included:

- ◆ Criticism of western imperialism based on the ongoing Palestinian and Lebanese wars
- ◆ In terms of culture and aesthetics, a criticism of Orientalism based on Said and the argument of multiple-modernisms (the suggestion of an authentic, national Turkish/Muslim modernization, and aesthetic standards)
- ◆ Representation of personal faith and metaphysical reality (absoluteness) in response to the modernist consumption culture.

After a senior generation of masters with Islamic credentials including Sezai Karakoç, successors like the poets İsmet Özel, Cahit Zarifoğlu and Ebubekir Eroğlu. Along with the contributions of these poets, its rich sources were updated and the poetry expanded in context, enriched in form and style. The politics in Islamist poetry can be interpreted along three lines.

#### 8.6.1 *Politics of Poetry among 1980s Islamists*

Islamist politics typically praised the Ottoman past and yearned for an Islamic life-style along with its criticism of the West. With its emergence in poetry in the form of Mehmet Akif Ersoy's moralism, or transformation into Sufism by Necip Fâzıl, the form and content of Islamist poetry were designated. The Islamist criticism of Westernized "corruption" was predicated on tradition. On the other hand, this criticism was increasingly out-of-date and ineffective, as it had remained unchanged since the Tanzimat. But the cultural depression palpable in the capitalist West during the 1960s opened new critical horizons for Islamist intellectuals who closely surveilled of the Western world. Edward Said's criticism concerning Orientalism and Colonialism also stimulated this new area of criticism.

Had integration into global economy, which caused both economic and social transformations, not taken place along with the abolition of martial law, the violence and coup d'état of the 1980 would have probably been questioned at an earlier date. Starting from 1983, import trade freedom, export incentives, and rapid integration to global environment paved the way to rapid individualization and class mobilization, deepening the gaps between classes. Imports

of consumption goods and their advertising in media also contributed to the adoption of capitalist culture in society. These entailed the universal problems of the modernity, the most important of which for this research is the rise of popular culture against high culture.<sup>599</sup> The Islamist domain, not yet a major actor in capital accumulation produced a moral realm equipped with relevant references to protect Islamic values.

The philosophical paradoxes of ordinary modern individuals provided an opportunity for Islamism. Along with acknowledgement of Allah's presence as metaphysical fact, positivism gradually faded out among the intelligentsia. Thus, religious people were able to assume a critical stance against nihilism and modernism through their paradoxes. Besides, in those days Islamist scholars had chance to develop a deeper insight about Western culture and the concept of modernization by acknowledging them both as methods.<sup>600</sup> They could maintain their traditional religious philosophy as a cultural universe, on account of postmodernist approaches seeking responses to modernism and its philosophical shortcomings. Along with criticism of rationality and ethics, postmodernist waves emerging in the early 1980s were reanimating religious movements in the rest of the modern world, as well.<sup>601</sup>

After 1983, owners of SMEs (small and medium sized enterprise) located in various towns of Anatolia that represented by the Nationalist Salvation Party in the 1970s, started to become active partners in economic growth, market share and foreign trade.<sup>602</sup> They were still SMEs but growing rapidly. Thus,

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599 The social transformation is comprehensively analyzed in Chapter 4.

600 Hasan Bülent Kahraman defined the modernism of the Republic of Turkey, not as an internalized philosophy, but as a method. *Türk Şiiri Modernizm Şiir*, (Istanbul: Agora Kitaplığı, 2004). In fact, this has been a favorite theme among conservatives since Tanzimat years.

601 Ömer Çaha, "Ana Temalarıyla 1980 Sonrası İslami Uyanış", *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce - Volume 6 -İslamcılık*, Ed: Tanıl Bora and Murat Gültekingil (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2014), 478-480.

602 See Şevket Pamuk, "Küreselleşme, Sanayileşme, AKP", *Osmanlıdan Cumhuriyete Küreselleşme, İktisat Politikaları ve Büyüme-Seçme Eserleri 2* (Istanbul: İş Bankası Yayınları, 2009), 273-283.

animosity against the West and capitalism (which made an RPP coalition possible<sup>603</sup>) was replaced by an obvious temperateness. Again, starting in the 1970s, culture, art, and literary figures responding to the pressures of modernism through a postmodern worldview, appeared in the Islamist domain.<sup>604</sup>

In the 1980s, the suggestion of a new type of faith conveyed by Islamic philosophy made new interpretations possible through Sufi philosophy.<sup>605</sup> Hence, the Islamic view not only able to interacted with Western philosophy but tackled modern, moral issues with reference to a concept of "spiritual training." For example, this world view resisted against the conflicts of modern life - such as the objectification of individuals - by making them the target of mass production, by attributing meanings or images to mass-produced goods (as Baudrillard points out) or by replacing certain realities with the projected reality of media(as Guy Debord elaborates). According to Sufism, on the other hand, the individual is nothing but a metaphor - a dream. All kinds of worldly illusions must be resisted to wake up from this dream.

So, during the 1980s, Islamist politics served not only the religious lower classes who did not have access to the benefits brought about by the Republic, but also individuals dizzy from the fast pace of societal transformation, constantly forced to make financial choices to survive. The desperate individual,

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603 Kemal Karpat drew attention to this aspect. This coalition was an enigma and provided many different justifications in various history books. It was explained by Karpat as "reaching a consensus in terms of anti-imperialism and social justice issues". *Türkiye'de Siyasal Sistemin Evrimi* (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, 2007), 339-341.

604 The real issue is that these thoughts and approaches have never been subject to actual criticism and certain questions have never been asked. Ultimately, Islamists had their own philosophical resolution with an integrity onto itself. Nevertheless, a complete response to the West was never worked up, since the question was never asked. Neither the positivist faction nor the Islamists were eager to develop a satisfactory Islamic notion and ask these questions... After all, by nature, questioning was not a part of Islamist view; mystic philosophies were seen as Allah's blessing; intuitions established by "hikmet" (wisdom and profundity) not by rationalist inference. In his context, the Islamists might have neglected actual criticism even if it were possible.

605 ... which in itself is a type of movement emphasizing that absolute truth can be perceived from different perspectives.



dealing with a new language with semantic loss, and with a new media reality,<sup>606</sup> was eager to escape from the freedoms acquired through isolation - a slippery society in which traditional social ties were gradually severed (as described by Fromm).<sup>607</sup> Embodying all of these characteristics, many individuals of various classes and backgrounds united the under Islamic worldview (i.e., under Islamic communities and sects) embracing a contemporary philosophical system moderate in its religious attitude.<sup>608</sup>

### 8.6.2 *Defending Islamic Civilization*

Edward Said's work *Orientalism*, dated 1977, dealt with representations of the East Western literature, helping intellectuals from non-Western geographies reconsider their perspective on and understanding of Westernization. In efforts to they reassess their position vis-à-vis the West, attempts to define genuine culture continued long after the end of official colonization.

Although never directly colonized, the Ottoman Empire could not withstand the integration of powerful countries. In Turkey, as the successor of the Ottoman State, Western (i.e. French) influences were manifest in the principle of secularism, that is to say, the removal of religion from political and professional arenas during the process of modernization. The rise of Islamists in the 1980s resulted from a revision of Islamic culture. Islamic masterworks were re-published in simplified Turkish. İsmet Özel suggested the "Mind of a Muslim" in his work *Üç Mesele: Teknik, Medeniyet, Yabancılaşma* (1978).

Scientific thinking, which had been deemed the source of Western superiority up until then, was criticized for, as Ali Bulaç puts it: "dominating nature

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606 Nurdan Gürbilek defines the typical characteristics of the 1980s as changes in consumption patterns, self-expression to the extent of becoming exposure, and the metaphorization of language. Nurdan Gürbilek, *Vitrinde Yaşamak* (Istanbul: Metis, 2007).

607 Erich Fromm, *Özgürlükten Kaçış* (Istanbul: Say Yayınları, 2015).

608 M. Emin Köktaş, *Din ve Siyaset: Siyasal Davranış ve Dindarlık* (Ankara: Vadi, 1997). Gülalp also explains the inclination towards Islam in the 1980s as a result of a falling out of the "raw rationalism" first produced by Kemalist positivism and the rise of spirituality and spiritual values. I think the inclination from different layers of society origins from socioeconomic transformation. Haldun Gülalp, "Entelektüeller, Modernite vs Postmodernite", *Cogito*, spring, 2002, p: 215-225.

and humans, [and] manufacturing lethal weapons that sustain the continuity of exploitation.”<sup>609</sup> In this essay published in 1988, Ali Bulaç defined a person as an object to be used against others for the purpose of social sciences. He defined the social as ideological tools.<sup>610</sup>

Traditional values provided by the Islamic civilization were offered as alternatives whenever people felt exhausted of modernity, as seen in the period's major literary journal, *Yönelişler*, discussed in Chapter 6.

### 8.6.3 *Anti-Imperialist Discourse*

In the 1970s and 1980s, global super powers directly intervened in Afghanistan, Palestine and Lebanon, or supported the attacks of various local groups. Therefore, there was always implied or open an anti-imperialism on the agenda of new Islamist movements. *Mavera*, which launched in 1976 and continued through the end of the 1980s, grounded its political discourse on an anti-imperialist position, starting from the USSR's invasion of Afghanistan through the Motherland Party government.<sup>611</sup> Cahit Zarifoğlu, who was among the founders of the journal, used the themes of Palestinian and Lebanese wars and the Hama massacre in his poems in 1985.<sup>612</sup>

609 Ali Bulaç, *Çağdaş Kavramlar ve Düzenler* (Istanbul: Beyan Yayınları, 1976) and *Özgürlük Arayışı* (Istanbul: Beyan Yayınları, 1988).

610 Ibid.

611 Ömer Lekesiz, “İslami Türk Edebiyatı'nın Değişen Yüzü”, in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce Cilt 6 İslamcılık*, Ed: Tanıl Bora and Murat Gültekinil (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2014), 973.

612 “Daralan Vakitler” (“Time Overs”) for example, is a compilation of the wars in which Muslims were involved. “their cheeks, hair, eyes burnt,/ the bombs of toxic gas/ bit the bodies like snake, and licked/ their mouths burnt, with little tongues / All Beirut turned pale/ almost impossible to cry/ the fathers?/ their heads squashed by tracks,/ the Jews cut their mothers,/ thousands of kids under the canons and buildings// Beirut's tears now,/ nearby Jerusalem are...” “Yanakları, saçları, gözleri yanmış,/ Zehirli gaz bombaları/ Yılan gibi sokmuş, yalamış gövdelerini/ Ağızları, küçücük dilleri yanmış/ Bütün Beyrut sapsarı kalmış/ Sanki ağlamak imkansız/ Başları/ Paletlerle ezilmiş babaları,/ Yahudi doğramış analarını,/ Binlerce çocuk topların, betonların altında.// Beyrut'un gözyaşları şimdi,/ Kudüs'ün yanbaşında...” “Hama Sımsıcak” (“Hama So Hot”) concerns the Hama massacre. “A milestone on the road to Hadj/

While the cultural environment of the Islamic movements flourished with such themes, modern Turkey's integration with the capitalist world system was further facilitated by the coup d'état. More conservative sectors of society were particularly receptive to the Islamists' critique of positivism, along with the broader debate about the Republic, given the economic crisis that emerged at the end of the 1980s along with rapid cultural and financial transformation. The relatively pluralist moderate attitude of the Islamists also aroused sympathy among some leftist intellectuals. Literary works of some leftist authors appeared in *Yönelişler*, directed by Ebubekir Eroğlu, a reputable Islamist poet.<sup>613</sup>

As noted in Chapter 3, Islamist faction developed their radical criticism of the Republic earlier period than young the liberal poets did. However, they had not developed a pluralist, liberal criticism until the 1980s. They defined Islamism as one identity to be represented within the principle of democratic pluralism. For the first time, they had the opportunity to be included in the “capitalist, modern” state; hence, they communicated with young liberals and the left. In fact, both of these groups were eager to criticize Kemalist ideology, though the military regime of the time endorsed Kemalism, at least rhetorically. Therefore, the opposition developed a criticism of the cultural policies (of history and language) of early Republican period through criticizing “leftist” Kemalist statements.

The most important achievement of the Islamists was to develop a comprehensive criticism of the ideological and psychological void left unfilled by Kemalism. In this criticism, they referred to ancient Islamic tradition and the Ottoman past. This criticism was comprehensive and encompassed the junta regime, as well; nevertheless, this attitude was hidden behind a criticism of leftist views at a time when the liberal left was developing its own ideological position distinct from the Kemalist stance.

Below I elaborate on Sufi poetry and its world-view highlighting an alternative to the capitalist worldview in poetry.

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An equipage for heart and a corpse/...” “Hac yolunda bir merhale/ Kalbin ve cesedin azık yeri/...”

613 Ömer Lekesiz, “İslami Türk Edebiyatı'nın Değişen Yüzü”, *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce Cilt 6 in İslamcılık*, Ed: Tanıl Bora and Murat Gültekingil (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2014), 974. *Bürde* also followed this path from 1991 onwards.

#### 8.6.4 *Ebubekir Eroğlu's Mystic Route*

İsmet Özel's impact on 1980's Islamic poetry is undeniable. However, this impact generally became visible only during the 1990s. In the 1980s, Sezai Karakoç's impact on the poetry of the period was more apparent, though there was no primary shift in Karakoç's poetry in 1980s. Alongside Hilmi Yavuz, Ebubekir Eroğlu<sup>614</sup> was the other senior poet with whom the young generation was able to make contact. Considering *Yönelişler*, Eroğlu was a pioneer of a certain literary path. He published his second book of poetry entitled *Kayıpların Şarkısı* (Song of the Lost) in 1984, ten years after his first *Kuşluk Saatleri* (The Hours of Late Morning).

The *Song of the Losts* is entirely isolated from daily politics and consists of three chapters: "Sınırlar" ("Borders") and "Teyidler" ("Affirmations") consist of a single poem; and "Diğer Şiirler" ("Other Poems") is made up of seventeen short poems. The name "Borders" connotes a limited, imaginary scope of worldly living in opposition to an infinite, eternal being (Allah).

The first chapter broaches the concept of being bound by limits with pastoral elements: "If we could move as much as a wave's length/ there it is our wind/ .../ just as a drop of milk ages a woman/ we have slowed down by one more step"<sup>615</sup>. The poet observes nature and life even in lifeless plants, from the perspective of the first person plural. He shudders under the lightest wind and wanders along the borders of existence. According to Sufi philosophy, only Allah, as the absolute being, really exists. Since Allah is the embodiment of infinity, a second being is inconceivable. In this case, the universe and individuals as we perceive them - in other words anything in plural form - should be regarded as Allah's illusive reflections through different mirrors. Just like a passage in the Qur'an, everything is created from "nothing." Being created from nothing is interpreted as finding essence in nonexistence. In this poem,

614 Ebubekir Eroğlu, (1950) was a major Islamist poet also important for his essays.

615 Ebubekir Eroğlu, *Berzah – Toplu Şiirler (1968-2006)* (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2011), 91. "Bir dalga kadar yer değiştirse/ işte/ rüzgârımız bu/ .../ bir damla süt her kadını nasıl yaşlandırır/ bir adım daha yavaşladık."

the artist is trying to feel “non-existence” by reducing himself to lighter sounds and winds and by observing the world.<sup>616</sup>

The passages in the Qur’an that represent creation were written in the first person plural. The fact that the poet-subject also uses first person plural and talks about earthliness in this chapter does not mean he wants to sublimate himself, but indicates an avoidance of saying “me/I” which would divinize himself. The poet-subject starts using “me/I” - that is, the first person singular – in the third part on.

The poet uses both the pronouns “I” and “we” in the rest of the poems. Daily life is pictured in these poems. It is implied that the poet figured out the secrets of the universe for just a moment, but could not preserve this state and had to return to the physical world. From this point, the people are pictured in flames, along with their fears and in their most ordinary selves in the poem. “Other people” also refers to settlements like cities, towns, and villages. It is as if nature is essential for Eroğlu’s poetry, while the other places that coexist with other people are ignored -either because people seem secondary or because they are fictional. And in each step, the poet experiences his limits.<sup>617</sup>

In the ninth part on “Yedinci Yön” (“The Seventh Direction”), he describes the state of “*hikmet*” (holy wisdom). It is the discovery of certain secrets about existence. He starts this part with a reference to Nesimi: “without passing through cities that Nesimi fit in...” Nesimi was a wise dervish and the city that he fit in was his Nesimi's holy rank. The poet-subject admits that he has not yet reached his rank but is gaining great wisdom along the way: “trees stand without having to know balance/bird learns to fly and trees learn to drink water

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616 This could be considered a desire to reach divinity as described in Nesimi's poem: “Sometimes I rise to the heavens and watch the world / Sometimes I descend upon the land and the world watches me.” “Kâh çıkarım gökyüzüne seyrederim âlemi/ Kâh inerim yeryüzüne seyreder âlem beni.”

617 “conquer this mountain with its foot/ within the fire of Namrud turning back to inside/ when sniffing the body of a fly/to fit in your own rules/ deliberately against closings and capsizings/ conquer this mountain with its foot as well,” “bu dağı al açıklarını unutma/ bir sineğin gövdesini koklarken/ içine dönen ateşine nemrudun/ kendi kurallarına sığışmaya/ kapanmalara kapaklanmalara inat/ bu dağı al açıklarını da,” Ibid., 96, “I wandered around up the hills/ as a wanderer lost his pass,” “dağda dolaştım/ pasaportu yitik bir gezgin gibi,” Ibid.,:97.

/water to collect for roots/and everything is a holy wisdom."<sup>618</sup> It is again admitted that each existence has its own wisdom as declared in the Qur'an,<sup>619</sup> And Allah has taught humans, as well as other creatures and even the non-living, everything. The poet-subject is a witness to this. At the end of this part, he criticizes positivism and exactness with following words: "I was born into a language that doesn't know MAYBE." In the world of Sufism, even people's existence is a probability, not a fact. The poet learns balance from the "rivers." He craves for the "eternal language," the language of infinity, which he lost by learning the language of positivism.<sup>620</sup>

The second chapter "Teyidler" is a poem on the experiences of dervish acknowledged by the poet-subject. In this chapter, Sufi jargon is more distinct. A dervish's voyage towards the "truth" is portrayed via word pairs like mirror-foil and dervish-*hafiz*. The word *hafiz*, which is the person who thoroughly memorized the Qur'an, refers to a sublime rank. That person comprehends and protects the Qur'an and in a way becomes the Qur'an itself. Nevertheless, the physical body "still persists" (meaning that it has not yet reached the state of *Wahdat al wujûd* or the unity of existence).<sup>621</sup> It is a moment of ecstasy

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618 Ibid, p: 102-103. "dengeyi bilmeden durur ağaçlar/ kuş uçmayı öğrenir, ağaçlar su içmeyi/ su toplanmayı kökler için/ ve her şey bir hikmeti."

619 The first passages of the Alak surah: "1. Read! In the Name of your Lord, Who has created (all that exists), 2. Has created man from a clot (a piece of thick coagulated blood).3. Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous, 4. Who has taught (the writing) by the pen [the first person to write was Prophet Idris (Enoch)],5. Has taught man that which he knew not." These were the first verses to be revealed to prophet. Resource :<http://www.noblequran.com/translation/surah96.html>

620 Ebubekir Eroğlu, *Berzah*, 103.

621 This explanation is required by the poem. Nevertheless, the verse - "The hafiz stands behind the mirror," "Hâfız aynanın ardında durur" (Ibid., p: 111) - constitutes an issue, since it could mean that the state of being is aware of the mirror, as well as being at a state that transcends the mirror. Reaching *Wahdat al-wujûd* is called "yakıyn" (near) and is defined as a three-phased path: Knowledge approximating, approximating by witnessing the truth and being close by becoming the *Wahdat al-wujûd*. The knowledge discovery here should refer to passing onto the state of closure by witnessing "dervish silent watching the waves of man/ touches his brightest nodes/ looks into the mirror the hâfız became a secret himself/ how on earth stands the body/ touches my back the gifts of a moment and I tremble/ and that moment stays and I cannot pass trough/ life dissolves to a power melting," "İnsan dalgaları önünde susan

where all earthly things become like a child's toy. The rest of the poem depicts the dilemma between plural and singular pronouns (between abundance and uniqueness) because he cannot permanently remain in the uniqueness state. This spiritual state is always “momentary”.

