

## *Turkish poetry in popular culture in post-1980 period\**

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Until 1980s Turkish poetry occurred in verbal, written and audio-visual environments. Since 1980s, however, poetry has frequently occurred in the popular culture, as well. In this paper, this phenomenon which is a new trend in the cultural life of our society will be analysed, and the intersection of the popular culture of post-1980 period and Turkish poetry will be studied.<sup>1</sup> Firstly, the brief history of the relation between Turkish poetry and communication instruments will be studied, which has paved the way to this phenomenon. Secondly, Turkish poetry in popular culture in post-1980 period will be discussed through the analysis of the groups, namely the "sub-groups", who have pioneered this phenomenon and the themes they used, respectively. The sample poems in this paper have been selected from the poems which have been read on in the radio broadcasts or on television through video-clips and those included in the albums of poems available in the music market.

### **Poetry and communication instruments**

In the very beginning, Turkish poetry has first appeared in the verbal accounts of culture, most probably accompanied by music and dance.<sup>2</sup> Since the 5<sup>th</sup> century poetry has appeared in the written accounts belonging to the Orkhon region of today's Mongolia in Yenisey (5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> century) and Orkhon

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1. In this study, *Literary into Cultural Studies* (1993) by Anthony Eastrope has been taken up as basis for the cultural analysis model and the ideas in the study have been duly organized.
2. Epic poems and *sagas*, the oldest samples of poetry, are known to have been sung collectively accompanied by stringed instruments called *saz* and *tar*.

(7<sup>th</sup>–8<sup>th</sup> century) inscriptions (Tekin 1995; Sertkaya 1995). Later on, in the process thus launched, the folk and the Divan literature,<sup>3</sup> which have both stemmed from the synthesis of Islamic and Turkish culture, have passed a great treasury of poetry on to today's society, through calligraphy.<sup>4</sup>

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century when Ibrahim Muteferrika established his printing office, Turkish society moved on to the written, namely *modern* culture. 19<sup>th</sup> century has been the time of dynamic and useful formations of the tradition of written culture. The innovations brought by these two centuries in calligraphy and content resulted in a new synthesis in Turkish poetry.

On the other hand, by the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, it is by no means possible to say that the necessary infrastructure was available for the written accounts of culture in our country; nor the modernization process was complete.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, in the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Turkish society who could not entirely formulate her tradition of written culture, found a new platform for self-expression: electronic communication instruments. First radio,<sup>6</sup> then

3. This distinction is solely a formal classification today as the both literatures have influenced one another.
4. Calligraphy is not only the continuum of verbal culture but also a form of technology. According to Walter Ong (1995: 101) "Plato regarded calligraphy a foreign, outsider technology... just like many people regard computer to be, today".  
In contrast with spoken language, calligraphy develops in an artificial setting. One needs a medium, some competence and some instruments to write; for instance paper, pencil, brush, ink, carefully selected animal skin or wood (Ong 1995: 101). Provision of various instruments is not enough for writing. Transmission from the memory to written accounts necessitates some adjustments. First of all, one who writes has to make use of a medium. The piece of writing has to meet some audience. For this to take place paper, printing and distribution sector have to complete their development. Paper factories and printing houses should be established, the technological gear has to be complete. In the meantime, mediators and personnel should be recruited. Editors, editorial directors, publishers, revisors, graphic designers, publicity coordinators, property agency, distributor companies, increasing number of literates and their reading demands all play their role in the process of publishing of the piece of writing (Ong 1995: 145).
5. Technological infrastructure was not complete. The rate of literacy was low. The units that the printing necessitated, editorial directors, revisors, graphic designers, publicity coordinators, property agency, distributor companies, typography and all of its complicated components... were not sufficient. Property payments of the authors created dilemma. The attempts of the authorities to take part in culture programmes, turning creativity systematically into art did not prove useful.
6. Despite the experimental attempts in 1921–1922, the first systematic state-led radio broadcast dates back to 1927. Poetry which reached then a limited number of audience in Ankara and Istanbul through two small transmitters could reach a much larger audience especially in 1960s as the local radio stations were built in Izmir, Adana, Antalya, Gaziantep, Kars and Van (Aksan 1994: 293).

television<sup>7</sup> and then computer (and all sorts of communication it has provided) assumed their roles in our lives. And, in a sense, poetry has been reproduced verbally or visually on the radio, television or Internet.<sup>8</sup> Thus, Turkish poetry has taken its place in the popular culture through radio and television broadcasts, respectively.

