Between Content and Form:
The Models of Representation
in Kurdish Poetry of Turkish

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for my daughter Rabia,

Thesis Abstract

This thesis is a theoretical study of models of representation marking the political content, language uses and aesthetics of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish language; it aims to offer a situated and historicised analysis to help address current questions about its status, political meaning and aesthetic value. The focus is on the poetry of three prominent post 1980s contemporary Turkish poets, Murathan Mungan, Bejan Matur and Yılmaz Odabaşı. The study is motivated by dialectical approaches to literature and the argument is structured around content, language uses and form to provide an overview which pays due attention to the political as well as aesthetic dimension of these poetries.

After the background provided, the second chapter explores the literary articulations of ideas about the self and community in the selected poetries and illuminates, through close engagement with texts and comparison with Kurdish poets of the previous generation, the extent to which they are necessarily political and oppositional. It contends that, while these poets could be thought of as inscribing Kurdish identity in particular respects, the plurality of discourses present and connections to Turkish-language literary alterity suggest that their collaborative political models have an impact for the entirety of the society in Turkey: Turkish literature is Kurdish too.

The third chapter demonstrates the correlation between the political pluralism of these poetries and the diversity of specific uses of Turkish effected in each, ranging from celebration in Mungan to driving language to its bare minimum in Matur's poetries. Based on a comparison with mainstream Turkish poets, the thesis argues that the presence of artistic connections with the literary mainstream also highlights the aesthetical determination of the content of their work; literature as a form of representation belongs to language, these poetries to Turkish-language literature.

In Chapter 4 the analysis of the interaction of the content and form (the aesthetic dimension) focuses on the difference between the implied and intended meaning and value of these texts. The comparison with the poetries of present-day Kurdish poets, who claim this term for themselves, reveals the distinct aestheticism moderating the liberal humanist rendition of Kurdish identity inscription; what is represented is the implied Kurdish self rather than content. The thesis identifies the plurality of aesthetic positions defining the representations of self and the world as the context defining their value for Turkish and Kurdish literatures in general and for understanding the political dimension of literature in particular. The conclusion argues that these poets have brought these literatures closer together as parts of world literature, thereby also highlighting the distinct Kurdish presence in the development of its aesthetics.

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Notes on Translation

Except for Bejan Matur and Ahmed Arif's poems discussed in this study, all poems and material have been translated from their Turkish originals by the author, which are provided in the footnotes.

All Turkish and Kurdish words, except for proper names, are italicised.

Introduction

Introductory Remarks: Turkish Literature by and about Kurds

In the early days of the new century, in 2004, as the status and role of ethnic minorities and non-Turkish nationalities within Turkish society, culture and literature garnered increasing attention, a public debate emerged around the central challenges of Kurdish engagement within the Turkish literary field. One side of this debate comprised a group of poets who identified as Kurdish – including, Sezai Sarıoğlu, Mehmet Butakın, Metin Kaygalak and Kemal Varol – and wrote for the literary journal, *Yasakmeyve*[1] (Forbidden Fruit). Although this group accepted their status as poets of Turkish, they rejected the classification of their literary activity as 'Turkish Poetry'. Instead, these poets argued that 'poetry in Turkish' (or 'of Turkish', the vernacular) was a more apt description of their literary work. As Kaygalak argued in *Yasakmeyve*, this descriptive classification was necessary since such poets were without an identity, as being of Kurdish origin did not equate to them being 'Kurdish poets' (Kaygalak 2004b, 4). Özdemir İnce, a columnist for the renowned centre-right Turkish daily, *Hürriyet*[2], and a significant Turkish poet of the latter half of the century, held up the other side of the debate. Arguing from a clearly liberal nationalist political position, İnce took issue with the classification provided by the above poets as, according to him, the question was redundant: the poets in question could not but write 'Turkish poetry' and must hence accept the epithet 'Turkish poet'. İnce also conceded, however, that literary expressions of the Kurdish question were incredibly relevant and could potentially intensify in relation to an evolving Kurdish political question and national sensibilities.

There is much to be said about how questions raised by this debate may figure in the literary life in a Turkey undergoing a period of intense centralisation of political power by the AKP, led by president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Most recently, in the aftermath of 15 July 2016 coup, the steps taken by the Turkish government also included curtailing the intellectual and academic freedoms of the very researchers in this insipient field of Turkish literary studies[3]

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[1] *Yasakmeyve* is a literary journal that has been in circulation since 2003 in Turkey, published by Komşu Yayınları, managed by Ali Enver Ercan who is also the editor of the prestigious literary journal Varlık, See http://yasakmeyve.com/ for further information.

[2] *Hürriyet* (Liberty) is a major Turkish newspaper published since 1948 with a secularist and liberal outlook. See http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/.

[3] Selim Temo Ergül, Kurdish poet, writer, columnist and academic, details of whose work is discussed in the literature review, was expelled from his position at Mardin Artuklu University because of an Edict of Law (Kanun Hükmünde Kararname) the AKP government exercised as part of the clampdown

(Duvar, 2017). Nevertheless, ever since the debate had coalesced in exchanges between İnce's columns in *Hürriyet* and the Kurdish poet's dossiers in the *Yasakmeyve* and *Yom Sanat* journals, a modest amount of critical work and academic research has emerged around questions of Turkish literature by and about Kurds (Uluçay 2006, 20). So far, as detailed in the literature review below, this work has focused on pointing out Kurdish writers' presence in and contribution to Turkish literature both before the republican period – the period, prior to the 1923 establishment of the Republic, that saw the modernisation of Turkish culture and literature – and throughout. In addition, Turkish literature's treatment of Kurdish people and society has also garnered increased attention, and this has been a line of enquiry that is developing in parallel with the self-reflective discourse prominent in the Turkish cultural and literary fields since the 1990s. This self-reflective discourse seeks to understand the role played by Turkish literature in constructing official Turkish nationalist narratives in the course of its recent modern history, which also involved the exclusion of the identity, lives and literatures of minorities in Turkey. Progressing on a thematic front but now also being complemented by a debate concerning specifically the Kurdish authorship of Turkish literature, the emerging critical discourse on minority engagement with the Turkish literary field has not only brought the very meaning and boundaries of the Turkish literary field into question, but also paved the way for academic and critical attention to be dedicated to the role and function of the literary activities of non-Turkish or non-Muslim writers both in their languages of origin and in Turkish.

Being in its early stages of development, as it is comprised of only exchanges in popular literary journals – such as those mentioned above – and a modest amount of academic enquiry from metropolitan universities in both Turkey and Western Europe, this attention to Kurdish engagement with the Turkish literary field has, so far, only yielded an incomplete account of the meaning and significance of Kurdish authorship of literary texts. Despite the valuable contribution of such debates to the development of historicist and political approaches to the Turkish literary field, preliminary studies have, so far, managed to only partially consider the theme of Kurdish life, society and people within Turkish literature. Furthermore, such studies have taken a more diagnostic focus; instead of giving comprehensive descriptive accounts that interpret and map out the different and often competing political and aesthetic projects of the literatures produced by Turkish authors and those of minority backgrounds, such studies have sought to identify how Turkish

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following the 15 July 2016 unsuccessful coup attempt. See literature review below and newspaper article referenced.

nationalisms have been paradigmatic. With regards to the meaning and value of Kurdish authorship of Turkish literature, the little explanatory work that exists is limited to considerations of authorial political and ideological positions, not the kinds of literature Kurds produce or what they write.

Much was said after the public debate between İnce and the *Yasakmeyve* poets, but the ambivalences in our understanding of what we consider to be the Turkish literary field, the society from which it emanates, the connections of this literary field to the literatures of minorities, and this case's theoretical significance for more general political readings of literature remain largely unaddressed. While a marked political and historical emphasis is now part of the critical discourse around these questions, the results of this modest theoretical turn are not so readily identifiable as it pertains to these central questions. Along with the question of classification, which requires attention at a study's earlier stages, one of the main challenges to the development of research on Kurdish engagement with Turkish literature has been a difficulty of distinction between studies on Turkish literature produced by Kurds and those studies about Turkish literature about Kurds, whether the author is of Kurdish origin or not. As attention to the themes of Kurdish life, society or political identity are not exclusive to Kurdish authorship alone, it is reasonable to expect studies of Kurdish-authored Turkish literary texts to aim to gain a greater understanding of the texts' cultural, literary and theoretical meaning and value; the same that is expected from analyses of any other literature. Such studies should question what kind of literature this is, what is being written, and the subject and themes marking this writing, namely the narratives constructed and how and with what artistic considerations this writing is produced; that is, the language uses of which the literature is the art, the ways in which the author or the poet has chosen to react to the tradition, and the aesthetic preferences, which no doubt figure in the process of artistic meaning creation. Perhaps the paucity of such accounts is, partially yet importantly, the reason for the ambivalences haunting the understanding of the subject, the fragmentary nature of the arguments enunciated both by İnce and the *Yasakmeyve* poets and the possible conclusions they argue for despite their emotive force and putative value.

Within this context of Turkish-Kurdish cross-cultural literary studies, this study aims to elucidate the models of representation that mark texts produced by Kurdish authors in Turkish by analysing their political positions, language uses and aesthetic preferences. Motivated by a desire for establishing an objective basis for analysing questions of the presence, status and implications of Kurdish authorship in the Turkish literary field, as a method, this study argues for a close, focussed reading of the texts and literatures produced

by Kurdish authors in Turkish to complement the considerations of the authorial milieu and self-stated views on the political or aesthetic dimensions of their work. This study proposes such an approach for clear practical and methodological reasons. On the practical level, this study attempts to provide a representative portrayal of the kind of Turkish literature produced by Kurdish authors in order to objectively respond to the concrete needs of this under-researched field of cultural-literary studies. If an indication of the scope of this need is the paucity of textual bases for arguments and emotive identity claims, another is the lack of focus and specificity of research due as much as to the cross-cultural nature of the research as it is to confinement of the study of the case to Middle East specialist, western academic and political circles with varying degrees of interest in the Kurdish national question. Indeed, it may be asserted that our understanding of the structures and meaning of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish is fragmentary and the consideration of its literary and theoretical significance of the complexity of questions it presents seems not completely connected with perspectives on political dimension of literature developed elsewhere. Along with gaps existing within the research field due to the bilingual nature of this study, which renders engagement with its questions all the more challenging, the need for a general account of the kinds of literature produced can also provide such a basis for this case of cross-cultural interaction to make further and fuller impacts.

On the methodological front, a study emphasising close textual engagement and attention to the literature's aesthetic dimension and political content is necessary to contextualising the readings to which they have been subjected through contrasting political and historicist agendas and developing a more accurate understanding of the precise political function of this literature. This is especially relevant given the discrepancy between, on the one hand, the emotive force of identity statements to self-inscribe both by the Kurdish poets and the conservative underpinnings of Ince's approach, and, on the other, the paucity of textual evidence to fully argue either of the cases. This discrepancy is due, specifically, to this modest area of research and criticism's preoccupation with authorial political positions and statements on their own literature rather than engagement with the texts themselves. This is a preoccupation with 'intended meaning' not 'actual meaning' and, on the theoretical front, is dependent on the overvaluation of this literature's political dimension over its aesthetic value and dimension; an attitude that could arguably be attributed to either side of the argument. Although attempts at such accounts inevitably involve generalisations, attention instead to the actual meaning of texts, how they are structured and articulated, to their apparent political content and aesthetic preferences provides an objective basis that

can help address this discursive gap and test the limits of the political readings literature has been subjected to over the last half century so that more comprehensive perspectives on the political dimension of literature are developed.

As the emphasis on attention to both the political and aesthetic dimensions of literature as a methodological tool makes clear, this study assumes a certain critical and theoretical trajectory. In particular, in addition to considering the theoretically fragmentary nature of the field of study and the non-theoretical approaches somewhat facilitating this state of ambivalence, this study seeks to test the credentials of political approaches to literature which foreground the apparent political nature or metonymic value of the text over its aesthetic nature; the very device and forms through which such meaning is construed. To this end, rather than taking the *Yasakmeyve* poets or İnce's designation of the Kurdishness or Turkishness of certain literary practices at face value, this study explores Kurdish involvement in Turkish literature in the period just preceding the acute and antagonistic statement of the question that culminated in public debate. This study maintains that, while the political and aesthetic attitudes of the current generation of Turkish-language Kurdish writers has value and meaning in itself, the contextualisation of both the meanings ascribed to contemporary examples of this writing in the debates recounted and their, as yet, under-analysed actual meanings within their past and present literary context could amount to a more comprehensive understanding of Kurdish engagement with the Turkish literary field. Not only could we then define and populate the boundaries of this engagement, but its contextualisation within a comprehensive account will also facilitate a more accurate understanding of the contemporary literatures produced by Kurdish authors in Turkish by the demonstration of the lines of confluence and divergence of their poetries from the rest of the body of Turkish poetry during the Republican period.

Alongside their artistic maturity, representative nature as popular poetries and enjoyability, it is with such methodological concerns to help discern and clearly state some of the central questions of the field of study that the poetries of Murathan Mungan (1955-), Yılmaz Odabaşı (1962-) and Bejan Matur (1968-) – three leading poets of post-1980s Turkish poetry of Kurdish heritage, have been selected as the focus of the study. As will be expounded upon later in this introduction, limiting the focus of this study to a genre of poetry is firstly done to the address the lack of situated close readings and engagement with texts to complement a field of research which has already began to explore questions of self-stated authorial political and aesthetic positions. While this evades a certain line of ambiguity by not presupposing what is valid for the genre of novel-writing is true for all literature, thus

ensuring the kind of specificity desired, it also provides ample ground for study. Poetry is distinct as a mode of representation, a genre that deals with, at once and immediately, the totality of the questions and meanings of its subject matter in a way which the language used itself also becomes subject to focus (Eagleton, 2008, 21). This can help expose the studies in the academic field to considerations of form as constitutive of literary meaning that helps develop a fuller understanding of the functions of language use in such contexts. And as noted by critics such as Frantz Fanon (2004, 173) writing about questions of political domination, nation and nationalism in literature in periods of the emergence of national culture, it can, at the same, provide an adequately representative basis for the subjectivities involved as it is able to capture very complex ambiguities identities, like those that the Kurdish people experience in such contexts. Through the immediate perception of the interplay of form and content which it especially exemplifies as a literary genre, a focussed engagement specifically with poetry will also expose the research to questions of form in response to its understudied nature and the resulting theoretical ambivalence in which it is currently enveloped.

However, if poetry's ability to respond to the understudied nature of the research is one reason why it is a suitable genre for specific study, a second reason is to provide the study with a context which the function of the political dimension of this literature in terms of its the aesthetic dimension can be properly situated. This study maintains that the aesthetic dimension of a work of art, a literary text, is constitutive of the meanings it makes possible rather than merely a superficial feature, and that the choice of poetry as a genre of focus also facilitates an appreciation of the questions of form with which poetry is more acutely intertwined. This is important to counter theoretical positions that equate literatures produced in contexts of national domination and minority questions with political reporting, often devaluing the singularity they seek to inscribe by overvaluing such literatures' political dimension at the expense of aesthetic value, which is constitutive of its meaning. Now, such literature is conceived as merely 'political', condemned to the political and cultural centre.

A focus on the genre of poetry can help redress such theoretical pitfalls by exposing the research to a literary space where meaning itself is the subject, a matter of nuance and interconnection as well as something more than what was meant. Such inescapable appeal to both the form and aesthetic dimension of literary text as constitutive of the political meanings ascribed to it can counter tendencies that reduce the work of art to political reporting by confronting the subjectivities marking these poems in their totality. As noted by critics such as Terry Eagleton, drawing attention to the experiential capacity of literature is

made possible through the artwork's specific potential as a transformation, as an experience, as something that happens to us (2008, 17-22). Closer attention to the function of literary forms, connecting the poetries of focus with past and present poetries that comprise their cultural milieu, in the construction of the subjectivities, the political ideas with regards nation and nationalism as well as the 'inscriptions of the self' marking these poetries can facilitate such confrontations by elucidating ways in which the subjectivities distinguishing these poetries are as much a matter of authorial intention as they are of intended or unintended aesthetic choices.

This study is also concerned with developing our understanding of the precise impact of engagements with literary trends, such as realism and postmodernism, within the Turkish literary creative and critical fields, alongside official and unofficial forms of Turkish nationalism on the kind of subjectivities and discourses constructed in their respective poetries. This has helped define the period of the study's focus not as the current period but as the poetry of the post 1980s period of Turkish literature. As detailed in the historical review provided at the first chapter of the current study, the post-1980s poetry, bridges a gap between the period in Turkish poetry starting from 1960's with the contemporary era of artistic fragmentation observed by current research and criticism (Sazyek 2006; Yalçın-Çelik 2006). A focus on the previous generation of Kurdish authorship of this period serves to address the practical question of whether the discourses currently constructed or even intended by these poets are exclusive to them or an already existing trend within the Turkish literary field; besides such historical contextualisation of the subject, it also helps contextualise the impact of various aesthetic trends within this field in producing the kind of discourses marking this production. The generality of possible implications raised by the 'Turkishness' or 'Kurdishness' of Turkish literature and its boundaries, meaning and value of this literature beyond restrictures of political reporting begs the question: Does what is currently true of Turkish literary production by Kurdish authors remain true for the entire period of republican Turkish literature? The answer, to be sure, should be of some help in understanding whether and how the highly emotive claims stoking the debate have any validity and significance.

In *Sürgün Alayı* (Band of Exiles), a little remembered novel in Turkish by Kurdish novelist Mehmet Kemal, first published in 1974, Neco, a common Kurdish soldier, during a conversation with his ranking officer, retorts: "When you get angry, as a matter of convenience, you call me a Kurd. When you are not angry, and are level-headed, you say you are not Kurds; you are Turks, our brothers. Just a moment ago, you said that because you

were angry. Were it not for that, you wouldn't have said it"[4] (Alakom 1991, 266). Such a concise yet enigmatic expression of the kind of ambiguities, transitiveness and perhaps even the need for a specificity that forms the subject as well as the challenges of its study can be found time and again in Turkish literature by Kurdish authors. Such expressions also point to another important factor facing this research field, as indicated by Neco's last remark: "Were it not for that, you wouldn't have said it." And were it not for the fact that Neco somehow believed that his retort, his continued plea, despite the state of affairs he so eloquently describes, might amount to something; that somehow his officer, his excluder can still be reasoned with, Neco would also not have said what he said. This example underlines the fact that the field of Turkish literature in which Kurdish authors of Turkish operate, as much as involving the exclusively Turkish, Kurdish and other minority sensibilities, is also a scene of the negotiations between these sensibilities. As noted by critics – such as Selim Temo – writing on Kurdish Literature in Turkish, this has often involved not only negotiation but also cooperation based on shared value and sensibilities such as socialist realist poetics (Temo 2007, 15).

Important to this study is the fact that while there are merits in exploring Turkish literary texts through the lens of the national and minority identity positions they articulate, the literatures produced also expect a reading that considers the collective poetics and political positions they also readily articulate. In this respect literature is not, it becomes. This is demonstrated adequately well by the role of shared political values and aesthetic sensibilities discussed in this study, which includes socialist poetics alongside tentative degrees of Kurdish national sensibilities seen in the discourses produced by some Turkish-language Kurdish authors; or, in other cases, through the impact of metaphysical or Islamic sensibilities which figure intermittently. Once again, only an approach that engages closely with what is written and the function of its formal aspects and influences can explore the impact of such collective literary perspectives and positions on Kurdish literary writing in Turkish, not to mention acknowledging aspects of this writing's meaning and value in the first place.

The rest of this Introduction and the following chapter elucidates these research questions and their specific context of Turkish literary studies presented until here only in general terms. The following section opens by a clear presentation of this dissertation's argument:

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[4] Kızınca bize Kürt diyorsunuz, öyle işinize geliyor. Kızmadığınız zamanlar, serikanlı olduğunuzda, siz Kürt değil, Türk'sünüz bizim kardeşimizsiniz, diyorsunuz. Sen de demin kızdığın için öyle dedin. Kızmasaydın demiyecektin.

the political purport, status and implications of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish with regards Turkish literary field, Kurdish literature and political criticism are better addressed through a close textual engagement that also takes the aesthetic dimension of literature into consideration alongside its political purport. It details how the analysis of the political content, language and formal aspects of the poetries of Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı will proceed as a method of developing such an account and elicits the comparative basis on which the analysis comprising it is undertaken. Responding to gaps in the research, discussed at length in the literature review that follows, this section also provides a clear formulation of the research project's methodological presuppositions in relation to both the analysis specifically of the political content, language and aesthetics dimensions of poetry, and of the definitive theoretical positions on which these models depend, discussed at length in the first Chapter.