The first poem of “Other Poems” entitled “The Song of the Losts” is about tending to religious life and giving up worldly agony.<sup>622</sup> The poems “Help me” and “Proposal” are about the desire to sense the universal flow of energy. These poems emphasize the vitality of nature, further attributing consciousness to the objects such as rocks and water. Grounding himself in Sufi philosophy, Eroğlu again resists capitalism and the capitalist culture that “commodifies” everything through mass production. As a matter of fact, the poet thinks each object has its own consciousness; he speaks and listens to them. According to Sufism, the power that holds atoms together and gives them the form of an object is conscious, as well. This is the manifestation (becoming apparent) of Allah's “power” on earth's surface.<sup>623</sup>

The search for the absolute is embedded in almost all poems of faith. The unknown is not scary, but the individual cannot easily reach it. The poet-subject wanders around in nature, observes all creatures and tries to render himself non-existent in order to reach it.<sup>624</sup>

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derviş/ el sürer en parlak yerlerine/ hâfızın sırr olduğu aynaya bakar/ bedeni hâlâ dayanır her nasılsa/ arkama dokunur titrer bir anın besileri/ işte o an geçmez ben de içinden geçemem/ hayat çözüdür eriyen bir güç olur” Ibid., p: 112.

622 Ibid, p: 127.

623 “The stone does not tell much”, “taş çok şey söylemiyor”, (A.I..y., s: 134 “Geçit”), “ivies stacked in supplication,” “sarmaşıklar yığılı yalvarışta,” (Ibid., p: 134 “Passage”), “the shadow wrapped around my feet,” “ayaklarıma dolaşan gölge” (“Being Happy,” p: 135), “the soul/ that budges the wind / that wakes us up,” “bizi uyaran/ rüzgârı kımıldatan/ aynı can,” (“Soul,” p: 136), “the rocks always talking to me,” “bana hep konuşan kayalar,” (“Mist,” p: 139).

624 “here around I know/ here around not far away/ sees me and I'm searching for,” “buralarda bir yerlerde biliyorum/ uzakta değil buralarda/ o beni görüyor ben arıyorum,” “Night Lights,” p: 142), “like the parts where the artists declares existence,” “ressamın ben buradayım dediği yerler gibi,” (p: 144), “you gave me that I stand/ I left the day there diffused me like a smell/ so long as it ends in a mirror of secrets,” “bana kattıklarına dayandığım/ bir koku gibi nüfuz eden günü orada bıraktım/ madem ki sırlı bir anaya kapanır” (“Wings of the Night,” p: 147).

The feeling of flow - the state of existence that is similar to a river - harbor both plurality and singularity, just as portrayed in Herman Hesse's *Sidharta*. The poet refers to the will submit to the river and exist in it as a drop of water without ever trying to change its flow. The awareness of water constitutes both the drop's life and the river's essence.<sup>625</sup> The metaphor - "still water" - that appears in the poem from time to time refers to the inability to feel the "flow".

The success of this book is in its ability to highlight a critique of capitalism freely while avoiding ideological fetishism. It expresses its political position with symbols and jargon, but without including any reference to current politics or any civic regime. Perhaps, the political direction of the references in the poems were so clear that, it was already positioned before being published. The book is written in new Turkish and in a much simpler style than the works of other young generation poets like Hilmi Yavuz (who was not entirely detached from the left at the time), Seyhan Erözçelik, Osman Hakan A., Vural Bahadır Bayrıl, or the even social realist Orhan Alkaya. However, Sufi themes like *hikmet* (wisdom), secret, mirror and river served as poetic jargon. This jargon was reproduced repeatedly, producing poetry in a modern sense.

## § 8.7 Summary

This chapter focuses on poets of the 1980s who started their literary journey during the previous decade (or earlier) and who created poetry of abstract images and metaphors, which were a typical literary feature of 1980s. These poets' work during the 1980s and the political content conveyed in their poems have been elaborated. These poets preferred to reveal their political views by charging literary elements like language, statements and even jargon, with meaning instead of making direct references.

Some young liberal-leftists attempted to manifest politics in a way inspired by Ece Ayhan's poems. In his books *Zambaklı Padişah* (Sultan with Lilies) and

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625 "There's a familiar flow apart from the bodies/ a moment in death/ that everything races with," "tanınan bir akış var bedenlerin dışında/ ölüm içinde bir an/ her şey onunla yarışıyor" ("Winter Room," p: 149.) That flow is in fact correct for Islamic mysticism. Each living and nonliving being returns to its origin. Of course, it has to die in some way in order to achieve that.



*Çok Eski Adıyla* (By Its Old Old Name) which were published during the decade, Ece Ayhan criticized official history by creating a world of decadence and by reading sexuality as an issue of political potency. The young poets who read his book perceived it as the poetry of a marginal poet-subject. Hilmi Yavuz, too, attempted to manifest his criticism by reproducing traditional forms, styles, poetry arts and vocabulary and he successfully influenced young poets.

A radical response to the identity issue was provided by Murathan Mungan who publicly disclosed his homosexual identity. The first homosexual poet-subject of modern Turkish poetry was evident in Mungan's poems. While young enough to be included among "young poets," he published his first poems during in the 1970s. But Mungan's works are analyzed in this chapter since they were among the pioneers of representation of an identity.

What these three poets have in common that their poetry requires readers to have a minimum intellectual formation. Among them, only Murathan Mungan refrain overextending the usage of vocabulary to the jargons of history, science, and philosophy. Therefore, his work was readable for a wider range of people. Their choice for intellectualism was a political protest against popular culture. A similar tendency was observed in the "Second New" movement in the 1950s. Thus, Ece Ayhan's being a "Second New" poet and this influence of the movement on Hilmi Yavuz should be no coincidence. Their protest can be understood as the poet's defense of his intellectual identity or a way of opening up a discussion mission of the Republican poets to represent and improve society. It also evinces a protest of the masses who ignored state violence or even an answer or protest against different factions of society. Ultimately, there was a growing gap between mass culture and intellectual, ethical arguments, in the 1980s.<sup>626</sup>

Islamist intellectuals of the 1980s produced a literary upheaval in response to modernist culture by reference to the sublime being (Allah). This upheaval was grounded in philosophical criticism that first emerged with Edward Said's *Orientalism* and it was directed against the culture of the imperialist West.

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626 For instance, Nurdan Gürbilek draws attention to the fact that the 1980s arabesque music no longer included ethical arguments or question. Arabesque music became a genre where winning and developing puissance along the route to victory was supported and justified. "Vicdan ve Teknik," *Vitrinde Yaşamak* (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2007), 92-101.

Young poets as Sezai Karakoç and his followers carried forward the traces of the “Second New” by utilizing aesthetic paths forged by this earlier movement. The comprehensiveness and scope of their criticism of modernity and its social and moral impact on culture improved and enhanced the intellectual understanding among the segments of the Turkish population they reached.

One of the major poets of Islamists, Ebubekir was a determining factor in the decade, not only due to his poetry, but also on account of the literary journal, *Yönelişler*, which under his direction became a medium for both Islamist and left-wing young poets who wrote imagist poetry. He was also a follower of Sezai Karakoç reproducing the discourse and jargon of tradition in poetry. His works during the period were written with a simpler language and a clearer image system compared to those of the liberal leftists and the young poets. With the transcription of ancient masterpieces into new Turkish, the contributions of Hilmi Yavuz and a young generation of poets who closely studied Western philosophy and literature, Islamists had a breakthrough, creating their own niche of literature and tradition. They predicated their poetry on a philosophical assumption a “meta-being,” building their arguments on a metaphysical ideal and a questioning of the modern.

In the following chapter, the books of the successors of this chapter's poets - the best representatives of the younger generation of poets - will be analyzed in terms of their political content.

## The New Generation Between the Political and Apolitical

The poetry analyzed in this chapter is typical of poetry of the 1980s, in general. The analysis has focused on the “poet generation” until now, but the young poets of 1980s became influential in the following decade - and they still are. In the present, they determine the current agenda of poetry both through their status as senior poet and as chief editors of the major literary journals. However, they were marginal in the 1980s; indeed, they were only trying to survive.

Their poems cannot be considered distant from day-to-day politics. Some poems even entertained hot political issues, while others were based on the internal feelings of the poet. Nevertheless, these poems can be analyzed together due to the following features they had in common:

- ◆ They lacked the theme of collective welfare.
- ◆ They did not embody any hope for “better tomorrows”, which is indeed the essence of social realism. On the contrary, they reflected either a cynic irony, or a melancholic nostalgia.
- ◆ They were the poetry of the individual. Therefore, they were mostly introverted.
- ◆ Social issues such as torture and state violence were occasionally mentioned in these poems, but even then, they appeared in particular aesthetic form, that remained almost indeterminable by readers. Or they remained as protests buried in dilemmas of irony, or as components of the underground world, as in

the poetry of k. İskender. There was no option of a promising future in these poems.

When it comes to the Islamists, they focused on their own discourse of seeking a divine life. Islamist literature could be read in terms of socialist purposes such as collective salvation through good morals and ethics, as in the work of Mehmet Âkif Ersoy. In their anti-capitalist attitudes of the journals of the 1980s, we saw the Islamists' desire to "feel safe" through belief in the "absolute truth of the absolute existence - Allah" as an alternative to the chaotic world of capitalism. While Islamic poetry appeared to carry some socialist content, it actually reflected an individualistic discourse of the pursuit of "the truth" as in Ebubekir Eroğlu's works where Islam served as the identity of the poet-subject. Islamic poetry followed the aesthetic space and questions about consciousness opened up earlier by Necip Fâzıl and Sezai Karakoç.

Young poets, distancing themselves from collective, ideological politics, protested the instrumentalization of poetry for the purposes of revolution, particularly in the late 1970. They criticized poetry laden with cliché, political imageries, labeling it "slogan poetry."<sup>627</sup> While Metin Celâl was launching debates on poetic aesthetics in various journals, Tuğrul Tanyol was emphasizing the traditional sources of poetry over ideological questions.<sup>628</sup> Ali Günvar was focused on the interaction between poetry and philosophy. Islamists, on the other hand, accepted classical Islamist texts as sources, claiming that current

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627 Özdemir İnce's essays are similar to those of Metin Celâl's, as well the theoretical books of R. Wellek, A. Warren and Suchkov, which had been recently translated into Turkish. İnce is known to have strong foreign language skills, often referring to foreign theoretical books of Western literature. Translations of literary theory boomed in 1980. Ragıp Zarakolu, a major publisher of the period, explains that this was because of the general prohibitions on publications of political issues. Publishers in the 1980s tended to publish translated books, whenever domestic books on social and political issues were prohibited.

628 Metin Celâl discusses the difference between poetry and verse pieces in a long essay entitled "Why New Turkish Poetry," in *Varlık* in March 1986. "A poem must be a 'poem' before anything." He explains the difference with the concept of "image system" borrowed from Attilâ İlhan. He delineates his approach in another essay in *Broy* in October 1986, claiming that poetry of the 1970s was linked to that of the 1940s that it focused too much on content and neglected form. Therefore their verse pieces mostly lacked aesthetic qualities to be poems.

Islamist literature should strive to be the best reinterpretations of those sources. Also, some other poets positioned folk poetry on the border between the social realist poetry of the 1980s and the young imagist poets Adnan Özer stands out as the most outstanding representative of this persuasion.

The politics incorporated in the poems of young poets were arrayed along three main dimensions:

- ◆ Issues of individual identity and the problems of defining identity in a capitalist system or junta regime were represented by such themes as roots, tradition, and the urban/rural dichotomy.
- ◆ The protest of daily routine was made manifest in such themes as nostalgia, escapism, suicide and narcissistic love.
- ◆ The protest of the ruling power and was represented by such themes as family, friendship, father, destructive sexuality, and rape.<sup>629</sup>

Several young poets used all of these themes, but the choice of their focus was determined by personal experience. For example, İhsan Deniz was keen to develop the dervish identity in poetry. Osman Hakan A., Vural Bahadır Bayrıl, and Tuğrul Tanyol, who interacted with Hilmi Yavuz, were keen to reproduce traditional literary forms. k. İskender liked being an underground poet where he could loudly protest the ruling power, while Adnan Özer and Haydar Ergülen emphasized their rural background like Haydar Ergülen. The latter insistently mentioned his will to preserve his political identity while adapting to capitalist urban life. Seyhan Erözçelik chose nostalgia to escape from modern capitalist life and culture.

Poets that expressed the necessity of a return to tradition defined themselves as followers of a tradition and wrote neoclassical poems, resisting the circumstances brought about by liberal capitalism, the modernity imposed by the Republic, and the state violence of the junta, pursuing work in the vein of their master Hilmi Yavuz, instead. Islamists manifest their resistance by merging the “body” as the symbol of “worldliness” and the modern, producing a modern dervish-ism using traditional patterns. Ahmet Oktay notes that nostalgia, along with archaism were useful tools for this approach.

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629 Ahmet Oktay similarly explained these approaches, without naming them.

These literary tools, seldom appeared clearly, particularly sexual identities were always expressed timidly. In revealing his sexual identity, Murathan Mungan imagined himself as an inheritor of Ottoman culture. Lale Müldür, on the other hand, blended the woman identity with a mystic belonging, that transcended traditional mother or woman identities. k. İskender was uneager to mask his sexuality and protested the “system” with a giddy freedom reached by hiding underground and vanishing among nobodies. His sexual identity became his armor, in addition to marginalizing him. He attacked the sacred concepts of mainstream literary culture with the comfort of a man with nothing to lose.

### § 9.1 Haydar Ergülen: The Poet Is Yet an Individual

Haydar Ergülen’s<sup>630</sup> identity was politicized before 12 September, as he had been arrested after the 12 March memorandum, when he was only a high school student. His first book *Karşılığımı Bulamamış Sorular* (*The Questions Non-responded*) published at the end of 1981 did not refer to daily hot politics. The title of the first part of the book is “Poems of Prehistory” evoking Ahmet Erhan’s “BC Poems” Although Ergülen’s book was printed later, this does not imply a that it was imitation; on the contrary both were pointing to the Coup.

The first poem in the book, “Mother,” is a poem of an injured son who asks his mother to help him relax as the rain falls. The poet-subject questions having born from a human - a wish to detach from human roots.<sup>631</sup> But still it is a child’s refuge in his mother, and the word “child” is present in almost all poems of this part.

In fact, “child” is a metaphor or concept that appears almost obsessively in Ergülen’s poems. After all, Ergülen belongs to a generation that suffered a traumatic youth, as he often emphasizes. Still the child in the first phase of his poetry deserves a closer look “BC” refers to the past and the past of a poet

630 Haydar Ergülen, (1956) was among the most popular young poet of the 1980s. He was Alevi.

631 “The roads and the rivers mid mornings as we have/ why is a child born from a human?” “yollar nehirler kuşluk vakitleri dururken/ bir insandan mı doğar bir çocuk?” Haydar Ergülen, *Nar Toplu Şiirler 1* (Istanbul: Türkuvaz Kitap, 2008), 13.

who himself was only twenty-six can only refer to childhood. In this part, the heart of his sweetheart is also a child,<sup>632</sup> the poet-subject was a dream of a child, therefore neither the sound of his harmonica lower, nor did his hopes become exhausted.<sup>633</sup> Only children could start a day bleeding from its “node”, because only “they could devote themselves to the songs at all.”<sup>634</sup>

The poem for which the book was named “For the Questions Non-responded” is also in this part. Although the 12 September coup does not appear in the book, in this poem it was a determinant of the psychology being reflected. The poems “Due to Love, Death and Pain” and “For the Questions Non-responded” provide clues to this. Written in 1980, both poems tell about death, bleeding and pain. The 1980 was critically marked by a peak in street violence in its first eight months and its sudden replacement with state violence from 12 September onwards. Both poems are of “prehistory,” with links the childhood, because they are contained in that part of the book. At the time both arrest and the street implied the threat of violence for anybody with a political identity. The lines “who can enter such a day bleeding from its nodes/ the sound of death carrying screams/ or the children” reflect time in which they were written. Death was carrying the screams of children, indeed;<sup>635</sup> love brought only sorrow in such a world. The dreams are not shared and love is defeated. The child leaves the city in the final line...

In “For the Questions Non-responded,” on the other hand, the friend for whom the season “burnt his face” was either dead or dying, or had somehow

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632 Ibid., 14

633 Ibid., 15.

634 Ibid., 16. Children and childhood are praised as symbols of purity and hope, particularly in the 1980s. Notably, 1979 was UNICEF’s Year of the Child. There was an anthology printed that year: Orhan Ural, *Şiirlerde Çocuk* (Istanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları, 1979). In that book, the child appears as a child up to 1980s. Poems about childhood assumed the children were their main readers; therefore, they are mostly built of naïve memories. However, childhood suddenly ends in the 1980s. Now and then, childhood is presented as the naïve, safe and pure part of adulthood, as in the book of Ahmet Erhan, *I Survived Today Mum*, where the narrator gives feedback to his mother at the end of the day. Childhood often appears through this sense of loss or trauma in the 1980s.

635 Ibid., 16. “kim girer bu ucundan kanayan güne/ ölümün çığlıklar taşıyan sesi mi/ çocuklar mı yoksa.”

been left behind and suffering. The loss of friends was relayed as an unimportant – i.e., matter of fact - detail about the time just before and after the coup, but was obsessively mentioned in several poems. The frequent existence of lost friends in the poems refers to a different circumstance than the betrayal by friends featured in Ahmet Telli's "Let the Warrior Tell." The poem "Incompetent" by Murathan Mungan seems characteristic of the apoliticism of the 1980s<sup>636</sup> and the mentioned "mobs" were "tailored," - composed of simply "lucubrating on the streets, sleeping in parks and keeping the strangers away from the neighborhood." But the poem is about the breaking up of friendships: "are them who died/ who abandoned / and whose numbers, addresses and selves have changed." The loss of friends is a common theme of the 1980s, when traditional, collective bonds were being broken. And for Mungan, who was only thirty-five at the time this poem was written, the loss of his friend was the result of death.<sup>637</sup>

Turning back to Ergülen, "The Questions Non-responded," are those that were forbidden to be asked. A photo "leaks" from "its colors," in the gloomy atmosphere of a life under the ongoing threat of *ending*. Since leaking implies sinking of a sea vessel, the poem means the stock of memory is losing its colors. The memories belong to a youth that cannot stay indoors, due to their enthusiasm and vigor. Enthusiasm is defined as mountains growing with a revolutionary motive. At the end of the poem, a letter implying falling out apart, says, "some questions must be responded to with death."<sup>638</sup> The question

636 Murathan Mungan, *Mırıldandıklarım* (Istanbul: Metis, 2003, 11. edition, 1. edition: 1990), 56-60. "Ölenler/ terk edenler/ bir de telefonları, adresleri, kendileri değişenler."

637 There are more examples. Friends who died due to 12 September coup were themes of poems of Akif Kurtuluş, Ahmet Erhan, and Yücel Kayıran, a young poet of the 1990s.

638 Haydar Ergülen, *Nar Toplu Şiirler 1* (Istanbul: Türkuvaz Kitap, 2008), 18. "the season that burnt the face of a friend/ with the sorrow of a life thinned/ stays silently by the shoulder of memories// we could not fit the rooms, they were narrow/ when a secret sound dies in/ the enthusiasm wandered around crazily/ hills, oh hills// ... in a belated letter/ is your face perceivable/ honest and wet/ came up with a memory lost /...// though a callow craft/ some questions shall be by death met." "bir dostumun yüzünü yakan mevsim/ incelmış bir hayatın kederiyle/ sessizce durur anıların yamacında// odalara sığmazdık odalar dar/ içinde gizli bir ses ölürken/ dönenip durudu heves/ dağlar dağlar// (...) yüzün gecikmiş bir mektupta/ anlaşılır, dürüst ve



to be responded to with death at the end of a rebellion is the questioning of the silencing of the rebels during police inquiries.<sup>639</sup> What the poet implied is unclear, but it suggests questioning of the political movement of which he was a part in the 1970s. Death is unavoidable in the end.