Reading has a private quality whereas listening has a general one and through the radio broadcasts including poetry or by reading poems on the air resulted in a coalescence of verbal and written accounts of culture. Turkish poetry has then occurred in audio-visual environment as well as in verbal or written accounts. Now that the communication instruments co-existed, no matter how old or new, dependence on written accounts has been observed in verbal radio and television broadcasts despite the generally held belief to the opposite. Walter Ong (1995: 15) defines this electronic age dominated by telephone, radio and television, three of which have originated from the calligraphy and printing technology, as "the age of secondary verbal culture". However, in contrast with the other cultures Ong has witnessed, Turkish society has met electronic communication instruments by not having completed its own tradition of written accounts (and

In accordance to the 1961 Constitution, TRT was established in 1964 and all radio broadcasts were unified. In 1974 channels TRT1, TRT2 and TRT3 were opened, which are still on the air, today.

7. 1952 was the year of the first television broadcast in Turkey: The 9<sup>th</sup> July 1952 saw the first experimental television broadcast in Istanbul Technical University, through the sound film on landing of the Korean troops. Until 1970, television broadcast took place in the studios of Istanbul Technical University and later on TRT was assigned with the power to broadcast (Tuğrul 1975).

Television broadcasts were initially experimental, and consequently regular. Programmes on poetry were also included in the broadcasts. These ones reached the audience through black-and-white screen. The 1<sup>st</sup> July 1984 saw the first colour screen and on the very date Ünsal Oskay commented: The colouring of television depends on colouring of our lives. If the life is dull no matter how many colours are apparent on the screen (even you give more and more colours than seven to the screen) people will not see those. The recognition of the colours depends on one's consciousness, consciousness depends on the hope and hope depends on the life experience to keep hope. If everyone collectively contributes to his own and one another's' life, we all can be aware of the colours on the screen by learning more, producing more and dreaming more. If not, it is by no means possible. Because, our dreams are not colourful and recently they have been dominated by one single colour: a dark, gloomy colour of a nightmare (cited in Özcan 1982: 103).

...to point out the close interaction between the television-social structure-individual and so doing he makes a criticism about the time.

8. As the Turkish poetry on the web is an extensive subject *per se* which requires a study on its own has been outside the scope of this paper.

not having developed a standard policy for culture and education), which means for Turkish society to come to terms with the advanced technology of the West.

In the post-1980 period, the process of utilizing from the advanced technology of the West was accelerated and the state policies were actively in favour of the adoption of the Western technologies (Technology involving public and private transportation and housing and comfort should also be mentioned here among the policies adopted in that respect). The concepts included in the economic programme of Turgüt Özal government who came to power in 1983 were dominated by the main idea of "why not we?"<sup>9</sup> In those years, Turkish society, who was provided with the goods and services of the West or who found it available all around, thought that she was more actively involved in the Western way of modernization when compared to the time since the Reformation Period and completely surrendered to the industry of popular culture.

So, it is possible to say that just like other societies, our society has found and built up the technology and the communication instruments it needed and made use of them. However, it is important to point out that such a transfer of technology has blocked the understanding of modernization both mentally and practically; therefore, social structure could not be built on a sound basis; in other words, modernism and consequently post-modernism could only exist in our society as a result of an "implantation".

In Turkey, which has experienced the electronic age as a result of the implantation and has moved on to the "secondary verbal culture age", as suggested by Ong, there has been a speed-up in the formation of "mass culture", which depends on "mass production, and mass production on reproduction; therefore, on the ongoing continuity of sameness of the difference" (Huysen 1988: 62).

It would be worth noting that the poetry, which has had its place in the radio broadcasts which first appeared in 1927 (and generally held by TRT in 1964), has been a part of the systemic policy of "enculturation" during the "planning period", which started in 1960 with the establishment of State

9. The model for being able to do it was formulated as "working harder, being aware of the economic rules and actively making wise decisions", which in return encouraged individuals to keep hope – though there was no fortune of having a splendid future. Jean Baudrillard (1991: 8) suggests that despite various dilemmas within the groups who have such a hope, feel "free" and "think that they are able to do anything".