The specific review of the academic and critical writing on the subject which follows this section, and which forms the other major section of this introduction, shows how some of the main questions of literary representation – the focus of this study – namely language uses, political positions and aesthetic preferences marking literary texts have been arising as gaps in research which are due as much to its early stage of development and cross-cultural nature as they are to methodological problems which the field of inquiry currently faces. To be sure, such theoretical and methodological problems might be a cause for the ambivalence the questions of the meaning and aesthetic value of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish has been facing. However, it is hoped that this review provides as much an exposition of the need for this little-explored area of research – questions of the status, nature and structures of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish – as it does an adequate background to the reader in a little-known and little-researched area of cross-cultural politics and literature.

The discussion of the theoretical questions and considerations animating this research and the overview of the history of and Kurdish involvement in Turkish poetry in the republican era provided in the first chapter, complements the account of its current stage of study with a background of theoretical trajectories prevalent in the field of study and a historical context. This discussion focusses on political approaches influential in approaching questions of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish as well as literature in general, emphasising the need for approaches which both can attend to the aesthetic dimension of literature while, at the same time, being able to respond to the specific needs of the current stage of the research field's development. This section also draws attention to the potential theoretical significance of

this case for literary theory and criticism, for the human experience represented through and by the writing and reading self.

As the background to this research has been little explored, the history of Turkish poetry in the republican era and the Kurdish involvement with it, forming the latter part of the first Chapter after this Introduction, provides a historical background to field of poetry researched and a basis for analysing Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı's poetry. This historical overview also helps identify the political and aesthetic positions which have been influential in Kurdish literary writing in Turkish since 1923 by considering both Kurdish authors' literary activity in Turkish in this period and the slow literary evolution of the treatment of the Kurdish theme. This overview shows how questions of language uses, political positions and aesthetic preferences marking literary texts, arise also throughout this history of involvement and emphasise the presence of a diverse range of responses to such questions which any account of this literature would do well to take into consideration.

In *European Realism*, G. Lukacs remarks (Lukacs 1977, 19-23) that if one approach is to treat experiences and contradictions of literary fiction and characters as considering some possible events amongst many, another approach is to treat these questions as the very questions of human experience, condition and contradiction; as questions aesthetised, the resolution of which, can enable humans to fulfil even more fully the potential and possibilities of their ever-changing nature, their historical development. In general, arguing that Kurds need language and literature as much to be with others as to self-inscribe, this research contributes to approaches to literature of the latter kind. By demonstrating the significance of the Kurdish case for other literatures of human experience, uncoincidentally characterised with similar contradictions, it is hoped that this research helps increase interest in the subject and future research focussed on the genre of poetry.

Research Questions and Methodology

As indicated in the microcosm of the public debate between the Kurdish authors of *Yasakmeyve* and Özdemir İnce, a variegated theoretical configuration determined by contrasting modes of foregrounding concepts of political identity, language and cultural space exists in relation to the assessments of the political significance and aesthetic value of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish. In order to expand our understanding of Turkish-Kurdish cultural interaction and of the theoretical significance of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish for the way in which we think about Turkish literature and its ethnic minority elements, about Kurdish literature and literature in general, this study contributes to the little explored field

of research with a theoretical study focussing on the literary models of representation articulated in literary texts produced by Kurdish authors of Turkish.

Set against a state of paucity of critical frameworks for addressing the political import and theoretical significance of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish, this study contends that it is only through a dialectical approach which pays due attention to the double-sided nature of the literary artefact, acting at once as a political as well as an aesthetic object, that its political import and theoretic significance can be more accurately understood. To this end, this study takes the specific genre of poetry as a point of departure and provides a critical account of the political and aesthetic dimension of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish that builds on the author-based incipient research on the question. But additionally, this study provides an account that pays due attention to both the materialities of the text and the authorial ideological position facilitated by this dialectical approach.

In a challenge against the two existing main trajectories of assessment of the political dimension and significance of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish, based either on readings associated with authorial ideological location, or solely on an aestheticism with which it is incorporated into the Turkish literature, as exemplified by Özdemir İnce's position, this study focuses on the social content, language uses and aesthetic dimension of the poetry of three leading Kurdish poets of Turkish: Murathan Mungan, Yılmaz Odabaşı and Bejan Matur. Enabled by its approach to literature as the dialectic of the aesthetic and political, this study raises the following questions about Kurdish literary writing in Turkish: how does literatures produced by Kurdish authors during the republican period relate to narratives of Turkish or Kurdish nations and nationalisms? Does this body of writing distinguish itself through how it politically foregrounds itself or do aesthetic concerns override this literature's treatment of political/social issues? If aesthetic concerns are paramount, does this specific body of texts present any kind of aesthetic unity that could distinguish it as a distinct strand of Turkish-language literary writing such that it necessitates comparison with the rest of Turkish, Kurdish and other literatures inflected with questions of political and national domination? And finally, if so, what does Kurdish literary writing in Turkish imply for the grand narrative of Turkish literature, Kurdish literary practices and how we think about the political dimension of literature?

Building on dialectical approaches to literature as developed in Critical Theory with Theodor Adorno and Herbert Marcuse's aesthetic theories and further elaborated by Aijaz Ahmad, Frederick Jameson and Terry Eagleton, and based on close readings of representative

specimens of texts, some of which has been translated into English for the first time, this study firstly examines the political agendas motivating the literary texts produced by Kurdish authors and provides an account of the diverse political perspectives marking the general purport of this discourse by attending to their transparent social content.

In a way that responds to the poststructuralist and 'minority' literary perspectives that foreground the political dimension of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish, this study examines through situated close readings, both the extent to which these narratives are necessarily political and oppositional, and whether the minority discourses they may be thought as construing are essentially political products of 'deterritorialisation' processes of the 'major' hegemonic cultures. It argues that, despite their disparate political underpinnings, as illustrated by the representation of the diversity of major positions of conservativism, liberalism and socialism across the political/ideological spectrum, the narratives of Kurdish authors of the contemporary era provide a collaborative political intervention which does not advocate or markedly reflect either Turkish or Kurdish nationalist positions.

In an effort to unearth the history of this writing, to identify and develop our understanding of the major theoretical trajectories which have been definitive throughout modern history so that research is informed by its current characteristics as well as its evolution, this study subjects to comparison the poetries of Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı, which exemplify the political/ideological configurations comprising recent and current Kurdish literary writing in Turkish-language, with those of Ahmed Arif (1927-1991), Cemal Süreya (1931-1990) and Sezai Karakoç (1933-), three influential poets of 20th century Turkish-language literature with avowed or implied Kurdish origins, in terms of the ideas of self and community. Utilising Benedict Anderson's concept of nation as 'socially constructed imagined communities' as a comparative tool, this comparative analysis demonstrates that current political approaches represent a continuity: while the literary response to questions of nation and nationalism presents no politically unified position in Kurdish literary writing in Turkish as this comparison reveals, nonetheless, this poetry is marked mainly by a clear break from all nationalist models of community, and its common positioning in relation to the cross-cultural social context of Turkey as a cultural space provides a collaborative model for the entirety of society in Turkey, not an espousal of monolithic Turkish or Kurdish nationalist positions. Formed of a diversity of political positions, the comparison of poetries also illustrates the extent to which discourses produced by Kurdish literary writing in Turkish are also related to counter-hegemonic discourses present within Turkish-language literature, given that the positions

identified – liberal humanism, socialism and conservatism – are not unique to non-Turkish authors and is representative of the evolving theoretic formations within Turkish-language literature.

This study identifies language use as a point of confluence of aesthetic and political dimension of the literary text. It draws on Soviet linguist Voloshinov's idea of signs as inherently social and practical entities and looks at language use as a matter of taste and aesthetic competence on the one hand, and as nothing but a purely political practice on the other (Eagleton 1991, 195). This study provides a critical account of the linguistic strategies constitutive of the political dimension of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish, and demonstrates that the discourses produced by Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı articulate an interdependence between language and the ideas of self inscribed in these poetries in a variety of forms, but which always include a sensibility shaped and moderated in relation to the periphery, the country, the East of Turkey. It raises the following questions about language use: How does language use reflect the political articulations marking these texts? Is the use of language to express a different identity idiosyncratic to Kurdish literary writing in Turkish? Alongside this, in relation to the formal features of language, are uses of language in Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı's poetries substantially different from those speaking from within the canon? And further, what does language use and variance imply in terms of the theoretical projects motivating these texts, especially with reference to the role played by aesthetic considerations?

To this end, this study provides an analysis of language use according to a classic categorisation: it compares the logical, grammatical and rhetorical uses of language and language use in the poetries of Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı with those of Hilmi Yavuz (1936-), Gülten Akın (1933-2015) and Küçük İskender (1964-), three prominent and canonised Turkish poets of the last century. On this basis, the study not only demonstrates that the poetries of Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı assume a rejection of the standards of Turkish use, but it also highlights, through the disparate and diverse of linguistic strategies involved, the problems associated with aggregating the linguistic distinctions of these poetries under forms of 'abrogation', 'appropriation' and 'deterritorialisation' processes. It shows that, in contrast to literary uses of language seen in compared works, Odabaşı's poetry provides a clear case of the impact of Kurdish on Turkish use, with his use of loan words, untranslated sentence and phrases, and a distinct socialist inflection in his language use; Mungan's poetry exemplifies another form of appropriation of Turkish by celebration and development; and

finally, Matur's poetry implies yet another strategy of an exhausting struggle with Turkish, a struggle to drive it to its bare minimum.

The discussion shows that, even though Turkish use in these poetries is a loose form of appropriation of Turkish, it has clear links with similar linguistic strategies active within the Turkish-language literary canon developing against dominant Turkish nationalistic literary perspectives. Despite this, the discussion identifies three common linguistic features of Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı's poetry, a commonality that clearly raises the possibility of discussing a Kurdish literature in Turkish. The intensity and widespread extent to which representations of and expressions inflected by the East mark these poetries; the cultural gap in between the centre and the East, which each of these poetries convey in a complex variety of ways; and finally, the parallels these linguistic strategies present with language uses in other Kurdish poets such as Arif, Süreya and Karakoç, which indicates its historical continuity. However, the presence of both shared linguistic strategies and discontinuities in terms of verse form and construction in the poetries of Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı and those of the Turkish-language literary canon, evidence also the role of aesthetic projects prevalent within the distinct social practise of literature in Turkey in moderating the kind of representations of the political domination effected in these poetries.

Set against an approach that regards poetic form and content in terms of each other, which places the two dimensions of the text in a dialectical relationship with historical conditions, the following questions are posed in relation to form of the poetries subjected to analysis: How do aesthetic considerations moderate the diverse political responses present in these poetries? What are the particular aesthetic challenges posed by these poetries in relation to their content? And finally, in relation specifically to the ideological determinations of the author, how do aesthetic considerations moderate their articulation of identity questions? Through an analysis of how formal qualities – such as tone, pitch, rhythm, verse form and structure, system of rhymes, syntax and register – moderate the kind of discourses marking Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı's poetries, the discussion demonstrates that these authors' aesthetic choices establish the contradictions between the self and the social reality which define the content of their poetries. This is manifested in various ways in these three poetries: Mungan's aesthetics are characterised by elaborate language use and the distinction of being a literature about literature as much as a representation; Odabaşı employs a lyricism facilitated by a free verse poetry, political terminology, and tropes of feudality, East and utopianism of his Kurdish synthesis of social realism; and Matur's poetry

displays metaphysical pessimism and a select linguistic strategy. This study also identifies negotiation with forms of literary realism as an influential point of confluence of the aesthetics Kurdish literary writing in Turkish, with varying degrees of continuity from and reaction to it shaping the poetries of Odabaşı, Mungan and Matur.

The study concludes by proposing that a distinct engagement with questions of literary realism and characterisation as political poetries operating against grand narratives of Turkish community and literature are factors which determine the current perception and categorisation of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish as part of Turkish literature. It argues that this aesthetic correlation with the cross-cultural literary alterity in Turkish-language literature, as well as its distinction as a political aesthetic, implies that Kurdish literary writing in Turkish is more accurately read in terms of the tension between its aesthetic and political dimension, as mutually exclusive forms of aesthetic responses conditioned by a cross-cultural literary space to questions of nation and nationalism.

Based on these findings, the study concludes that the cultural pluralism implied by Kurdish literary writing in Turkish indicates that Turkish-language literature is the literature of a number of peoples; that the question of categorising the literary activities of authors of Kurdish origin or heritage constitutes the first option of 'poetry of Turkish' (*Türkçe Şiir*), or the term 'Turkish-language literature' used by Mignon, given also the multicultural authorship of this in and outside Turkey (2014, 198). In terms of a Kurdish Literature of Turkish, even if these poetries exhibit a range of shared political aesthetics, the aestheticisation of Kurdish and/or pluralist identity questions manifested and the linguistic strategies and historical continuity presented by poets such as Arif, Süreya and Karakoç provide substantial aesthetic ground for thinking about a distinct Kurdish element of Turkish-language literature.

On the methodological level, this study shows that while the representation of political domination in Kurdish literary writing in Turkish underlines the need for close engagement with the political dimension of literature as a strategy of reading and of resistance, this has to be in conjunction with, in Franco Moretti's (1998) words, 'distant' reading models capturing its interrelationship with the evolution of aesthetic forms in the particular cultural and historical conjecture and the stage or forms it has reached. As this study shows, coming to terms with and reconciling identitarian concerns with aesthetic realism provides a certain nexus through which this particular historical conditioning seems to be taking place in the specific case of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish.

The study's identification of a diverse range of aesthetic forms, which align examples of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish with counter-hegemonic discourses in the rest of Turkish-language literature, also underlines the pitfalls of theorising about literatures produced in complex contexts of political domination under the aggregate concepts of 'minor' literatures or postcolonial binaries of coloniser/colonised and displacement/exile.

The study also shows that a repercussion of the moderation of the political positions articulated in these poetries by the aesthetic tastes it shares with the cross-cultural literary alterity is that Kurdish literary writing in Turkish is more accurately read in terms of the tension between its aesthetic and political dimension, as mutually exclusive forms of aesthetic responses conditioned by a cross-cultural literary space to questions of nation and nationalism. It argues that the overvaluation of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish's political social content, and lack of attention to its aesthetic dimension, serves only to enrich the cultural centre, whether in Turkey, Western Europe or North America, which only devalues the singularity it inscribes.

Research Data and Sources

Despite events such as the awarding of the Nobel Prize to Orhan Pamuk, one of the country's most celebrated novelists, scholarly interest in political debates in Turkish literature remains limited. Both because of these poets' relative obscurity in the English-speaking literary world which figures as an element of this limited attention but also to show how research data and sources enact the study's method, an introductory background to these poetries is necessary. Murathan Mungan – arguably one the leading living poets of the Turkish literary canon, as evidenced by his inclusion in major anthologies, widespread publication and appearances in public life – was born in 1955 in Istanbul, but was raised and educated in Mardin, a city in the predominantly Kurdish south-eastern region of Turkey, before attending higher education in Ankara. In a speech at the 2013 London Book Fair, to which he was invited by the British Council as an author in residence and as detailed in his *Paranın Cinleri* (1996b) (The Jinns of Money), Mungan states that he is of mixed Bosnian, Arabic and Kurdish background and is thereby representative of an inflection and presence of a Kurdish element in Turkish literary authorship. His poems were published from 1980 onwards, with *Mahmud ile Yezida* (Mahmud and Yezida, 1980), *Osmanlıya Dair Hikayat* (Stories about the Ottoman, 1981) and *Sahtiyan* (Saffian, 1981) appearing to notable critical acclaim and followed by a prolific writing career that includes some 20 collections of poetry as of 2010, around 30 stories, novels, plays, scripts, and essay collections in addition to a large number of essays

and contributions to literary and cultural journals. His poetry is noted for being influenced by the social realist poetry of the earlier period, such as Atilla İlhan (Behramoğlu 1991, 1126), and the formalist aesthetics of the *Second New* School of surrealist poetry, which has dominated mainstream Turkish poetry since its rise in the 1950s (Halman 2006). The politics of his writing, as evidenced by *Osmanlıya Dair Hikayat*, *Sahtiyan* and other poetic series, offers a liberal humanist position that is as much inflected by a Marxian outlook as it is informed and functions by identitarian precepts, in particular that of gender sensibilities. As a representative of Mungan's poetry, along with a selection from across his oeuvre, this study subjects the poet's 12-part poem *Sahtiyan* and selections from *Osmanlıya Dair Hikayat* – a long epic and panoramic poem of late Ottoman history – to close engagement and examination in terms of their political, linguistic and aesthetic dimension.

In line with this study's concerns to evade one-dimensional accounts, the study also proposes to utilise examples that find their aesthetic and philosophical inspiration outside the urban, erudite aesthetics of Mungan. Along with social realist and modernist poetries that presuppose mainstream or postmodern notions of nation and nationalism, the poetics that define and express ideas of collectivity not depending on ethnic or national conceptions – represented by the poetries of Yılmaz Odabaşı and Bejan Matur, two other Kurdish poets of Turkish – are subject to scrutiny in this study. As the second poet under focus in this study, Yılmaz Odabaşı was born in 1962 in the province of Diyarbakir, arguably the leading Kurdish urban centre, and began publishing poetry in the early 1980s. After spells in prison in 1980 due to political sentences, he worked as a journalist between 1986 and 1993 (Odabaşı 2000b, 496) and produced 10 poetry collections beginning with *Siste Kalabaliklar* (Crowds in the Mist) in 1985. His poetry is noted for its distinctive socialist outlook and connection with generations of socialist realist poetry that has figured distinctively in the history of Turkish literature, beginning with the poetry of Nazim Hikmet and notables such as Ahmed Arif, who reached a different folk socialism in the 1950s and 1960s. Mungan and Odabaşı's poetry are united through one of their other qualities: as Bezirci notes, their treatment of social themes or articulation of the socialist outlook is always combined with 'aspects of personal life' and 'concrete images' which achieve a remarkable degree of sincerity and somewhat accounts for their distinctive readership (Bezirci et al 2002, 348). For the purposes of the study, his 22-part poem *Reşo, Talan İklimi* (Reşo, The Climate of Loot) from his collection with the same name published first in 1987 and selections from across his oeuvre, works which exemplify the sensibilities of political opposition, are the subject of focus.

Bejan Matur was born to an Alevi Kurdish family in 1968 in the province of Maraş, in south-eastern Turkey; she was educated in the region's prominent urban centre, Gaziantep, and then moved to Ankara for a university education in law, which she completed but never practised. She has published five poetry collections, appeared in prominent poetic journals since the early 1990s and has been a columnist for the daily *Zaman* newspaper since 2005. In 2003, her poems were translated into English as a collection entitled *In the Temple of a Patient God*. The distinctive feature of Matur's poetry is perhaps its neoclassicism, which takes as much Anatolian mythology as Sufi Traditions to create a poetry inflected by a panoramic yet distinct imagery and an unsettling personal sensibility and penetration. Her poetry thereby provides a connection to classicist approaches to Turkish literature and tastes, as exemplified throughout its history by a continuous strand of poetry that finds inspiration in the formal features of Ottoman *aruz* poetry tradition, as much as Islamic and otherwise modulated classicisms. This study looks at Matur's 17-part poem the *Winds Howl through the Mansions* published first in 1996 and selections from across her oeuvre.

This selection of these texts evades interpretative stances that restrict the function of literary texts to a single element by providing a diverse and representative range in terms of the selection's political/ideological purport, aesthetic choices and poetics. The texts' position satisfies the paradigmatic insistence on their aesthetic dimension as what makes them recognised is their literariness. The canonic position of some of these poetries, arguably such as that of Mungan, should also hold no fear for the proponents of approaches with distinct political and historicist, particularly identitarian, approaches. The selected texts are representative of the prominent political positions of Kurdish writing in Turkish, so, if this writing also represents a distinct continuum aesthetically, it can shift the strictures of the institution of Turkish literature.

State of Research on Kurdish Literary Writing in Turkish

Despite increasing scholarly attention to ethnic minority cultural and literary practices in Turkey since the 1990s, research on the political meaning and aesthetic significance of minority literary production in Turkish is still at an early stage of development. This research field currently faces questions of scope and focus due, in part, to the relatively recent development and cross-disciplinary nature of research on minority and Kurdish literary practices, and in part, due to the impact of theoretical approaches prevalent in its study. This is manifest in the disparate nature and scarcity of studies that engage with literatures, texts, produced by Kurdish authors as well as ongoing ambivalence to the questions and

implications they raise; considering the length of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish, there is momentous putative value in formulating questions for this overdue field of inquiry. For instance, it may be true that the concept of 'literature in Turkish' – in contradistinction to 'Turkish literature', which the *Yasakmeyve* poets brought to the fore – has gained some acceptance within Turkish or Kurdish literary research and criticism. However, it is noteworthy that this acceptance is often a conclusory recommendation, a platitude, rather than a point of confluence for a range of critical/theoretical positions as a focus for study.