If the patterns of fear and anxiety had not existed, this poem could be interpreted simply as a personal “friend loss,” since the violence is not apparent in the content.<sup>640</sup> The social events were so abstracted that they were transformed into individual impressions and the work became a poetry of deep resentment by a sensitive poet-subject. The main theme of imagist poetry of the 1980s was “personal trauma,” which was often the loss of a friend or relative, or at least the fear of it. Narcissistic disappointment in love and search of an identity were other common traumas. The personal experience of state violence does not directly exist in this poetry. Social cases transform into personal pain and violence loses its power, as seen in social realist poetry of the period. Politics exist only as structural criticism of the capitalist system, of official history, and of language - or as an impression left by an event.

For example Ali Günvar’s<sup>641</sup> poem of confronting the coup starts with “a misty autumn morning//with thinned ropes/ I landed sinner coasts/ the rest of my boats.” It is a completely personal experience - a poem of a defeat where the poet-subject is either the commander or king of defeated army: “And abandoned the burning eyes of my spawn/ to the dissolved ambition of the

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ıslak/ yitirilmiş bir anıyla çıkageldi/(...)// ne kadar acemi harcı olsa da/ ölümlle karşılaşmalı bazı sorular.”

639 For example, Enver Ercan, who prepared the literature pages in *Düşün*, was visited by a plain-clothes police officer, though he was merely an apolitical poet with a clean sheet. He discovered that the police knew everything about him and became astonished and irritated. Although martial law had lapsed, recording and follow-ups were going on. This was in the mid-1980s.

640 Consider the following lines: “so twin the climates/ to the moods of societies they serve/ childe corpses fell from the skies this year/ in place of snowflakes,” “iklimler ne kadar da benziyor/ toplumların hâlet-i ruhiyesine/ bu kış kar yerine/ çocuk ölüleri yağdı gökten.” (p: 31). These are rare verses that reflect the collective pain and stress in this book. Here again the eye of a kind person by nature softens and shapes the violence that the phenomenon embodies.

641 Ali Günvar (1953) was a young poet of 1980s linked to Hilmi Yavuz, but particular for his genuine epic tone.

cursed tulips, / in secluded Cybele marches/ consuming the shortening life of mine/ the final parts of, / screamed had I my pains/ to the senseless walls of dark tumulus// my noble weakness/o my noble weakness!”<sup>642</sup> Another significant message of this poem is the admission that the cause of the defeat in the love affairs. The poem exemplifies degenerate love affairs as a representation of power relations through sexuality instead of as a manifestation of love: “hence from now on/ neither the crestfallen rocks of the city of hollows/ nor the ancient age’s mirrored swallows/ or even the woman in the bed warms// can ease the distortion of our pains.”<sup>643</sup> The woman in these lines exists only for “warming the bed,” unable to ease the pain after the turning point mentioned in the poem. In Haydar Ergülen’s poem, on the other hand, the sweetheart he calls “my woman,” is the point of attachment to life.

Before coming to degenerate, withered love affairs in 1980s’ poetry, the individual in Ergülen’s poetry is shown to reflect the atmosphere of the decade. “Gece Yağan Sessiz Yağmur” “The Silent Rain In the Night” is a long poem reflecting the isolation and alienation that arose all at once from the rural man’s existence, the destruction of books, the obligation of carrying identification and showing it whenever the police ask, the sorrow of losing a relative and the pain of defining an identity with a double meaning reflecting both the obligation to justify oneself to the police and the relentless burden of representing and defending oneself to the society. Individual existence is not celebrated but challenged: “call it the freedom, the loosened bonds of heart.”<sup>644</sup> The poet created an atmosphere of a personality, invoking practices such as the obligation to carry an identification, and the defense of identity together

642 Ali Günvar, *Nisyan ve Rapsodi* (İstanbul: İstanbul Yayınları, 2002), 23, 25, 26. The poem was initially printed in *Şiir Atı* as mentioned in the Chapter 5. Therefore it was written in 1980s. “puslu bir güz sabahı, // incemiş halatlarla/ çektim günahlı kıyıları/ artakalmış gemilerimi,” “Ve terk edip zürriyetimin yanan gözlerini/çözünen ihtirasına ilenç lalelerinin,/ kuytu kibebe bataklıklarında/ tüketirken azalan ömrümün/ son çağlarını,/ haykırdım acılarımı/ duyarsız duvarlarına karanlık tümülüslerin// soylu zayıflığım/ soylu zayıflığım ey!”

643 Ali Günvar, *Nisyan ve Rapsodi* (İstanbul: İstanbul Yayınları, 2002), 33. “ki bundan böyle/ ne yılgın kayaları oyulan kentin/ ne aynalı antikçağ kırlangıçları/ ne döşeklerimizi ısıtan mutlak kadın// dindirebilir çarpıklığını acılarımızın.”

644 Haydar Ergülen, “Gece Yağan Sessiz Yağmur”, *Nar Toplu Şiirler 1* (İstanbul: Türkuvaz Kitap, 2008), 36. “Özgürlük deyin gevşetilmiş yürek bağlarına.”

as aesthetic sources in a single poem. This is the point of launching a poetry based on the personality and identity of the poet.

In the end, this poem reflected the period. The individual suffers from violence, oppression, death, as well as the alienation of the urban city. He is obviously an intellectual who also suffers from the destruction of books (millions of books were destroyed by military forces and the police in the 1980s). But these all-personal issues in the poem, no longer formulated as collective problems, even though they are experienced by everybody.

The provincial man with his “genuine” identity became a theme of poetry in the 1980s, represented as ordinary, neither a weakness from which to recover, nor something about which to be ashamed. Nurdan Gürbilek described and confessed this rural identity as a natural, spontaneous component of his personality: “here's my id card with my tears/ neither my name is there, nor my childhood/ my juvenescence a step beyond/ a rural voyager I am, sleeping uninterruptedly.”<sup>645</sup> The rural man inhabits various poems in this book, but this is quite different from that in the “New Folk Literature.” First, all poems are set in an urban environment. Second, they consist of problems of individuality. Third, the poet-subject does not expose himself; on the contrary, he turns inward to interpret the environment from which he is alienated. He is different from Gürbilek's rural man, described in chapter 4, 6, and 8, in that this rural man does not intend to expose himself and is not aggressive. He is just adapting to the circumstances.

The second and third parts of the book are entitled “The Poems Uttered in Low Voice,” and “Humanist Poems for Middle Class.” The “low voice” evokes the cautiousness of political activity under the junta regime. A criticism of the capitalist system occupies the rest of the poem. The first part of the poems start with a general depiction that becomes gradually personalized as the poems develop. But from this point on, the poet-subject dominates the text as the consciousness of the poem. The poems evoke the murmurs of the poet's protest in low voice: “I don't understand the capitalist relations/ you give

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645 Ergülen, *Nar*, 36. “kimliğim yanımda gözyaşlarım da/ ne adım yazılı ne çocukluğum/ gençliğimse benden biraz ötede/ kesiksiz uyuyan taşralı bir yolcuyum.”

money to have a rose in the market,”<sup>646</sup> “particularly on Sundays/ clipping the sun as a flower/ to the collars is forbidden,”<sup>647</sup> “I came to pick the corpses/ to be their well-wishers.”<sup>648</sup>

The last part of “Humanist Poems for Middle Class” is formed of four poems. They voice a criticism of the middle-class mind. The first poem criticizes the mentality behind “official history.” “The father” is a metaphor referring to the state in the poem “The History of the Fathers.” The first part of the poem tells how official history is written with blood - that the common people are of no value. The second part submits that official history is just a manifestation of power. The third part conflates the state with history in the line “Daddy history, I beg.” And in the final part, the poet-subject is threatened for the poem: “your daddy will show you soon!”<sup>649</sup> Haydar Ergülen, who was a sociologist, deliberately defined the state as the legitimizer of violence: “you kill or forgive after castrating.”

The second poem in this part describes the hegemony of the ruling power on individuals through a metaphor of surveillance of the questions by their question marks: “question is the big brother of the punctuations/ pulls the ears of sorrowful questions.”<sup>650</sup> The questions surrender to the hegemony of question marks, keeping within in their limits.<sup>651</sup> The third poem “A Happy Marriage” describes the poets-subject’s declaration to an “interviewer” that he has a happy marriage. It is a poem of self-exposition through confession, another typical feature of the decade defined by Nurdan Gürbilek.<sup>652</sup> The poem starts with a sincere description of a happy middle-class family but transforms into the performance of happiness by its end.<sup>653</sup>

646 Ibid., 43. “Aklım almıyor şu meta ilişkisini/ para verip gül alıyorsun pazardan.”

647 Ibid., 45. “Özellikle yaz günleri/ güneşi bir çiçek gibi/ yakalara yerleştirmek yasaklanmıştır.”

648 Ibid., 46. “Cesetleri toplamak bana düştü/ ölülerimin ardından iyi konuşacağım.”

649 Ibid., p: 55. “Baban sana birazdan konya'yı gösterecek.”

650 Ibid., 57. “Bir soru noktalama işaretlerinin ağabeyidir/ boynu bükük soruların kulağını çeker.”

651 “Şaşkın Bir Soru Nasıl Ayaklanır?,” 56-57.

652 Nurdan Gürbilek, *Vitrinde Yaşamak* (Istanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2007), 22-23.

653 The poem started with the declaration of the husband: “we're ordinary citizens, sir, as now/ we attach the happiness to the naughty strands of hair,” (“biz sade yurttaşlarız bayım şimdi olduğu gibi/ bir saçın haylaz tellerine takarız mutluluğu”). This is coupled by the voice of the wife: “the books decorating our walls are the mirrors of our souls/ .../ how nice is the color of

The final poem of the book “A Medieval Legend on high jacking” tells the loss of prestige of local men in the eyes of women due to the bandits who came to the city. The theme of castration is mentioned twice in the book, which is committed once by the state and again by these bandits. In fact, Haydar Ergülen compiled his poems about the junta in his third book in 1990. This may be explained by fear: Ergülen did not ignore state violence even in his first book, manifesting it with the metaphor of sexuality. As mentioned, this was typical for the period and may even be taken as a leitmotif. Furthermore, he manifested all of these in poems that problematized a newly emerged insincerity in relations linking all these to the middle-class morality, culture, and the power relations of capitalism.

Haydar Ergülen was writing the poetry of provincials who had settled in an urban city. He declared that the sources of poetry at a high intellectual level could be extracted from social the sciences as sociology, psychology, and economics (*Gösteri*, December 1981).<sup>654</sup> He was himself a sociologist with a career

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this book, pea green/ I shall knit a sweater to you my dear of that green/ a tragic novel are you reading, so has the winter come/ before the first snow we should dress of darks,” “ruhumuzun aynası kitaplar duvarları süslüyor/.../ bu kitabın rengi ne hoş filizi yeşil/ sana bu renk bir kazak örmeliyim kocacım/ trajik bir roman mı okuyorsun demek kış geldi/ ilk kar düşmeden koyu giysilere bürünmeli,” (Ergülen, *Nar*, 58-59). These verses aiming to cement the happiness with instant scenes that soon become a *happiness performance*, as described by Guy Debord. He argues that the language of spectacle is formed of the signs of hegemonic production, that are also the ultimate goals of production. Guy Debord, *Gösteri Toplumu* (Istanbul: Ayrıntı Yayınları, 2006), 37. The image of a happy family is constructed with signs such as fashionable hair styles, paternal family structure (“I let her”), and the signs of a perfect family: making love as Greek gods, making kids with green eyes and long lashes, and various signs of consensus.

654 Intellectualism is typical of the poets analyzed in this chapter. Tarık Günersel explains the tendency in a poem entitled “Island” in the June 1982 issue of *Yazko*: “Unseen before– so hungry we're for you!/ We're ten thousands over a few books./ (Down there/ theory/ is a tramp/ close like/ a solution/ far way but...)/ Lazy-dog particles that news throw/ each day we're riddled in hundred particles/ Each morning resews us our yarns of nylon/ More destructed every morning, more particles// An island isolated there is amongst the masses/ O theory so hungry we are to you!” “Rastlanmaz böylesine – öyle açız ki sana!/ Üç beş kitap üstünde onbinlerceyiz./ (Aşağıda/ teori/ bir tuzak/ gibi yakın/ bir çözüm/ gibi uzak...)/ Lazy-dog kıymıkları fırlatırken Haberler/ her gün delik deşmiş yüzbinlerce parçada/ Her sabah yeniden

in the advertising sector. He considered the social objectives of poetry as a limitation, believing instead that all things in the world have their own, innate functions. Hence, he defended the autonomy of the poet. The politics in his poetry was reflected through subconscious language as the protest of a marginal individual against the current order.

Haydar Ergülen easily settled into the literary world. This is also because of his choice of not establishing his individuality on class struggle. For example, the managers of *Gösteri* promoted him in their annual evaluation of poetry in 1987. He was somewhat older than other outstanding young poets were (was born in 1954) and had received a major poetry prize, which were determining factors for the journal's preference. Though his social criticism was similar to k. İskender' it left a more moderate impression. Its high aesthetic quality, his choice to use a relatively new Turkish vocabulary, and his moderate rural identity were all factored into the fact that he was featured in a mainstream journal like *Gösteri*. In the end, Ergülen amassed considerable group of readers in the 1980s.

## § 9.2 Sexuality, Destructive Eroticism and Gloomy Love Affairs: k. İskender

Sexuality exists on the dark side of poetry of the 1980s, mostly in a vocabulary expressing rape and disgust. Ahmet Oktay explained this with reference to Fredric Jameson's approach of cooling of the feelings and feeling endangered by sensitivity, along with decadent sexuality in a postmodern sense. He found

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dikiyor naylon ipliklerimiz/ Her sabah daha bölük, daha çok parça/ Kitlelerin orta yeri bir  
ıssız ada./ Ey teori! öyle açız ki sana!"

News was given as unrelated pieces and censored in the junta period. The disinformation was cleared up when a dossier on torture during the junta period was published in the news journal *Nokta* in 1986, which had a shocking impact on the people. Those were days when people were kept under arrest for days, waited for their court date in prisons, and were fired without solid reason; and television broadcast that the mobs were overthrown. Individuals were misinformed while leftists suffered utterly from state violence. "Fragmented personality" also refers to capitalist society. The poet subject discovering to have become an isolated island among masses could only speak with the "theory."

the origins of this attitude in Ece Ayhan, claiming that the main problem is the individual's alienation from himself from his sense of isolation and unhappiness emerge. According to him, the tendency for nostalgia had a similar basis,<sup>655</sup> but he also wrote in that essay, that nostalgia was part of the struggle with political stagnation and the mental depression of an intelligentsia damaged by the 1980 coup.<sup>656</sup> Perhaps these factors work in interaction with each other; after all, the decadent sexuality in Ece Ayhan's work also recalls state violence, as explained in the previous chapter.

Ergülen had written that the history of the father or the state either killed or castrated its sons. Castration refers to the prevention of all kinds of political existence in history. Poets, who were under threat of castration, like the rest of population manifested pathological love affairs and sexualities in their poems to represent the power of the ruling "father." Love and sexuality in this poetry served as a protest, since the poet aimed to destroy the ruler, not the lover. The workers in the glass sector make love to the glasses, which make their lips bleed in Orhan Alkaya's poem. And "the justice father cannot erect" but he "takes of our pants, panties curiously/ takes of our sliver skins carnelian flesh,"<sup>657</sup> in k. İskender's poem. There are several other examples.<sup>658</sup>

İskender Derman Över<sup>659</sup> is reputed as a marginal, urban poet. However, his first book is not that of a poet-subject living underground.<sup>660</sup> The reason for the reputation is probably his filthy, pornographic language; in fact, in the

655 Ahmet Oktay, "Siyaset ve Siyaset Dışı", *Defter*, 19 (winter- 1992), excerpt: *İmkânsız Poetika* (Istanbul: Alkım Yayınları, 2004), 116-117.

656 Ibid., 106.

657 k. İskender, *Gözlerim Sığmıyor Yüzüme* (Istanbul: Adam Yayınları, 1988), 13. "O sıyrır pantolonlarımızı, donlarımızı merakla/ sıyrır alır sim tenimizi akik etimizi."

658 Metin Celâl had a "castrated smile" for example. Dignity "gets pale." The face of his sweetheart "dissolves to deteriorate" in his mind. He makes love with a "woman keen on herself," (*Adım Ölüm*, İstanbul: Çizgi Yayıncılık, 1986).

659 İskender Derman Över - k. İskender - was born in 1964. His first poem was printed in *Milliyet Sanat* journal in 1985. Later he was printed in major literary and poetic journals of the decade as *Varlık*, *Gösteri*, *Adam Sanat* and *Şiir Atı*. He is among the most popular poets of his generation.

660 According to Bâki Asiltürk, he becomes a marginal after his first book. Bâki Asiltürk, *Türk Şiirinde 1980 Kuşağı* (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2013), 403-404.

beginning he was only one of the followers of Ece Ayhan: "I chose a God too much sodomite/ earless noseless just like a cat black."<sup>661</sup> But he was underground for his recklessness and courage, attacking the mainstream figures from the perspective of the marginal "other." Therefore, he used the jargon of the underground as a language of criticism, although he was not yet personally an underground poet.

k. İskender's first book *Gözlerim Sığmıyor Yüzüme* (*My Eyes Don't Fit My Face*) was published in 1988. The book was successful because its position at the crossroads of various politics, along with the aesthetic skill it demonstrated. The poet-subject is the simultaneous victim of the junta and of social degeneration. Further, he is among the producers of this degeneration - a narcissist who emerges as a by-product of the culture of capitalism. He is a "loser" leftist, an intellectual alienated from society who even protests it. He is bisexual - both macho and homosexual. He became a vampire after having bitten by the capitalist system.<sup>662</sup>

All poems are written in the first person singular. There is no "we" because the poet is alone.<sup>663</sup> The only possible plurality is in the context of his relationship to his sweetheart. This is similar to Haydar Ergülen's book mentioned in the previous section. Both poet-subjects return to their mothers for shelter.

661 K. İskender, *Gözlerim Sığmıyor Yüzüme*, (Istanbul: Adam Yayınları, 1988), 22. "Bir tanrı seçtim çok kulampara/ kulaksız burunsuz aynı bir kedi kara."

662 "The word of brotherhood/ between two vampires at some. We: / fest of swear, without date and holiday." "İki vampirin karşılıklı ettikleri/ kankardeşlik yemini biraz. Biz:/ tatilsiz tarihsiz küfürleşme bayramı." (k. İskender, *Gözlerim Sığmıyor Yüzüme*, 56). These lines are excerpted from a poem on a love affair. But vampire-hood must be considered in relation to "official" concepts, as holidays, the language and history. "Fest of swear" evokes arrests, where people reported to have been sworn to along with torture. Something "without date and holiday" evokes a similar process, at the end of which people become vampires. This has nothing to do with sexual marginality. But homosexuality is also a political issue. The transsexual singer Bülent Ersoy was prohibited from official television channels in those days. The prohibition was repealed after 1983 by Özal, who also went to the program to watch her on the stage. But this was perceived as an individual gesture.

663 The friends are either shot - "they shot my friends/ the winter fell on the city stereo," "vurdular arkadaşlarımı/ stereo düştü şehre kış" - or they do not exist at all - "d) once there was a boy. He had no friends to help him..." k. İskender, *Gözlerim...*, 89, 41.



(Recalling the poems of Ahmet Erhan and others on motherhood, taking shelter back in mama's lap was a general tendency among the youth of the 1980s). Mother is the one whom one reported when coming home late, indicating the possibility the poet-subject was dependent on his parents as a university student. The relationship with the mother is the final, sincere relationship to them. H. Ergülen, on the other hand believes in the sincerity of the sweetheart. k. İskender describes a narcissistic relationship; the partners are vampires who share a destiny at best. The heterosexual love affair in the book - the love of Şule and Kerem –indeed suggests a lack of communication. There is no reciprocity between the two separate, parallel poems. The partners are merely sexual partners with no sentimentality.<sup>664</sup>

The “mother” relates to the child as the main component of these poems. Childhood represents innocence and declares not yet having entered adolescence. Childhood is particularly often mentioned in the earlier poems that directly concern fear of arrest, execution - i.e., the rule of the junta.