Planning Institution<sup>10</sup> when an attempt is made to rapidly reproduce technology and to carry out culture programmes. Thus, in the beginning poetry reached masses of people without losing its artistic quality.

On the other hand, radio has not been state-led from 1990s and on, as an implication of the events taken place in post-1980. Private radio stations use the developed technology in their non-stop broadcasts. The pace of the technology is immense. Until then, there was already a general paucity in the studies carried out on Turkish poetry. It could not keep pace with this speed. While the radio broadcast devoured everything like a giant, populist non-qualified studies on Turkish poetry were carried out besides quality ones. Even in some broadcasts on the radio, some flow of words forming rhyme couplets were presented to the audience as artistic poetry.

The case on the radio was no different on TV. During the time when only TRT held the television broadcasts, Turkish poetry was supported by the formal ideology. On the other hand, from 1<sup>st</sup> May 1991 onwards, state's domination over broadcasting institutions came to an end as private TV channels opened in parallel with the establishment of private radio stations.<sup>11</sup> Privatization of radio and TV broadcasts was mostly supported by the advertisement sector<sup>12</sup> and as a consequence of this incentive, private TV channels have quickly become popular.

At first, Turkish society watched private channels in an atmosphere similar to that of the first time when the TV broadcast was on the air. That was not the first time that the TV broadcast was discovered but that free

10. The first development plan envisages the years 1962–1967 and the second five-year development plan 1968–1972.
11. Despite the Constitution, broadcasting private TV channels in Turkey should not be regarded as the breach of codes by means of technological advancements. Private broadcasts with a different content and style, outside the ruling ideology, have influenced many aspects of social life, ranging from the notion of democracy to politics, from bureaucracy to daily life and to the formation of popular culture.
12. As quoted from Nurdan Gürbilek (1993: 19–20): The language of advertisements has not only put the word at the service of scenery or image but also turned the whole culture into the raw material to be made use of in marketing some good, and into a whole of allusions. It has turned interaction with the culture into a jest and bewitching, a sudden stimulation and shock, and a relationship of shop-window and spectacle. While loosening the relationship between those who know about an object and those who advertise it, and between the knowledge based on experience and the know-how in promotion, the language of advertisements encouraged a synthetic, arbitrary and preferential language use in reference to the language of press, technical jargon, theoretical or philosophical language, street jargon and literary or political discourse but at the same time remaining its distance to any of them.

broadcast outside the formal discourse reached the target audience. "Private life" was the most significant concept to represent this period.<sup>13</sup>

Thus, a mass production system was created in a haste with overheard information, as stated above, without available background for the development of the genuine art and in a setting where culture policies were not yet complete. Thus, our society failed to produce high quality cultural products and/or protect already existing ones. Artistic and cultural products just became the objects of mass production to make up an artificial market in turn. It is not possible to tell for sure who is responsible for using this cultural industry today.

Literature and literary genres have also been affected by this sort of an "enculturation process". In an attempt to confine this study to the popular poetry as a genre, we can say that new ways of reading appeared developed in the post-80s. From then onwards, popular poetry has become an object to consume in the mass culture. However, poetry was the fiction to be constructed and deconstructed before the 80s in the environment of oral and written culture.

Thus 1980s, when the daily life was the primary topic for discussion, has been the period to turn all the cultural elements including poetry into a *merchandise* as well as the life with all of its aspects, creating in turn a new phenomenon of consumption. Once the product of a high culture, Turkish poetry had to take its place in such a setting of consumption and cultural industry.<sup>14</sup> For instance, in the TV broadcasts of TRT poems were read live by heart or from the written parole by the speaker accompanied by the back