Indeed, the current state of research on the subject underlines the need to respond both to this stage of the research and the theoretical ambivalences expressed in the disparity between this state and the substantial questions and possible implications for the understanding of the Turkish literary field and the literatures of concerned nations/minorities. As this review demonstrates, engaged with substantiating questions of political purport, general meaning and the potential implications they raise for the boundaries of Turkish and other minority/national literatures, the research field has the potential to develop further through studies attentive to the totality of the models of representation articulated across Kurdish literary writing in Turkish. Based on gaps and problems of the disparate research, this review argues that only a reasonably comprehensive account that pays heed to the aesthetic as well as political dimension of this writing, and is based on analysis of the texts that comprise this strand of Turkish language literary writing, can clarify the questions raised by the debate, test their implications and take these conclusions to their end. Such studies, a dearth of which characterises the methodological issues of this research, would help develop our understanding of the Turkish literary field.

Current analytical and critical literature available on Kurdish literary writing in Turkish can be summarised under the following categories:

1.   Turkish literary studies research with distinct political and historicist agendas focussing on questions of nation and minority writing;

2.   Non-academic Turkish cultural criticism in literary journals, as surveys or collections concerning minority and Kurdish writing in Turkey;

3.   Kurdish literary studies research done in Turkey with distinct political and historicist agendas;

4.   Academic research, papers and book chapters specifically on Kurdish literary writing in Turkish emanating from metropolitan universities in Turkey, western Europe and the Anglo-Saxon world;

5.   Academic and non-academic criticism of the work of individual Kurdish authors of Turkish.

Owing to the cross-disciplinary nature of the research field, divided between Turkish and Kurdish literary studies while also attempting to exist in the as-yet-undefined intersection of these fields, it comes as no surprise that research on and criticism of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish has been primarily undertaken by academics and individuals with scholarly appreciation of and political sympathy for the Kurdish national question. This is true across the kind of criticism listed above and is responsible for the diverse development of criticism with disparate foci. Therefore, there is a need to consider how the questions of the field have emerged; such can provide both a backdrop for discussions of specific research on Kurdish literary writing in Turkish and a counterbalance to charges of separatism, given it cannot but be expected that Kurds themselves have at least some degree of scholarly appreciation of and political sympathy for the Kurdish national question.

As such, the first field of research under discussion is the proliferating discourse within Turkish literary historiography and criticism with a distinct political and historical emphasis on the role of Turkish nationalism in the genesis and evolution of Turkish Literature. This research emerged from the considerable changes taking place both in the Turkish-language literary world and in the historiography and criticism that has addressed this literature since the 1980s. A challenge to the nationalist narratives that dominated a large part of the literature written and taught since the birth of the Turkish Republic in 1923, as well as those narratives paradigmatic to its study, by and large effected this change, arguably more so in Turkey than in criticism and scholarship elsewhere in the west. This is one of the debates within the context of which Kurdish literary writing in Turkish has been identified as a question of minority cultural repression as a consequence of the domination of literature by Turkish nationalism, if not serving as an integral part of it.

This challenge was precipitated by the unfolding, in this period, of the discrepancy between official Turkish nationalist narratives of community, which dominated literary production and helped conceive and sustain a grand narrative of Turkish literature, and the multicultural nature of the social setting and context out of which this literature came. Commentators such as Nurdan Gürbilek refer to the end of the 1980s, as a period of 'self-reflection' and 'coming to terms with the past', as the decade had commenced with a military coup and the subsequent years spent in a socio-cultural setting of repressive military rule (Gürbilek 2011, 7-19). The end of the 1980s saw the emergence of a literature that not only questioned the

repressive political regime's nationalist ideology but also became increasingly characterised by reactions to discourses in Turkish literature seen as connected to nationalism and the nation-building project of the entire republican era (Brenan et al 2014).

Involving an examination of literature's relationship with nationalism, the historical genealogy and development of this nationalism in Turkish-language literature – as much as the cultural and theoretical repercussions of this political determination – thus became subject to increased critical attention. The increase in political readings of canonical texts – often but not solely from post-structuralist literary perspectives both in and outside Turkey and, if not to the same extent, criticism outside academia – adequately exemplify this.[5] For instance, a 2007 issue of *New Perspectives on Turkey*, which was dedicated to 'literature and nation' and subtitled 'confronting unhealed wounds', featured a wide-ranging debate on nationalism's political and historical determinations of and functions in Turkish literature and ethnic minority writing (Köroğlu et al 2007). On the creative front, this is paralleled with the waning influence of Kemalist and classicist nationalist literary currents. Indeed, as the current scholarship widely agrees, Turkish-language literature has seen a period of aesthetic and political fragmentation – i.e. the disappearance of distinct currents which share a common set of taste and standards *per se* – in the post-1980s period (Behramoğlu 1991 and 2007).

In relation to the cultural-literary field of study, the accentuation of the political line of analysis helped elucidate the mediations of literature by the forms of nationalism dominating Turkish politics throughout the century. By highlighting the presence of counter-canonical discourses present within its history, this accentuation has challenged the influential, nationalist conceptualisations of Turkish literature. The increasing interest in the cultural politics of nation-state building in the 1920s is a case in point, along with the role of language and alphabet reform in 1928 and literature's function in the creation of modern Turkish national and nationalist narratives, as seen through studies as variegated as Geoffrey Lewis' *Turkish Language Reform: A Catastrophic Success* and deconstructive approaches to narratives of nationalist literatures of the 1930s and 40s (Lewis 1999). Along with the direct confrontation between the ideological determinations of the enterprise of Turkish national literature, this period has also seen a growing interest in research[6] on the theoretical demarcation and evaluation of the counter-canonical discourses present within this

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[5] See (Guth 2007) and (Glassen 2007) for a discussions of non-Turkish language uses by Turkish authors for identity articulations.
[6] See (Köroğlu et al 2007).

literature throughout the 20th century, with an increased interest in works of literature from socialist, Islamist or other political viewpoints.

The elucidation of nationalist assumptions of perspectives which have been so influential in literary criticism and production in this way also raised important questions about the literary representation of and response to the socio-political context which this literature constitutes. Firstly, if ideas of community, which this literature exemplifies, are better conceived in terms of creating a monolithic Turkish society, a single Turkish language, culture and ethnicity, as the Kemalist nation-state builders desired, then how has this literature represented and responded to the multicultural nature of the socio-political context? In terms of the socio-political context represented, have there been any alternative and competing approaches to nationalist ideas of community? To what extent has our understanding of Turkish-language literature been inflected by salient nationalist approaches?

As these questions generally correspond to how this literature relates to the socio-political context out of which it comes, critical attention has inevitably turned to questions of the literary representation of the so-called 'Turkish community'. Given the multicultural reality of the setting, this specifically meant questions of the literary representation of cultures, minority identities and faiths such as the non-Turks and non-Muslims which also made up this community. Since the 1980s, interest in the representation of Greek, Armenian, Jewish Ladino and Kurdish minorities in Turkish-language literature visibly rose; Turkish nationalist approaches have been subject to increasing scrutiny and challenged as having excluded these minorities in the representation and narrative of grand Turkish literature they helped define. Furthermore, the function and role of this literature, having been so dominated by these nationalist ideas of subject and community, in politics of exclusion, neglect and domination, which these minorities were largely subjected to by Turkish nationalism, began to be questioned in earnest.

Politically pluralist approaches emanating from a range of politics mirrored across genres in the creative field reflected this anti-nationalist turn. This was not, however, restricted to tastes and values which merely distanced themselves from nationalist strictures at the expense of an apolitical approach, for which liberal and individualist sensibilities surging within poetry could be provided as an example.

The considerable amount of biographical and historical prose and poetry writing dealing with the cultural history and politics of the republic era in terms of these communities, and which

has been both to critical and popular acclaim in the recent period, evidence also the presence of discourses marked with a distinct reaction to Turkish nationalism. For instance, the works of some of the leading authors dealing with such themes in today's literature– such as Mario Levi and Roni Marguiles, writers of Jewish Ladino heritage, and Murathan Mungan, of mixed heritages – have been subject to this interest, as evidenced by their inclusion in major anthology and collections and the prestigious literary awards they have received (Behramoğlu 1991). Added to the literary representation of ethnic minorities with which literary production preoccupied itself, the politicisation of the literary content in the period has also accompanied the foregrounding of the author as a political agent: as in the case of Nobel laureate Orhan Pamuk, writers have also been intervening in public debates directly and 'speaking out against' traumatic events of the republican past – including but not limited to the Armenian genocide, the repression of the Kurdish uprisings in the 1920s and 1930s and the systematic purge of Greek communities from Istanbul, the Aegean and Black Sea coast (Brenan et al 2014).

Indeed, as another distinct aspect of the period of politicisation that Turkish literary production and criticism underwent, authorial ethnic and political identity in Turkish-language literature and the meaning of the discourses produced by authors of non-Turkish or non-Muslim heritage began receiving critical attention. The motivations for this were not, however, restricted solely to the process of undermining nationalist approaches in cultural space. This is because, as much as being a product of the period of 'self-questioning' of its national narrative on the part of the Turkish culture, the politicisation of authorship has also been conditioned, to a certain extent, by the contribution to such questioning by non-Turkish and non-Muslim authors such as those just mentioned. Connected with the characterisation of the social life of the period with political and cultural questions of ethnic, national and cultural minorities such as the rise to the political prominence of the Kurdish or Armenian national questions, the reassessment began to distinctly involve questioning two nexus of relationships: first, the relationship between the literary practice of non-Turkish and non-Muslim authors with rest of Turkish-language literary writing, and second the literary practises of ethnic minorities with which they were associated.

Specifically, this manifested as a marked, if not growing, body of critical work that can be described as unearthing the cultural significance of the presence of ethnic minorities within this literature as the very producers of this literature. Studies concerning the role and involvement of ethnic minorities within both Ottoman and Turkish literature, in terms of their contribution to both the cultural milieus conditioning the emergence of these

literatures and the political debates dominating these literatures, have been the focus of interest.[7] The alternative models of community representation the literature of the period has seen on the creative front were accompanied on the conceptual and the historiographical level by a visible effort to demarcate the literary boundaries of non-Turkish and non-Muslim Turkish writing outside nationalist conceptions, as 'literature in Turkish' or 'literature of Turkey' rather than 'Turkish literature'. What this body of creative and critical writing has begun to show is a continuing tradition of non-Muslim and non-Turkish literary involvement and production, as illustrated for instance, by studies on the key role played by Greek and Armenian bilingual publications in the creation and transmission of the very idea of a national literature. Although his work on specifically minority writing will be explored below, in relation to this aspect of enquiry, Laurent Mignon's (2009) *Ana Metne Taşınan Dipnotlar* (Footnotes Carried over to Main Text), for instance, exemplifies the multiculturalist perspective developing within the field, by providing a text based historical account of the active presence of non-Turkish, particularly Armenian authors in the late Ottoman and early republican era.

As the discussion thus far makes clear, this research field forms a complexity as a point of intersection of, on the one hand, the study of nation and nationalism in Turkish language-literature and on the other, the study of the literary practise of members of several different ethnic or national minorities within this cultural context. With a focus drawing on both these spheres of study, it comes as no surprise that the current study of the significance of this cultural interaction has been more concerned with dealing with the repercussions of this cultural interaction in relation specifically to discrediting Turkish nationalistic literary and conceptual approaches to Turkish-language literature. It is true enough that this salient aspect of the current inquiry has illustrated the presence of a dynamic of political domination alongside national, ethnic and cultural lines that highlights the relevance of political readings of Turkish-language literature by showing how nationalistic views of community and of Turkishness has been paradigmatic to its conceptualisation. But also true is that this has by no means yielded a re-canonisation of this literature which represents or gives due theoretical regard to its heterogeneous content and context.

In contrast, the inquiry into the discourses of nation and nationalism with respect to the literary practices of ethnic minority, national or faith groups, to a certain extent, have

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[7] See for instance Laurent Mignon's "A Pilgrim's Progress: Armenian and Kurdish literatures in Turkish and the Rewriting of Literary History" (2014) and Clémence Scalbert-Yücel's "Emergence and Equivocal Autonomization of a Kurdish Literary Field in Turkey" (2012).

developed separately from this with a contrasting methodological prioritisation of identifying the meaning and value of discourses present within non-Turkish and non-Muslim literary writing. This was paralleled by attempts to evaluate the significance of this writing in terms of Greek, Jewish, Armenian, Kurdish and Alevi literatures. It is within this context of evolving sensibilities of Turkish language-literature and the politicisation of minority authorship that the question of the nature and theoretical significance of Kurdish literary writing in the Turkish language has also risen to prominence within non-academic literary criticism. As the above overview makes clear, this has been motivated both by significant changes taking place with respect to the domination of cultural and literary life by forms of Turkish nationalism and the coming to the prominence of the Kurdish national question as a constant feature of social life in Turkey since the 1980s coup. In a situation where studies in subjects such as Kurdish nationalism are still in their infancy (Özoğlu 2001, 384) – as are those concerning Kurdish literature and literature by Kurdish writers in Turkish – this body of critical writing also provides a basis on which the impact of Kurdish politics on the Turkish literary field can be examined alongside engagement with questions of content and form distinguishing Kurdish literary writing in Turkish, which forms this study's focus.

Corresponding to the second category of non-academic critical writing on the subject, there is also an emerging discourse on Kurdish literary writing in the Turkish language that includes preliminary surveys, articles, dossiers, interviews, and collections of articles in Turkish literary journals and newspapers. As examples of non-academic accounts with a distinctly Kurdish focus, the monographic surveys by Alakom and Ömer Uluçay – *Çağdaş Türk Edebiyatında Kürtler* (Kurds in Contemporary Turkish Literature) and *Yaralı Kimlik* (Wounded Identity) respectively –both provide a helpful background to the questions and history of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish and are distinguished as among the first examples of criticism with a focus on Kurdish literary writing in Turkish. Alakom's survey, published in 1991, is a valuable treatment of the theme of Kurdish life and society in Turkish language-literature and concentrates on the modern period of Turkish Literature – from the founding of the Republic in 1923 to the contemporary era of Turkish language literature (post-1980s). The little-known study provides examples of the treatment of Kurdish identity and life in Kurdish regions in different literary genres, including in folkloric forms such as idioms, proverbs, songs, novels, short stories and poetry. Interestingly, the survey restricts the conclusions to the narrative of Turkish literature alone:

> […] modern Turkish literature gives a very partial and biased view of the Kurds, almost entirely neglecting the emotionally important aspect of their national identity,

distorting the most dramatic events of their history, and overlooking their political aspirations. In this respect it may be said that Turkish literature has so far failed in the task of creative and critical reflection on society and its dramatic experiences (Alakom 1991, 233)[8].

This is remarkable in two respects: first, even though the basic study provides examples of the contrasting treatment of the theme of Kurds in the writings of major and well-known novelists – such as Yaşar Kemal and Mehmet Kemal, themselves Kurdish authors – it depends on a definition of Turkish literature that is exclusive of the ethnicity of the authors. For instance, it is not clear whether the interpretation suggested is that Kurdish authors, writing in a diversity of genres throughout the republican period of this literature, were complicit in constructing the very biased literary treatment to which Kurds has been subjected. But the restriction Alakom places on the value of the counter discourses created in the Turkish writings of Kurdish authors also indicates that such a generalisation foregrounds a method of interpretation concerned more with the thematic of literary representation than one concerned with illuminating how this relates to the politics of authorship.

This contrast between the text and author-oriented interpretations seems to also animate the rest of existing critical writing on the subject, as well as the brief, if seemingly formative, literary debates that took place around the categorisation of Turkish and minority literatures. Uluçay's study, published in 2006, is motivated by the need to demarcate the presence of Kurds as both a trope and producers of Turkish language poetry. To this end, Uluçay's study involves commentary on the contrasting treatments of the theme of Kurds and of 'East' in 40 poems by 20 different Turkish-language poets (*Doğu*). Despite concern with textual content, the value Uluçay ascribes to the narratives of Kurdish writers in Turkish is with respect to Turkish literature but vitally for the debate, with a suggestion of reconceptualization of Turkish literature (*Türk Edebiyatı*) as Turkish language-literature (*Türkçe edebiyat*). This, he maintains, is because Turkish has become an international language, with its use in Europe, across the globe, and in the multicultural Anatolian geography, and because 'Turkish belongs to all of us' (*Türkçe hepimizin*). Yet Uluçay's work does not shed any light on how the narratives created by Kurdish poets suggests this understanding, as Uluçay foregoes any focus on the specific meaning and value that can be ascribed to the Kurdish contribution. Instead, he restricts the literary interaction as framed

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[8] Alhtough in Turkish, Alakom's survey provides a two-page summary in English.

against a narrative of Turkish language-literature (*Türkçe edebiyat*) rather than of Turkish literature (*Türk edebiyati*).

That evaluations of Turkish language-literary writing by Kurdish authors are motivated by contrasting interpretative stances, which are themselves, in turn, informed by a diverse range of political sensibilities, manifests itself also through a developing academic debate on the boundaries of Turkish and Kurdish literary activity. Motivated by the incompatibilities in the specific identity and the unity of distinct forms, content and authorial politics of texts in Turkish that non-paradigmatic readings – such as Uluçay's – attempt to provide, but also with readings concerned with the politics of authorship, a certain aspect of the debate has also concerned the very definition of the literary and cultural spaces in question.

The public debate-style literary exchanges captured the contentious complexity of the question that motivated Uluçay's work and provides another line of criticism that has helped placed the specific field of Kurdish-Turkish literary interaction within the scope of modern literary criticism. The criticism in popular literary journals in Turkey was especially spurred on by the public debate in 2004, mentioned previously, between Özdemir İnce and the *Yasakmeyve* (Forbidden Fruit) poets (İnce, 2004). This debate was indeed considered a momentous moment (Mignon 2014, 198) not only because it brought the concept of 'poetry in Turkish' (or 'of Turkish', the vernacular) in contradistinction to 'Turkish Poetry' to the fore, as argued by *Yasakmeyve* poets such as Sezai Sarıoğlu, Mehmet Butakın, Metin Kaygalak and Kemal Varol, but also because it spurred a 'proper literary debate'. Indeed, Uluçay's work exemplifies this and also considers augmenting the options of Turkish Poetry' and 'poetry in Turkish' with 'poetry in Turkey' (Türkiye Şiiri), although the classification is neither coined nor advocated by Uluçay himself.

The ambiguity is further compounded by the ambivalent approach of Kurdish literary creative and critical writing, rendered mainly in Kurmanji and Sorani dialects, and which has enjoyed a period of focused if not widespread activity and development both within and outside the Turkish cultural context, to questions of Kurdish writing in Turkish. A major anthology of Kurdish poetry, published in 2008 by Selim Temo, a prominent Kurdish literary scholar, does not include poetry written in Turkish by writers of Kurdish origin but does contain Turkish translations of the Kurdish poems included (Uluçay 2006, 17-22). Thereby, if not due to the same reasons, it seems to be in agreement with the Turkish nationalist paradigmatic conclusion in so far as language is conceived as the determining factor, even if

the language in question is not Turkish and Temo's rationale for such categorisation is not a Kurdish nationalist one.

The concerns articulated as a need for categorisation captured in this debate show that the incompatibility is largely a matter of the mutual exclusivity of definitions of Turkish literature and literary conceptual frameworks presupposed, with alternating emphasis on concepts of identity (Turkish – *Türk*), language (*Türkçe*) and space (Turkey - *Türkiye*). Particularly for the examples of Kurdish writing in Turkish outlined above, this implies that the identification of the set of cultural, literary and linguistic differences suggested by these texts is possible only through certain non-paradigmatic conceptualisations which go beyond the use of Turkish language and cultural setting as their common characteristics. Crucial to our understanding of Turkish literature, however, the debate further suggests that the logical implication of identifying this Kurdish difference is a redefinition of texts hitherto conceived as Turkish literature as now consisting of both of a Turkish literature (the challenge is not that there is no such thing as 'Turkish literature' but their inclusion in it) as well as a literature of Turkish. In this regard, Kurdish writing in Turkish also problematises the Turkish literary landscape as being possibly conditioned with political differences and points to the paucity in conceptualisations of Turkish literature with regards its Kurdishness, as evidenced by this seeming lack of an agreed basis for addressing questions of classification and evaluation.