The first poem of the book describes a scene of waiting for execution. The poet and execution are even stressed in the name of the poem: “The Execution of Each Poet is Written by His Holding the Pen.” The poet wants to die with honor as the birds. But there are things that he does not yet know, like flying. He entertains this as something he did not yet do, and probably will not have a chance to do, because death is near. The word “yet” implies that he is still young, which he further highlights: “Really, how many kilometers was my life/haw many liters of air have I taken in?”<sup>665</sup> And he calls mama to tell her not to wait for him.

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664 “Life is like a man who has a quick shower,” “Duşa bir girip çıkan güzel bir erkek gibidir hayat,” (p: 75), “then it's possible that the soul and the body are namesakes/ then the namesake of water and crime/ ambition and sex,” “o halde mümkün ruh ile gövdenin adaş olması/ o halde su ile suçun/ hırs ile seksin adaşlığı,” (p: 21), “you should address me you, I addressed you as they,” “bana sen demelisin ben sana hep onlar dedim,” (p: 21), “the beautiful boys hiddenly/ raped in bachelor pads,” “bekâr evlerinde gizli saklı/ tecavüze uğramış güzel oğlanların,” (p: 52), “I'll kill myself with your lips/ your lips mobilizes with flesh and lust,” “öldüreceğim kendimi dudaklarınla/ dudakların etle, şehvetle seferber,” (p: 55). k. İskender, *Gözlerim Sığmıyor Yüzüme*.

665 Ibid, 9. “Sahi kaç kilometreydi yaşantım/ kaç litre hava çektim ciğerlerime?”

The second poem “My Community's Lights Fall upon the Pages of My Dear Diary” is about society writ large. The poem starts by confessing to the mother having been raped by the state, continuing the similar psychology with the first poem. The “father” is introduced as the husband of the mother in the first poem. He represents justice in this poem, and rapes his sons, despite being impotent.<sup>666</sup> “Erects not the Justice Father/ takes of our pants, panties curiously/ takes of our sliver skins carnelian flesh.”<sup>667</sup> Childhood was also highlighted in Ergülen's poems. These imagist poets (who were not Islamists) dignified childhood in their poems of this decade. This attribution of dignity can be interpreted within A. Oktay's general conceptualization of “nostalgia.” However, each poet made his own attribution to childhood. k. İskender, in this sense, used it as a guard against state violence, with feelings of escape and despair. He reminds the police that he has only just become an adult and lost his innocence, begging them not to attack anymore.

This is the poetry of an intellectual reflecting on his narcissistic pathology. The poet-subject wants his intellectual accumulation: the narrow heels of his wife remind him of Kafka.<sup>668</sup> The waiter reminds him of Brecht's protagonists, who are expedient and reckless.<sup>669</sup> He makes references to Can Yücel, Orhan Veli and Ece Ayhan. And the Oulric that he mentions is possibly from Oğuz Atay's *Tutunamayanlar*.

The narcissism of the poet-subject is a contemporary collective syndrome brought about by the culture of the capitalism. Such a personality is manifested in the poems. The new culture developed under the conditions of mass production, the manipulation of reality by media, and the culture of commodification, which were reported to trigger narcissism as a collective tendency of

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666 The rape of the state is a homosexual relation between the state and justice. The victim is male. Şule's sexual relations, on the contrary, are all heterosexual - with “school boys,” etc. - not with the state.

667 Ibid., 13. “Kalkmaz ama adalet babaninki/ o sıyrır pantolonlarımızı donlarımızı merakla/ sıyrır alır sim tenimizi akik etimizi.” The organs are all described with precious metals and gems in this part. The bones remained when released from the skin and flesh are of crystal, the veins are of opal and the nerves are of gold.

668 Narrow heels describes Kafka's works, for being hard to go deep in but being savory. Ibid., 18.

669 Ibid., 18-19.

the period.<sup>670</sup> In terms of pathology, narcissism is an individual syndrome. But its emergence as a collective tendency is explained as the replacement of truth with images, the ideology of recovery and output or performance oriented-practices (as a barrier to confrontation with the self and developing insight), the rationalization and materialization of inner life, the emergence of addiction to consumption that accompanies increases in the availability of goods, and changes in family and socialization patterns that are the ultimate result of all of these. These are byproducts of a new culture under the capitalist system.<sup>671</sup> Narcissism is the pathology that results in the rejection of the love of others along with the fear of being rejected, from which gradually hatred of the self grows.<sup>672</sup>

In the 1980s, “being rejected in love” mostly related to themes of intellectual identity and status he pertains to the reality of the decade. Intellectuals who assumed a role or responsibility vis-à-vis society up until 1980s experience a breaking point after the coup, due to the disregard of the masses for their suffering, the loss of their status, other material and immaterial losses, and their struggle for existence in society. The considerable literary accumulation about the 12 March Memorandum, which was previous instance of state violence and the absence of such a literature following the 1980 coup, was due to extra factors such as the disinterest of society at large and the struggle to survive.

Returning to İskender, the poet-subject's admission that he is a producer of degeneration is reflected in different senses two poems in *Gözlerim Sığmıyor Yüzüme*. First, the third poem of the book “Şehsuvar,” which means “brave, good rider,” refers to men particularly in Eastern Anatolia. In this poem, which is the poem of *others*, the Şehsuvar is suggested to have escaped from his home to settle in Beyoğlu: “a handsome woman is şehsuvar.”<sup>673</sup> The poem in fact admits that the poet-subject is confronting the suicide or suicide attempt of Şehsuvar. “God damn, you cursed me, you made me a butcher/ I

670 Melanie Klein, *Çağımızın Nevrotik Kişiliği*, Christopher Lasch, *Narsisizm Kültürü*, etc.

671 Christopher Lasch, *Narsisizm Kültürü* (Ankara: Bilim ve Sanat Yayınları, 2006, Norton: 1991), 67 and A. Oktay refers to him.

672 Ibid, 71.

673 k. İskender, *Gözlerim Sığmıyor Yüzüme*, İstanbul: Adam Yayınları, 1988, p: 36.

raped myself in my body.”<sup>674</sup> The second example is the poet-subject's seduction of the maid of the house, “Gülten.”<sup>675</sup> The subject does not intend to maintain a love affair with or to marry to the maid, but in Turkish society, this is an insult to that woman, since chastity is still a taboo. The style of the poem is not lyric, but pornographic. Furthermore, while Gülten hopes to marry the poet-subject, the poet ridicules her hopes.<sup>676</sup> Such attitude that lacks empathy is narcissistic.<sup>677</sup> “Narcissist” exists as a word in “Şehsuvar,” therefore the poet-subject must be aware of his attitude. The poet-subject also depicts his homosexual lover; the search for this twin lover is also narcissistic.<sup>678</sup>

To sum, the poet-subject determines the collective pathology in the book without excluding himself. Though the society that does not respond to state violence is sharply criticized, the poet-subject does not exclude himself from that society. As a clear example, the segments that emerge or are named in the 1980s as the “you” who “don't have any other aim than existing” include “the coups,” “the unionists and obviously the structuralists,” “the ones that use surplus value as tonic to their gin,” “mayists,” “existentialists,” “solely the bras-onion socialisms,” “social justice defenders of 30-50,” “intellectuals,” “Marxist chanteurs,” feminists” and “prestigious scholars.” These people “don't have fingerprints” and “stand as italics,” so they do not leave a mark on the society in which they live and they obey hegemonic power. The poet-subject first labels himself as Şehsuvar vis-à-vis these people, but then calls them Şehsuvar,

674 Ibid., 39. “allah kahretsin, kahrettiniz beni, cani ettiniz/ kendi bedenimde kendi kendime tecavüz ettim.”

675 “Gülten the char girl. Clean girl. Coynessless! / could hymen be discerned/ I entered a spring morning,” “Gülten temizlikçi kız. Temiz kız. Nazsız! /hiç temyiz edilebilir mi kızlık zarı/caaart! diye girdim içeri bir bahar sabahı,” “My navy with preservative turns back from Preveza,” “preveze'den dönüyor prezervatifli donanmam.” Ibid, 63.

676 “We can't marry gülten. Don't make me laugh just now / just as I'm about to ejaculate,” “evlenemeyiz gülten. Güldürme beni şimdi/ tam boşalmak filan üzereyken,” ibid., 64.

677 Otto Kernberg, *Aşk İlişkileri* (Istanbul: Ayrıntı Yayınları, 2003). All relations are relations of exploitation, in the eyes of a narcissist. The narcissist subject sees sexuality as a form of conquering and loses focus as she or he conquers a partner. (100-101). In the end, Gülten is the maid working in the house of the poet subject. The difference in value they attribute to their relationship was admitted only after the “conquest, by the poet.”

678 Otto Kernberg, *Aşk İlişkileri*, 123.

too. Such coexistence of exclusion and inclusion reflects the poet's position in a transmitting area, on the border of these two opposing positions.

The description of politics through violence and love together can be explained through this cycle of narcissism. However, it is possible that the pathology was formed due to state violence. In the end, love, violence and the criticism of the society are blended in these long poems. Society is subjected to a sharp criticism after the rape that takes place the beginning of the poem "My Community's Lights Fall upon the Pages of My Dear Diary." For example, the line "it's my right who worships all limp"<sup>679</sup> which refers to the National March, reflects the psychology of leftist movements, which were being or were supposed to be run in the name of and for society. The term "limp," which is "halt" in Turkish, evokes and stands in for the word "halk," which is society. It is a criticism of the romantic intellectual's mission. But this is a reaction, not a claim of individuality existing under danger, as Enis Batur claims.

The second part of this poem is a chat with the mother figure, reflecting an environment filled with fears of women, isolation, and the psychology of defeat among the leftists, in which women and marriages are insincere, the strikes are tasteless with pain, and the brothels are "rhythmless."<sup>680</sup> Ambition and sex, water and crime are merged in this world, because the existence of a poet depends on "the monopoly of a dog;" this dog is not only President Kenan Evren, but also the employer or the capitalist boss (as in the line: "look out to you the devil exploitation!") and the junta (as in the line "the numbers of destroyed youngs in bastionlessness.")<sup>681</sup> The third part of the poem is a confrontation with religion, religious politics, and the secular state ideology, upon which a tragedy is built: the killing of reserve officer Kubilay by a radical Islamist rebellion in 1930. The poem starts by recalling the event. The poet labels the event as the "arrogance" of God, and this arrogance is the sister of the pain, according to the poet. But that pain weakens with the practices of a militarist regime.<sup>682</sup> The reason is not given, but it is probably that the military

679 "Hakkıdır her halta tapan kendimin ihtilâl."

680 k. İskender, *Gözlerim Sığmıyor Yüzüme* (Istanbul: Adam Yayınları, 1988), 20.

681 Ibid., 21. "lokavt lan sana iblis sömürü", "ve burçsuzluk adeta yok edilen gençler onca."

682 "This shattered heart I carry/ becomes a stolen joke of Bektashi/ through those blazons of concrete-iron concrete in time// leans out!" "Bu taşıdığım paramparça yürek/ o beton-betonarme armalarla giderek/ çalıntı bir beктаşi fıkrası olur// sarkar!" Ibid., 23.

regime created pains similarly in an arrogant manner: “through those blazons of concrete-iron concrete.”

Kubilay's blood is coupled with the chastity of the blood of Juliette in an excerpt from *Romeo and Juliette*. The way that official ideology formats the perception of religion in the family is satirized: “The western uncle is elegant.” (Uncle refers paternal uncle, which is the state and the ruling power). The maternal aunt, on the hand, is conservative.<sup>683</sup> Although Juliette (the beloved Western woman) is at the top of the hierarchy of society, the family is formed of various identities present in society. The poem ends with hope for reaching freedom with a generation cheering Mayday.

“The Symphony on the Breakup of Şule and Kerem,” the last poem of the book, concerns the breakup of the heterosexual lovers Şule and Kerem. It is, in fact, a symphony of the young generation of the left wing who lost hope and faith in revolution.<sup>684</sup> Breaking up is inevitable, according to Kerem, because “all loves pollute in the end.”<sup>685</sup> Şule accuses him of being prejudiced in his response, but according to Kerem the struggle is over and missing Şule became demagogy, since he himself gave up the struggle for her.<sup>686</sup>

683 “-have you met my uncle? wow! so elegant! / -and my aunt? How perished your aunt is! / ...I disliked your (mother) uncle actually/ he reminded me of fringe of fez,” “-amcamla tanışmış mıydınız? aaa! ne şık! / -ya teyzemle? teyzeniz ne çok eskimiş öylee! / ...dayınızı hiç sevmedim açıkçası/ fes püskülünü anımsattı bana.” (Ibid., 5.)

684 “cats I had handfuls of that drink milk from my palms/ to go to the night clubs jelling their tails/ .../ fertility man fertility I liked/waiting for my expectations I liked/.../ -run, I shouted, run away from these damned lands/ you used the forbidden pronoun again your poems/ the police called you today/.../ commiserating with an intellectual butcher in Kumkapı/ on the inflation/ and to provoke a quarrel in the most crowded Bebek bus/ on the isolation/.../the doctors that stand you a drink in bars or try/ all are leftist/ and all smell stability and breath.” “kedilerim vardı avuç avuç, avuçlarımdan süt içerlerdi/ kuyruklarına jöle sürüp geceleri pavyonlara giderlerdi/ .../ bereketi ulan bereketi/ beklentilerimi, beklemeyi sevdim hep /.../ - kaç diye haykırdın, kaç git buralardan/ yine yasak zamirle yazmışsın şiirlerini/ polis bugün telefonla seni aradı/.../ bir entelektüel caniyle oturup kumkapı'da dertleşebilmek/ enflasyon konusunda/ ve en kalabalık bebek otobüsünde kavga çıkarmak/ yalnızlık hususunda/.../barlarda cin-tonik ısmarlamaya kalkışan/ doktorlar – hepsi de solcu ve/ ağızları istikrar kokuyor olacak.” Ibid., 79-118.

685 Ibid, 91.

686 Ibid.,: 101.

In the end, Kerem leaves Şule “homeless.” Pathology has emerged and “making love became something like hatred.”<sup>687</sup> He labels his sweetheart as a “mother monster,” admitting his pathology at the end of the part.<sup>688</sup> Narcissism is explained through the fate of Kerem's brother, emerging as a syndrome of frustration. He was raped and killed in custody. His interrogation by the police is sharp and pornographic. His family's drama is also mentioned but limited to profiles of the worried family members who cannot reach their son/brother. After the death, the family's point of view is not given.

The last part of the poem a dialogue in which Kerem and Şule break up. Although a sense of dialogue is created from the beginning of the poem, the only real dialogue, in the form of two people responding to each other, is this part. Şule questions if Kerem is also among those who were castrated.<sup>689</sup> Kerem then prepares to shoot Şule, and she encourages him to shoot, expressing that they belong to a “cursed generation.” But in the end, Kerem shoots himself. Their dialogue does not involve communication. It is composed only of their declarations of status. The poem includes a statement that leftists are impotent idealists.<sup>690</sup> Everybody including the poet-subject reproduces this pathology and culture repeatedly. However, the state policies and state violence prevented a struggle with this culture of pathology. According to the book, this violence degenerated all types of relationship, from family to love to friendship.

No poem in the book focuses on a single theme. Life is taken overall and reflected as a chaotic whole in which various politics are embedded. This is an

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687 Ibid., 103. “Life is something like death – making love is something like hatred / and the betrayal is assignment back to the body sometimes.” “hayat ölmek gibi bir şey – sevişmek nefret gibi bir şey/ ve ihanet kendi bedenine devrolmak zaman zaman.” Such inhibition and bursts of aggression are narcissistic. And a dialogue between Kerem and Şule was impossible because they never established a communication. Every love pollutes because the body loses its value when conquered.

688 According to Otto Kernberg, narcissistic person, fears from the object of love unconsciously. (Kernberg, *Aşk İlişkileri*, 197.)

689 “And castrated and isolated men/ -if you're one of them” “ve hadım ve yalnız adamlar/ -ki sen de onlardansan eğer,” k. İskender, *Gözlerim Sığmıyor Yüzüme*, 113.

690 Ibid., 107.

anti-lyric atmosphere. The lyric, homosexual love in Murathan Mungan's poems becomes an erotic, pornographic relation of sex buddies.<sup>691</sup> Sexual identity needed to be bolstered in those days, as marginal arousal was sacrificed for the sake of political protest. The trauma in the political sphere was also expressed in terms of sexual pathology.

k. İskender's poetry was linked to that of the Beat generation.<sup>692</sup> The poet probably read the latter, but his poems are rooted in a more direct, social trauma. His confrontation with himself is rather different from that in Beat poetry with respect to methodology and depth. They are similar in the sense that the poet moved underground and utilized pornographic sexuality, in a nihilist manner. However, their psychologies differ. Beat poetry stems from the crisis in 1940s,<sup>693</sup> inspires from and confronts with the 1929, to protest capitalist exploitation, while k. İskender emerged from the 1980 junta regime. Beat literature was revitalized in 1960s and linked to the Cold War, since the leftist movement in the United States was suppressed in those days. But the constitution was not suspended, as it was in Turkey.

k. İskender's poetry was seen as political,<sup>694</sup> but as lacking an ideology. Indeed, it was. The only literary vein that openly represented an ideology in the 1980s was the Islamist vein. However, k. İskender was important for his capacity to question the official ideology openly. In Özkarcı's terms, the children who were killed in "state course" started to speak again through his poetry. Özkarcı also agrees that the underground was the only environment where this speech could take place at the time. k. İskender lives in the underground but he did not refrain from being a citizen, an individual and an intellectual.

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691 We drove mad of pleasure as two hearts isolated in bed/ if morale blew his nose/ our name would be the blood on the hanky, letterless," "Zevkten kudurmuştuk bir yatakta tecrit iki yürek/ ahlak sümürse adımız kan olurdu mendilde, harfsiz." Ibid., 56.

692 Hasan Bülent Kahraman and later Bâki Asiltürk referring to him.

693 Kenneth Roxroth, "Beat Kuşağı Üzerine," *Beat Kuşağı Antolojisi* (Istanbul: 6:45 Yayın, 2011), 17-36.

694 Ahmet Oktay, *İmkânsız Poetika* (Istanbul: Alkım, 2004), 104, Ali Özgür Özkarcı, *Cetvelle Çizilmiş Dağmıklık* (Istanbul: 160. Kilometre, 2014), 87-112, Hasan Bülent Kahraman, *Türk Şiiri Modernizm Şiir* (Istanbul: Agora Yayınları, 2004), 163-191, 412-424.



He accused them but did not exclude himself, just as in the poem “Şehsüvar.”<sup>695</sup>

Finally, k. İskender's poems are also intellectualist, because almost all refer to intellectual knowledge and figures. Therefore, he can be considered typical of his generation and decade. Certainly, intellectualism is not intense or complex as it is in the works of Hilmi Yavuz and Ece Ayhan. However, it is not a poetry for the masses, either. It is poetry at the intersection of a number of identities. It is not socialist and it does not satisfy any of the principles of socialist literature. There is no strong voice of the heart or of ethics; perhaps self-conscious poetry in terms of defining good and bad, but that is all. Instead, it questions the conditions of existence for the individual, homosexuality, youth, and even Islamism in “My Dear Diary...” The state's tendency and capacity for design, defining limits and violence is questioned and criticized in this first book at the end of the 1980s.

### § 9.3 Is Provincial Identity Political?

Nurdan Gürbilek explains the 1980s by the emergence of debates on the rural with the loss of legitimacy of socialist ideas that accompanied the coup.<sup>696</sup> Furthermore, the proportion of Turkey's urban population was equal to its rural population in the 1980s, surpassing it due to migration to cities. In the end, various identities that used to be in the rural periphery came to express themselves in the 1980s, such as women, Kurds, and people with provincial roots.

The “modern,” “contemporary” Republic defined the ideal citizen as an urban citizen, while rural regions needed to be “improved,” and their people

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695 Ali Özgür Özkarcı, *Cetvelle..*, 94-95. Kahraman, *Türk Şiiri*, 177. I disagree with Kahraman's claim that his links with tradition were weak. On the contrary, I agree with Özkarcı that he was a good reader of his predecessors: the “Second New” poets and the social realists. Özkarcı's determination that he was not satisfied with the existing vocabulary of marginality and produced his own is significant. Poetry is already an aesthetic or anti-aesthetic manner of language production.