13. That was the time of the news programmes presented on TV (and radio) by beautiful girls with *décolleté* instead of the speakers renowned for their correct spelling and proper accents and of the arabesque singers such as Küçük Emrah, Ferdi Tayfur, Müslüm Gürses, Kibariye, etc. who were not allowed to appear on the screen (or be played on the radio). In the discussion platforms such as *Kırmızı Koltuk* it was possible to discuss the issues regarded as taboo before. Supervision was not that frequent as it used to be. With the initiative of the artists such as Cem Özer and Rüstem Batum talk shows began to be held where people heard the jokes they had not heard before, and enjoyed the opportunity to talk to the people they had no chance to see on TV before (such as transsexual or homosexual people, members of '68 generation, leftist or rightist groups, young yuppies, and representatives of some organizations) (Maktav 1993). Telephone lines starting with 900 personalized the white screen into a member of the family. Private channels which were able to receive more advertisements this way managed to make popular programmes where they offered money awards (Turnike - Star, Seç Bakalım - Kanal 6, Saklambaç - Show TV).
14. The term "cultural industry" was used in reference to "the process of manufacturing, distributing and consuming the cultural products, and the organization of technology and labour in that process", see Özbek 1991: 90.

ground music and in this process the content and the meaning of the poems were stressed. However, after 1990s poetry has been broadcast through videos in which imagery and sound was integrated into a more complex form<sup>15</sup> just like the songs which have been dramatised into videos. Thus, image has become more important than the poetry itself as the video and the CDs offered a much developed technology rich in visual material. Frequent repetition of videos on TV would leak into the conscious of the audience making the content of the poetry an object of advertisement.

After the appearance of the pirate recordings it was possible to produce many albums and discs. Thanks to these materials music products were copied non-stop. This way music was copied and gained access to private life which was the first step for the other arts. The next step was making use of technology for Turkish poetry, story, novel, tale, etc.

The perception of culture in Turkey in post-1980 period has been increasingly carried out through radio in oral ways and TV, which makes use of written and visual materials. Thus, the personal interaction means with the world have largely turned into just watching. In that phase of transformation, mass culture has played a crucial role as well as the developed advertisement.<sup>16</sup> Mass culture uses technology and presents the "thing" manufactured through mass production to the user after distribution in a short time. In that order, Turkish poetry turns into an image and becomes the representative of some certain styles. Poetry, which has a place in the oral culture in radio stations and tape recorders, is confronted with less bureaucratic obstacles in that medium when compared to the other organs of broadcast and has been increasingly copied and sold through pirate recordings.

To conclude, '80s and '90s have been a special period when the popular culture was created and supported through the presence of private radio stations and TV channels. This period has affected Turkish poetry. In the remaining part of the study, this effect will be discussed through the analysis of those who produce poetry in popular culture and the themes of their products.

15. Contribution of many fields has been necessary during shooting videos for the poem such as choreography, scenario, lights, costumes, acting, dance, etc.

16. Because introducing any good/object/individual necessitates creating an image of that to make it real or look real, rather than introducing its characteristics and real value.

### Producers of Turkish poetry in popular culture: sub-groups

Turkish poetry has not followed a one-faceted spreading when moving into popular culture but the diversity in Turkish society created a multi-faceted/pluralistic point of view which most of the time resulted in uncertainty. To classify this pluralistic point of view for poetry, we can say that a small group is of a higher cultural level. This group is selective in their perception and interpretation of poetry. So, this group has shown an ideal attitude in placing Turkish poetry in popular culture as they have integrated a particular artistic view with technology. Notable poets in Turkish literature have vocalized their own works and recorded them as albums so as to place them in the popular culture.<sup>17</sup> Particular groups, publishing-house owners and researchers have found the original recordings of the notable poets in our history of poetry, modified them by making use of the computer technology and data banks on-line and prepared documentaries or voiced recordings. From time to time, they prepared anthologies and marketed these on CDs.<sup>18</sup> Remarkable examples of integration of technology and poetry has not been confined to these individual efforts. Notable poetry works of Turkish and world literature have been brought in the form of a composition and transferred to audio-visual environment by actors and actresses.<sup>19</sup> In the post-1980 period, voice recordings of the poets over their own works and actors' and actresses' voice over recordings of these works, with full respect to their artistic value, have been a remarkable incentive and first step for the creation of Turkish poetry history and development of literary and cultural policies.

17. The poems of the artists which they voiced on radio and TV programmes are as various as to be a thesis subject and thus, have been outside the scope of this study.