Again, as with Alakom and Uluçay's valuable if incomplete surveys, the rationalisation with which the new generation of poets define both their own and literary identities is indicative of the kind of foregrounding of politics of authorship involved. In responding to İnce, the Kurdish poet Metin Kaygalak contends:

> … neither I nor my other Kurdish [heritage] fellow poets are "Kurdish Poets" because of our Kurdish origin even though we write in Turkish. In any case, we ourselves do not use this term. Sezai Sarıoğlu and Mahmut Temizyürek mention us as "Kurdish Poets" in their writings. The most a poet could perhaps be is to be the poet of the language one writes in… In this case, we will be the poets of Turkish. This includes also the classification of "Turkish Poet" which İnce thinks we will take offense of. This could also be called the "Poet of Turkish" or "Turkish Poet"[9] [Turk, ethnographically] (Uluçay 2006, 21).

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[9] "… ne ben ne de diğer Kürt asıllı şair arkadaşlarım, Türkçe yazdığımız halde Kürt kökenli olmamız sebebiyle "Kürt Şair" değiliz. Zaten bu sıfatı da kullanmıyoruz. Sezai Sarıoğlu ve Mahmut Temizyürek kendi yazılarında bizi "Kürt Şair" sıfatıyla anmaktalar. Bir şair, yazdığı dilin şairi olur olsa olsa… Bu

What Kaygalak's argument and the definition he arrives underlines is that a focus not on the text or the kind of politics involved in the narratives produced but a prioritisation of authorial ethnicity, albeit on pluralist rather than an antagonistic Kurdish nationalist political stance, now exists. Sezai Sarıoğlu and Metin Kaygalak also suggested the concept of *melez edebiyat* (hybrid literature), which has not gained credence in the debate (Uluçay 2006, 20).

Arguably, such issues also haunt the fragmented criticism stimulated by this debate, including Uluçay's survey on the subject, which – as the other only comprehensive account of some sort since Alakom – is perhaps the most focussed non-academic example of the discourse. Amongst the poets who problematised Turkish identity and the boundaries of literature as such, the poetry and personality of Metin Kaygalak is particularly illuminating and drew attention in the cultural field, as evidenced by interviews with him in the pro-Kurdish *Gündem* (28 February 2004) and *Yom Sanat* Journal (Issue 17, March-April 2004) (Uluçay 2006, 20). These and similar articles appearing in newspapers and journals, owing to the priorities of the literary medium, subject to debate Kaygalak's statements of his 'identityless' state and include examples from his poetry though engagement with the texts is, perhaps for understandable reasons, absent.

Related to the criticism in literary journals following the debate in 2004, it is also remarkable that some reputable literary journals have dedicated issues to Kurdish literature, if not strictly to the specific field of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish. An issue of the *Tasfiye* journal in 2010 (Issue 24, May 2010) (Kurt 2010) and *Varlık* (Mignon et al 2011), a long-standing publication arguably exemplifying the taste and values of the Turkish literary establishment, in 2011 (September 2011) are examples of this. The treatment of Kurdish literature and questions of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish that inevitably arise, and the contrast presented in the scope and quality of criticism between each journal's treatment, once again proves useful in terms of presenting the literary and cultural context within which, the related yet separate field of the Kurdish literary writing in Kurdish has evolved, in addition to exemplifying some of the methodological issues dominating the debate

The *Tasfiye* dossier involves interviews with prominent Kurdish intellectuals and writers – including Evdile Koçer, Helîm Yûsif, Selim Temo, Muhsin Kızılkaya, Mahmut Yavuz, Hasan Polat, Murat Celali and Haşim Ay – and articles about the history and evolution of Kurdish

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durumda biz Türkçe'nin şairi oluruz. Özdemir İnce'nin gocunduğumuzu düşündüğü "Türk Şair" sınıflandırmasını da içerir bu. "Türkçe'nin Şairi" ya da "Türk Şairi" de denebilir bütün bunlara" (Uluçau 2006, 21).

literature by an authorship based almost exclusively in Turkey (Kurt, 2010). But this dossier also contains an article by Şehmuz Kurt on Kurdish literary writing in Turkish, based on Kemal Burkay's poetry mentioned, entitled "Türkçenin Şairliğinden Kürt Şairliğine Geçiş: Kemal Burkay" (Transition from being a poet of Turkish to Kurdish Poet: Kemal Burkay) which deals mainly with the political evolution and life of Burkay to argue that his Kurdish nationalist political perspective emerges only after he takes up writing poetry in Kurdish, his early poetry being in Turkish. While it is of some value in terms of identifying and considering the relationship between the ascendency of the Kurdish political question within Kurdish authorship of Turkish, this article thereby also instantiates the authorial focus of the debate as a basis for its identarian claims and the quality of existing research proceeding on an inadequate textual basis.

The range of diversity of questions comprising the context of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish is provided another layer by the *Varlık* dossier on the Kurdish-Turkish literary interaction, even if the approach of restricting analysis with authorial political positions is not repeated. The dossier entitled "Kürtçe Edebiyat Odağında Karşılaşmalar, Karşılaştırmalar" (Encounters, Comparisons on the focus of Kurdish Literature) is comprised of five articles by Laurent Mignon, Servet Erdem, Ayhan Tek, Ömer Faruk Yekdeş and Rûken Alp which subjects to comparative analysis authors and literature seminal to both literatures. The issues these articles and the dossier's introduction by Mignon (2011, 3-4) deserve attention, as they so well present and propose interpretative perspectives and questions which can be brought to bear on the analysis of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish. Erdem's article compares the role of ideology in the treatment of language as a theme in Turkish and Kurdish novels of the Tanzimat and early Republican era. Tek's article considers the confluence of questions of Turkish and Kurdish classical literatures through a comparison of Şeyh Galib's (1757-1798) 'Hüsn ü Aşk' and Ahmad Khani's (1651-1707) 'Mem û Zîn', which are considered masterpieces of their respective oeuvres. Yekdeş's article compares the treatment of the theme of love in the socialist poetries of Nazım Hikmet (1902–1963) and Cegerxwîn (1903–1984), poets considered pioneers of modern Turkish and Kurdish poetries respectively and argues for the differences in the perception of Marxism underpinning these poetries. In a way which reflects the distinctly political and historicist agendas animating the debate of such literary interaction, Alp's article draws parallels between the poetries of Palestinian and Kurdish women poets in terms of the similar impacts of a socio-cultural context defined by questions of nation and national struggles. The dossier's introduction is also noteworthy, as Mignon problematises questions of mother-tongue use by Kurdish

authors for the Turkish literary context, and highlights both the presence of literatures alongside Turkish literatures in Turkey, with a view to raising awareness around their rich traditions and breadth, and emphasises the existing interaction connecting these two literatures.

Despite the fact that these articles bring a textual basis to the analysis of Kurdish-Turkish literary interaction, they neither intend to nor address questions of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish in their analysis of Turkish and Kurdish literary texts by respective authorship. Nevertheless, the articles are valuable in terms of the centrality of questions they pose in terms of language, confluence with socialist and identity politics, and aesthetic responses to tradition and modernity as lines of enquiry for the analysis of models of representation effected by it.

Arguably, a similar debate is also occurring around a line of criticism within the Turkish literary field, taking both a scholarly and non-scholarly form, concerning specifically the dynamic of centre-periphery (Taşra Edebiyatı). The literature of the periphery that figured and continues to figure as a question of the representational dimension of this literature, is also provided as a relevant context, in connection which political questions of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish are also considered. Two recent works are noteworthy here as examples of this line of criticism representing the breadth of political perspectives on the centre-periphery opposition present within the field as a discourse dealing with questions of political domination, but also more pertinently, the line of criticisms of Kurdish literary activity in Turkish in connection with the periphery. The first, a rigorous study of the genesis and evolution of the theme of periphery in Turkish poetry before and during the republican era, entitled *Türk Şiirinde Taşra* (Periphery in Turkish Poetry, 2011) by Selim Temo, and the second, a collection of 14 articles comprised mostly of the speeches delivered and the manifesto produced collectively at the Periphery and Literature Symposium (Varlık 2015), which took place in Kadir Has University, Istanbul on 18-19 May 2013, titled *Edebiyatın Taşradan Manifestosu* (Literature's Manifesto from the Periphery), edited and introduced by Mesut Varlık. These critiques of the literature of periphery roughly provide two contrasting positions prevalent within the theoretic formation with regards questions of political domination, which not only potentially impacts the Kurdish case but also seeks to characterise it by contextualising it in relation to contrasting conceptualisations of centre-periphery binary, hence rendering it necessary for the study to consider.

Temo's *Türk Şiirinde Taşra* (2011), comparable and perhaps influenced by Raymond Williams' *The Country and The City* (Williams 1975) in terms of importance and theoretic perspective, traces the genesis and evolution of the theme of periphery in its relationship with the evolution of the political ideas of community and self between 1859 and 1959, which may be considered the first century of Turkish modernisation. Including also a background on the emergence of the theme and dynamic during 15-19th centuries, the study analyses the role and function of the recurring theme as imagery, perspective of country, rural life, and externality from the political and cultural centre of Istanbul. It does this, firstly, through tracing the formation of the concept and narrative of the *Vatan* (Motherland) and its evolution into the less ideologically precise concept and narrative of *Memleket* (Country). The former is associated with incipient Turkish nationalism of the late Ottoman and early republican period, the proper space and location of which was the periphery but after the consolidation of the Republic, while the latter was the rendering of the concept even more amorphous with the particularly individualist perspectives implied by *Garip* and *Second New* poetries dominating the early period of Turkish republican poetry. Arguing that the concept becomes spatially restricted to central and south-eastern Turkey (Temo 2011, 309-18) after the 1950s and that the real space to which the concept and narrative of country corresponds began in earnest after this period, Temo names the period the 'domination of the periphery'.

Valuable in this study is the congruity Temo highlights between Kurdish literary writing in Turkish and the realist depictions and treatment of a central thematic of Turkish literature, the periphery, which thereby offers it a literary location and a line of aesthetic influence which mediates its political dimension, given the very questions of community and belonging the theme involves. Further, in relation to questions of the political dimension of this literature, Temo's rationalisation of the role of literature of periphery, and the coming to the fore and prevalence of its realist rendering in the post-1950s literary scene, which he argues caused a momentous shift in narratives dominating this literature, is relevant considering the partial or wholesale inclusion of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish within this literature of periphery. The contextualisation of the question within such a model, as he clarifies in his introduction, is reminiscent of and influenced by models of 'minor literature' put forward in Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, which continues to be an influential approach in the reading of literatures developing in contexts of political domination, colonialism and nationalism. As such, as well as the momentous positive contribution of Temo's work, the questions it highlights are equally important for both the separate yet connected analysis of the political and aesthetic dimension of Kurdish literary

writing in Turkish. In addition, Temo's work is also suggestive of the ways the research field could be developed considering the methodological concerns that form and distinguish it. This is evident in the text based contrapuntal reading it so well instantiates as a method, and its particular embodiment of the theoretical presuppositions underpinning this method, which seems not only to be influential but perhaps constitutive of current perspectives of this amorphous sub-strand of Turkish-language literature.

While Temo's thematic consigning and indirect reference to Kurdish literary writing in Turkish is emulated as an approach in the body of article and statements forming *Literature's Manifesto from the Periphery*, its political and historical contextualisation of both the question of this literature and the distinctly textual basis of and perspective brought to the analysis is not completely shared by it. The *Manifesto* prefacing the collection, which emerged as a collective statement at the end of the Symposium, recognises the function the themes of periphery, country and rural life served in the creation of dominant political myths by becoming the "bereft, undeveloped, incurable" other, or the golden age through romantic/nostalgic renditions, which the centre needs "to maintain and expand its centrality" (Varlık 2015, 11-12). However, while taking a very contemporary perspective, it further argues: "the periphery, having been torn away from its reality, was, in time gradually abstracted. Periphery as conceptualised space became a spatialised concept" (ibid, 12)[10] and that, currently, it has become the space of escape from life at centre. Having been isolated from its reality, the Manifesto argues, the tensions this relationship has rendered, which has been to so much concern to the representational approaches to literature, have now been carried over to the individual's level whereby now "if a street in Istanbul is the centre, the one behind it, is the periphery" (Varlık 2015, 13). Against this situation, the Manifesto asserts that "literature has no centre," "has no concern with the centre-periphery geographical divide" and that "if it is going to continue existing, to understand it we have to develop a new way of thinking about it. We carry the hope of a world where the periphery is no longer the other" (Varlık 2015, 11-15).

This relates to Kurdish literary writing in Turkish in its retention of the connection to the periphery, which both the Manifesto and the contribution of Kurdish author and poet Mehmet Said Aydin draws. Yet this treatment equates Kurdish association with Turkish-language literature with involvement in the literatures of the periphery, with its externality

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[10] In Turkish it is provided as follows: "Kavramsallaştırılan bir mekan olarak taşra, mekansallaştırılan bir kavrama dönüştürüldü" (ibid, 12).

from the centre, the political power. This implies paradoxically that Kurdish literary writing in Turkish itself may be approached as a matter of personalisation (by a Kurdish author) of the confines of the concept of periphery itself following its divorce from its reality, which the manifesto, being the formulaic statement and manifesto of its kind, arguably unseen since 1980s, would have done well to expound upon. Crucial for this study is indeed the reaction against arbitrary deployment of political and identarian perspectives on literature that not only reduce it to a political artefact, a personal report, but also disregard the political dimension and mediation of literature, which this Manifesto implies to a certain extent, by reducing all treatments and perspectives of the periphery to personal agendas and thereby stipulating arbitrary notions of causality between literature and the social context out of which it comes. This is done through a condescending aestheticism and assurance that 'they have no doubt that the sound text will finds its place', through a schematic contextualisation of the need for a new outlook in accordance with the stage of capitalist culture when it 'rules by generating the misperception' that it has conceded the question of periphery; that is, in superficially political-economical Marxian terminology exemplifying the kinds of Marxisms with which the research field has to grapple.

Corresponding to categories three and four presented in the introduction to this section, alongside both the scholarly and non-academic discussion around the theme of periphery, the emerging body of critical writing on Kurdish literary writing in Turkish includes also Kurdish and Turkish literary studies in English. The foregrounding of the authorial politics and interpretations motivated by the element of Kurdish identity and origin, on which this debate draws, also finds an analogue in incipient English academic writing on the subject, which focuses on the need to acknowledge ethnic minorities' contribution to and the boundaries of Turkish literature – e.g. recent studies by Laurent Mignon and Clemence Scalbert Yücel. Within the framework of text-focused strategies, as opposed to those concerned with politics of authorship, Mignon's (2009; 2014) *Ana Metne Taşınan Dipnotlar* (Footnotes Carried over to the Main Text)*,* "A Pilgrim's Progress: Armenian and Kurdish Literatures in Turkish and the Rewriting of Literary History" and Scalbert Yücel's (2011) *Languages and the Definition of Literature: The Blurred Borders of Kurdish Literature in Contemporary Turkey* are all concerned with the historiographical aspect of the field of ethnic minority interaction. These are distinguished as examples of studies concerned with authorial ethnic and political denominations; they present a wealth of data about the literatures of non-Turkish and non-Muslim authors, but only to argue for a contrasting set of needs.

Mignon (2014, 200) argues that it is integral for Turkish-language literature to acknowledge these authors as ethnic minority writing, and that critical thinking has been and is important to literary production within the Ottoman-Turkish cultural space and the transition itself: "… a way of recovering parts of the lost heritage of multi-ethnic, multireligious and multicultural Ottoman intellectual life that could contribute to the reconciliation of the peoples of the region." Scalbert-Yücel's concerns, on the other hand, are relatively more contemporary, as her study evaluates the ramifications of the multiculturality of the authorship of Turkish language-literature, particularly in terms of the presence and continuing development of a specifically Kurdish literary field in Turkish.

Finally, as the fifth category, both the academic and non-academic writing about the work of authors is relevant to the study in that, even if not specifically concerning the politics of identity articulated in these literatures. As text-based research and criticism, they readily provide an objective basis for understanding the role of aesthetic and theoretic considerations moderating their production and the kind of discourses they articulate. To this end, this study will utilise this criticism in accordance with the specific stage of discussion, including for instance Sayın's (1997) work on the models of Mungan's poetry or Pelek's (2011) discussion of Matur's politics.

As evidenced by Mignon and Scalbert-Yücel's author focus, rather than textual focus, and the contrasting theoretic agendas marking the preliminary surveys, the specific field of research on the significance of Kurdish writing in Turkish has been one in which perspectives informed by identity and minority perspectives have been influential. Whether concerned by the literary treatment of Kurds and Kurdish nationality through readings focussed on texts' aesthetic dimensions or the authorial political configurations mediating literary production by Kurdish authors in Turkish, a certain strand of research on Kurdish writing in Turkish not only accepts minority or plurality identity or differences but is dependent on it. The reconceptualisation of Turkish literature, either as Turkish-language literature or as including a Kurdish literature, is indicative of this and presents a stark contrast to approaches committed to the 'the most important attribute of literature – its political and aesthetic autonomy' – dominating wider research on the significance of ethnic minority writing. Such approaches look at the significance of ethnic minority writing solely in terms of, as Adak, presumably referring only to Turkish literature, puts it, 'how nationalistic are national literatures and how nationalist (and essentialist) are our critical frameworks when we address national literatures, particularly those from the Third World' (Adak, 20-21).

This methodological divide suggests that the ambivalence shown to the political significance of Kurdish writing in Turkish – evidenced by the fact that it can simultaneously be an object of both Turkish-language literature and a separate Kurdish literature – is also mainly caused by contrasting approaches to the nature and value of literature, i.e. the theoretical tension between an emphasis on the 'aesthetic autonomy' of art and literature and the prioritisation of a text's apparent political dimension. However, despite the evaluation of Kurdish writing in Turkish from these contrasting positions, the field of study is characterised by a remarkable dearth of focus on either of these two dimensions, on the basis of which questions such as the following about its meaning and political significance could be accurately answered: how did literatures produced by Kurdish authors during the republican period relate to narratives of Turkish or Kurdish nations and nationalisms? Does this body of writing distinguish itself through how it politically foregrounds itself or do aesthetic concerns override this literature's treatment of political/social issues? If aesthetic concerns are paramount, does this particular body of texts present any kind of aesthetic unity that could distinguish it as a distinct strand of Turkish-language literary writing and necessitate comparison with the rest of Turkish, Kurdish and other literatures blighted with questions of political and national domination?

For theoretical perspectives sensitive to the cultural and political assimilation of Kurds, Kurdish culture and literature into a Turkish literature or Turkish-language literature, the discourse and research field's dependence on identitarian and political precepts – that is, the question as to whether and how this body of writing politically foregrounds or distinguishes itself – needs critical attention as one arising naturally out of the formative state of the research outlined. This is indicated by the shortage of studies based on adequate textual analysis, alongside authorial political and ideological formations, which could support or debunk either of the perspectives' alternative to the paradigmatic Turkish nationalistic treatment of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish. This point is illustrated by the extent to which the focus remains confined by considerations of authorial ideological and political mediation and the emerging need for an approach that builds on the materialities of the texts through close reading.

Furthermore, as much as the threat of ethnopolitical Kurdish agendas, an obliviousness to being subjected to one-dimensional and conventional paradigmatic, Turkish nationalist readings and sensitivities continues to loom large over the field of the study. This, arguably, may be connected to the aestheticism marking the counter-canonical debate around ethnic minority literatures within the confines of Turkish literary scholarship and criticism. This also

makes a comprehensive understanding of the political dimension of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish all the more important.

As evidenced by the above discussion, the study's strategic concern with the methodological questions of literature stems largely from this state of theoretical underdevelopment and paucity alongside problems of application of political perspectives to this case of literary interaction, which any current student of the field must grapple with from the onset. In this respect, although the concern is a critique of mainstream apolitical approaches to questions of identity and nation in literature, the point of departure is an appeal to alternative conceptions of 'aesthetic autonomy' through which current political perspectives on the case and its political dimension are assessed. Seemingly presenting a range of parallels and divergences with literatures similarly conditioned by political agendas elsewhere, a dual trajectory of issues of application of contemporary conceptualisations, as well as those of inference from the theoretical signification of the particulars of this case, characterise the methodological problems of the field. The foregoing discussion about the gaps in the research of the field highlight both these trajectories, while a detailed discussion on the subject is also provided in the first chapter of the current study under its discussion of theoretical trajectories influential in the field. From the perspective of literary theories prevalent in Anglo or Francophone academia, where poststructuralist, postcolonialist theories still exert influence, the paradox is one of basis of comparison. However, as the introduction to this dissertation evidences, there is a risk of compounding the ambiguity by arbitrarily applying conceptual frameworks which may prove instrumental but not sufficient for a comprehensive understanding of the texts involved. The plausible doubts embodied in the ambivalence to a critical approach to the subject – i.e. whether there is any place for such political musings in Turkish literature – must be countered by a critical application of central concept and categories of contemporary theoretical perspectives on the politics of literature such as those of the poststructuralist school. In this way, the paradigmatic theoretical ambivalence that dominates the critical assessment of the question, usually in the form of anti-theoretical approaches, can be addressed.