696 Nurdan Gürbilek, *Vitrinde Yaşamak*, 102.

“educated.” A series of policies were implemented to accomplish this transformation throughout Republican history.<sup>697</sup> Settlement in cities was necessary to develop a capitalist economy and culture. The dynamo of the economy had been the agricultural sector up until the late 1980s. Therefore, rural segments often had financial relations with the government: Peasant did not demand political power; governments, in return, prioritized agricultural subventions. This deal continued until the 24 January decisions.

From the 1960s on, industrial initiatives and increasing labor demand in cities provided job opportunities for peasants who became redundant in the face of new agricultural technologies. The resulting migration ended with comparable urban and rural populations in the 1980s.<sup>698</sup> A considerable population accumulated in the cities. While the first generation lived in poor socio-economic circumstances, the population acquired opportunities for higher education and representation in political movements.

Rural village literature was always a part of social realist literature, from Mahmut Makal's novels to the 1980s. Makal was a graduate of a village institute. He claimed that the first book given to him in the school was written by

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697 I wry on the scholars who insist that the state policies targeted to keep the peasants in the villages since there were university graduates the graduates of village institutes. Whatever the aim, at least some village institute graduates went to the university. According to Oktay, the village institutes - like other investments in the rural - were intended to keep rural populations in the villages. He refers to a statement by Hasan Âli Yücel, then Minister of Education, promoting village institutes. Yücel stressed that the intent of the village institutes was to develop wise, healthy, patriotic and productive citizens in villages: “We don’t intend to raise men to migrate to the cities equipped with this knowledge.” No new class formation was desired, according to Yücel (Excerpt from Taner Timur, *Türk Devrimi ve Sonrası 1919-1946*, 250; Ahmet Oktay, *Toplumcu Gerçekçiliğin*, 399). Ahmet Oktay claims that rural sympathies within the established elite of the late 1930s and early 1940s leaned on the populist discourse of the Republic, promising a classless society. Village institutes, established in a similar period where labor law prohibited strikes and lockouts, were designed to pacify rural population so that they serve the interests of dominant classes, according to Ahmet Oktay (A. Oktay, *Toplumcu Gerçekçiliğin*, 398-399.) Gülce Başer, “The Poetry of Self Definition”, unpublished master's thesis, Boğaziçi University, 2011.

698 Şevket Pamuk, *Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyet'e Küreselleşme, İktisat Politikaları ve Büyüme*, (İstanbul: İş Bankası Yayınları, 2008).

Gorki and his literature teacher had made students read the books of the socialist novelist Sabahattin Ali.<sup>699</sup> Authors with rural roots such as Orhan Kemal and Yaşar Kemal also narrated the rural life. Nâzım Hikmet's *The Human Scenes from My Country* was a saga of the countryside. On the other hand, Islamists of the 1980s were not keen on narrating the rural scenes, due to the distance they placed between themselves and socialism as Chapter 2 explains.

The transformation experienced in the 1980s vis-à-vis rural identity must be considered in a larger framework than the simple dissolution of the left wing. One of the major developments regarding rural people was their financial and political empowerment by the 1980s, such that some became employers in the cities.<sup>700</sup> The second development was the mediatization of cultural life and the rise of popular culture in the 1980s.<sup>701</sup> And finally, as Gürbilek explains, Kemalism had only partially fulfilled its promises by the 1980s. The rural identity was one among many other identities, and became a platform from which to express oneself.<sup>702</sup>

Memet Fuat's essay "New Folk Literature" in *Yazko Edebiyat* reveals various young poets utilizing the techniques of folk literature.<sup>703</sup> The pioneer of this movement was Yaşar Miraç, and his followers from among the new generation were İsmail Teoman, Müslim Çelik, Ozan Telli and Adnan Özer.<sup>704</sup>

699 Ömer Türkeş, "Taşra İktidarı," *Toplum ve Bilim*, 88 (spring-2001). This is additional evidence that the Republic was not monolithic. The leftist literature was not included in the curriculum and leftist teachers were sent to Anatolia to work in hard conditions. They would educate a leftist generation in the village institutes.

700 Kemal Karpat, *Türkiye'de Toplumsal Dönüşüm* (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, 2003).

701 In line with Rifat Bali's statement, Anatolian entrepreneurs migrated to cities and joined the wave of consumption that had already started redefining the status of the upper classes through the opportunities provided by the "24 January Decisions." (Bali, *Tarz-ı Hayattan Life Style'a*, 38-40).

702 Gürbilek, *Vitrinde Yaşamak*, 102-110. Both Gürbilek and Bali define rural identity in terms of a resistance to modernist high culture: The provincial man wears a gold watch like a parvenu, speaks with a marked accent, exhibits his rural roots, and demands the products of his region. He wants more than what the urban is ready to serve him and wants to join the urban as he is. Nurdan Gürbilek formulates this in terms of "The Return of the Suppressed."

703 Memet Fuat, "Yeni Halk Şiiri," *Yazko Edebiyat*, June 1981: 8.

704 Ibid.

These young poets born in the countryside reached a cultural synthesis by reading Western sources, in addition to their rural backgrounds. M. Fuat argued that they overcame complexes with respect to the West, and released from the monotony of the traditional opened themselves to intellectualist poetry.<sup>705</sup>

The poem “Trabzonlu Delikanlı” in Yaşar Miraç’s book of the same name is a narrative of a young migrant to Istanbul. The poet-subject is a countryman with a dialect and local patterns of speech. Here again moral degeneration is pictured: the “virgin widow” Istanbul cheats the naïve countrymen. Rape is almost legitimized. The poor people’s houses fill with water under heavy rains. It is a city of tricksters. In the same years, Müslim Çelik<sup>706</sup> was also unhesitatingly using the local sayings and vocabulary, risking not being understood. Miraç is the first appearance of the countryman in the urban with all his rural moralities. Miraç writes in a Northern Anatolian dialect but uses the vocabulary of Istanbul. Miraç is ultimately closer to the socialist literature; he demands justice and equality through public welfare. Çelik, on the other hand, is an individual countryman resisting urbanization and industrialization.

Miraç established Yeni Türkü Publications at the end of the 1970s. The early poems of many young poets, most of whom had provincial roots, were published here. The poets involved and witnesses emphasize that these books were printed under the constraint of difficult financial conditions. From 1980 to 1983, Miraç was an outstanding poet, whose poems were printed in almost all the literary journals. Adnan Özer<sup>707</sup> took over the publishing house when Miraç had to leave the country to escape prosecution by the junta, as mentioned in Chapter 4. The “folk poets” of the new generation such as Adnan Özer and Müslim Çelik often appeared in *Varlık* and *Yazko* and occasionally

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705 Ibid.

706 Müslim Çelik, born in 1952, was among the young poets of the generation.

707 Adnan Özer, who launched his literary career at *Yeni Türkü*, tells that they used folkloric flower figures on book covers and most of the poets whose books were published there used the basic themes and metaphors of folk poetry. He also says he raised awareness to defend the provincial poets,” right to make high arts there. (“Artık Bizden İyi Şair Çıkamaz,” int: Erdal Doğan, *Gösteri* 234 (Jan. 2002).

in *Gösteri*. Özer became one of the pioneers of many literary initiatives of the young generation in the 1980s, such as the publications and journal *Üç Çiçek*.

The aforementioned essay by Memet Fuat<sup>708</sup> was a response to Cemal Süreya's 1957 essay in *Yeni A*. The essay "Folk Poetry is the Enemy of Poetry" is one of the critical texts introducing the "Second New" movement, which argues that it is impossible for the language of folk poetry to produce an abstract, contemporary aesthetic since it relied on the static proverbs and authentic phrases. The aesthetic method of "Second New" poets released vocabulary from its traditional literary contexts. Folk poetry was social realist in nature and could make a technical revolution through utilization of authentic, local sources. But by 1980s, M. Fuat discovered an opportunity to develop a genuine protest poetry together with these new provincial poets using a variety of sources due to their social transformation - i.e. their migration to cities.

Ahmet Oktay objected to Memet Fuat's views in two essays printed in *Varlık* and *Yazko*. He argued that the structure of folk literature lacked conscious roots of such concepts as the individual and class, envisioning society as a homogenous structure. Hence, it was produced through generic imageries just like Divan poetry, and a renaissance for contemporary needs was impossible.<sup>709</sup> Adnan Özer argued that criticism brought against poets with rural roots was partly the disdain of the urban literary establishment towards provincial literary figures. For him, this was a "reproduction of the prejudice" that "the vocabulary of rural regions lacks the necessary historical formation to pursue any philosophical debate."<sup>710</sup> He claims that such views are outdated,

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708 Memet Fuat, "Yeni Halk Şiiri", *Yazko Edebiyat* (June-1981): 8.

709 Oktay: "(...) are these the relations of the perceived class members with their conditions and their cognitive extensions, or the generalizations which are no more progressive or the standardized sentiments without any transmitting quality?" (*Varlık* no: 886, *Yazko*, no.12).

710 Adnan Özer, "Taşralı Şairleri Ne Yapmalı? Taşralı Şairler Ne Yapmalı", *Üç Çiçek*, (January-1984): 146-160. Adnan Özer discusses and defends rural identity as a problematic in poetry. He was the loudest voice among these young poets and undertook the responsibility for Yeni Türkü Publishing House. He once stated that they used folkloric flower figures on book covers, and most poets whose books were published there used basic themes and metaphors from folk poetry. He also raised awareness of defended provincial poets' right to make high art. "Artık Bizden İyi Şair Çıkmaz", interviewer: Erdal Doğan, *Gösteri*, 234 (Jan. 2002).

recalling the potent vocabulary of rural mystics as Pir Sultan Abdal and Âşık Mahzuni.

Particularly Adnan Özer, Müslim Çelik and Ozan Telli “overcome” the resistance against provincial writers and appear in journals such as *Varlık* and *Yazko* and even in *Gösteri*, throughout the decade. However, their poetry reflected pastoral scenes rather than a political attitude, in line with Miraç's statement that “[Journal editors] wanted pastoral poems.” This is evidence of self-censorship in the decade.<sup>711</sup> The difference from earlier folk poetry was the manner of representing the rural person and life: the village described as a “sweet and far away land over there” during the early Republic had become a place of poverty by the 1940s and a region of exploitation by the 1960s. In the 1980s, rural regions were places to return in one's search for self and origins, as in Adnan Özer's works, places where industrialization is rejected in Müslim Çelik's works. Veysel Çolak's problem of “appearing in the literary journals and inclusion to poetic circles” in the 1970s were solved by the 1980s, for example.<sup>712</sup> This was not a reproduction of early Anatolian Folk literature;

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711 *Gösteri*, July-1987.

712 *Somut*, 8-9 (Aug-Sep 1979), Istanbul.

it was a representation of rural origins in urban cities.<sup>713</sup> And this was a political attitude and identification, although moderate. The next section analyzes of the rural region in Müslim Çelik's early poetry.<sup>714</sup>

This poetry, the clarity of which is in question when the works of Müslim Çelik are considered, cannot be considered in the social realist vein. They disregard collective welfare and the intellectual's mission, substituting local patterns which are unknown in the rest of the country. The protest in this new provincial poetry is individualist, personal, and not optimistic. It is a poetry that reflects a personal politics of identity. Such expression of an individual political attitude did not bother the authorities. Hence, while Y. Miraç had to leave the country, his successors managed to survive legitimizing their provincial discourse.

### 9.3.1 *The Rural Pattern in Language and the Environment in Müslim Çelik's Poetry*

The poet and teacher Müslim Çelik was born in 1952. His first book *Peryavşan* was published in 1988. *Peryavşan* - or bitter wormwood- is an herb scarcely

713 Unfortunately, Adnan Özer's readings was not on Anatolian culture but on current events and literature of Latin America, which shared a similar recent past with Turkey. He probably felt closer to the rural patterns in this literature. In fact, translations of Latin American works and analyses of their regimes were among the numerous translations made during the junta regime, as mentioned before. All literary journals from *Gösteri* to *Varlık* printed dossiers on Latin American poetry. In other words, Latin American poetry was among the primary sources for the trend of "New Folk Literature." Although mostly attributed to Adnan Özer in terms of following, the first poem of Can Yücel's *Rengâhenk* was dedicated to Lorca. Various people translated Latin poetry for the dossiers in the journals. Furthermore, young poets of rural origin followed world events through major third world literatures –such as Latin and Palestine - in developing their political expressions and trying to be a part of "a bigger revolt" as Adnan Özer mentioned. This choice may also be related to censorship and suppression. Again, they were certainly followers of native poets such as Ahmet Arif, Nâzım Hikmet and Pir Sultan Abdal. And these young poets from Hüseyin Haydar to Ozan Telli all tried to contribute to revolution in the 1970s and ended up representing themselves in the 1980s.

714 For an analysis of the first book of Adnan Özer, see. Gülce Başer "The Poetry of Self Definition," unprinted master's thesis, Boğaziçi University, 2011.

known in the city. The poem for which the book is named was awarded honorable mention in the poetry contest in *Gösteri* in 1989, and the book received the Ceyhun Atuf Kansu Poetry Prize that same year. Çelik also worked as a high school teacher throughout the decade.

The book consists of four parts. The first part “Water Leaks,” is a blend of pastoral poems that reflect the rural landscape and lyric love poems. The second part “Peryavşan” is a typical example of the poems of the rural.<sup>715</sup> And attitude against war, industrialization, and imperialism is faintly discernable.<sup>716</sup> The glorification of the pastoral is visible in this poetry, as in Adnan Özer's works.<sup>717</sup> The third and final parts “With a Broken Wing” and “Day Light” are lyric love poems from the countryside. The book ends with a short, independent poem “The water in our canteen/ is finished// The bullet's yours/the water's ours.”<sup>718</sup> It is the only poem written in the first person plural.

715 “At least/ these few consistent things I shall hand to/ my successors,” “Bari şu/ elimdeki üç beş tutarlı şeyi ulaştırayım/ benden sonrakilere,” Müslim Çelik, *Peryavşan* (Gaziantep: Zemge Yayınları, 2010, 7. Edition), 34, “For example: The skeletons of space shuttles and computers/ that are unlike/ And to human,” “Örneğin: Uzay mekikleri bilgisayarların dolaba/ benzemeyen iskeletleri/ Ve insane,” *ibid.*,: 50.

716 “Asking I am, isn't this the biggest problem/ Of the unnamed era-our era/ to die of hunger/ or the experiments of nuclear wars,” “Soruyorum, en büyük sorunu değil midir/ Adı konulmayan çağ-çağımızın/ açlıksamaktan ölmek/ ya da çekirdeksel savaş denemeleri,” p: 38, “You're hitting me with the pole of development/ and your knees with its nightmare,” “Kalkınmanın ucuyla beni/ dizlerini dövüyorsun karabasanıyla,” p: 41.

Such opposition does not result in rebellion as with the original folk literature. Çelik's opposition originates from more definite sources than Adnan Özer's does. However, Çelik's pain does not cause rebellion either. Özer explains his efforts to overcome pessimism and the feeling of uselessness in which they were put. Adnan Özer, “1980'li Yıllar Şiirine Subjektif Bakış,” *Varlık* 998 (Nov. 1990). If Özer was indeed trying to overcome feelings of defeat and exclusion caused by the practices of junta, he seems to propose that the depressive reader visit his hometown to console with himself authentic stories as a solution. Gülce Başer, “The Poetry...”

717 I'm walking/ valerians pile in my neck/ I walk and my shadow gets taller/ .../ I bow to kiss the pebble stones” Yürüyorum/ pisi otları doluyor koynuma/ yürüyorum gölgem uzuyor/ .../ eğilip çakıl taşlarını öpüyorum,” p: 56, “The walnut tree in my garden/ brings the hidden countries/ of the rustles of its leaves,” “Bahçemdeki ceviz ağacım/ dizil ülkeleri getirir bana/ yapraklarındaki hışırtıların,” p: 55.

718 “Mataramızda su/ bitti// Kurşun sizin/ su bizim.”



The poems are either in the first person singular or are subject-less. The choice to not mention the subject recalls early folk poetry and sometimes implies a widely- defined “we” as the subject. Major is therapeutic, as in the poetry of Adnan Özer.<sup>719</sup> Modernization, on the other hand, is destructive because it breaks the order and brings about war. The poems were all written in Istanbul yet describe the countryside.<sup>720</sup>

The idioms are authentic and local and the transliterations are of the local dialect in this book: the river does not flow with a “fısıltı” (whisper) but a “fisilti,” and the rose is not “yalnız” (alone) but “yalanuz.” The terms as *şıvga*, *çiğit*, *kaşana*, and *halk dağarcık*, which would be unfamiliar to the urban reader, are used without reservation. He went further than Ahmed Arif in this respect did. He brought rural vocabulary into the city. He did not display politics though he is a political being himself - a peasant determined to exist in the urban environment. This poetry, which did not bother the authorities, was a step towards the “ruralization” of mainstream poetry of the 1980s.

#### § 9.4 The Islamist Poem of the New Generation and Individuality

Islamist poetry underwent modernization in the 1960s and 1970s. It became freer and far more abstract with the modernist poet as Sezai Karakoç and his

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719 Adnan Özer expresses the solely rural sources of his poetry in the preface of first book *Ateşli Kaval (Fiery Pipe)*: “My childhood – thankfully – passed in fertile lands, the fields of my village, among sunflowers, ears of corn, and the scent of grass, under wild pear trees, by birds and... folk songs. I traced the abstract and mysterious fascination of those days in every poem I wrote.” *Rüzgârı Durdurma Takvimi Toplu Şiirler* (Istanbul: Everest, 2001), 6. Similarly in an introductory verse of Müslim Çelik's book, he addresses himself, saying “Don't be a drop in the sea/ either the sea you are or in the drop,” “Denizdeki damla olma/ denizsin ya damlada,” to remind himself how worthy he is. (p: 9).

720 “Cahit Külebi, with his rural identity, defined the rural as a place where one did not have time for love affairs while struggling with nature to survive. Külebi further embraced all of Anatolia as home, influenced by Republican idealism. A third point differentiating Külebi from “new folk poets” was his Istanbul Turkish. Ahmed Arif was a folk poet who placed some local vocabulary in his poetry. But he was a warrior against the “cruel,” as were the epic rebellious poets of traditional folk literature as Dadaloğlu.” (Gülce Başer, “The Poetry of Self Definition”).

journal *Diriliş* in the 1950s and with his successor as Cahit Zarifoğlu in the 1970s. Cahit Zarifoğlu also paved the way limiting direct religious references in the poems. When İsmet Özel joined the Islamists in the 1970s, they had the chance to add social content that they had overlooked since the 1940s. Therefore, by the 1980s it is hard to pinpoint a monolithic Islamist poetry. In the end, the Islamist labeling was not a result of a distinctive aesthetic path, but of a political attitude.<sup>721</sup> That was the umbrella that could keep an ironist poet like Osman Konuk, who formed his poetry in almost an anti-lyric style, with a mystic as İhsan Deniz under a common heading.

According to Ahmet Oktay, the Islamists started to read Sezai Karakoç and İsmet Özel, conservative Christian poets such as T.S. Eliot and P. Claudel, along with atheists such as Mallarmé and Rimbaud, in the process of forming their poetry of the 1980s. Thus, they left the Qur'anic discourse of Mehmet Âkif, distancing themselves from such mystics as İbn-i Arabi.<sup>722</sup>

An actual secularization did not take place in Islamist literature. There was no change in basics of beliefs underlying the discourse. But they started to follow other literary schools, both in the country and around the world as well. They were keen to think through the social issues of the day. They developed a criticism of daily life through readings on ethics and individuality, which started to appear in striking metaphors in their poetry. Hasan Bülent Kahraman's statement that "the authors of *Mavera* at least do not transform their world views solely on their own formation, they try to fix it to the model of a different formation" address their interaction with Western culture.<sup>723</sup> *Yönelişler* was similar in this sense. Obviously, a new generation had grown in the Islamist domain that had a sufficient notion of Western literature and philosophy and was eager to respond to it.

Hasan Bülent Kahraman interpreted this as a radical opposition to "official cultural ideology" and the Republican consciousness.<sup>724</sup> A. Oktay sees it rather

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721 Bâki Asiltürk, *1980 Kuşağı Türk Şiirinin Poetikası* (Istanbul: Toroslu Yayınları, 2008), 99.