18. The poems like the following have been recorded as voiced by their producers and taken their place in the environment of audio-visual culture: *Tandık Dünya*; Ahmet Arif, *Hasretinden Prangalar Eskittim* (1998); Ahmet Arif and Rahmi Saltuk, *Hani Kurşun Sıksan Geçmez Gece* (1998); Özdemir Asaf, *Yalnızlık Paylaşılmaz* (1995); Atıf Behramoğlu *Kendi Sesinden Şiirleriyle*, *Bir Gün Mutlaka* (1992); Nazım Hikmet, *Kendi Sesinden Şiirler* (1991) and *Şiirleriyle Nazım Hikmet* (1993); Atilla İlhan, *Ben Sana Mecburum* (1999) and *Kendi Sesinden Şiirleriyle* (1997).

Similar samples seem to be too few when we consider the poetry heritage of Turkish literature.

19. For instance, Bertolt Brecht, *Şiirler* (Voice over: Zeliha Berksoy and Genco Erkal, 1992); Nazım Hikmet, *Şeyh Bedrettin* (Voice: Tuncel Kurtiz, 1994); Murathan Mungan, *Bir Garip Orhan Veli* (voice: Müşfik Kenter, 1995); and *Shakespeare'den Brecht'e, Dünya Şiirinden Seçmeler* (voice: Can Yücel, 1987). The productions like recorded Turkish tales, Dede Korkut tales, Nasrettin Hodja tales in the form of poems so as to transfer into audio-visual environment for children have been outside the scope of this study.

Such an incentive as to develop an elite culture in Turkish poetry represents an elite understanding of poetry, as well.

However, the developments in the post-1980 period in Turkey resulted in structural transformations and a replacement of modern approach by post-modern approach which in turn paved the way to the formation of new "subgroups" in Turkish culture. These subgroups have created their own discourse outside the formal discourse. Cultural sub-groups now started to make use of all media and technology available to express their discourse, quite naturally, also including literature and literary texts. It is the same period when literary texts (including poetry) have become visual objects and have been regarded as a product to consume.

It is also possible to classify the sub-groups to appear mostly in post-1980 and to transfer their notion of poetry to the popular culture environment as the following: media-workers interested in poetry, pop music stars, those who reflect their traditional opinion through a modernist identity, youth, those interested in politics and outsiders of the dominant religious ideology.

#### **Media-workers interested in poetry**

Vocalization artists using electronic communication technology and/or speakers, programme advisors, programme directors in radio and television, actors and actresses, journalists; in other words, those who are appraised and approved by the society through the programmes they produce, their voice and behaviours also record poetry albums.

Most of the time the background of those included in that category is not Turkish literature or world's literature. Thus, they must have a limited background knowledge on the theory of poetry, historical development of poetry, and notable representatives of poetry in Turkey and in the world. Their selection of poetry and the compositions they produce for audio-visual environment are of a popular quality. Examples of this category include: Kerem Alışık, *Kerem Misali* (2001); İclal Aydın, *Kızıma* (2002); Bedirhan Gökçe, *Üçüncü Sayfa Şiirleri* (1999); İkbal Gülpınar, *Simidin İki Yakası* (1999); Şebnem Kısaparmak, *Bir Şiirdi Yokluğun* (2002); Mesut Mertcan, *Şimdi Şiirler* (2001); and Tayfun Talipoğlu, *Seyyah* (2000).

This way, Turkish poetry first started to appear with the year 2000 in the music and entertainment programmes on TV (especially in the morning broadcasts) and in music and video programmes. For example, Bülent Çarıkcı who reads poems in his programme "Yanar Döner Saatler" for Kral TV, a music channel, İkbal Gülpınar in the programme "Nane Limon Ka- buğu", and Ayşe Egesoy in various entertainment programmes fall into this

category. So, poetry has become a product to consume in the service of any other art and to complete different information domains owing to the efforts of these media professionals.

### Pop music stars

Pop music stars also started to release poetry albums and shoot videos. This attitude can be considered another extension of the above-mentioned development. For instance, in the poetry album by Cem Karaca called *Hep Kahır* (2001) there are poems vocalized by himself and various other artists (Ayla Algan, Uğur Aslan, Savaş Ay, Ayşe Egesoy, Bedirhan Gökçe, Nedret Güvenç, Ahmet Selçuk İlkan, Müşfik Kenter, Haluk Kurdoğlu, Nihat Nikerel and İbrahim Sadri). Later on, a poem in the album is published on TV as a video.