However, as the distinctness of the literary mode of expressions rendered in texts and poetries under question suggests, in addition to problems with deductions rendered on the basis borrowed political perspectives, there is also a set of questions relating to actual implications of the case for theories of literature and its political dimension. For, as seen in Neco's words, the materialities of these texts provide a different starting point to proceed to the concepts and categories of such a theory; this highlights the possibility of differences in

terms of the kind of concepts configured but more importantly, the mode of theoretical configuration of such concepts to redress its questions. Accordingly, as a theoretical contrast, the exploration of such elements of the question has the potential not only to show how the dialectic rendered in the subjectivities marking these texts relates to those attributed a central focus in current theory, but it, thereby, also presents a case study testing the theoretical efficacy of the current models of conceptualisation.

Beyond being a matter of choice of literary questions to which political sensibilities about problems of domination and hegemony could be deployed within a comparative discipline, this divergence can arguably be attributed to competing ideological and theoretical positions exemplified or presupposed by methods of political reading in circulation within Turkish literary criticism; specifically, with respect to the questions of the politics of representation of ethnic minorities and domination. A distinction Aijaz Ahmad makes in his *In Theory* in between interpretative approaches which are 'symptomatic reading of an ideological location' (1992, 125) and sufficient readings of the text or the author is, this study suggests, pertinent in this conjecture as a means of understanding the kind of political reading strategies shaping the competing agendas and current state of criticism on the subject. It can be argued, as the discussion thus far suggests, that research on the meaning and value of literature produced by ethnic minorities, whether in terms of Turkish literature or the literatures of these ethnic minorities, seems to have progressed with a distinct concern for politics of authorship in contrast to inquiry on the function of nationalist discourses within the narrative of Turkish literature. As evidenced with the proliferation of scholarly interest in questions of nationalism as much as of representation of ethnic minorities described, this is, to a certain extent, connected with the surge of identity politics to the cultural scene in Turkey. This process of questioning Turkish literature in relation to the dynamics of political and ethnic domination interestingly parallels readings and revisions of nationalist literature from gender perspectives, as for instance Freudian readings of canonical Turkish nationalist texts evidence[11].

However, this is not to suggest that the entirety of contemporary research and critical perspectives can be categorised along the lines of the focus of their critical attention; rather, this dissertation points to a need to consider the ends to which each of these readings have been deployed. As described above, it is not so much the case that research strictly on the

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[11] See Hülya Adak's (2007) "Suffragettes of the Empire, Daughters of the Republic: Women Auto/biographers Narrate National History" (1918-1935).

mediation of Turkish-language literature by different forms of nationalism does not sufficiently consider the ethnic minorities who produce and form the world of this literature, but that the consideration of ethnic minorities has been restricted to the discrediting of Turkish nationalist mythology – and perhaps even falling into the alienation it was supposed to discredit – for arguing for a post-nationalist Turkish literature and consciousness. Indeed, recent commentary by Jale Parla (2007) and Hülya Adak (2008) – writing on problems of language reform, nationalism and the representation of ethnic minorities in Turkish-language literature from non-Turkish nationalist and liberal perspectives and drawing on textual analysis – recognises the novel questions that ethnic and cultural heterogeneity raises. However, in terms of both focus as much as framing the question within a critical canon, such studies do not ascribe authorial politics a defining role in the conceptualisation of Turkish literature. This is in contrast to, for instance, the separate discourse dedicated to the significance of such writing in terms of Greek, Jewish, Armenian, Kurdish and Alevi literatures.

This suggests that the current state of nascent thinking in the field of study is shaped by fundamentally different approaches to questions of literature's relationship with the world and of the significance of this relationship for understanding literature's meaning. Specifically, as the theoretical framing of the significance of the question simultaneously for both Turkish as well as the other ethnic literatures shows, with respect to the literature's relationship with the world, a particular line of division relates to differences of approach to the political content, the experience and subjectivities expressed, and the representations produced in literature; that is, whether and how their political dimension is at all worthy of critical attention as an interpretative method to understand its meaning. Concerning as it does the specific question of how to approach the political dimension of literature, the models of thought prevalent within the field of inquiry draw on a diversity of theoretical trajectories and display a range of competing attitudes. Specifically, as evidenced by the determination of the focus of the current study according to contrasting prioritisations of textual analysis over that of authorial ideological and political determinations, the current state of research on ethnic minorities and questions of nation and nationalism in Turkish language-literature involve competing readings underpinned by methodologies with contrasting historicist and political agendas.

For this reason, in addition to the methodological discrepancies between approaches to the questions of the political dimension of literature, the motivations for political readings is also under contention. Ranging from restricting the significance of the meaning of these texts for

the narrative of Turkish community or literature on one side, to conceptualising the literary production of some authors in terms of other minority or national literatures on the other, the contrasting values ascribed to this cultural and literary interaction indicate that reading strategies dominating the scene depend on contrasting conceptualisations of the aesthetic autonomy of literature. Put simply, this evidences that the divergence within the field of study is also caused by a difference of perspective not only on how to approach literature's political dimension but also whether the consideration of this element is adequate in itself as a route to entering its meanings. For whatever the significance of the political dimension of literature, there is a question as to whether the literary text, a cultural product, can be conceptualised solely as a political artefact. Given the overall agreement on the need for an alternative to Turkish nationalist political discourse, it can be argued that it is the different notions of the value of the political dimension of literature for its meaning that are responsible for the ambivalent attitude faced by studies of ethnic minorities within Turkish-language literature, which thereby factors for the development of the field of study with disparate focus and scope, while the relationship between the strands of analysis remain understudied. Take for instance what the analysis of the relationship between Turkish and minority nationalisms this research may reveal, drawing from such notions that nationalisms develop both in reaction to but as a continuation of nationalisms of the dominating or colonising nations.

While these key questions form the challenges the development of the field of study faces, the development of research in the field of ethnic minorities in Turkish-language literature as a whole, from the very start, renders focus on the literary production of particular ethnic minorities a prerequisite. For even though the existence of the very conceptual and methodological difficulties can be inferred from the current state of research in the field, attempts at addressing them depend on an analysis of the literary texts which form its research data. In this respect, a consideration of the political dimension of ethnic minority Turkish-language literary writing becomes important, as a potential basis on which the validity of the different approaches to its nature and value can be assessed and the reading method and strategies which accurately reflect the subject matter of its research can be identified.

Given this study's concern for the political and aesthetic dimension of such writing, the selected authors are presented as representative of the spectrum of ideological and aesthetic formations active within Turkish Literature. Due to concern with rendering a representative account but also in a way that tests whether or not the phenomenon of

Kurdish writing in Turkish is a time-specific process given the volatile status of the Kurdish national question and its current evolution in both Turkey and the Middle East, the authorship selected for analysis is also contemporary. As pointed out by prominent Turkish literary critics arguing from varied points of reference (Kurdakul 2000; Halman 2006), Turkish literature and poetry has been undergoing a fundamental shift since the 1980 coup. This shift has seen both paradigmatic traditional nationalist and oppositional socialist aesthetic and views give way to aesthetics inflected by neo-liberalism and individualism, while concern with political agendas continue in both the creative and critical realms. Thus, the literary and cultural field has been fragmented in terms of the ideological and aesthetic formations prevalent within this discourse. The same consideration is also relevant in terms of the relative political freedom Kurdish culture and literature has begun to enjoy and forms the main non-literary motivation for the existence of such a field of literary production to start. Whether Kurdish writing would shift away from the Turkish language is both a speculative and null question once the volatility of both national liberation struggles, such as the Kurdish one, and the regional politics of Middle East are considered. For this reason, the choice of Murathan Mungan, Yılmaz Odabaşı and Bejan Matur, three reputed poets of the literary field, is done to both represent the its diversity as much as to provide an axis through which the aesthetics represented by these current poetries (such as *Yasakmeyve* poets) connect to the history of both Turkish literature as much as traditions which have moderated Kurdish writing in Turkish.

Ethical Considerations and Limitations

This study's main focus is also one of its sensitivities: ethnic or national identity. As indicated by the paucity of research on Kurdish writers as Kurdish individuals, one of the reasons for this sensitivity has been the disparate attitudes of different authors, arguably just as other Kurdish individual, to self-identify in ethnically or nationally defined terms. While some of the poets this study focuses on self-identify as Kurdish – such as Bejan Matur and Yılmaz Odabaşı, who define their cultural origins and identity as Kurdish – this is not something shared across Kurdish literary writing in Turkish due to a variety of reasons. As for Murathan Mungan, as previously mentioned, the author's multicultural heritage is a reason he does not self-identify as Kurdish. In Sezai Karakoç's case, this is for ideological reasons, as Karakoç represents a distinctly Islamist outlook illustrated also by his current leadership of an Islamist political party, *Yüce Diriliş Partisi* (the Supreme Resurrection Party).

Here, the intention is not to assimilate these authors under a category of a literary writing defined in line with an ethicopolitical project; if anything, as the methodological approach emphasising the need not to restrict reading strategies with authorial considerations alone, the study argues for the opposite. These authors are included in the current study as examples of the cultural and ideological diversity within Kurdish literary writing in Turkish to provide a reasonably representative account of this literary practice.

The scope of the study also presents another limitation: even though this is a comparative study, it is a comparative study of Turkish literature with itself due to the nature of questions under scrutiny. However, two further lines of comparison can arguably provide an even more nuanced reading of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish. Firstly, one line of comparison includes Kurdish authors writing in other national or geographical contexts, whether in Iran, the Kurdistan National Government areas of Iraq, Syria or Rojava (Western Kurdistan) or the many Kurdish diasporas scattered across the globe. Secondly, the other line of comparison includes literatures produced in similar social contexts of political domination; perhaps Basque and Irish literatures might relate to Kurdish literary writing in Turkish in terms of the longevity of national questions that have existed since the dawn of modernity and continue to do so in one form or another, and in terms of the dual national spaces to which they relate. Despite the almost certain benefit such a prospective comparison is sure to yield, the study must constitute an overview that attends to the main aspects of this writing by providing a representative number of poetries in accordance with the nascent nature of research in the field, which is also the main reason for precluding any comparison with other genres of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish.

The Research Project in Summary Outline

Structured according to general terms and categories of content- expression-form- which owes it logic to the preliminary nature and methodological gaps in the field of literary research, the account of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish presented opens with a background discussion of the theoretical perspectives characterising the field of study and an overview of modern history of Turkish poetry and Kurdish engagement with it up to the recent period. It does this in a way which introduces the reader to the context and questions of the understudied field and clarifies the research method and sources. This discussion of the theoretical and historical context of the study complements the review of the current state of the research provided and in tandem, forms a basis to help situate the research questions in relation to the Turkish and global literary contexts in which they are set.

The following two chapters provide examinations of the political and linguistic nature of the expressions rendered in specimens of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish. The political or ideological articulations marking the poetries of Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı are examined in Chapter 2 for the benefit of a readership probably little informed by the concrete conditions in which this literary production takes place. Based on literal translations of texts as axes of a comparative discussion of the ideas of collectivity, nation and nationalism in these poetries, the first section of the discussion is dedicated to a critical consideration of the political and ideological content of these texts and to testing whether they present a collaborative model. In a way that tests the identitarian emphasis on such contexts of political domination and oppression, the study presents a comparison with Kurdish poets of Turkish of earlier generation, including Cemal Süreya, Sezai Karakoç and Ahmed Arif, who respectively represent modernist, Islamist and socialist ideological formations. The comparative analysis of the subjectivities involved in the discourses these texts form, with particular attention to the relationship of the ideas of self and community, nation and national consciousness, helps facilitate a historical contextualisation of the Turkish-Kurdish interaction by critically accounting for the distinct relationships these texts have with their evolving social setting.

The specimens and the thematic account of Kurdish writing provided through commentary on these poetries is complemented with the discussion in Chapter 3 which elicits a textual basis also for considering the linguistic characteristics of this body of writing. This is necessitated by a consideration which will be detailed in the theoretical discussion below, that it is unsurprising that writers of a language write from varying, if not directly opposing, political perspectives. Again, by a close reading and combing of these texts, as well as specimens provided across the oeuvres of these three poets, the study presents uses of language effected in these poetries and take the Deleuzian notions of deterritorialisation of language as its cue, as well as processes of linguistic appropriation and abrogation languages undergo within contexts of political domination, as proposed by Ashcroft et al in *The Empire Writes Back*. The study compares the uses of language in these texts with those in the poetries of three Turkish poets, Gülten Akın, Küçük İskender and Hilmi Yavuz. In this way, as well as contributing to our understanding of the specific use of Turkish effected by this body of writing, the theoretic significance of the role played by the same body of writing is also qualified as detailed in the latter section of this Chapter.

Having established an account of this literature's relationship with the social context surrounding it on the basis of qualities of what may be regarded as its content, Chapter 4

turns to a comparative discussion of the aesthetic dimension of these texts and their formal, stylistic and poetic representational qualities. Mobilising the formal qualities of the poetries of Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı against their transparent social content, the study puts forward an account of the poetics of Kurdish writing in Turkish and qualify the extent to which these texts present an aesthetic unity. The poetries of Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı are then compared with the aesthetics shaping the poetries of Metin Kaygalak and Mehmet Butakın, two poets who have been involved in the *Yasakmeyve* debate and claimed the Kurdish title. How the aesthetic and ideological locations are mediated by and in turn, mediate the political content of these works, as well as how these poetries relate to cultural formations and tastes represented by schools of poetry and critical positions prevalent in the field is of particular interest in this chapter.

Using both the general findings of the study in relation to the content and formal qualities of this writing and the following substantive theoretic discussion in relation to the aesthetic dimension of these texts, the Conclusion considers the extent to which the aesthetic dimension of this body of writing relates or determines its political and ideological character so as to qualify a consideration of this literature as a distinct sub-strand of Turkish literature. On this basis, the study concludes by drawing attention to the general theoretical signification of this amorphous body of writing for both the particular and general literary and cultural spaces involved, be they strictly Turkish, Kurdish or general questions of the status and role of the literary enterprise. In this way, the study also identifies recommendations for further research in this field of subcultural studies, particularly in relation to the questions of theory which haunt this particular context and literature in general.

Chapter One:

The Theories and Histories of Kurdish Politics in Turkish Literature

Theoretics of Kurdish Literary Writing in Turkish: Status and Prospects

As the discussion has argued thus far, conditioned by the contrasting prioritisation of authorial politics over textual content, the current state of research on the representational models produced by Kurdish authors of Turkish-language literature calls for theoretical perspectives which give due regard to both the political and aesthetic dimension of literary writing. This study proposes to implement such an approach through both an adequate reading of the textual content and by giving due attention to the authorial political mediation of the kind of narratives produced. Thus, before presenting the poetries and texts forming the empirical basis of this study, a preliminary formulation and substantiation of this study's theoretical assumptions is in order.

The conceptual frameworks presupposed by this study's methodology have so far only been articulated as an implied agreement with criticism levelled at paradigmatic approaches to Kurdish writing in Turkish, hence, the need is to both locate the study's theoretical presuppositions in relation current approaches to literature and also, to clearly explicate how the study's methodology is derived from these presuppositions. In contrast to selection of specific genres of writing, which can be utilised in different ways for testing the hypotheses involved, the selection of texts and methods deployed draw from the general strategy and objective of such studies, which imply or depend on conceptual and theoretical frameworks of their own. The rationale and instrumentality deploying a logic and reading strategy that determines both the selection of texts and methods proposed, i.e. the empirical basis of the study, therefore needs a clear and critical, if preliminary, summation.

This need becomes especially acute once the kinds questions against which these texts could be read in order to actualise an approach that gives due attention to both the aesthetic and political dimension of the literary text is considered. For this reason, the substantiation of how poetic texts may intrinsically be useful must also be complemented by a statement of the theoretical assumptions and methodological strategy that makes it necessary for these

questions to be posed. The following elaboration of the study's methodological considerations outlines how they are derived from the theoretical concerns underpinning these perspectives while also providing the terms of the method this study utilises in its analysis.

The study's general aim – to present a critical account by way of subjectivities, uses of language and the poetics/aesthetics that mark the texts of three contemporary Kurdish poets of Turkish – owes its rationale largely to Deleuze and Guattari's test of characteristics that mark minor literatures, offered in their influential *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature*. The politics of political domination and the status and function of literature within this nexus has been the subject of widespread critique and has been the ostensible motivation for the political and historicist approaches prevalent within postcolonial literature since, especially, Edward Said's *Orientalism* and *Culture and Imperialism*. Although the entirety of postcolonial approaches literature are not restricted to or dominated by Deleuzian approaches to the questions akin to the Kurdish-Turkish cultural interaction, one finds in it the most consistent and thoroughgoing philosophical method of approaching Kurdish literary writing in Turkish, even if this approach itself is also distinctively representative of current approaches with a political and historicist agenda, and is by and large theoretically influential. Unsurprisingly, following this method constitutes a test of a major approaches currently active within postcolonial literatures and leads to a comparison with insights of the other non-Deleuzian and non-empiricist postcolonial approaches where the conceptual framework of 'minor literatures' fails or falls short in illuminating the purport and kind of texts under question. In this way, the study hopes to contribute to approaches to literature with a distinct political and historical agenda by expanding the preliminary research to the specific field of Kurdish poetry in Turkish and its theoretical signification, and by testing the efficacy of the modes of conceptualisation, namely identity politics, largely responsible for the identification of the question and research field. Thus, the choice of a Deleuzian framework is due to this study's charge that it is the reading method that is most committed and attentive to the materiality of these texts on a practical level while also, on the theoretical level, its attentiveness evades readings that are 'symptomatic reading of an ideological location' (Ahmad 1992, 13-17) rather than adequate reading of the poet or her poetry.

Therefore, as the 'materialist ontology' of the Deleuzian 'minor literatures' model holds such influence over the structure of this thesis, it is important to outline why its terms and framework can act as a basis for this study's diagnostic and methodological concerns and questions. However, this study's utilisation of a Deleuzian theoretical framework is not due

to commitment to the philosophical empiricism which underpins it but to test the instrumentality of postcolonial approaches based on one of its, arguably, most influential and representative forms. What makes the postcolonialist and particularly Deleuzean approaches both appealing and problematic, at the same time, for the study of literatures produced in the conditions of political domination is the kind of attention they pay to the power dynamics which moderate the purport and value of literatures produced in such conditions. Its contribution has been its recognition of the political aspect of an artwork as an ever-present aspect which could be understood only by appeal to its other formal and linguistic characteristics. This represents a much more nuanced outlook than those text-based empiricist 'close readings' which consider it in splendid isolation from the social milieu and authorial intentions, obscuring the social function of literature in relation to political power dynamics out of which it comes. But while both this politicisation of the context and the stress between the form and content of a work captures a fuller understanding of social practise of literature, the systematisation of the content and form of literature as merely a function of the individual, of the subject and of desire is what is distinct to 'minor' approaches. As Deleuze and Guattari puts it:

> A Kafka-machine is thus constituted by contents and expressions that have been formalized to diverse degrees by unformed materials that enter into it and leave by passing through all possible states. To enter or leave the machine, to be in the machine, to walk around it, to approach it—these are all still components of the machine itself: these are states of desire, free of all interpretation (Deleuze and Guattari 2003, 7).

As such even if a superficial interaction between the aspects of work of literature are acknowledged, what is proposed for providing their unity, their transformation into each other, is desire. While obviously representing a more developed outlook than for instance aestheticism, which consider the aspects of literature in isolation from each other and social context out which it comes, the Deleuzean logic, becomes another form of empiricism which now limits the meaning of the text to how the texts correlate with one's desires, one's ego rather than a 'close reading' from politically conscious/unconscious positions. It is on the back of this that the meaning of the text is reduced to the politics of ego, the politics of the writer-machine.

From a dialectical perspective which recognises the possible determination of literary meaning by social context as well as socially moderated intentions of the author, this

perspective is problematic in two respects. The first is that there is no room in this framework for causality, the following of effects necessarily from causes, in that in the postcolonialist and particularly Deleuzan framework presumes an epistemology where meaning is a matter of the difference or simulacra of a subject's desires with those of others, which has become conventions as a matter of difference or simulacra too. Given the centrality ascribed to the desires as the first and only cause, what this means is that the Deleuzean outlook also depends on a view of meaning that limits with senses, with perception and how things appear to the individual, how they relate to the machine. But this is problematic in that human social practise usually leads to intended as well as unintended results (Lukacs 1988, 186-190) as in especially art where there is a disjunction between intended and unintended meanings, which gives rise to the development of literature in ways the authors comprising its current stage cannot decide.