722 Ahmet Oktay, *İmkânsız Poetika* (Istanbul: Alkım Yayınları, 2004), 84. The distancing from mysticism was limited to a short period.

723 Hasan Bülent Kahraman, "Kör Dövüşü", *Yazko Edebiyat*, 2 (December-1980): 66-69.

724 Kahraman, *Modernizm*, 173.

as a response to capitalist culture.<sup>725</sup> Özkarcı does not see this poetry as an opposition, at all, defining it as a poetry that represents “the Muslim identity.”<sup>726</sup> Among its poets, Ebubekir Eroğlu emphasized peace and humanity over the mystic perspective, while young Muslim poets took various positions. For example, Osman Konuk presented an ethical analysis of society. İhsan Deniz, who read Eroğlu, Sezai Karakoç, İsmet Özel, Cahit Zarifoğlu, and even Turgut Uyar, presented a political attitude only through his identity as a Muslim.

Readers do not usually perceive İhsan Deniz's poems as political, but they did not doubt his political identity or that he represented a particular political attitude. Political discourse in poetry was determined through the particular vocabulary employed.<sup>727</sup> Hence, when İhsan Deniz wrote, “we had a long way of ours/ our waters and sleeps,” the reader and the publisher immediately recall İsmet Özel's verse “I was sentenced to a long long way,” proceeding the journey as a religious search for the self.

The new generation had difficulty maintaining a religious life because they had to deal with modern life. New capitalist relations were reforming morale and cultural patterns, as Nurdan Gürbilek noted. The major debate in Islamist journals such as *Yönelişler* and *Mavera* concerned criticism of Republican cultural policies that excluded Ottoman and Islamic history as seen in Chapters 5 and 6. Obviously, there was no change in the Islamist critique of the Republic for opting for secularism, as seen in the second and third chapters. What changed was the emergence of a new generation that was able to communicate with Western culture in terms of knowledge and perspective. Islamist poetry already encountered Western poetry, even in the 1950s (via Sezai Karakoç) and in the 1960s (when the journal *Diriliş* was founded). Hence, in the 1980s they were not limited to writing poetry that strictly served Islamist ideology.<sup>728</sup>

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725 Ahmet Oktay, *İmkânsız Poetika*, 72.

726 Özkarcı, *Cetvelle...*, 160.

727 M. Foucault, *Bilginin Arkeolojisi* (Istanbul: Ayrıntı Yayınları, 2011) 65.

728 Özgür Özkarcı has also mentioned this and suggested the term “counter culture.” (*Cetvelle...*, 168-169). This is acceptable for a broad conception of counter culture, as k. İskender, and even the followers of Hilmi Yavuz are included. I think the state gave up building its own mainstream by the 1970s. The “counter culture” conception is rational, but the existence of a “mainstream” is questionable, because the curricula was not updated from the 1960s to 2000s.

The junta of the 1980s did not take direct issue with religion; on the contrary, it fostered moderate religiosity through both discourse and policy. Islamist cultural production, which was apolitical on the surface, did not challenge the regime. However, its audience, who would have been familiar with the whole discourse, easily grasped the alternative system or worldview being proposed.

By then, young poets of the left who had liberalized and adapted to the free market economy, started to communicate with the relatively secular, pluralist Islamist young poets. They agreed about criticizing “cultural ideology”<sup>729</sup> of the Republic. These two groups started appearing in one another’s literary journals: *Üç Çiçek*, *Yönelişler* and *Şiir Atı*.

#### 9.4.1 *The Lyric Mysticism of İhsan Deniz*

Islamist poetry followed one of three main discursive paths in 1980s: the representation of religiousness as a nostalgic life-style and cultural consciousness, the ethical, moral, and confrontational criticism of modern life; and the religious journey to wisdom.<sup>730</sup> All three paths were embedded in the poetry of İhsan Deniz, an outstanding poet of the decade. Deniz was born in 1960.

729 ...labeling it Westernist, and accusing it of rejecting Ottoman and Muslim origins.

730 Three successive poems in the ninth volume of *Yönelişler* exemplify the trends of Islamist poetry. Osman Konuk’s “Yarışma” (“Competition”), Necat Çavuş’s “Gölge Kadınlar” (“Shadow Women”) and İhsan Deniz’s “Yağmur Sanatı” (“The Art of Rain”), respectively interpret the present social order through concepts such as “competition” and “deficiency,” through a quest of holy awe to escape the isolatedness of individualization, and through criticism of modern “speed” via sophist wisdom. In “Yarışma,” the poet subject reaches adulthood and tries to be a “normal” man, but discovers he is in a competition and starts to run. He discovers the paradoxes of life and his deficiencies. He discovers that deficiency – which is presumably a lack of wisdom – is a common property. “The results of competition: everybody ranks the first” reflects self-deception; it is a verse with multiple meanings. Not everyone can rank first in a competition; either everyone is deluded or the competition itself is an illusion. A society of opponents trying to defeat others is covered by the metaphor of the “competitor” and reflected through such verses as “I washed my hand and they got suspicious,” “Ellerimi yıkadım, kuşku-landılar” and “I looked around, all seats nabbed; I was left standing,” “Bir de baktım her yer kapılmış, ayakta kaldım.” From another perspective, the individual competing with time is actually deceived by his lack of wisdom. The poet does not make any overt recommendation

His first book *Mağara Külleri (The Ashes in the Cave)*, was published by Üç Çiçek Publishing House in 1984. His statement that the 1980s were a time when "...metaphysics did not exist" stands out among debates on tradition and thousands of poems on mysticism.<sup>731</sup> But he bases his claim on a presumed of a lack of personal experience of wisdom and including them in poetry like an ornament. Such an expression of personal experience is an act of individuality at the same time, which Deniz makes clear: "The poet definitely needs the metaphysical perception, tendency to grab his own existence and the senses of the origins of his existence."<sup>732</sup> He should mention something personal, otherwise no one can witness another's' privacy. The Islamist poetry of the 1980s is linked to traditional Ottoman poetry; however, it is still the poem of the first person singular. It is about the individual and subjective.

Ottoman poetry was a poetry of a collective identity; its subject was either nonhuman or anonymous. Therefore, it is not easy to extract the Islamic sharia from this poetry, and isolation is not affirmed. Only the system of belief of Islamic mysticism (tasavvuf) is able to respond to modernity, which describes the existence of a second being along with the eternal Allah, a sin of polytheism. If the "existent being" is an absolute "One," the human - or man - does

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but a recommendation is implied in the poem by the Islamist identity of the poet. "Gölge Kadınlar" starts with a description of a modest woman with the capacity to love, "aware that she'll burn." She hesitates to hanging around without the permission of her husband. In the second part, it becomes clear that she is a figure from the past: "I read these words from my memories." "Anılarımdan okurum bu sözleri." The poem ends with a definition of "Burn with sun/ Fade with sun/ Shadow women," "Güneşle yanan/ Güneşle sönen / Gölge kadınlar," "attached to the houses and clothes," "evlere ve çamaşırlara bitişik," "Not dependent upon their kids and husbands," "çocuklarına ve kocalarına bağlı olmayan." The change in the woman parallels with the change in society as a whole; what is indeed criticized lies in the first part: the people who are not aware that they will burn in hell who are attached to worldly things such as houses and clothes and are independent from their families. Again, a "lack of wisdom" is reflected through unawareness about the fate of hell. The woman described in the first part is obviously is a believer. The poem is constructed around an ideal society of believers living in peace. Gülce Başer, "The Poetry...", 2011.

731 İhsan Deniz, "Metafiziksiz Şiir," *Yönelişler*, 47 (June-1990).

732 İhsan Deniz: "Şair, içindeki kederi hoş tutan insandır," Interview: Murat Tokay, *Kitap Zamanı*, 20 (3 September 2007). [http://kitapzamani.zaman.com.tr/soylesi/ihsan-deniz-sair-icindeki-kederi-hos-tutan-insandir\\_545259](http://kitapzamani.zaman.com.tr/soylesi/ihsan-deniz-sair-icindeki-kederi-hos-tutan-insandir_545259)

not exist in reality. His existence is an illusion - a dream. The dervish wishes to release himself from perceiving existence as a sum of plural beings – the “grids by the body” - to reach unity. Therefore, the existence of man is denied in the name of a single being, not of collective society. That means there is finally a subject, although only vaguely and in a vast context. Man admits that he cannot easily release his subjectivity, in a life envisioned as a journey to absoluteness as a whole.

Physical isolation is a basic requirement of such a journey. Yet isolation for the sake of wisdom is also a practice in *tekkas*. The poet addresses Allah in his poems with the pronoun “you.” While he had not experienced the “unity,” he knows that he should “see the face of Allah everywhere,”<sup>733</sup> so the world of plurality is the sum of the reflections of Allah in “the mirror of non-existence.”

İhsan Deniz's first book lies on the border between the religious and non-religious worlds. Confrontation with existence starts only in the first line of “The Flood of Underground That Somebody Made up:”<sup>734</sup> “the seas don't tell about you.” And the poet-subject immediately appears in the second line “this is your destiny, flowing, refreshed faith in you.” The destiny is Allah's, but faith is the epiphany in man. Therefore, the fact that the absolute destiny is a bridge, and that the man sentenced to faith for his inability to perceive absoluteness are brought together in turn.<sup>735</sup>

This book also relates scenes of the journey to wisdom, as the poem “Ayrımlar” (“Differentiations”). The search for absoluteness resembles the search for a friend: “come over and dignify our table, stop the time,” “if you come/ room for thousands opens for you/ I'll share the room for thousands

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733 “The East and West (all earth) belongs to Allah. Allah's face is wherever you turn yours. There's no doubt that Allah endows high blessing, and knows absolutely/factually,” Bakara Surah 115. Verse, Qur'an (Source: The Presidency of Religion).

734 İhsan Deniz, *Buz ve Fire Toplu Şiirler (1980-2005)*, (Istanbul: Hece Yayınları, 2005), 15. “denizler seni anlatamaz.” “akıp giden yazgındır bu, yenilenen inancındır.”

735 In fact, the dilemma is significant: The individual is to be built and then destroyed. Obviously, the problem of Islamic mysticism is also the individual. It is easier to rub up the self in collective societies where the “individual” does not exist. Hence, the transformation of the 1980s was a hard process for Islamic mystics, as well.

with you,”<sup>736</sup> “Come on hold my hand, let us stay human everywhere”<sup>737</sup> This is a poem of a mystic journey but it is not a religious one. It could be the poem of any modern, isolated individual, looking for a friend – that is, unless the poet himself represents religiousness. Its terminology suggests that is obviously a poetry book of mystic consciousness when compared with the second book. But mysticism (tasavvuf) and spiritual search are implied only by representative patterns of Islamic mysticism. For example, “you made me adore/ all the seas by adoring them”<sup>738</sup> “all flow/ all flow”<sup>739</sup>, and “if I come by death to meet behind the balconies/ the sky fades away from the scene, the objects lose their taste.”<sup>740</sup> As in Ebubekir Eroğlu's poetry, the watcher and the scene are both Allah; Allah is the adored, as He adores. The lines “that a moment is extracted from itself/ a flood snatched from itself again, we used to hear that,”<sup>741</sup> refers to the belief that time is an earthly dimension.

“Yağmur Sanatı”<sup>742</sup> (“The Art of Rain”) is a poem of communication with the past but the subjects of this “past” are the “timeless witnesses of the skies.” Time and moving beyond the time are among the common issues of both modernity and Islamist mysticism. The subject of beyond time evokes the “wise man,” - the high ranked wali - who is able to travel in time, because his eyes “don't get tired along the seas,” and he does not “amuse” himself in “pre-ordered dreams.” The man who witnesses the absolute should be of the “wise man” rank, with absolute freedom. The complement, “in the old times” also

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736 Deniz, *Buz ve Fire*, 16. “gel soframıza kurul, hiç geçmesin zaman,” “gelsen/ binlerce kişilik yer boşalır evimizden/ binlerce kişilik yerleri bölüşürüm seninle.”

737 Ibid., 17. “Haydi elimi tut, her yerde insan kalalım biraz.”

738 Ibid., 58. “kendine hayran bırakırdın/ hayran olmanla tüm denizleri.”

739 Ibid., 61. “her şey akıyor/ her şey akıyor.”

740 Ibid., 56. “ölümle gelirse ardında balkonların buluşmaya/ gök çekilir aramızdan, eşyanın tadı kaçır.” The biggest wish for a dervish is exceed the limits of the body before physical death (i.e., to die before death). The balcony is the place to watch; the poet subject would be watching the world if he dies before death. But the real source of happiness would be the union. The new circumstances would lose the taste of the body, which lives on plurality. This great feeling was expressed through a philosophical definition.

741 Ibid., 47. “bir an'ın bir an'dan çıkarıldığını/ bir tufanın başka bir tufandan koparıldığını duyardık.”

742 Ibid., 34.

refers to the golden age of Islam in this context. “Today” is criticized by reference to the past in this poem. The individual is tired, unable to witness the sky and amuses himself with “pre-ordered dreams.”

“Haklıyız, Birtakımız, Bazıyız”<sup>743</sup> (“We Are Right, We are A Group, We are Some”) questions the contemporary moral and cultural issues, which is to say the alienation of modern life: “I saw women diminishing somewhere,” “was broken, was frozen but could never be freed from this context,” “a grocer, found a chance/ was getting his revenge from me, he intended,” “you go over to summarize happiness, then you feel pity for this,” “still you forget to cry on the way to mountain/ regrets emerge somewhere in you.” The poem is about superficial nature of ordinary life, the damage of some people under these conditions, and others' choice to exclude themselves. People hurt each other with self-interest that they even forget to regret. All these melt into the daily routine. The poet-subject does not want to become polluted and to commit sin, so he avoids earthly life: “we refused selected loves/ for we did not sign in the polluted summer mornings.”<sup>744</sup>

743 Ibid., 19-27. “kadınlar görüyordum bir yerlerde eksilen,” “kırılmıyor, donakalınıyor, kurtulunamıyordu bu çerçeveden,” “bir bakkal yeri gelmişken/ aklına koyduğu intikamını alıyordu benden,” “gidip mutluluğun özetini çıkarıyorsun, üzülüyorsun sonra bunu yaptığına,” “yine ağlamayı unutuyorsun dağ yolunda/ yine bir yerlerinde pişmanlıklar beliriyor.”

744 Ibid., 71. “Olmazlar Yurdu”: “seçilmiş aşklar yaşamadık hiç/ kirlenmiş yaz sabahlarına imza atmadık çünkü.”

In his poem, “Söylenmeyene Katkı” (“Contributed to Unvoiced”), Osman Konuk's – another young poet of the 1980s – poet-subject tells of his inability to run away from daily routines. This inability means sticking to worldly issues and is a deficiency. The deficiency is formulated in his “uncovered notebooks.” Uncovered notebooks exclude the poet both from school rules (it is required to cover notebooks in schools) and from holy wisdom; it is the position of a misfit. Therefore it is “another departure/ in the form of not departing.” The wish to leave is “voiced extemporaneously” - “to contribute to the unvoiced.” (“başka bir gitmektir/ gitmemek biçiminde/ bir imkânsız melodidir/ irticalen söylenir/ kalır/ söylenmeyene katkı için.”). The poet cannot leave modern life but does not fit in it, either. Because the individual is “alone in climbing the hill of irrecoverability,” but “the descents are crowded and there is a queue in front of breathing.” It is not a world that “[wise] old people guide,” In fact, Osman Konuk established his poetry on an ethical scan of discourses and actions from the beginning and he used irony as a poetic discourse technique. However, in his first book, published in 1982, the



The work of Ebubekir Eroğlu also displayed poetry's almost epic comparison of the earthly and otherworldly, its positioning as a "watcher" of the journey of wisdom, and the poet-subject's obligation to make choices. These are still present in the poetry of the young generation of today. The path chosen and enforced is the path to wisdom, because according to Islamist mysticism, the consciousness that is unable to attain unity is a consciousness that is unable to reach his origins. Two famous poems of the 1970s already employed this theme, albeit with contrasting atmospheres. The first was İsmet Özel's "Mataramda Tuzlu Su" ("The Salty Water in My Canteen"), which is a poem that renounces earthliness. But even this poem was influenced by Sezai Karakoç's "Sürgün Ülkeden Başkentler Başkentine" ("From The Deported Land to The Capital of the Capitals") from the 1975 book *Zamana Adanmış Sözler* (*The Words Devoted to the Time*). Far beyond the context of Islamist poetry, the poem tells the suffering of being limited to a physical body. It is a poem to which any dervish poet would like to respond or be inspired by.

İhsan Deniz seems to have read Turgut Uyar and Cahit Zarifoğlu, as well. But the Islamists of the 1980s merely used the "Second New" styles to follow tradition - at least in their early works - rather than directly following the classical Turkish-Islamic tradition, as Hilmi Yavuz did. Their vocabulary was contemporary Turkish compared to Seyhan Erözçelik or Vural Bahadır Bayrıl, but they surely followed Hilmi Yavuz's essays on classics and tradition because those essays provided the necessary ground for tradition debates on tradition. They did not include criticism of the Republic in their poems. The state, in

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poems covered sophist perspective too, referring to wisdom and therefore the absolute existence of Allah. The modern ethical questioning was an attack on rationalism using its own weaponry. Konuk admitted his offensive tone in the poems. "Osman Konuk: I'm not writing with the power of dreams but the reality," int: Mehmet Öztekin, *Heves*, 11: 27-32. The poet-subject is a sophist individual. He is a romantic in expressing the poet subject, ironic for redefining and renaming the phenomenon in daily terms and a sophist for his metaphors and references to holy wisdom. The paradox of the meeting of Sufism, where existence is denied, and modern romanticism, where the individual is the basis, is eliminated by hiding holy wisdom as a mystery or a subtext. Religion is not visible in the poems, but the allusion to peace is felt as holy wisdom. "According to Osman Konuk, irony is the position of pure lyric poetry in front of reality," *Hece*, 124 (April-2007): 135). Osman Konuk, *Tehlikeli Belki* (Ankara: Hece Yayınları, 2006). Gülce Başer, "The Poetry of Self Definition".

return, did not perceive them as political. In other words, the poems were simply perceived as poems of some Muslim people.

Hasan Bülent Kahraman claimed that after 1980, the Islamists might be deemed progressive with their policy of resizing the authoritarian state. He adds that they also managed to develop an “interesting discourse” with the contribution of a wide variety of sources and ability to reach “the cultural accumulation of the past” (which he avoided calling “tradition”). But he insists that this “counter-culture” did not directly interact with the junta,<sup>745</sup> claiming that “a person without the courage of upheaval and the power to become detached from the system would eventually get centralized.” For Kahraman, this incapacity to develop a counter-culture was due to the failure of the Republic to produce individuals.<sup>746</sup> The Islamist sector could not produce individuals; therefore, they could not develop an antagonist poetry to oppose the system radically.

The Islamists particularly tried to confront the problem of individuality with the help of Islamic mysticism in the 1980s. Besides, they tended to write poetry, which lay along the border of Sharia and the individualism of Sufism. But Islamist readers perceived this poetry as religious. Individuality, for example, was a burden in Sezai Karakoç's poems, even considering that his upheaval was inspired to a great extent by the “Second New” movement, which was a previous attempt at individuality. Some Islamists adopted relatively more secular positions, such as Osman Konuk whose poetry was an intense criticism of capitalism.<sup>747</sup> But martial law, torture and related issues were never their problem. Their intent to reach a broader domain of readers, including the center, brought about the necessity to express Islamist identity as an issue of pluralism.

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745 Hasan Bülent Kahraman, *Modernizm...*, 175.

746 *Ibid.*, 417-418.

747 Gülce Başer, “The Poetry of...,” 2011.

## § 9.5 New Traditionalism and Its Identities

By the end of the 1980s, the followers of Hilmi Yavuz were searching for a poetry that was rooted in local literary “sources,” aiming for a modern reproduction of the poetic tradition. The tendency to revise history was typical of the decade and in fact, took a number of different forms. For example Ahmet Oktay, interpreted it in the context of nostalgia and escape from current conditions.<sup>748</sup> Nurdan Gürbilek, on the other hand, explains it as a process of self-definition or identification and as the rise of consumption culture<sup>749</sup>

Ahmet Oktay’s conceptualization of the “present” draws attention to the rise of capitalist standards for life standards - i.e., “targets to be yearned for” – supported by the advertising sector and media. These guaranteed that these targets are often renewed. Everything was constructed as temporary. Besides the capitalist system was employing art and technology in its service.<sup>750</sup> The past also became part of the market as a good for consumption.<sup>751</sup> The new media conceptualization transformed historical components into entertainment or accessories, further manipulating them to hide the oppressive nature of this new order.<sup>752</sup> A. Oktay agrees with Gürbilek in this respect.