Easy production and consumption of pop necessitates some new quests as a result of the need to keep update and *en vogue*. Some arabesque and pop music stars also read poetry in music albums and videos. This way music is being deliberately decomposed by the post-modernist approach of the pop music stars. For instance, in the album *Kemal Isık* whose producer was Zerrin Özer (2001) poetry and music goes hand in hand. That is a deliberate action. Though not that overt, a similar tendency can be observed in the albums of Soner Arıca, Murat Gögebakan, Haluk Levent, Rafet el Roman and Yasar.

### Those who reflect their traditional opinion through a modernist identity

Nostalgia, which can be defined as yearning to past, has been one of the notable themes of the Turkish poetry in the audio-visual environment in post-1980. In the Turkish society, where the post-modern discourse is strongly felt, an alienation process has launched in parallel with "forgetting" and "losing memory" due to the decomposed way of spending time (Oskay 1998: 148). As Unsal Oskay (1998: 148) points out,

Nostalgia has adopted alienation as a reason *d'être* in an attempt to maintain various aspects of the past, make it visualized and perceived; so as to make us find hope in it as to keep our "humane" qualities for tomorrow.

From late '80s on, which is the period of a value transformation and loss, poets have taken up the theme "nostalgia" in order to reconsider the past to judge today. In this evaluation they adopt traditional values as themes rather than the current ones in order to maintain and transfer them into the future. İbrahim Sadri is among those who express the longing to the past experiences, rather than the realities of today, in the form of a poem in the

audio-visual environment. Some of his albums are the following: *Adam Gibi* (1998), *Bir Adın Kalmalı* (1999), *Öylesine Sevmiştim* (1999) and *Bir Şey Söyle* (2001).

The realities of early lives and past moments have been collected together to be reconstructed into a post-modern discourse and thus a new form has been produced in poetry. This way, those included in the mass culture has been supported by music, thus offered a one-way message to the recipient. Anyone who reads/listens or watches these poems can find something familiar in them.

### **Youth**

In Turkey youth is also studied as a sub-group (see Doğan 1994). This sub-group has not created its own discourse and culture, yet. However, the frustration caused by the modernization process in this country is one of the major problems that confronts and affects the young people. This frustration leads youth to question many concepts with a new point of view in the practise of living. These concepts include love, destiny, interpersonal relations, happiness, patience, death and loneliness. As Meral Özbek points out, love, especially, turns into a sort of "emotional ethos" in this sub-group (1991: 115). Ahmet Selçuk İlkan (for instance, *Bir Tutku*, 2000) and Yusuf Hayaloğlu (1999, 2001) are included in the poets who take up such concepts as themes in the poems in their albums. These poets are very popular; İlkan is invited to various TV programmes and Hayaloğlu produces and presents a TV programme himself.

### **Those who are interested in politics**

It is widely acknowledged that election and selection activities have been carried out through a multi-faceted and complicated process in democratic societies. Effective propaganda activities necessitate making use of other domains than politics in an attempt to persuade people. Using information technology, mass communication instruments, popular culture and advertisement make up only one dimension of today's domain of propaganda activities.

Since the very beginning of the multi-party period, policy makers in Turkey have used poetry and poetic discourse to support their ideologies during election processes. In post-1980, political elites tried to reach the target audience not only in the election process by using audio-visual environment. They have released poetry albums and have taken their place in this sector. For instance, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan released a poetry album called

*Bu Şarkı Burada Bitmez.* Burhan Çaçan released the album *Mevlit-İlahiler* in the period when he put his candidacy for membership to the Parliament from the Virtue Party. Poems with religious themes in Turkish literature were included in this album.

### **Outsiders of the dominant religious ideology**

Although the majority of the people are Muslim in Turkey, independent views and diversifications were observed besides the dominant religious ideology and sect in the religious culture and the perception of the religious culture of the country in post-1980 period: fundamentalists (Mevlevî, Nakşîbendî, Kadîrî, etc.), followers of some religious orders, those who obey the rules of their religious beliefs, Muslims who lead a secular lifestyle (Sunni, Alevî and Şafîî), those who hold religious beliefs other than Islam (Jewish and Christians), atheists, Satanists, etc. Each "group" comprise a subgroup according to their own beliefs and thus each of them has developed a discourse to represent their group. This religious subgroup discourse has increasingly spread to reach the audience through poems or poetic talk show programmes by means of audio-visual communication techniques during the phases of perception, adoption and application of religion since post-1980s. Thus, the subgroup discourse of each religious order can easily follow the way to the individual's subconscious through the music in poetry.