Here the empiricism which personalises reality and disregards causality is left wanting in its lack of an objective account of social development which can show that art and literature has a life of its own, with objective structures out of which it has emerged as a special form of its representation. For instance, where science represents the quantitative aspect made available by senses, artistic representation deals with forms of its qualitative aspects. The distinction of this kind of representation is evident in the universality as well as the insistent survival of its central category of beauty; as Hegel (1993, 7) puts is, even if we were to grant the permissibility of the question of the practical purpose of art, once a purpose is defined, it will not be regarded as an object pertaining to beauty any more. As such by perceiving art as another form of X is Y, the Deleuzeans have missed the beauty of the question with no appeal to the objective rules of its social development, which moderate the form and function of the kind of representation that literature and art is. Truth, even about beauty, is never empirical or rational alone, it is always concrete, dialectical and historic.

Secondly, the political corollary of this empiricism/positivism is the reduction of the agenda of literature to political ends, which also seems to involve quite a bit of theorisation of one's particulars as universals too; it is remarkable that it is left-wing forms of liberalism which dominate questions of the functions of literatures in such intense context and periods of political upheaval. How this relates to field of research of minority literatures is through the equivocation of the modes of minority articulation as modes of literature per se. To state how minority identities are articulated is one thing, to assert that all literatures are necessarily determined by it is something else. This idea of reducing social necessity to one's

contingency through a perspective that similarly limits itself with an empiricist epistemology, also highlights the importance of approaching the questions of the study from the perspective of representational theories in a way that goes further than the postcolonialist and Deleuzean efforts to develop 'palatable' models of the political aspect of literature. And herein lies the significance of this perspective too: it provides a basis for the specific material dialectic of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish can emerge as a function of its critique necessitated by the need for improved political nuance it highlights.

This evades and redresses one of the methodological pitfalls identified above, relating to forms of application of such understandings of literature which renders the work of Kurdish authors a one-dimensional if not an ambiguous literary text. Testing the instrumentality and efficacy of such identitarian conceptions allows us to pose such questions as follows: what is the content of writing such as those produced by Kurdish authors of Turkish? Is the political content of their writing – as evidenced by questionings of and through ideas such as literary language, nation and nationalism that have been under so much discussion within postcolonial literature as well as within the emerging body of critical writing on it – their only distinctive characteristic? To evade the pitfall of reducing the representative nature of this literature to a strictly-defined ethicopolitical project, the study aims to compare such minority readings of these texts with interpretative stances that approach the literary text with due regard to its totality, rather than only their political and identitarian dimension. Here, the study joins the critique of approaches prevalent within postcolonial and comparative literature as prioritising the primacy of the socio-political content at the expense of its artistic or aesthetic autonomy; as an alternative, it emphasises modes of reading that are sensitive to the interaction of the political and aesthetic elements of the literary artefact (Adorno 2002; Jameson 1974; Eagleton 1989). Indeed, as Deepika Bahri puts it: "Unfortunately, alertness to socio-political relevance is often transformed into a perception of the postcolonial literary book as a primarily documentary social text, with scant regard for its aesthetic dimension" (2003, 10).

Leaving aside the question of whether Kurdish writing in Turkish can be considered a form of postcolonial literature of any sort, the study proposes to counter the reading of such texts solely as "documentary social texts", as reports, information or intelligence (Bahri 2003, 9) with a consideration for their aesthetic dimension, the terms of which are largely owed to Marxist theories of literature as developed by the work of Aijaz Ahmad, Terry Eagleton, Georg Lukacs and Frederick Jameson. What is arguably taken and utilised from these

influential critics captures some of their common theoretical precepts: on an epistemological level, an understanding of literature that gives due regard to the objective nature of the text, such as its immediate content and formal qualities; while on a methodological level, an interpretative stance that takes into account the nature of literature as an artefact, machine, in which the political and aesthetic elements are bound inextricably to one another to achieve representation. As Eagleton puts it, "in poetry, what is said is largely a matter how it is said it" (2008, 27). Unsurprisingly, the insight of Eagleton's comment is, in one respect, due to the summation of the large and diverse number of problems and questions contained within what makes up this 'how' of literature and the anomalous grounds of poetry.

For this reason, the employment of Deleuzian terminology to provide an interpretive network will be balanced with a close reading that takes such theoretical presuppositions as its cue. This is indeed reflected in the structure of the current study, as the Deleuzian framework of content-form-expression is not only able to provide a full account of its efficacy and legitimacy but also a useful axis for the consideration of the texts' aesthetic dimension. But the instrumentality of this approach is no coincidence and largely owes to the thoroughgoingness of the highly sophisticated form of empiricism that underpins the Deleuzian perspective, and thereby brings it close to the 'philosophical materialism' of thinkers like Ahmad, Eagleton and Jameson. A view of 'good old-fashioned content analysis', as Eagleton puts it, is what they share; a precept shared also by Jameson (1974, 2) in referencing Lenin's suggestion that 'sophisticated idealism is closer to dialectical materialism than is vulgar materialism' as central to literary method. In this respect, in a way that accords with the preliminary nature of research in the field, a diagnostic as well as critical account of the aesthetic dimension of this body of literature is afforded primacy by the structure of the thesis, which focuses on the actual content of the enunciation, language and poetics of such writing and includes a specific discussion of how the aesthetic dimension can be instrumental in understanding the political purport of these texts. The presence of such reading and research strategies, the methodological approach and pitfalls identified, which have been paradigmatic in approaching the questions presented and rendered the field of research largely unexplored, also meet a double-edged response in this study. With the research method and elements proposed, while not restricting an account and interpretation of these texts with political and identitarian precepts, the study also counters the creative and critical writing that solely underlines the aesthetic dimension of these texts at the expense of disregarding their political determinations such as those of the *Hürriyet* writer Özdemir İnce. Specifically, the study proposes to do this by demonstrating in adequate detail how the

aesthetic consideration and tastes in question are ideologically and politically mediated and determined, even if they cannot be reduced to one another.

As such this study constitutes a dialectical approach that gives due regard to building on the successes of critical approaches responsible for elucidating the political determinations of the literary and cultural interaction of the Turkish-Kurdish kind in Turkish, Kurdish, English and French. Specifically, the methodology of the current study draws from a critique of the existing approaches discussed to provide an account and theory of this interaction, hence a dialectic, the content of which is the very terms of the critique of approaches based on their exposure to the totality of the objective content of the text. So, while Marxism as an approach is afforded theoretical and methodological primacy, this is only so on the basis of a certain version of which that proceeds from the objective content and characteristics of the text; the starting point is the analysis of the texts for what it is, the material dialectic it forms by and through the actualisation of its content. Because one must distinguish between an approach's view of itself and its objective assessment, with the text as the starting point, the study's methodological stipulations themselves are also placed in a control mechanism whereby other influential approaches in the field are brought to bear on each dimension of the text and contend for efficacy to release the truth-validity literature may or does hold.

Together with Deleuzian and Marxist considerations, the study bears in mind also the positivist and pragmatic approaches to literature that have formed the paradigm of western literary creative and critical canon. It does this not solely to facilitate a representative tableau, but also to recount the insight of schools of thought, which have been traditionally associated with content-analysis and close-reading both within and outside Turkey before the days of political literary theories. Essentially, the charge is that a dialectical approach is possible only on the basis of the critique of such Anglo-Saxon and European positivist, pragmatist and speculative approaches that currently prevail in literary analysis and criticism. Though each to a different degree and through contrasting modalities, but always due to some concern with the objective nature of the text, each of these approaches elicit different manifestations and representations of questions of the content and form of literature, thus providing a necessary element for a comprehensive interpretation of the text by, at the very least, pointing to its questions. As such, these questions provide the moments of the dialectic that connect the aesthetic dimension of these texts with their political purport by providing as valid a basis as any: their existence forming the concrete relationship under question. Briefly considering how this theoretic perspective underpins and forms the discussion in each

chapter is relevant to understanding how the study proposes to examine the relationship of the aesthetic and political dimensions of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish.

Ideas of Self and Community

Building on dialectical approaches to literature as developed by Aijaz Ahmad, Frederick Jameson and Terry Eagleton, the study opens with an examination of the ideas of self and community these texts convey by considering the extent to which the individual concerns of these poetries position themselves in relation to the socio-political context. Focussing on the genre of poetry, the discussion scrutinises the political and ideological presuppositions of the discourses marking this strand of Turkish-language literary writing in relation to questions of nation and nationalism. Based on close readings of representative texts, some of which has been translated into English for the first time, this study examines the political agendas motivating the literary artefacts produced by Kurdish authors and provides an account of the diverse political perspectives marking the general purport of this discourse. It argues that, despite their disparate political underpinnings, as illustrated by the representation of the diversity of major positions of conservativism, liberalism and socialism across the political/ideological spectrum, the narratives of Kurdish authors of the contemporary era provide a collaborative political intervention that does not advocate or markedly reflect either Turkish or Kurdish nationalist positions.

Having established an overview of the kind of political/ideological configurations impacting current Kurdish literary writing in Turkish-language literature, the discussion then turns to an analysis of the extent to which current political approaches represent a shift from or continuity with Turkish-language literature writing of the republican era until 1980, considered as a watershed moment for Turkish culture, literature and modern history. The study does this in an effort to unearth the history of this writing; to identify and develop our understanding of influential theoretical trajectories throughout this history so that the research is informed not only by its current characteristics but also its evolution, the kind of contingencies mediating the future of both the creative and critical fields involved. For this stage of the argumentation, the study compares the poetries of Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı with those of Ahmed Arif, Cemal Süreya and Sezai Karakoç, three influential poets of 20th century Turkish-language literature with avowed or implied Kurdish origins in terms of ideas of self and community.

Utilising Benedict Anderson's concept of nation as 'socially constructed imagined communities' as a comparative tool, the study traces the evolving literary and cultural

responses of the authors to questions of belonging, to Kurdish community and to a social context in which this ethnically and linguistically different community has been subjected to political domination. This specific and situated reading is undertaken with the aim of identifying the kind of continuity and discontinuity currently present in this writing's political sensibilities so that a more accurate understanding of the major historical trajectories can be developed. Indeed, this discussion reveals that, contrary to what may at first be expected from a literature produced in the context of political domination and disenfranchisement, the political discourses created by Kurdish authors of Turkish language are characterised by socialist and conservative perspectives present since and prior to the 1923 republican turn in Turkish-language literature. It contends that while the literary response to questions of nation and nationalism presents no politically unified position in Kurdish literary writing in Turkish, this poetry is nonetheless marked mainly by a clear break from all nationalist models of community and, assuming the context of Turkey as a cultural space, provides a collaborative model for the entirety of society in Turkey, not an espousal of monolithic Turkish or Kurdish nationalist positions.

By bringing models of the representation of political domination into question in this way, the study aims to offer a more situated and historicised reading of the political significance and purport of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish than poststructuralist approaches; such approaches have begun to make an appearance on both sides of the theoretical perspectives impacting the development of the incipient discourse. Through close and situated readings of the texts, this study examines the efficacy of reading Kurdish literary writing in Turkish affected by 'minority' postcolonial approaches influential in proposing the possibility of a literary analogue of a Kurdish national or nationalist narrative, as Mignon and Scalbert-Yücel's work seems to imply. Based on an assessment of the kind of political sensibilities traced in this way, this part of the discussion raises doubts about the extent to which the Turkish-Kurdish cultural and literary interaction can be defined in terms of political (dis)empowerment and the applicability of postcolonial assumptions of a binary relationship between power and opposition, hegemony and resistance, and nationalism and displacement to Kurdish literary writing in Turkish.

In this respect, dealing with what may in general be regarded as questions of the political dimension and content of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish, the substantive discussion is intended as part of a critique of postcolonial approaches to this writing. However, as the foregoing makes clear, the aim is not to argue against the need for political approaches to Kurdish literary writing in Turkish that give due critical attention and focus to identitarian

and political aspects, which has been the case with the paradigmatic Turkish nationalist treatment of the cultural and literary interaction involved, but instead to offer a more accurate reading that critically builds on political and historicist readings. The study proposes such is possible only through theorising the particular dialectics, specific contradictions defining both the content of the literary text and the relationship with other texts and their authors.

In response to the theoretical credentials of 'minor' literary approaches that view minority discourses as essentially political products of 'deterritorialisation' processes of the 'major' hegemonic cultures, this study explores the extent to which the narratives formed consist of being necessarily political and oppositional through situated, close readings. Specifically, it examines the extent to which this literature can be conceived and defined in terms of the binary relationship between 'majority' and 'minority' discourses through the prism of which postcolonial critics have approached literatures produced outside North American and western metropolises, of Third World authors, including, as Adak's comments above confirm, those writing in Turkish. This is for two reasons: firstly, to take issue and draw attention to the pitfalls of the arbitrary application of 'minority' approaches to questions of representation in literatures mediated with such political contexts, inspired by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's characterisation of 'minor' literatures, which lumps together a diverse range of cultural artefacts as necessarily distinguished as political in content, uniformly oppositional to the hegemonic culture and paradigmatic approaches, and united in advocating similar kinds of models of self and community.

But as much as attempting to provide a more accurate reading of the political dimension of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish, the second critical aim of this study, considered in the third chapter, is to bring to the fore the particular empiricist theoretical presuppositions that render reduction of literary writing to political reporting, to something written from the 'periphery' to the centre, often preoccupied with political issues with lengthy and complicated histories and not quite subject to the aesthetic considerations applying to novels, poems and plays written in the western centres of power. In accordance with this, as well as offering a reasoned account of the political dimension of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish and the theoretical implications for the discourses involved, this study argues for a need to consider the aesthetic 'characteristics' or dimension of this writing in order to understand the significance of the particularities of the Turkish-Kurdish cultural and literary interaction.

Models for Conceptualising Language Use

Because words are the stuff of literature, one of the main features of the study of literatures inflected by social contexts of national and political domination have invariably concerned the specific language uses characterising such literatures. Examples of the function literature and language played in perpetuating the hierarchical structure of power to establish 'standards' of language and literature as the norm – such as in African and Asian contexts – have ostensibly motivated recent literary studies and theory's interest; the marginalisation and repression of cultures politically dominated by the hegemonic centre has been a consequence of this (Ahmad 1992, 27). Pertaining to questions of both linguistic and literary/cultural interaction between different ethnic or national communities, the contextualisation of questions of political domination in relation to language 'variances' has facilitated a critical debate around the particular ways in which writers of marginalised groups have grappled, used and changed the literary language they use 'which is not their own'.

In relation to questions concerning the political mediations of the literary language, three major conceptual approaches, which draw from fundamentally different ways of theorising the relationship between language and 'reality' exert a considerable influence over the field. First is an 'aestheticism' which is not adequately sensitive to the political mediations of literary language, such as those of culturally monist and often official nationalist outlooks and shallow forms of pluralism which regard political mediations of literature either as 'impurities', or degenerations of the cultural 'norm' and 'myth'. Some forms of pluralism may be included in this group because of the aestheticism they share with the former even if a nationalistic or culturally monist approach may not be; the way in which this conceptualisation manifests itself is usually through an extreme form of particularism that rejects an objective basis to the political mediation of a range of literary artefacts that share a social milieu, regarding them as a simple matter of diversity of expression whether or not an explicit form of aestheticism is assumed. Examples of these include approaches that restrict the study of the linguistic properties of a literary text and the variances of language produced as merely aesthetic matters, without reference to its political dimension (Ashcroft et al 1989).

In contrast, inspired by a conceptualisation of language not merely as an 'instrumental' faculty with which subjects engage with reality but strictly as 'constitutive' of this reality, there exists a second theoretical trajectory comprised of a range of poststructuralist approaches that emphasise the ideological and political aspect of language as a medium

through which ideas, including political ideas, tastes and values are produced and perpetuated. Within this conceptualisation of language, literatures beset by conditions of political domination are defined categorically in terms of the politically constitutive function of literature, where the 'postcolonial' literatures the dominated produce are distinguished by an effort to reject and subvert the literature of the hegemonic centre, including the uses to which language is put. In *The Empire Writes Back,* a text influential in recent postcolonial thinking, the authors argue that the political mediation of literatures produced by the dominated are generally characterised by distinct, if not connected, processes of abrogation and appropriation in 'which the language, with its power, and the writing, with its signification of authority, has been wrested from the dominant European culture' (Ashcroft 1989, 8). Drawing from a similar empiricist epistemology, Deleuze and Guattari also postulate similar processes of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation through which 'minor' writers engage with and revolutionise 'major' literatures. Deleuze and Guattari argue that this is an essential characteristic of 'minor' literatures. According to this view, the 'minor' writer's impetus to posit his/her existence, to 'inscribe' the difference, is what sets these processes of rejection and/or subversion of 'major' literatures in motion:

> Only expression gives us the method. The problem of expression is staked out by Kafka not in an abstract and universal fashion but in relation to those literatures that are considered minor, for example, the Jewish literature of Warsaw and Prague. A minor literature doesn't come from a minor language; it is rather that which a minority constructs within a major language. But the first characteristic of minor literature in any case is that in it language is affected with a high coefficient of deterritorialization (Deleuze and Guattari 2003, 16).

In this regard, due to the centrality accorded to self-differentiation in this perspective, which proposes that the 'minor' starts by expressing itself and its difference from the 'standard', this approach holds a theoretical perspective primarily grounded in the politics of authorship rather than the content of the text, which it accounts for through appeal to the determinations of authorship. By couching the question in terms of the determination authorship, this approach thus captures the practical aspect of literary expression without reducing literary creation to a special kind of perceptual and representational experience, which the educational establishment can help install and improve. However, even though this approach demonstrates that the particular use to which language is put in 'minor' literatures is largely a matter of practice than an artistic whim, it also runs the risk of reducing

language use to political/social practices. Within the Deleuzian conceptualisation, this is done through a psychologistically defined desire that drives the author-subject to posit itself by expressing its difference; in contrast, Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (Ashcroft 1989, 39-45) argue from a philosophically materialist point of view, if not a strikingly particularist one, that "the syncretic and hybridized nature of post-colonial experience" facilitates a world of infinite difference and thereby "refutes the privileged position of .. any monocentric view of human experience." Amounting to a clear relegation of the idea of aesthetic experience and autonomy, along with the representational nature of language, this means that the language uses effected are not only politically significant but necessarily political.

Emphasised especially by Soviet linguist Voloshinov's idea of signs as inherently social and practical entities, a third option could be added to thinking of language use as a matter of taste and aesthetic competence on the one hand, and as nothing but a purely political practise on the other. This is to regard language uses as also being inflected by the dialectic between the text and other texts, that is, the ways in which aesthetic taste and values moderate its political dimension. In this view, while the materiality of the language uses as being integral to a social practise is emphasised, in this case a specifically cultural one, the specifically artistic nature of meanings effected is also preserved. This is important because in literature, language use is not only "a matter of meaning, but of making a meaning stick" (Eagleton 1991, 195), and artistically at that too. In this way, this view captures not only the moderation of the meaning of the literary text and the language use effected in it by the social milieu defining the subject, but also adequately takes into account the way in which particular network of signs, discourses and forms comprise the social practise of literature that moderates the content of the text and the author's writing strategy. This view thus gives due regard to the double-sided nature of the literary text, which functions simultaneously as a political and aesthetic human artefact in its materiality as a specific social and historical form of the reproduction of the world.

What this shows is that the examination of particular uses of language marking literatures beset by similar conditions has the value of explicating the political dimension and content in a set of literary texts while also providing a basis on which the role of aesthetic considerations motivating the theoretical projects underlying these discourses could be more accurately identified and understood. In this regard, while working on the empirical basis provided by the study of strategies of linguistic approbation and appropriation provided by current criticism, this study nevertheless avoids ascribing an essential character to these strategies, as those shared by all such literatures, by clarifying the role of different

ideological positions that find their way into the author's sensibilities and give rise to different form and combinations of rejection and revision of the standard for different reasons.

In terms of the linguistic practises of Kurds writing in Turkish, a categorisation for distinguishing linguistic groups operating within contexts of political domination is needed. The first category is comprised of those societies of 'settler' colonies such as the United States, Canada, New Zeeland and Australia, which emerged as a result of European colonisation and settlement which 'disposed and overwhelmed' indigenous populations (Ashcroft 1989, 25). In this case, the colonising settlers established a culture that supplanted the indigenous culture through the retention of a non-native language; the consequence of this has been the opening of a rift between the dominated and their culture, which, in relation to literature, gave rise to questioning the disjunction between the imported language of the coloniser and the experience of home by the invaders. In contrast, there are also 'invaded' societies, such as India and Nigeria, where political domination did not result in displacement but nevertheless marginalised native culture and literature as products of cultural and political domination. While English did not necessarily supplant or stop the use of mother-tongues in these societies, it was nevertheless established as the official language of education and social discourse, giving rise once again to a reaction to the appropriateness of the imported language for the expression and articulation of the experiences of the specific space.