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748 According to Oktay in *Entelektüel Tereddüt*, the working class radically lost its economic power, was under the narcotic effect of the media, became apoliticized and lost the ability to face its realities. John Urry’s “three-minute culture” was being adopted, in that time was reduced to the present. The nostalgic wave simply brought the past back as a consumption pattern, detaching it from its context as a means of consolation to resist the shocks and chaotic order of the present. Oktay refers to Harvey’s argument that the motive of nostalgia is an important means to adapt to crisis. Nostalgia softens and strengthens national identity under the circumstances of insecurity and high alert (Harvey, *Postmodernliğin Durumu*, Trans: S. Savran (İstanbul: Metis, 1997).

749 Gürbilek also notes the tendency to draw interest to the past. But this past did not reflect any historical or scientific truth; instead, it was an image to stimulate the current needs and fantasies. It was a “consumable” past. So for the first time in the 1980s, pop history was produced in Turkey for extensive consumption (*Vitrinde...*, 24).

750 Ahmet Oktay, “Şimdi Üzerine Düşünceler”, *Argos*, (November-1989), *Entelektüel Tereddüt* (İstanbul: Everest Yayınları, 2003), 63.

751 A. Oktay, *Entelektüel Tereddüt*, 74.

752 *Ibid.*, 130.

But A. Oktay again claims that the literati wished to escape from this context, and of which the tendency for nostalgia in arts and literature was evidence. The countryside was another area of escape.<sup>753</sup> A. Oktay sees this escape as a response to the oppressive atmosphere of martial law. Economic and social transformation must also be included in this perception of oppression. Hence, A. Oktay linked this to Hobsbawm's conceptualization of the invention of tradition: society's efforts to reconstruct or repossess old traditions after radical and rapid social transformations. A. Oktay linked this trend of escape to the junta since the junta regime triggered a social transformation by breaking down traditional, collective bonds. But the economic transformation following the coup completed the process of social transformation.

The issue labeled "the problem of sources," by various poets from Hilmi Yavuz to the Islamists was an update to or reinvention of tradition. But the criticism of modernity in Yavuz was not as radical as it was in Islamists. It was a protest against the junta regime and against participation in the global economy. Yavuz lent value to local cultural accumulation by criticizing Republican cultural policies. Actually, Yavuz is one of the early intellectuals who launched the debate of the official ideology of the Republic. He also set his sights on intellectualist literature but Islamists focused on concepts such as atheism and secularism. So, Hilmi Yavuz and his followers turned their faces to tradition, and the Islamists to the West. At least one group of Islamists would later become followers of Yavuz.

The liberal, left intellectual followers of Hilmi Yavuz were eager to escape reality and create a local style of aesthetic production. By local, they meant an authentic aesthetic atmosphere constructed on local language, traditions, and accumulations from the pasts. They opposed the early Republic's language, history and tradition policies, which they labeled as the cultural ideology of the Republic. For example, Osman Hakan A. focused on Sufi mysticism. Ali Günvar distanced himself from Hilmi Yavuz despite his similar outlook (probably due to his mature age). He also focused on Sufi mysticism, but neither of these two poets became hard-core Islamists. They did not deal with political Islam. Seyhan Erözçelik and Vural Bahadır Bayrıl took a liberal line, and were closer to Hilmi Yavuz. Furthermore, they were both in advertising. Tuğrul

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753 Ahmet Oktay, *İmkânsız Poetika*, 106.

Tanyol was a scholar and never experienced the private sector. His links to the Eastern tradition were through the Divan-Yahya Kemal line.

The idea of a mission of intellectuals was a product of a leftist, socialist worldview. It had been a main concern of the left wing since the time of Nâzım Hikmet. The followers of Hilmi Yavuz confronted this. In fact, Bayrıl, Erözçelik, and Tanyol who immediately gave up the socialist threads of their initial poems. But Ali Günvar wrote a poem of intellectual criticism of socialist worldview. All wrote intellectualist poetry that left daily politics aside. The new poetry was introverted, relied on an old vocabulary, was anti-populist and included intertextual references.

Hilmi Yavuz defined his intellectual mission to develop links with the literary tradition.<sup>754</sup> Bayrıl and Erözçelik developed a notion of becoming completely civil, as they mentioned in *Şiir Atı*. Ali Günvar tried to translate the verses of Qur'an in the verse form in *Şiir Atı*. The nostalgia noted by A. Oktay crystallized in the poetry of Seyhan Erözçelik and Lale Müldür.

The first book of Seyhan Erözçelik (1962) *Yeis ile Tabanca (The Gloom and the Gun)* was published by Şiir Atı publications in 1986. Its criticism of capitalist culture is clear even in the organization of the book, the poems of which are “memories purchased from a shop of memories.”<sup>755</sup> These memories comprise a common experience. These memories are short and fake. The seller introduces them as “common memories,” but the poet envisions them as the memories that enable individualism.<sup>756</sup> The memories enable the poet to write individualist poetry because the poems are distant from society. Hidden behind the old vocabulary and lyric atmosphere is in fact that the memories are

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754 Tuğrul Tanyol's essay questioning the tradition implied the possibility of this: “What we intended was a synthesis of the Divan and folk poetry. The reason this synthesis failed was that Ottoman palace culture and folk culture were alien to one another.” *Yazko*, 10 (August 81). This is opposed to Republican teachings. Hilmi Yavuz's perspective on the Divan from the point of view of national history is noteworthy.

755 Seyhan Erözçelik, *Yeis ile Tabanca* (Istanbul: Everest Yayınları, 2011, 1. issue: 1986), 3-5.

756 Ibid.

in fact purchased – that they have a purchasable nature – which results in creativity with low sensitivity. The poet, upon losing his halo in the Bermanian<sup>757</sup> sense, wrote an introverted, abstract poetry that he defined as an effort to regain the halo.<sup>758</sup> He was indeed attacking linguistic structure. He established his own surrealist language with genuine methods:<sup>759</sup> “The days like a figure shed/ on the record,”<sup>760</sup> “The bat between the morning star and the sun stretched/ the trembly vision of admit,”<sup>761</sup> “When the rose laid on salt, becomes a woman do the clouds...”<sup>762</sup> It is possible to come across both local and global references in this rich poetry. References to the Ottomans Tulip Era<sup>763</sup> and the dance of skeletons<sup>764</sup> (a metaphor of modern literature) coexist in this

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- 757 The poet was integrated into the market to communicate with readers, according to Berman. But the capitalist system has blown away the divine halo over occupations that normally do not normally produce consumable good. Instead of fighting it, intellectuals and artists, including poets, must become a part of it to exist. Marshall Berman, *Katı Olan Her Şey Buharlaşıyor*, (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2010 [1. issue: 1999, *All That Solid Melts in the Air*, 1982, 88 Georges Borchardt Inc.]), 162-163-165. Considering that Erözçelik was in the advertising sector, he was not only a published poet, but also a player within the capitalist system, reproducing aesthetic production.
- 758 According to Berman, efforts to reproduce the halo through avant-garde art and literature rejected the reality of capitalism and had no function. For him, Flaubert and Gautier developed a mystification - hoping to live and work behind the motto “art for art” - but it was ridiculous (Berman, *Katı Olan Her Şey Buharlaşıyor*, 166-167).
- 759 Erözçelik's vocabulary is problematic in the analysis of his poetry. Bâki Asiltürk claims that Erözçelik launched from Ece Ayhan's poetry to explain the focus on constructing a genuine language (Baki Asiltürk, *Türk Şiirinde...*, 175.) The reason for his claim should be that E. Ayhan was doing the same thing. Erözçelik must have read Ayhan, but he also seems to have visited postmodernist theories. In my opinion, his poetry does not originate from E. Ayhan's, but he was a good reader of it. Mehmet H. Doğan describes his vocabulary as bony and fragmented. Mehmet H. Doğan, “Günümüz Şiiri Üzerine Aykırı ve Dağınık Düşünceler II”, *Yazının Bir Çağı* (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2006), 204-213. To me, it is not fragmented. He attacks a linguistic order that represents the social order. He consciously destroyed the language in his struggle.
- 760 Erözçelik, *Yeis...*, 48. “Günler, sıyrılan birer eşkâl/ gibi sararmış evrakta.”
- 761 Ibid., 49. “Sabah yıldızıyla ay arasına gerilen/ yarasa, titrek görüntüsü itirafın.”
- 762 Ibid., 50. “Gülü tuza yattırınca kadın olur bulutlar.”
- 763 “Tarih ve Kaplumbağalar,” 68.
- 764 “İskeletlerin Dansı,” 75.

book. The poet functions as a ground where East and West coexist. The references in this intellectualist poetry range from Kavafis to Metin Altıok, including many poems, texts, and films.

He established his link with tradition following the line of Behçet Necatigil-Hilmi Yavuz, establishing the authenticity of the thematic of roses, tuberculosis, gardens, and a nostalgic for daily routine along with an old vocabulary. The thematic link he establishes with Divan literature is related to Nedim's poetry. However, he is close to modern Western poetry, as well, resembling a flaneur. It is as if when writing his forms, he sat and tried to remember, "How did *we* use to reflect this?" The term "we" denotes society as the producer of culture. To build such subjective images in a period when individualism prevails, the poet abandons subject position for the sake of a link to tradition: "When the morning lime flies about over the umbrellas/ and clothes burn my eyes. From the concrete/ leaks the rust, sugaring clouds and ossifying/ the thin voice of blood / drains the grasshopper of the clock, wither/ the fireflies."<sup>765</sup> The poet escapes first-person pronouns and hides the subject behind lush description. The eyes, umbrella, clouds, concrete and fabrics are together the constructive components of classical poetry along with modern goods. The poet-subject's oscillation between visibility and invisibility recall those of Baudelaire.

Erözçelik's poems presume intellectuality, but he rejects the intellectual's mission. He represents the identity of a white-collar man with a high education - unhappy and modern. He struggles with conditions of the capitalist system. But methodologically he insists he is avant-garde; his surrender to nostalgia and demand for return of his halo -i.e. his rejection of the realities of the system - do not even let him reach the margins of the system. In the end, he is an advertising professional and is among the reproducers of the system. And his struggle and the target of his struggle is invisible. As Berman said, there is no safe place for anybody in a capitalist system. Nobody can leave the

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765 Ibid., 64. "Sabahın kireci dağıldığında şemsiyelere/ ve örtülere yanıyor gözlerim. Betondan/ sızan pas, şekerlenen bulutlar ve kemikleşen/ kanın ince sesi/ boşaltıyor saatin çekirgesini, söniyor/ ateşböcekleri."

system, every product becomes a marketable good, and therefore every production reproduces the system. All leftist authors of the 1980s needed to consider this dilemma at some point.

## § 9.6 Summary

The imagist poetry of the young generation of the 1980s, which makes up the majority of Turkish poetry of the 1980s, is analyzed in this chapter in terms of the politics it reflected. Ahmet Oktay says that imagist poetry went so far as to seek connotative, sonic techniques, and imaginal, emotional methods that lead the reader to an intuitive understanding: “Unnecessary, unobstructed elements of daily routine and subconscious are described in abstract forms to protest the routine.”<sup>766</sup> This summarizes of the scope of this strain of poetry, but imagist poetry of the 1980s was obviously not monolithic.

First, the source of this protest was the impact of the military junta regime directly (through the presidency of Kenan Evren and the empowerment of National Security Council) or indirectly (through regional practices of martial law) maintained its rule throughout the decade as well as social and economic transformations that emerged with passing into a market economy.

The politics of these poets were mostly reflected through their identities. In brief, they represented themselves. But given their positions, statuses, and origins, they each produced the discourses of distinct segments of the intelligentsia. For example, identities such as homosexuality, having a rural origin, being a white collar professional and/or intellectual and religiousness began to be expressed. The marginalized sectors of society developed protest by expressing their identities. Again, each identity expressed its own language and historical background to oppose “official” history and language implicitly or openly.

The “identity of being a woman” is not analyzed in this chapter, though it too emerged in the form of a feminist movement in this decade. Women poets supposedly emerged in the 1980s and impression is left by the capability outstanding female poets as Lale Müldür and Gülseli İnal. However, the propor-

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766 A. Oktay, *İmkânsızPoetika*, 81.



tion published poems by women poets to the number of journal issues published over the decade was trivial. In the journals I analyzed, I noted one poem by Gülten Akın, one by Neşe Yaşın, two or three by Lale Müldür, one by Senur Sezer, two or three by Gülseli İnal, one by Oya Uysal and one by Nilgün Marmara, amounting to an average of one per year in average - which is to say, they were all but nonexistent. The women had priority in short story though. Women poets of the decade gained their reputations in the early 1990s, with the exception of Gülten Akın, who had already made her career by then. This is also the reason why the language of this dissertation is gendered. The world of poetry was under the hegemony of male poets.

The lines of differentiation among the poets analyzed in this chapter are most clear between k. İskender, the last poet to confront the intellectual mission radically, and Haydar Ergülen, who limited the poet's role to social criticism. They were both are intellectualists as were their predecessors, the poets of the "Second New." Except for most Islamists, many poets felt offended by the society in which they lived. Thus, the intellectualist attitude is easily interpreted as anti-populism, again. They intend to undermine the culture - including the history and language - of a past that they find authoritarian, monolithic, and state-centered. But the motives for Islamists are quite different from the liberals and liberal leftists. The politics they manifest are the politics of themselves and their own status. The Islamists, on the other hand, had no pluralist agenda. They criticized secularists, Republican policies for ignoring the needs of religious people. But their criticism of capitalism was initially a challenge to Western culture, which provided them a pluralist image, in their demand of fair representation of all identities. They were satisfied by reflecting their political side in their work without engaging in political debate in their poems.

## Conclusion

Literature has long been an aesthetic medium of social and political criticism. In addition to its capacity to reflect on socio-political circumstances, it can be directly used supporting a certain political view.

The politics of literature has mostly been the subject of studies of comparative literature and literature theory. In Turkey, debates on the politics of literature have merged with debates on the presumed roles of intellectuals, who are supposed to have been the dynamo of modernization since the Tanzimat era. This notion was reproduced by the establishment of the Republic - i.e. the intellectuals, the army, and the bourgeoisie. The literary intelligentsia, including poets, played an important role as a natural power block during the establishment period, defining the “identity” of the Republic, and feeling responsible for the progress of society.

This study responds to three major assumptions about the literary intelligentsia of the Republic. The first assumption is that poets were a part of that power block all through the Republic. The second assumption is that, in contrast to early Republican poetry and the social realists of the 1960s and 70s, the poets of the 1980s were apolitical. And the third assumption is that the Republican government had maintained a constant, immutable cultural ideology throughout the Republican era.

## § 10.1 Politics in Turkish Poetry

This research shows that the criteria for determining political content was that of the principles of social realism in the establishment period of the Republic. As social realism had been the source of these criteria for determining the politics of a text up until the 1980s, the intelligentsia, the government and even the literati considered individualism and non-critical populist approaches to literary work as apolitical. In this framework, the First New (*Garip*) and the “Second New” movements were considered “apolitical.” But the poets of both movements' hardly considered themselves apolitical. The first movement's political aim consisted of reaching at least the urban masses and pushing literature out of its elitist boundaries, while the latter aimed to represent the unrepresented. The abstract, introverted poetry of the “Second New” movement was not elitist, but in fact anti-populist. But, when representatives of “Second New” poetry movement argued in the 1950s that they had created an anti-populist, “civilian” poetry outside official discourse, few readers thought they were right. Thus, every movement deemed apolitical was shaped according to the discrepancy between the collectivist and individual identities of the poets on the basis of populism and representation. Hence, these movements approached or retreated from the social realist criteria for political content and the role of the intellectual in accordance with political and social transformations. Given the social realist criteria they were applying, critics did not perceive the political attitude of these works until the 1980s.

The social realism, with its emphasis on social hierarchies, conflicts and exploitation of the poor, dominated literary production during two periods, both under the influence of Nâzım Hikmet: the 1930s and the second half of the 1960s through the end of the 1970s. However, social realist literature tended to focus on themes of revolution in 1970s, with the discourse and vocabulary that entailed.

Poetic tendencies in the Republican periods were closely related to the socio-political conditions of the particular period - i.e. government policies, the response of the community to these policies, and social, economic, and political transformations taking place in society. The evolution of poetry can be perceived as a response or reaction only if these aspects are read together. Oth-

erwise, poetry itself seems to respond neither to political authority nor to social tendencies; it is not possible to reach a sensible conclusion by considering only one of these factors in isolation. Some factors of course become more dominant at certain times. For instance, literature was instrumentalized to oppose the government in the 1970s, in a time of political polarization.

The politics in poetry take forms that are more abstract during periods in which popular culture grew and the status of the intellectuals weakened. These are also the times when there was a deviation between the agendas of society and those of intellectuals due to the latter's oppression. Politics and political discourse are more visible at times when the agendas of popular and high culture are aligned and state policies do not directly interfere with intellectuals, as it was in the 1960s and 1970s. I am not relating with the courage of intellectuals to stand against the oppression of the state but with interaction of intellectuals and society. However, state policies have obviously influenced in the poets' choice of political content in the poetry, either directly or indirectly.

The politics in poetry was evaluated by the criteria of social realist poetry until the 1980s. The state, the critics and society were in consensus about these criteria. However, a more abstract political component to poetry was developed in the 1980s inspired by the "Second New" movement.

## § 10.2 The State in the Face of Poetry: The Practices of Ideological Apparatuses

The Republic has been seen by intellectuals as a project of modernization and Westernization in which the prevailing cultural policy rejected Ottoman culture, secularization was encouraged, pure Turkish was adopted, and government policies remained consistently with these principles throughout Republic period. Given the cultural policies of the government, pressure on literary figures, and the formulation of school curricula, this argument becomes questionable. First, poets who opposed the aforementioned principles and championed Ottoman tradition were always included in the curriculum and were never prosecuted in anyway. Essentially, leftist poets were most frequently subjected to prosecution for their poems in Turkey. Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, a conservative who gradually became an Islamist, was never prosecuted for his

poems. Religious discourse in poetry was never regarded as critical opposition to the Republican principle of secularism by the state and Necip Fazıl was routinely included in the curriculum except in certain periods.

The argument that the Republic negated Ottoman culture should be revised in light of the fact that Divan literature was never excluded from the curriculum except for a short period in the 1930s. Likewise, Ottoman history was always included in history curricula, as well. Ottoman heritage was reinterpreted in the framework of contemporary cultural policy, but the Ottoman past was neither rejected in any period of Republican history nor negated as a whole.

Investments and publications by the Turkish Ministry of Culture, along with primary and secondary school literature curricula, reflect government interventions to define the literary mainstream including that of poetry. Due to the tendency to favor “apolitical” poets, real leftist poets were excluded from the curriculum, as were the poets of the “Second New” movement. Only extensive research on the curriculum would explain why the “Second New” movement was still not included in textbooks in the 1980s and whether the government considered the pioneer poets of this movement to be political entities.

This present study shows that contrary to common belief, only a small minority of intellectual poets managed to join the mainstream Republican intellectual elite. By the 1950s, the links between poets and the governing authorities had become too weak to be irrelevant. But still, up until the 1980s the intellectual identity of the poet was strongly felt either through the representation of the poet-subject in poetry, or in poetic manifestos. The state only considered the poets of social realism to be politically threatening. It perceived conservative inclinations as apolitical, a perception with which the intelligentsia and society seemed to agree.