On the other hand, in the religious literature which has been produced under the Islamic influence (Sufi literature, in particular) poetry and music goes hand in hand to make up a complementary composition. For instance, *Mevlit* can only be read with a special music. Religious songs are enriched with music. Along with the albums produced by Turkish Religious Foundation; in other words, religious poems which have been recorded under the state-held cultural policy, some other, sometimes *kitsch*, productions are also available which have been produced for some commercial interests under no controls at all and which are sold in Hacı Bayram Veli Mosque in Ankara and in the whereabouts. These samples are too many to fall within the scope of this study.

What are the themes used by the subgroups which produce poetry in the popular culture? This part of the study is allotted to this subject.

### Themes in Turkish poetry in the post-1980 popular culture

Turkish poetry in the post-1980 popular culture<sup>20</sup> can be classified to the following subgroups with respect to the themes used: "Love, love, love...", "Oh, those big cities...", "It was our village", "This is a minority culture" and "Those were the days..."

#### "Love, love, love..."

Love makes up the primary motive of the poetry in audio-visual environment. However, the notion of love in this category is abnormal in that there is always a cruel woman, and a man who likes to be in pain. There are loves unreturned. A transition occurs from such an understanding of love to a different philosophy of life. As Meral Özbek (1991: 106) points out:

Love relates itself with all concepts from the right to live to reaction and trouble; reactions of the "lover" to himself, to the beloved, to the others and to the social problems are integrated within "love" and are expressed by means of love.

The attitude in these poems is a continuum of the traditional attitude and approach to love which makes up the theme of almost all poems in audio-visual environment, however the way of expressing it is quite new.

*I'm gone  
I'm gone my love  
Before you asked.  
Now, now you're only in my mind when I sleep  
In my dreams.  
Oh I wish I could hold my heart with your hands again  
I wish I could take a deep breath*

*You're a rose faded before wilting  
I'm always in sorrow, always in pain  
I wait for you for months  
If only you come to me once in a blue moon*

Kenan Işık, from the album *Kenan Işık* (2001).

20. Turkish poems classified this way were selected among the popular culture products which were recorded as albums and videos in between 1998–2002. In classification "content analysis" approach of Leo Lowenthal (1961) was used.

Here, the originality of once a popular song "Senede Bir Gün" was undone and a secondary text was added to it; thus, poetry and song was introduced together with a post-modern point of view under the theme of love.

To conclude, it is important to emphasize that in most poems the theme of love is not an earthy and realistic love but a symbol. So, it is possible to note that the concept of love in the post-1980 Turkish poetry in audio-visual environment resembles the notion of love held in the public literature and Divan literature.

**"Oh, those big cities..."**

The urbanization movements in Turkey have increasingly developed since 1950s. By 1980s the overall view in cities already underwent a profound change. The experiences in urbanization and collaboration irreversibly changed the nature of the interpersonal social and economic relations. This breaking point in social relations blocked the past entirely.

The concepts like family, quarter and work place have gained in new meanings. Individual has been alienated from himself, society and the social institutions. Loss of identity has been slowly but increasingly going on. Discrimination, all sorts of smuggling, money laundering, mafia, bribery and corruption have become everyday events which confront people living in the urban area. A situation has emerged in which aggression, thievery, fury, violence, drugs and prostitution have been perceived as concepts co-related with big cities as well as individuality, selfishness, being all alone in life, and "easy money". The city which is named as the "outside" is a place to oppress and depress human. For the individual who is desperate, unhappy, penniless and tired the outside is unbearable, which means a wreckage, a dynamite, betrayal, panic and crush.

Individual fails to figure out the life in city and to adapt to the lifestyle. For this reason, he feels helpless. He needs to react to this helplessness as a man. Because he lost his trust in government. The institution of family has dissolved. Politics is full of bans and punishments. Police is a suppressing force.