As Ashcroft notes, this classification runs the risk of being too general to account for the complexities involved in particular contexts, firstly, because there are cases – such as the West Indies – that could fall into either category, as the native population was exterminated only to be replaced by an entire population of 'displaced' 'exiles'. Secondly, the categorisation does not pay due regard to societies in which the culturally dominated preserved some indigenous forms of language and literature while the imperial hegemonic domination continued; for example, South African and West Indian literatures retained fragments of their precolonial cultures. Thus, the categorisation is useful to the extent that it recognises these complexities and does not posit essentialist views of language as inherently appropriate for specific contexts.

In this context, Kurdish literary writing in Turkish is distinguished as mainly a literature of the politically dominated native community, given the continuous settlement of Kurds in the same regions they still inhabit, a region divided between modern day Turkey, Syria, Iraq and

Iran. This view is also supported by the centuries-old dominance of Turkish culture in the region, which makes it problematic for categorically classifying Turkish political domination as a product of settler colonialism. Having said so, however, the expectation of sensitivity to linguistic subtleties applies to this context because although writing in Turkish by Kurds has emerged as a product of the establishment of Turkish as the official language, and the ban on the use of Kurdish as a tool of repression in the Turkish nation-state building process, a separate Kurdish culture and literature, both written or oral, continued both in Turkey and other countries where the Kurdish population lived. In Iran, Iraq and Syria, the use of Kurdish was not banned but each community had to deal with corresponding dominating culture and literatures (Kreyenbroek 1992: Uzun 1999, 44-80).

As such, although the ban on Kurdish yielded generations of Kurds who cannot speak Kurdish, or at least cannot speak it well enough to feel confident in using it as the language of literary expression, including poets like Bejan Matur (Scalbert-Yücel 2012, 181-183), considering the continued existence of writers who could speak or had an affinity with a form of Kurdish language, such as Yılmaz Odabaşı and Ahmed Arif, Kurdish literary writing in Turkish may be regarded as a diglossic practise. As in other diglossic societies, Turkish has been accorded the position of the official language of government and commerce, as well as the register of the cultural space. As Kurdish literary writing in Turkish is conditioned by such a social context and distinguished as a form of Turkish-language literary writing engaging critically with the social context of cultural domination, an examination of the possible forms of language variance effected in this literature is crucial for a comprehensive understanding of the theoretical trajectories motivating the political interventions to be discussed in the second chapter, as well as the aesthetic/ideological determinations of the political dimension of this writing.

Aesthetic Theory

This study draws on aesthetic theories developed by Frankfurt School theorists such as Theodor W. Adorno, Georg Lukacs and Herbert Marcuse, and elaborated further by leading Marxist critics such as Terry Eagleton and Fredric Jameson. As a feature shared and developed by these critics, it follows the principle of nonidentitarian positioning of the artistic or reader subject with the aesthetic object, in which literariness is considered first as a property of the aesthetic object. In this regard, this study assumes a view of the value of literature in terms of the nondominative relation between the aesthetic thought and its object. It pays due regard to the discontinuity between subjective authorial intention and the materiality of the object that is articulated, taking into consideration both the Hegelian

formation that "We mean more than we meant to mean" (Bahri 2003, 14) as well as Adorno's stipulation that, even where art is successful, non-oppositional and aggressively marketed for consumption, it has a truth-content, a relationship of representation with the social reality out of which it comes. In the face of suspicion by approaches concerned with articulating the function literature and art has played in establishing the ideological hegemony of the dominators, this appeal to aesthetic is likely to be perceived as perpetuating 'Western or standard' values and norms, and as a capitulation to the dominant cultural logic.

Furthermore, the various conceptualisations offered by these theorists demonstrate the extent to which the particular history of power relationships themselves have been taken into account in proposing a need for the consideration of the aesthetic dimension of art and literature. For instance, in his *Ideology of the Aesthetic*, Eagleton argues in typical trenchancy how the birth of Aesthetics as a field of inquiry develops as a product of the transformation of the established bourgeois domination into hegemony by the end of 18th century as a rationale for the hegemony of a new ruling class. He traces the development of the concept of aesthetics, appearing first as a discourse of the body as proposed by Alexander Baumgarten, which then turns into the rationale with which the authority of the Law is accepted; in other words, the personalised content of the acceptance of subjugation: 'Structures of power must become structures of feeling and the name for this mediation from property to propriety is the aesthetic' and that "Law is male but hegemony is a woman and the aesthetic would be their felicitous marriage" (Eagleton 1989, 330-331). In this regard, the appeal to the aesthetic dimension not only subjects forms of aestheticism associated with hegemonic rule to challenges by pointing to counter-literatures, but also seeks to revise the notion of what constitutes literature in a way that discredits this aestheticism.

Therefore, due to proper attention to it gives to both the political and aesthetic dimension of literature, such conceptualisation of the aesthetic seems to be up to the task at hand; it facilitates a perspective that reflects the dialectic connection in which the literary artefact is placed with universal and the artistic forms which constitute the social milieu to which the text belongs; it takes into account the complex relationship between the historical and ideological determination of the text as well as authorial intentions and the internal logic of the text, which defines the text's limit and value (Bahri 2003, 16). This also matches the importance attributed to the aesthetic dimension of postcolonial literatures or those produced in similar contexts of political domination as providing an alternative aesthetics

against hegemonic models through the artistic representation of the experiences of minorities or peoples placed in such contexts rendered. Eagleton makes this point in his "Aesthetics and Politics in Edmund Burke" (1989, 61-2) in terms of the givenness of the political space that Aesthetics create, however questionable the class interests and logic behind it:

> The aesthetic, then, is not a category to be cavalierly abandoned to the political right, any more than it is one to be uncritically celebrated as emancipatory by the political left. One terminus, in our own time, of the conservative aestheticisation of politics is fascism, for which image, senses, blood and intuition are all. But when Walter Benjamin instructed us that since the fascists had aestheticised politics, we must politicise aesthetics, he did not, presumably, mean that we must replace the aesthetic with the political. Instead, we must find our own ways to reinterpret the classical tradition of the aesthetic…

What this emphasises is that while dominant versions of aestheticism must be challenged, they cannot simply be wished away. As a reification, alienation of the content, the form itself deserves illustration within the terms in which it is elaborated even if such articulation intends to overturn the logic and power structure implied by those terms. But Eagleton also makes another significant point here about the way in which the aesthetic and political dimensions of art and literature interrelate: that they cannot be reduced to each other, that aesthetics is not a category that can be 'celebrated' independently of art's political dimension. Adorno makes the same point (Adorno 1997, 6) by appealing to the 'other' experience art facilitates as the transformative relationships between its aesthetic and political dimension:

> Every artwork is an instant; every successful work is a cessation, a suspended moment of the process, as which it reveals itself to the unwavering eye. If artworks are answers to their own questions, they themselves thereby truly become questions. The tendency to perceive art either in extra-aesthetic or preaesthetic fashion, which to this day is undiminished by an obviously failed education, is not only a barbaric residue or a danger of regressive consciousness. Something in art calls for this response. Art perceived strictly aesthetically is art aesthetically misperceived. Only when art's other is sensed as a primary layer in the experience of art does it become possible to sublimate this layer, to dissolve the thematic bonds, without the autonomy of the

artwork becoming a matter of indifference. Art is autonomous and it is not; without what is heterogeneous to it, its autonomy eludes it.

This draws attention to two methodological pitfalls that Bahri identifies in relation to readings of postcolonial literatures and may apply to cases of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish. Firstly, any consideration of the aesthetic dimension of literature inflected by power relations without due regard for its particular history and ideological determinations, such as postcolonial approaches, "can slide into shallow politicking by other means", rendering it yet another ethicopolitical project of representation. In relation to this, notwithstanding the successes of such projects, the reduction to aestheticism also runs the risk of the further artistic disenfranchisement of cultural forms of expression by minorities or repressed groups and communities if the aesthetics developed do not engage with Western approaches, on the terms of which conceptualisations of aesthetic autonomy of art were developed (Bahri 2003, 16).

Within this perspective, the content of the literary text is placed not only in its dialectic relationship with the politics and history of the world, but also with the evolution of artistic forms, which are as much historically determined as they are moderated by the particular context of literary production that condition them. In this regard, this perspective problematises the reduction of literary texts produced in conditions of political and social domination along national and ethnic politics to its transparent social content, to propositional representation without any regard for its aesthetic dimension. It raises the question of whether the value of these literatures is restricted by their representational capacity. As a solution, it offers art's specific forms through which material realities are engaged and points to the role of form in moderating its social content, that is, the distinct modality of representation involved in literary and artistic representation. In this view of couching the question of form in terms of the objective content, the significance and value of literary writing is not limited to its transparent social content but is conceptualised as a function of the interrelationship between the works' form and content. By accounting for the autonomy and distinct modality of artistic representation, this perspective thus attends to the need to distinguish between the representations of the empirical world on the one hand and the specific kind of representation involved in art on the other. Within this model of artistic value and meaning, which proceeds from the artistic object and the objective reality to which the text relates, as Adorno explicates, the form relates to its content as a

form which has become content and which differs from representations of the empirical world seeking to produce identical representations of it (Adorno 1997, 4):

> Aesthetic identity seeks to aid the nonidentical, which in reality is repressed by reality's compulsion to identity. Only by virtue of separation from empirical reality, which sanctions art to model the relation of the whole and the part according to the work's own need, does the artwork achieve a heightened order of existence.

By positing the autonomy of the artwork, this view captures the role of the text's internal logic of reconfiguring the empirical world in characterising the work of art alongside its political and ideological determinations. It accounts for the different ways art speaks about reality, ways which are distinct from representations of reality in other fields such as natural sciences or social sciences such as history. Despite this, even in a specifically mediated way, the artwork relates and represents the reality which forms its substance and the basis of specific enunciations it makes. In this regard, given the distinction of artworks by their specific aesthetic form, the content present within this form is a specific configuration of the realities, articulated through a negotiation with norms characteristic to the artistic field:

> If art opposes the empirical through the element of form -and the mediation of form and content is not to be grasped without their differentiation- the mediation is to be sought in the recognition of aesthetic form as sedimented content. What are taken to be the purest forms (e.g., traditional musical forms) can be traced back even in the smallest idiomatic detail to content such as dance…Tracing aesthetic forms back to contents, such as the Warburg Institute undertook to do by following the afterlife of classical antiquity, deserves to be more broadly undertaken. (Adorno 1997, 5).

The assessment of the value and meaning of literary texts as a matter of 'the mediation of form and content' also has ramifications for what is to be taken as the totality of its content; since the artwork is not reduced to a solely political or aesthetic artefact, it is the very distance and tension between these two dimensions that reveals its value. Since on this view, the meaning of an artwork is not comprised solely of its transparent social content, but the contradictions/antagonisms shaping this social content that manifest themselves as the form of the artwork. As Adorno puts it, "The unsolved antagonisms of reality return in artworks as immanent problems of form" (Adorno, 1997, 6).

An Overview of Turkish Poetry in the Republican Era (1920-1980)

The Concurrent Emergence of Modern Turkish Literature and the Kurdish National Question

Modern Turkish literature of the republican era emerged out of the political and social upheavals resulting from the collapse of the Ottoman state after the First World War, as well as the subsequent foundation of the Republic of Turkey in 1923 following the National Struggle (*Milli Mücadele*) period (1920-23). For the subject of study, the cultural political context of the Republic's early years is of crucial importance because it marks both the beginning of the period's literature that is the focus of this study and the establishment of the political basis for excluding non-Turkish and non-Muslim nationalities and minorities from the nation building project. 1924 saw the abolishment of Kurdish institutions, such as schools, religious clubs and intellectual circles, and the banning of the Kurdish language, dealing a blow to the development of Kurdish language and literature. This prohibition would stunt the Kurdish language for decades, and delay its development as a modern literature, providing also one of the historical causes of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish. A brief look at the role of these non-literary factors – such as the undertaking of the nation building project with the establishment of the Republic – in the birth of a new literature, as well as in the inevitable Kurdish involvement in the Turkish literary field, is therefore important both for accounting for the kind of political and aesthetics positions prevalent in this literature and providing a reasonably detailed account of the Kurdish political national question, against which this historical overview is set.

The 1920 Treaty of Sevres set out the terms of the Ottoman defeat following the First World War, but the resultant resistance to the Allied occupation – especially in the Asia Minor part of the former empire and characterised by a power alliance between the military, middle strata and rural populations – led by Mustafa Kemal, quickly turned the situation around, combining also with an Islamic aspect. This power alliance also drew the support of those who led the nationalist movement during the late Ottoman period. Ziya Gökalp, a leading writer of *Genç Kalemler* (Young Pens) and arguably the theoretician of Turkish nationalism, of Kurdish origin, for instance was announcing his conviction in 'the leadership of his Excellency Mustafa Kemal' in his *Türkçülüğün Esasları* (The Essentials of Turkism) (Kurdakul 2000, 18). The Turkish national struggle ended with the founding of the Turkish Republic and the partition of Ottoman Kurdistan with the Treaty of Lausanne between Turkey, Syria, Iran and Iraq in 1923. As Kurdakul identifies, and confirmed by the rhetoric then, the character of

the regime began to be formulated within a framework of the principles of nationalism, independence, populism, republicanism, the secular (*laik*) state and westernisation.

In line with a particular interpretation of these principles, the political regime of Mustafa Kemal set about creating a state closely tied to the notions of 'Turkey of Revolutions' and 'national and secular state'. The government abolished the institution of the Caliphate, closed religious orders, prohibited the Arabic recitation of *azan* (call to prayer), introduced the Civil Act in opposition to a legal framework dependent on Islamic jurisprudence, and took the regulation of law based on secularism as a principle. In 1928, the Arabic script was replaced with a Latin alphabet prepared by a regime-appointed delegation of intellectuals. These social reforms, termed revolutions (*inkılap*) but better understood as reforms, drew reactions from Islamist and Ottomanist currents, which survived through the first decade of the Republic. Furthermore, the unity of history and language Kemalists had set as the basis of their nationalism took on a tripartite emphasis of laicism and nationalism augmented and enacted by the reforms they jointly entailed (Kurdakul 2000, 22).

In 1924, the political alliance that instigated the transition to the Republic set out to implement policies corresponding to the composition and social basis of the new ruling class in order to consolidate its power. Kemalism, the official ideology, began to be constructed around a Turkish version of 'modern' nationalism. In the name of laicist secularism, Kemalist nationalism subsumed the role of the other political currents it cooperated with during the years of National Struggle, such as Islamism, under itself. The Republic saw no place for other ethnicities and nations, neither as founding elements nor in terms of recognising their languages and cultures; only Turks were recognised. This year saw the abolishment of Kurdish institutions such as schools and religious clubs or circles. In this context, Kurdish as a language and literature was prohibited from developing in the newly established Turkish Republic. The preceding decade had seen efforts to revive Kurdish literary activities, which themselves were restricted by the activities of a small minority of Kurdish intellectuals. Furthermore, having lost all conditions in which to develop, Kurdish literary activities were exiled to Syria, where the language's rendition into the Latin script progressed; in Iraq, separate but very closely connected literary activity ensued into the 1930s.

Kurdish as a language and literature was not given any chance to develop due to the application of shifting attitudes and policies towards Kurds as well as the political repression of the three major Kurdish revolts in the early Turkish Republic (Bruinessen 1992, 274). The official view of the Kurdish political and cultural question was set in this context of the rapid

emergence and repression of the Kurdish question as one of the major issues of the early Republic. Set in this new conjecture of division, which itself continued to evolve, whatever Kurds were to do with their surviving language was to be done outside of Turkey, while Kurds in Turkey had to get on with a radically different social context.

As such, this period saw the emergence of the modern Kurdish national question, which was characterised by complexities resulting from this division and emerging from the formation and political transformations of the above-mentioned nation-states after the First World War. Specifically, this complexity was caused by these states' disparate political attitudes towards the Kurdish question, the distinct characterisation of the question in each country despite similarities, and the historical evolution of each state's approach to their respective social conjectures. The difficulties of the question as a late national question are further evidenced by the current lack of a unified political position amongst the concerning states with regards to their Kurdish issues as much as the divergence in the nationalist narratives put forward by Kurds, as evidenced by the traditional political disunity between the Kurdish nationalist movement in Northern Iraq and Turkey where it is currently most advanced.

In Turkey, the state's political attitude towards the Kurdish people was formulated during the founding period of the nation-state, which also saw the brutal repression of three major Kurdish rebellions between 1925 and 1938. The existence of such a nation and people was denied, or at best regarded as a part of the Turkish nation, along with the denial of all minority or cultural rights, including a ban on Kurdish-language education and intellectual activity. This approach continued until after 1960, when the Kurdish national movement in Turkey began to acquire a political character in a socio-political conjecture characterised by the introduction of a multi-party system and the impact of what was happening in other parts of Kurdish region to Turkey. Especially the inroads Kurds were making in Iraq and the emergence of radical politics in Turkey, influenced to a certain degree by the anti-colonial and civil rights movement around the world in this period, provided the conditions for this relative change. However, minority rights, such as writing in Kurdish or speaking one of the Kurdish dialects, remained prohibited until very recently.[12]

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[12] For a variegated historical background on Turkey's Kurdish national question see: (Gunter, 1990; McDowall, 1992; Vali, 1996; Kreyenbroek et al, 1996; Watt, 2000 and Maglaughlin (eds), 2001). For analysis of the recent period of the Kurdish national question, especially in relation to the Turkish context see: (Özoğlu, 1993 and 1994; Olson, 1996; Gökalp, 2005 and Gambetti, 2009).

Turkish Poetry of the Early Republican Period (1920-50) and Kurdish Presence

The history of modern Turkish poetry in the 20th century provides a resource for political readings of literature where literature's political and ideological functions are readily manifested. As Kurdakul notes, besides the currents of nationalism, westernism and classic Ottomanism, Islamism was also present on the literary scene, representing Islamic tastes, values and political approach to the social concerns of the time. Turkish poetry of the 1920s has been dominated, to a large extent, by poets who began writing at the turn or first decades of the century in a literary and cultural scene conditioned by such political configurations (2000, 25).

Even though the actors themselves retained their positions within the cultural milieu, the National Struggle period (1920-23) – after the Ottoman defeat and establishment of the Republic – brought about a new context for and synthesis of the prominent views expressed in the clash between the westernism of *Servet-i Funun* (Wealth of Knowledge) and *Fecr-i Ati* (The Dawn of Future), the nationalism of *Genç Kalemler* (Young Pens), the Islamism of Mehmet Akif and the traditionalist who upheld the values of classic Ottoman Divan poetry. Prior to the establishment of the Republic, and until 1940, the literary scene was dominated by two approaches that emerged from the poetry of the late Ottoman period. These are the schools of poetry known as *Memleket* (Homeland) poetry and the *Dergah* movement, which emerged as continuations of the nationalist and elitist poetry of the *Milli Edebiyat* (National Literature) and *Servet-i Funun/Fecr-i Ati* line respectively. It is mainly the distinctly monist Turkish nationalist point of view embodied in the poetries of these two schools that ideas which has been paradigmatic to the treatment of the theme or authorship of Kurdish of Turkish poetry are first set out. But, as we shall see, this is not a view purely confined to the particulars of their poetries.

The *National Literature* developed during the era of *Genç Kalemler* and *Five Syllabists* transformed into an artistic reflection of the political reforms brought by the new regime to poetry: writing with syllabics and 'a plain Turkish', Homeland poets – including Faruk Nafiz Çamlıbel, H. F. Ozansoy, Kemallettin Kamu, I. A. Gövsa, and O. B. Uşaklı – produced works with a romantic, optimistic perspective on Anatolia, a term which began to be used in reference to the newly established Republic's territory, and the life and culture of the Turkish people (Sazyek 2006, 21-22). 1920s *Homeland* poetry gave way, in a socio-political context characterised by the new regime's further consolidation of power and intensifying nationalist

discourse, to the *İnkilap* (Revolution or Reform)[13] poetry of the 1930s with the participation of new poets in the scene. In this new stage of *National Literature*, 1930s *Reform* poetry became the poetical exposition or expression of Kemalist reforms; the persona of Mustafa Kemal as Atatürk[14] itself was the main theme. In its transformation from Homeland to Reform poetry, the nationalist current of Turkish poetry mirrors the shifting attitude and emphasis in the work of novelists such as Halide Edip Adıvar and Reşat Nuri Güntekin, from a romantic version of nationalism to an immediate political nationalism and pan-Turkism (Kurdakul 2000, 25).