### § 10.3 The 1980's: The Pursuit of Political Antagonism

The study claims that the real transformation in the political interpretation of poetry took place in the 1980s. The transformation in question should be thought of in relation to the social oppression and political restrictions

brought about by the 1980 military coup. By the 1980s, representatives of different orientations and generations of poetry were active. Melih Cevdet Anday and Oktay Rifat from among the pioneers of the “First New;” Attilâ İlhan, a social realist poet who opened the way for the “Second New” in the late 1940's; Cemal Süreya, Turgut Uyar (who died in 1985), Edip Cansever (who died in 1986), Ece Ayhan, and İlhan Berk and from the Islamist wing Sezai Karakoç, as great poets of the Second New were alive and active. Poets of the 1960s - like Ataol Behramoğlu, representing a consequential generation of socialists and İsmet Özel, who had joined Islamists - were also popular poets.

Hilmi Yavuz, who had started writing in the 1950s, presented his interpretation of tradition from the mid-1970s onwards, becoming an important figure as both a poet and intellectual in the 1980s. In the Islamist domain, Ebubekir Eroğlu, a follower of Karakoç, was writing poems and pursuing a modernist aesthetics. In Ankara, leftist liberal pioneers were producing works in an aesthetic style in modernist terms in the circle of Mehmet Taner, a second-generation “Second New” poet. Taner owned Tan Publishing House, which printed books of young poets like İzzet Yasar, Enis Batur, who were mostly ignored in politically active literary circles. Finally, leading poets of social realism of the 1970s like Can Yücel, Ahmet Telli, and Yaşar Miraç were known and had the largest follow among readers. The poets of the younger generation of the 1980s arguably began their literary careers in the shadow of these giants of literature, as well as political and economic pressures.

Poetry of the 1980s has generally been defined as the poetry of “apoliticism.” Young poets of the period defended their position as a recognition of the importance of poetic aesthetics again. They position themselves against poetic approaches which, as in the 1970s, neglected aesthetic concerns. In this respect, they were even supported by some poets and critics of the older generation.

However, these were not the only voices in the 1980s, nor was every day politics completely excluded from poetry. In many of his poems in his banned books, Can Yücel directly and indirectly pointed out and protested the violence and oppression carried out under martial law and the military regime. However, on the whole, day-to-day politics were mostly excluded from poetry, replaced with more radical, individualistic politics, as the society of the 1980s was rapidly changing and adapting to a market economy.

The impact of political, economic and social events that occurred in the 1980s are as follows: Violence used by junta regime, in addition to the effects resulting from the country's participation in the global economy, changed the physical fabric of society, cultural individualization, and the patterns and philosophy of consumption. All of these resulted in the transformation to more opportunistic and economics-driven values. The political culture of the era was authoritarian, nationalist, and emphasized economic liberalism. Individualization triggered the existing identity definitions. As the society was both driven away and turned away from collectivist ideals, the politics of gender and ethnicity slowly gained traction by the end of decade.

These changes also affected intellectuals working and producing in the field of literature, and discussions on the role of intellectual resumed in literary journals. As a result, a possibility emerged for the literati to work in an autonomous area, representing only themselves.

New economic and political circumstances initiated a discussion of intellectual identity and quality. Considering the links between intellectual identity and literary production in Turkey, a period of individualist poetry would have been expected even if political prohibitions had not existed. Considering the statements of literary critics and poets, one major reason for the emergence of this poetry is widespread discomfort with the poetry of the 1970s; interestingly, political prohibitions are rarely mentioned in the explanations. In turn, this confirms the view that political prohibitions were not the only factor affecting the transformation of the literary field. Still, a reasonable answer must be given to the question of what was more influential in bringing about the change in the poetry of the 1980s: state violence and the feelings of resentment or radical criticism among intellectuals directed at the aesthetic qualities of the 1970s. In other words, did frustration result in a general depression among poets, as suggested? The reasons a protest poetry failed to develop as it did after the 1971 memorandum is unclear. What is clear is that the poetry that appeared in the second half of the 1980s - which was abstract, sometimes experimental, and went beyond the "meaninglessness" of the "Second New" poetry - was not dominant in the period just after the coup.

However, the new socio-political environment changed the content in the existing literary journals and was influential in shaping emerging ones. Journals, which are the major media for distributing literary works, are also means

of reflecting the changing nature of political views and agendas represented by literary people, namely poets. Many new literary journals emerged particularly in the first half of the decade in spite of censorship and oppressions. These literary publications reflected three distinct political, literary tendencies: liberal-leftist, socialist, and Islamist. The liberals identified the modern Turkish poetry with the masters and believed the variety of tendencies constitute the richness of Turkish poetry. They regarded literature as an accumulation pioneered by literary masters. As journals were categorized according to this conceptualization, they were rendered spaces for exposition for various identities. Together with the fact that they altogether disregarded hot political issues, they discussed language and history as these issues came onto the agenda together with new legislations regarding the Turkish History (TTK) and the Turkish Language Institutes (TDK). Moreover, as their modes of expression applied new Turkish but also leaned towards Ottoman history with which they had become familiar, they created a more inclusive field of political representation.

The literary journals prepared by the older generations, generally took no issue with the cultural politics of the Republican period. Even Islamist journals, which considered the Republic's cultural politics as a break with tradition, did not voice any radical opposition. In fact, they accommodated it, limiting their criticism emphasizing Islamic classics. Thus, Islamist journals offered a rather moderate perspective. As for socialist journals, the establishment of the market economy brought new problems. They encouraged intellectuals to resist and take a position against the cultural transformations brought about by recent economic changes.

These journals included translated articles, detailed, topical dossiers, and debates and analyses of poetry, aesthetics, language, and history - a template adopted by all the literary journals of the period. The subtle politics conducted via these indirect methods paved the way for the young generation to develop their own expressive metaphors. However, the resort to subtle aesthetics and indirect criticism also generated an obstacle for the works' reception among audiences - even confusion about these journals' political attitudes. This was especially true for *Gösteri* and *Yazko Edebiyat*. *Türkiye Yazıları*, on the other hand, was able to provide clearer and more comprehensible messages.



Although socialist journals were in harmony with the principles of Republican ideology, they had a clearer dispute with the junta. In contrast with the junta of 1960, the 1980 junta adopted a reciprocally intolerant stance towards the left wing. Indeed, the 1971 and 1980 juntas were manifested by prosecutions and violent practices, including corporal punishment. Particularly in the first half of the 1980s, leftist journals viewed Islamist groups as reactionary, while Islamist journals sharply opposed leftist ideology. These attitudes are not surely simple offshoots of the polarization of the 1970s - that the actual polarization was between MHP, the supporters of Nationalist Movement Party, and the leftists. The Islamists countered the leftist point of view to great extent due to its positivism and denial of religion. In fact, Islamism had all along opposed the Republic's cultural and secular politics. They managed to shift the state's discourse and practices onto a more culturally conservative course during the National Front governments of the 1970s, thanks to their "staffing" of bureaucracy. This is evidenced by the fact that the literature curriculum was not updated for years after 1970 while leftist literature, which was included in the curriculum to a degree in the 1950s, was completely excluded from textbooks by the 1970s. Hence, the struggle between the left wing and Islamists again emerged, albeit in a more circumspect manner, in the early 1980s.

The young people, who had newly emerged in the literary world, were eager to establish their own journals. In the past, some had succeeded, some even managing to develop successful publications as *Yaprak* and *Halkın Dostları*, that influenced the literary agenda of their dates. However, the young literati of the 1980s had a particular reason for establishing their own journals: the business of publication was rapidly becoming an economic sector. Young writers therefore had difficulty making it into the existing journals either due to editors' preference for less risky famous contributors who guaranteed sales, or the requirement of approval by literary authorities in journals like *Yazko*. Another reason of demanding their own journals was to create a center of political resistance against capitalist media. The journals of young authors and poets attracted the readers through translated material, discussions on culture, arts, literature and theory, and comprehensive dossiers. Their content mirrored the journals of the center. Even the journals as *Yarım*, which claimed to be the journal of the youth and differentiated itself from the others, and

*Edebiyat Dostları*, which criticized all literary world for being part of the capitalist culture, reproduced this template.

Even a journal that hesitated to focus on day-to-day politics like *Şiir Atı* reflected a political attitude by rejecting “authority” status, the hierarchical structure of language, and history, the consciousness of the establishment era, as well as the culture of current, free market society. Journals which emerged in the second half of the 1980s deliberately attempted to represent a political position, unlike, *Üç Çiçek*, which was among the journals started by young poets in the first half of the decade that reflected and eagerness to be approved by the literary authorities. *Yarın*, which reflected the struggle for survival of the young generation, did not demand approval by the literary authorities; rather it represented the collective struggle of young socialist authors and poets against a newly emerging capitalist media.

*Şiir Atı* and *Edebiyat Dostları*, journals started in the second half of the decade, openly rejected the present authority structure. *Şiir Atı* demanded “an anarchical powerlessness”, whereas *Edebiyat Dostları* sought a reorganization for the system. This reorganization targeted “collective welfare.” *Edebiyat Dostları* emerged together with a demand for socialist system - without naming it -, and defined itself as a critic of culture, in a society undergoing the process of integrating into the capitalist system. Yet it limited itself to a narrow cadre. It disappeared around the same time as the Soviet Union - like an unlucky coincidence. *Şiir Atı*, on the other hand, was a free, harmonious platform for the representation of any contemporary identities.

Journals of the left wing and Islamists, particularly expressed complaint about the degeneration of society, though the Islamists shared an emphasis on the tradition with the liberals. The socialists also started to pursue cultural sources, finding themselves closer to folk poetry and Latin American literature. Islamist intellectuals tended to fall in line with the conservative veins of American and British literatures which confronted modernist literature.

In sum, the literati of the young generation had many issues in common on their agendas - even the socialists and Islamists - such as developing resistance against the Western culture of capitalism. The difference between them was their references: for the former group it was Marxist-humanist values socialists and for the other it was the belief in Allah traditional Islamic values.

All these young people felt the need for an intellectual basis and mastery of Western philosophy to establish their literary existence. But Islamists also believed that Islamic culture should be mastered, whereas socialists appreciated folk literature. In the end, they shared the intent to generate an authentic culture, which they defined in terms of a political attitude. In fact, they coexisted in the same journals vis-à-vis these common principles. The two journals that managed this in the widest sense were the liberal ones: *Üç Çiçek* and *Şiir Atı*.

As the 1980s ended, most of these poets had settled into their respective literary circles, becoming recognized to publish their works in any literary journal. Furthermore, they had become the editors of major publishing companies and journals. Their accumulated experiences in their own, smaller journals played an important role in these successes. But now, they were players in the media sector, in which capital had been invested with the expectation of profit. In short, they became the part of the game they once protested.

The outstanding books of the period in various veins are also means of representing the political views and agendas of poets. The books published in the period reflect how political expressions are shaped and reflected in those veins. The poets' political stances were expressed in form as well as content in the 1980s, and this was also a shift from the criteria of the social realist literary vein. The shift even took place in the poetry still classified in the social realist vein, at least to a degree. The state's political prohibitions and violent practices limited the creation of antagonist art and literature in the 1980s. The implementation of these prohibitions through symbolic violence made it even more difficult to produce open political dissidence. For instance, *Rengâhenk* was prohibited for obscenity, not for its political content, which means that its content was not deemed "political" by the government.<sup>767</sup>

Furthermore, an antagonist aesthetic form of discourse in an aesthetic form against the mechanism and practices and the ideology of the ruling power - that is to say, one that would evoke restlessness within the government, even if not officially prohibited, and one which society would perceive and sympathize would not be generated in this decade. The hot political issues

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767 Obscene Publications Act.

in poetry were limited to prison torment and only a limited segment of poetry engaged even that. A verse in Hüseyin Haydar's<sup>768</sup> "Bir Ölü için" published in the June 1981 issue of *Yazko*, seems like a confession: "The country you were killed in is our country as well/ -are we complying a little?" As Yaşar Miraç expressed in his interview in *Gösteri* in July 1987, journal editors at the same time were demanding pastoral, lyrical poems that stayed far away from political themes. This, of course reinforced the accusations that poets who were therefore reluctant to write poetry on political issues were "apolitical."

With regard to the poetry produced, proximity emerged among the different strains, mostly due to transformations in the form and content of the social realist. The socialists were always sensitive with respect to the political sphere. Yet, just as the left encountered crisis and started to dissolve in the 1980s, the understanding of social realist poetry was torn between self-criticism and protest for bearing witness to the era. The divergence created dispositions the proponents of which were incapable of communicating. In fact, each position was reasonable. The left wing needed self-criticism, to confront and reckon with its mistakes and weaknesses in the past, to adapt to a new and changing public order, and come up with a compatible dissident movement. On the other hand, because leftist groups were subject to oppression and violence by the state, criticizing the left during the time could easily indicate cooperation with the ruling power.

In addition to political debates, criticism of the social realist poetry of the 1970's arose along with debates on the aesthetics of poetry. In the 1980s, the poet became an individual, which provided space for a more subjective, linguistic, and artistic experience in all types of poetry. In other words, social realist poetry itself became more abstract, with the inclusion of poetic arts in the form of images and metaphors. On the other hand, feelings of loss and disappointment with revolutionary politics eliminated some components of social realistic such as faith in a better future and hope for change. And what evolved was a new socialist poetry that highlighted collective welfare (as Ahmet Erhan did), pursued consciousness, equity, humanity and common welfare ("best interest for us"), bore witness to the era (as Ahmet Telli and Nevzat Çelik did), and sometimes questioned the scope and function of collective

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768 Hüseyin Haydar (1956) was a young poet of the 1980s.

welfare - actually confronting leftist ideas (as Akif Kurtuluş did). With the adoption of individual identity, however, it was no longer possible to advocate for change in society. Even so, if not for the tremendous physical oppression implemented on certain poets, different outcomes was possible. Ultimately, a battle for survival and rapid individualization were imposed on the poet, simultaneous with the rest of the society. The 1980s imagist poets of all sides preferred to reveal their political views by charging literary elements like language, statements and even jargon, with meaning instead of making direct references.

Some young liberal-leftists attempted to manifest politics in a way inspired by Ece Ayhan's poems. In his books *Zambaklı Padişah* (Sultan with Lilies) and *Çok Eski Adıyladır* (By Its Old Old Name) which were published during the decade, Ece Ayhan criticized official history by creating a world of decadence and by reading sexuality as an issue of political potency. The young poets who read his book perceived it as the poetry of a marginal poet-subject. Hilmi Yavuz, too, attempted to manifest his criticism by reproducing traditional forms, styles, poetry arts and vocabulary and he successfully influenced young poets. A powerful response to the identity issue was provided by Murathan Mungan, who publicly disclosed his homosexual identity. The first homosexual poet-subject in modern Turkish poetry was seen in Mungan's poems.

This protest can be understood as the poet's reflex to protect his intellectual identity or a way to open up to debate or protest their mission to represent and improve the society following the coup d'état, the ignorance of state violence by the rest of society, and the different factions of society. During the 1980s, there ultimately started to be a gap between the statements of mass culture and the ethical arguments of intellectuals. The debates mentioned above focus mostly on the world of intellectuals, ignoring the rest of the society. However, the newly emerged capitalist culture brought about a new set of values in the rest of society, as well as new social problems, which were obviously not addressed in intellectual debates.

The Islamist groups of the 1980s produced a literary upheaval, responding to modernist culture with reference to a sublime being Allah. Their philosophical criticism was usually based on Edward Said's *Orientalism* and was directed against imperialist culture. Young Islamist poets such as the followers of Sezai

Karakoç carried traces of the “Second New,” utilizing the aesthetic paths provided by this secular movement. The comprehensiveness and scope of their criticism of modernity – as well as its social and moral impact on culture – developed and enhanced the dissatisfied audiences they reached.

One of the major poets among the Islamists, Ebubekir Eroğlu earned a particularly influential status, not only for his poetry but also for the literary journal he managed, *Yönelişler*, which became a medium for both Islamist and liberal and left wing young poets writing imagist poetry. He was also a reader of Sezai Karakoç. He tended to reproduce the discourse and jargon of tradition in poetry, just as did the liberal young poets. Nevertheless, his works in the period are written with a relatively new vocabulary and with a clearer image system compared to the liberal leftists. Along with the transcription of ancient masterpieces into new Turkish, contributions of Hilmi Yavuz, and those of a young generation of artists who closely observed the mentality of Western literature, the Islamists had a breakthrough, creating their own special area of literature and tradition. They predicated their poetry on the philosophical assumption of a “meta-being,” and they built their statements entirely on a metaphysical ideal or questioning of the modern.

The imagist poetry of the young generation protested the military junta regime directly (through the presidency of Kenan Evren and the empowerment of National Security Council) or indirectly (through regional practices of martial law) maintained its rule throughout the decade as well as social and economic transformations that emerged with passing into a market economy. The politics of these poets were mostly reflected through their identities. In brief, they represented themselves. But given their positions, statuses, and origins, they each produced the discourses of distinct segments of the intelligentsia. For example, identities such as homosexuality, having a rural origin, being a white collar professional and/or intellectual and religiousness began to be expressed. The marginalized sectors of society developed protest by expressing their identities. Again, each identity expressed a particular discourse and historical background to oppose “official” history and language implicitly or openly.

While a strong feminist movement emerged in the decade, the identity of woman was not really expressed in poetry. However, women poets supposedly emerged in the 1980s, and impression is left by the capability of women poets

as Lale Müldür and Gülseli İnal. Yet, the works of female poets were virtually non-existent in literary journals. The women had the priority of publication in short stories. Arguably female poets of the decade only received reputation in the early 1990s.

Two important figures - k. İskender, the last poet to assume or at least confront the intellectual mission, and Haydar Ergülen - limited their role through their criticism of the society in which they lived. They are intellectualists in the vein of their predecessors, the "Second New" poets. Like the Islamists, they feel offended by society. Thus, their marginal intellectualist attitude may again be interpreted as a kind of anti-populism. They intend to undermine the received Republican culture, including its history and language, as well as its policies that they think are top-down and authoritarian. Their motives are different from those of the Islamists. The politics they manifest are the politics of themselves and their own circumstances.

Poets were rarely mentioned in parliament after Kenan Evren denounced Yaşar Miraç in 1981. The Minister of Culture Mükerrerem Taşçıoğlu noted Ali Püsküllüoğlu, Nâzım Hikmet and Kemal Burkay in a statement on 14 December 1984 for an anthology in a critical sentence.<sup>769</sup> In addition to the loss of readers, poetry lost its poetic and political power in the eyes of the political authorities after the 1980s.

The presumption of an immutable given, unchanging package of Republican cultural policy and ideology was common among various literary figures and lines. This exaggerated assumption paved the way for a consensus bringing about a shared vocabulary - i.e. a critique of Republican cultural policy. Among them, social realists maintained their earlier sensitivity to collective welfare and poverty, while at the same time developing a more aesthetically refined language.

However, this multi-sided criticism did not develop into an antagonistic language that could represent all the identities. A poet is no longer not considered a political identity – not even by the governments -, and poets have lost their intellectual identity in the new social environment. Moreover, although poets still can define themselves through particular political affiliations, they are generally isolated and represent just themselves.

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769 Türey Köse, *Edebiyat Parçalayan Nutuklar* (Ankara: İmge Yayınları, 2014), 46.

In the atmosphere of the 1980s, shaped by state oppression and overwhelmed by the colors of pop culture and corporate media, the poet had to go underground, as k. İskender did, or confess all his fears and isolation as Haydar Ergülen did, or say farewell to his mother under the threat of execution as Nevzat Çelik did. Another option was to isolate himself and play with memory as Seyhan Erözçelik did. However, poets could never be apolitical. On the contrary, they embodied their political attitudes at the roots of their poems or reflected them through codes, as Islamist poets did.

In this dissertation, I employ the world of poetry to shed light on the atmosphere, present discourses and political representations of the decade from 1980 to 1990. This research paves the way for future studies on the relations of politics and literature in Turkey, as well as the meaning of politics of the 1980s in Turkey's intellectual history.

Due to its scope, this study is an early example of its kind for Turkish poetry. I demonstrate that the social history of Republican literature can be written through poetry. This area is open to comparison, and reciprocal works and the experience of such periods in other cultures provide interesting parallels in terms of social and intellectual history.

Although this dissertation ostensibly provides insight about intellectuals, it actually concerns all of us, as it covers the adventure of the language we speak under continuous influence and subject to instrumentalization by political powers. In the end, poetry is the aesthetics of language. Furthermore, poetry is an important medium for producing political opposition - it is a means of producing politics. Thus, there is much to learn from poetry about producing opposition to hegemonic powers.



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