*Once I remember*

*A few tramps haunted to live on me;*

*As he got the chair, Rıza*

*Chased the guys to the hospital! ...*

*We would wear the same shirt, smoke the same cigar,*

*Support the same team...*

*Bet on each Fener's\* match*

*And the treats were on us for dinner...  
It would be up on our luck, one day,  
We would divorce the wife and buy a Mercedes  
Get a chick or two  
Show off by the road to Bosphorus!*

Hayaloğlu, from the album *Ah Ulan Rıza* (1999)

There are many poems like that in popular culture.

**"It was our village..."**

Human being is no longer able to lead his own life as an individual in modern cities. Just like the working and production processes have been categorized into portions, simplified and processed to be deconstructed, life and individual has been deconstructed. Individual who fails to understand the whole of the work in his work place also fails to understand the ever-changing order of life outside the work place. He is obliged to live a life in bits.

The thoughts and behaviours of the individual do not seem to be coherent. Institutions and rules have changed. Thoughts are corrupted with tabloids while fashion, making a difference, being a yuppie and luxurious consumption gain in importance. Corruption, porn and violence start to appear along with all these. Discrimination between religion and religious orders and ethnic discrimination increasingly appear. The collapsed world of ideals is replaced by the world of interests and financial expectations.

*I have sent you to the large town,  
Complete the education, and come back.  
If you are to waste my efforts in vain  
I lay you down and cut your throat, son!  
There were many strumpets over there  
Beware of the hustlers and hookers  
May God save you from Godfathers.  
Be careful, son Behtanam!*

Gökçe, from the album of *Üçüncü Sayfa Şiirleri* (1999)

The individual who fails to figure out the city life longs for his village and environment where he suffers no alienation at all. He goes on to look for and raise the undone and ideal human. Villager tries to find a way in the city to overcome the difficult situation. The never ending circle goes on forever.

**"This is a minority culture..."**

The minorities and small groups have been widely taken up as themes in post-1980 Turkish poetry. Minorities such as Bosnians, Circassians, Armenians, Kurds and Jewish people begin to search for an identity. They comprise a subculture to express the characteristics of their culture through poems:

*There must be a reason why your hand sweats in the cinema, your voice echoes in my voice... as if you're happy or sorry for the one on the screen and coincidentally your face has flown deep inside of me... Lie!... You watch the screen, I have the vision of you... it's the American Movie that I watch in Kurdish...*

Erdoğan, from the album *Kayıp Kentin Yakışıklısı* (1998)

This sample which represents the principle of pluralism in post-modern discourse introduces the position of different cultural sections of these groups of subculture in the society.

**"Those were the days..."**

For the individual who finds comfort in the past left behind the lost values, nostalgia is an escape. The one who would like to question today selects the beauties in the past to introduce us as a new composition.

*One day, in the morning, we saw that all the good things  
The ayvansaray dock  
Fade away  
Like a ship  
Sailing off to the dream world*

*That the ayvansaray waters receded,  
Said the papers  
That süheyla hanım raci bey  
melahat mehveş abla  
niko, ercument efendi faded,  
They did not say, why  
Yet they are not here, not here.*

*There is neither Harman cigarette left to us,  
nor Olimpos soda water  
nor sadri alışık...  
but a longing, perhaps.*

İbrahim Sadri, from the album *Adam Gibi* (1998)

The past has passed on to today in the most beautiful form after being distilled with its characters and sections from life. It should be born in mind that those who adopt traditional discourse have mostly taken up the theme nostalgia in post-1980 poetry.

### Conclusion

Since 1980s old and new communication instruments have been inevitably used together, as a result of which Turkish poetry has become popular to take its place in mass culture. As a result of mass production, poetry has become an object which created its own market where it is consumed. It is by all means possible to hold that poetry has been consumed in audio-visual cultural environment rather than written and oral cultural environment, today.

When the themes are analysed, it is observed that a notable characteristics of post-1980 poetry is that the urban identity is dominant in the themes. This is the identity of the subgroups who use poetry to express themselves in popular culture in post-1980 society. In this respect, notable themes are stuck somewhere between tradition and technology due to the alienation of those, who live in metropolises, to the city and people.

The presence of poetry in visual-intense audio-visual cultural environment rather than the written culture introduces new ways of poetry reading. Technology has become the power to shape Turkish poetry by means of electronic communication instruments today.

In conclusion, post-modern enculturation and mass culture has brought along profound changes in the profile of Turkish poetry and its developmental course.

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