The line which had begun with *Servet-i Funun* and *Fecr-i Ati* found its modernisers in the neo-classicist poetry of Yahya Kemal and the modernist Ahmet Haşim with which the nationalist Homeland poetry would come to contend. If the poetry of the Republic is viewed as a break with the tastes and values of the past, then Kemal and Haşim's poetry provide the connections of former cannon with the emerging one. Sharing the symbolist and formalist concerns of their *Servet-i Funun* and *Fecr-i Ati* origins, these two poets adopted their poetry to the new intellectual sphere dominated by Kemalist nationalism and began to exert influence on the official poetry circles of the decade, beginning with the movement they helped establish around the *Dergah* journal (1921-23). Coming from a poetical approach concerned with adopting western techniques and views of poetry, as well as an understanding of poetry principally as a specific product of language, Yahya Kemal's poetry presented a stark contrast to the poetry of Haşim in terms of social content and perspective, as Haşim's took a strictly individualistic perspective of 'pure poetry.' Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, who emerged as the prominent poet of *Dergah* and the traditionalism it represented, in an article entitled 'Three Hills', identifies that the victory of the National Struggle is the position poetry should occupy for common people, as opposed to the 'heights' sheltering artists from the late Ottoman period and *Servet-i Funun* with their traditionalist and elitist vantage points.

The influence of these two strands was apparent also in the Turkish poetry of the 1930s. Added to its impact on the appearance of the short-living unsuccessful group of *Yedi Meşaleciler* (Seven Torchbearers) of 1928, the syllabist *National Literature*'s evolution into *Reform* poetry is further contributed by young poets like Behçet Kemal, Y. N. Nayır, Ahmet

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[13] The word *İnkılap* translates as Revolution; but the issue is that the word *İnkılap*, in this context, refers to reforms brought about after the founding of the nation-state, which is explained below. For this reason, rather than using Revolution, the term Reform is used to avoid confusion.

[14] That literally means the father of Turks or the ancestor of Turks.

Muhip Dıranas and Cahit Sıtkı Tarancı. The poets who had made a name for themselves within the *Dergah* movement were joined by Dıranas, Ziya Osman Saba and Cahit Sıtkı Tarancı as well as the independents of Asaf Halet Çelebi and Fazıl Hüsnü Dağlarca. While these poets did not adhere to shared principles, they nevertheless displayed parallels such as the form/structure taking syllabic meter as a basis, and an intuitive, abstract, symbolically driven and individually positioned poetics. Despite the contrast presented with the nationalist National Literature, the continuing line of *Dergah*'s elite poetry did not contradict the policies of or narrative advocated and enacted by the regime and its nationalism. Tanpınar, Kısakürek and Tecer, born in the first decade of the century, matured during the demise of the empire and ensuing upheaval; this is reflected in the abstract and mystic mood of their poetry. In contrast, in the poetry of Dıranas, Tarancı and Saba, born in the second decade of the century, the content revolves around fragments of lived experience and concrete life, despite its individualism and symbolism (Sazyek 2006, 24-27).

In these two strands of poetry, which dominated the literary scene until the mid-1930s, it is not possible to identify an overt view of Kurdish people or any other ethnic group, their place in the newly established Turkish Republic, but only a mediated or implied nationalist Turkish sensibility. However, it is possible to identify a view of Kurdish involvement in Turkish literature as implied by examples of the treatment of reality these two strands of poetry present. For example, a poem by Kemalettin Kamu, a leading poet of the period, entitled '*Bingöl Çobanları*' (Shepherds of Bingol) subjects to attention experiences around the traditionally Kurdish town of Bingol. In this poem, Kamu's treatment of a shepherd, arguably of Kurdish origin, addresses the personality and the community of the shepherd as part of Turkish history and community. The other important aspect of the poem's outlook, which figures in the treatment of Kurds throughout the history of Turkish Literature is a view of the person and community solely in terms of the economic underdevelopment of the region, evidenced by the reference to the neglect and the illiteracy of the region (Kaplan 1973, 34). The treatment is similar in *Dergah*'s elitist line of poetry, if not from an immediately ideological sensibility (Sazyek 2006, 27). As evidenced by these features, these two strands of poetry express a monocultural view of Turkey, Turkish Literature, and Turkish society; this view assimilates the Kurdish element within Turkey into the Turkish nation in terms of geography, both through the theme of Anatolia and in terms of an assumed historical unity, implying that Kurds are somehow a subcategory of the Turkish nation.

If one reason for such a view of Kurdish involvement being paradigmatic is its prevalence in the mainstream poetic production in the period up to 1950, the other is the continuation or presence of this paradigm, in part or whole, in the other strands of poetry of the same period. This is the case both with the socialist approach, which emerges in the 1920s, and the modernist *Garip* (Strange) grouping that would dominate the poetry of the 1940s. The first decade of the Republic also witnesses the onset of the poetical expression of a socialist approach, especially in the work of Nazım Hikmet and Ercüment Behzat Lav, and Hasan İzettin Dinamo and Cahit Külebi in the 1930s. With the publication of his *835 Satır* in 1929, Hikmet brings a new approach to poetry. Rendered in his socialist outlook, Hikmet 's early period is defined by the influence of futurism and constructivism (Kurdakul 2000, 70). Commentators of contrasting perspectives, such as Sazyek and Kurdakul, agree that Hikmet's poem 'Şeyh Bedrettin Destanı' (The Epic of Shaihk Bedrettin) (1936) was a turning point since, for the first time, the ideological universal voice of his poetry was blended with the particulars of the life and history of the country. Spending vast lengths of his life in prison after 1938, Hikmet's poetry changed the face of Turkish poetry by offering a viable alternative to the classical *aruz*, syllabics and their respective structural limitations and bringing poetry to life in a modernistic fashion. In this regard, Hikmet could well be regarded as the first modern Turkish poet in the strictest sense, as a break from past both thematically and stylistically.

His '*Kuvayi Milliye Destanı*' and '*Memleketimden İnsan Manzaraları*' (The Epic of the National Forces and Human Landscapes from my Homeland respectively) as well as his letters to novelist Kemal Tahir evidence this attitude. In a letter to Kamuran Bedirhan[15], a prominent Kurdish nationalist in exile in Syria, Hikmet states:

> The Turkish administrators and ruling circles, after the founding of the Turkish Republic, did not recognise the national and human rights of the Kurdish movement which they had pledged before, not only this but they had also taken the matter to denying the existence of the Kurdish nation as a nation (Alakom 1991, 141).

Furthermore, he also posits that the 'national liberation movement' was not only a Turkish victory but a Kurdish one too (ibid.). In addition to referencing Kurds in the above works, Hikmet also clearly reacted to the repression of Kurds in Turkey. However, another aspect of

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[15] From the Kurdish Bedirxan family who ruled the Principality of Bohtan during the Ottoman era. His brother Celadet Ali Bedirxan was also politically and intellectually active and the creator of Latin Kurmanji Kurdish alphabet.

his treatment of Kurds, brings his poetry closer to the nationalist line is its treatment of classes within Kurdish society, which underlines a particular notion of the Kurdish issue that is characteristic to the school of Marxism prevalent in the Turkey of the period, embodied in the idea of 'corporatism,' that is, the merging of Kemalism with socialism. As the 40s confirm, this perspective contained a certain overlap with the official nationalist discourse vis-à-vis the character of the regime change and its socio-political signification. Just as in nationalist Kamu, the Kurdish question figured as purely a question of political economy and, for this reason, and not as one of colonial if not semi-colonial struggle, which explains why themes treated are not questions of Kurdish nationhood or identity but the Kurdish feudals and class structure.

From 1940 onwards, the *Garip* (Strange) school of poetry dominates the literary scene and expounds on the paradigmatic treatment of Kurds the subject of this literature. The movement emerges in an attempt to break with preceding poetic perspectives. In the preface to *Garip*, the first joint poetical collection by Orhan Veli Kanık, Melih Cevdet Anday and Oktay Rifat, the authors emphasise the "tastes of the majority who acquires the right to survive through a perpetual [daily] struggle" (Veli 1993, 32). As everything, poetry was theirs too and had to therefore appeal to and exemplify their tastes and lives. The intention was not to 'defend the interests of a certain social class' but to 'search for its tastes, identity and implement them'. According to this *Garip* view, there is no progress or development associated with being 'restricted within known models proposed by some ideologies' (Veli 1993, 26). *Garip* rejected the emotional and pure poetry of the *Dergah* movement as a matter of its rejection of the 'poetic'; the poetry of the syllabists due to opposing traditional literary arts and poetic meter; the 'mystic poetry' of the traditionalists due to their superficial treatment of ordinary life; and the poetry of socialists, such as Hikmet, due its rejection of ideology.

By attempting to produce a poetry that would appeal to the common man, the ''Süleyman Efendi who suffered the most from verruca's than anything else'' (Veli 1993, 46), *Garip* not only abstracted the object from all its concrete conditions but had also employed irony and humour as a feature of the perspective through which particular objects were related in parable like plots. Insisting on the particularism of the common experience, which highlights a kind of poetry which does not draw from any system or framework of poetics such as those of the nationalists or *Dergah*, *Garip* indeed embodied the tastes and values of a particular social stratum; this is evident in its acceptance, as a given, of the epistemology of the

nationalist paradigm by augmenting the discourse on the subject with a liberal humanist sense of satire, irony and humour. The isolation of its poetry from ideology amounts to the retention of the literary political paradigm, including on questions of nationhood and collectivity and of the Kurdish kind too, the result of which was a poetry that presupposed the views of geographical, historical and cultural unity of the Turkish Republic. Thereby, the Kurdish paradigm of Turkish poetry was modernised.

Kurdish Involvement in the Turkish Poetry of 1920 to 1950s

As Baskin Oran, a current commentator on the Kurdish question observes (2003) in an article titled the "*Kürt Milliyetçiliğinin Diyalektiği*" (The Dialectic of Kurdish Nationalism), the interaction between a western imperial nationalism, the nationalism of an emerging Turkish nation-state and a provincial Kurdish nationalism determines this political approach to the Kurdish question. Kemalist Turkish nationalism emerges as a product of the political struggle with and in response to the western nationalisms (Oran 2003, 872). For this reason, its attitude to Kurdish claims for nationhood or separate nationalism is either a view of these claims as regressive or retrograde on the basis of the project of westernisation; or a view that Kurdish nationalist claims have been imputed by external powers to assimilate Turkish identity, a hallmark of all imperial or colonising nationalist narratives against any other alternative nationalisms or proposals for collective consciousnesses.[16]

Indeed this view of Kurds, as representing the reactionary, religious aspect of the collective paradigm of the theocratic Ottoman state, its notions of religious community, as contained in its religiously inflected fundamental concept of nation, the *millet*, is apparent in Turkish literature, such as in a novel titled *Sevgim ve Izdırabım* (My Love and Suffering) by Mükerrem Kamil Su, published in 1934, which deals with the events of the repressed 1930 Ağrı Rebellion. The novel describes Kurds as religious reactionaries and presents the relationship between a Turkish soldier and a Kurdish girl as a relationship of master and slave (Türkeş,

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[16] For this was the period in which the Kurdish question was not only physically repressed but was followed by the prohibition of the Kurdish language and all forms of expression of Kurdish ethnicity and culture, the Turkification of Kurdish names, city names and cultural forms which coincided with the efforts to create a uniform society especially after 1938 (Kreyenbroek 1992, 73-76). The language reforms, the Latinisation of Turkish, the repression of Islamic and socialist currents, the hostility provoked against the former non-Muslim elements of the old empire, such as Armenians and Greeks, created a context in which Kurdish issue was disregarded, viewed as irrelevant or an issue of an economically undeveloped region or being 'uncivilised'. Within the intelligentsia, which was itself on the main an extension of the new ruling class, Kemalist nationalism became prevalent and subordinated the nationalist currents which had emerged during the late period of the empire, while Islamists such as Mehmet Akif Ersoy were forcibly exiled and socialists such as Nazım Hikmet imprisoned (Kurdakul 2000, 28).

2003, 821). This attitude is also apparent in the emphasis of the economic underdevelopment of Kurdish regions, and the portrayal of Kurdish characters as brutal barbarians who live in caves. This is complemented by the theme of the love between handsome Turkish soldiers and Kurdish women, which brings a gender basis to the Turkish-Kurdish opposition as in the portrayal of similar dynamics in another prominent nationalist novelist of the period, Halide Edip Adivar's novel titled *Zeyno'nun Oğlu* (Zeyno's Son) (Alakom 1991, 67). A similar attitude is also displayed by Mehmet Kaplan, a leading official critic of Turkish poetry: "Isn't it the same Russia who had divided people of Anatolia, who had been together ever since the Battle of Malazgirt, and amongst whom there were no separation, as Turks and Kurds?" (Kaplan 1973, 562). After all Kurds were Turks too.

In terms of the treatment of both Kurdish life and identity as well as the kinds of involvement by Kurds in this literary field at this period, it is both this prevalent paradigm but also the accompanying repression that is determining. As is the case with the poetries of socialist realists such as Nazım Hikmet, there is a clear authoritarian attitude by the regime to any oppositional political view, whether about Kurds or the state/government's policies of political repression inevitably giving rise to censorship and self-censorship. As Alakom shows, this is the case with Hikmet's poetry where he knowingly does not use the word "Kurd" because of the legal consequences of such an action (Alakom 1991, 142).[17] These are also the terms by which Kurdish literary activity in this period, encompassing names such as Cahit Sıtkı Tarancı, Mehmed Kemal and Enver Gökçe take place. This paradigm produces an assessment of the work of these poets either as a part of Turkish Literature, as in the case of Tarancı, or a dismissal of their poetries, not on grounds of their nationality but of the political assumptions of their poetries, as in the case of Mehmed Kemal and Enver Gökçe who had produced a poetry with a socialist outlook that, despite their limited success, antagonised the pervasive Kemalist nationalist narrative.

A first route of involvement, in the form of adherence to the official idea of community and individual is exemplified by the case of Cahit Sıtkı Tarancı. Despite his Kurdish origins and the social environment of Diyarbakir, a major Kurdish centre where he was born, he made a name as a prominent poet of the 1930s. His poetry is from an individualistic perspective and is characterised with a formal style. Embodying the abstract poetical tastes of the *Dergah* school, apart from a poem called K*elekler* (Melons) where he refers the geography of Kurdish

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[17] The poem in question appears in the Epic of Kuvayi Milliye, where Hikmet, according to Alakom, changes a line from a folk song where it reads 'Kurds' to 'Heros'. Alakom himself attributes this to legal restrictions rather than having been caused by Hikmet's outlook.

regions, his Kurdish background does not find any reflection in his poetry. On the contrary, he follows the official approach of Atatürk poetry and writes poems praising Atatürk: "During a night against the dawn/Before the sun was set in the horizon/appeared the golden head of Mustafa Kemal"[18] (Tarancı 1997, 202).

Nevertheless, his poetry's pessimism, with an emphasis on themes of death and futility, despite its connection with the aesthetic assumptions of the *Dergah* school, presents an exclusivity due to the synthesis of apparent influence of 19th century French poets such as Baudelaire and Verlaine which had brought his poetry closer to that of the modernist *Garip* school. His poetry proved popular and influential on the generations to come besides receiving prestigious awards such as the First Prize in the Republican People's Party (the ruling political party, led by İsmet İnönü) competition in 1946 and the favourite living artist award by the *Varlık* literary journal in 1958 (Behramoglu 1997, 1154). One of the only verses in his poetry that might be taken as a reference to Kurdish issue appears in a poem titled '*Memleket İsterim*' (I want a Homeland) with the line "An end to the fight between siblings" (Tarancı, 1997, 128). This kind of involvement in Turkish poetry is also an attitude displayed by novelists such as Halide Edip Adıvar[19] and Vedat Günyol who also have Kurdish origins (Alakom 1991, 174). In this respect, Tarancı's poetry is therefore best read as a part of the literary response of a certain section of Kurdish society to the political situation.

Another route of Kurdish involvement in Turkish poetry is exemplified by the work of poets such as Enver Gökçe and Mehmet Kemal in the period up to 1950. Their involvement in Turkish poetry presents a contrast with Tarancı's attitude and indeed the Turkish socialist realist attitude exemplified by Hikmet. Both these poets develop a socialist approach which takes the multi-ethnicity and multiculturalism of Turkey into account. Although the social realities which provided the thematic basis of their poetries are presented as those experienced or observed by a socially conscious individual of the Turkish Homeland, it is not so obvious whether this overlap with notion of Homeland is an ambivalence or subjugation which could be attributed to Tarancı. This is because, the repression of the regime in the form of censorship, if nothing else, restricts the way in which these poets write or even the their work is disseminated to their readership, as in the case of the work of Gökçe which was

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[18] From a poem called 'İstiklal Marşı'nı Dinlerken' (While Listening the Indepence Anthem), the Turkish National Anthem: Gecenin birinde fecre karşı/ Güneşten evvel doğdu ufukta,/ Mustafa Kemal'in altın başı.
[19] According to Alakom it is not very clear whether she is of Kurdish origin or she has been provided patronage by a Kurdish family.

to be rediscovered in the 60's due to censorship and the poet's imprisonment (Ergün 1973, 21-25). Both the nationalism of the official ideology and the Kurdish question is viewed by a socialist perspective that takes as its particular subjective vantage point and themes the rural life. As an approach which combines the socialist Turkish progressive narrative with a recognition of the Kurdish question (Gökçe 1981, 80)[20], this provides another coordinate of the Kurdish literary involvement by constituting the tastes and values of a different section of the Kurdish society and kind of involvement to come after 1950.

The perception of the socialist poetry of these two writers particularly by the literary establishment presents a contrast with the espousal of Tarancı's poetry that gives a good idea of what counts as Turkish literature and what does not. The poetries of Gökçe and Kemal figure in the anthologies and works of poetry by Marxist critics such as Ataol Behramoğlu, Asım Bezirci and Şükran Kurdakul prominently in a stark contrast to the establishment's line of the interpretation of the work of these poets, provided by Mehmet Kaplan or currently by Hakan Sazyek, as a passing dismissal and characterisation of their poetry as unimaginative or ideologically driven as with most of the other socialist poets of 1940's Generation. The reason for this is also illuminating for what the enterprise of Turkish literature is taken as: it is a part of Turkish literature if and only if it either advocates a nationalist sensibility or if it takes a nationalist view of Turkey and Turkish literature as a given.

The Modernisation of Turkish Poetry: (1950-80) and Continuing Presence

The 1950s would produce the modernist *Second New* movement of poetry that would dominate Turkish poetry up to and after 1980's, continuing the project of modernising Turkish poetry from where *Garip* had left off. But this period would feature the emergence of other political sensibilities in poetry such as a transformed Marxist generation and a modern Islamist current alongside the continuing analogues of Turkish nationalist and national poetries.

The vacuum left by *Garip*, the modernist *First New*, after their popular influence had completely faded and their literary novelty assimilated to the literary tradition, would be filled by another movement under the influence of French modernism. This new movement, the *Second New* (henceforth SN) did not emerge as a movement beset by a manifesto or collectively agreed principles but rather as a poetry which shared and was linked through a distinctive poetic perspective and style. A defining feature of these poets, as noted by Bezirci,

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[20] This is exemplified in a Gökçe poem, with the lines "And Kurds, Alevis, Gypsies live in mud-made houses and tents" (Ve Kürtler, aleviler, çingeler yaşar toprak damlar ve çadırlarda) (Gökçe 1981, 80).

(1996, 52-58) is that they were all poets who were born during the republic era and was the first generation that did not have any connections with the conditions and literature of the late Ottoman period which had proved influential in poetries active until 1950. Another feature of the SN poets was that they comprised two generation of poets, namely those who wrote before 1950 such as Oktay Rifat, İlhan Berk, Edip Cansever and Turgut Uyar and a second group who began their poetical life with the SN itself including Cemal Süreya, Ece Ayhan, Sezai Karakoç, Kemal Özer, Ülkü Tamer and Özdemir İnce.

The poets of the SN, notably influenced by the modernism of especially the existentialist philosophy and its pessimistic discourse of devastation which proved compatible to the repressive regime of the DP rule, share as common features a formalist approach that places emphasis on form rather than content which appears as the deformation of language, attention to literary devices and language, metaphor, free association and isolation from the social and natural environment (Bezirci 1996, 14). This is contrasted with *Garip*'s espousal of the spoken language, plain and plot based narrative poetry, and the efforts to embody the tastes of common people and its ideals of becoming the poetry of the majority. What both currents share is a rejection of a connection with any ideology. However, whereas *Garip* attempts to break with tradition by appeal to the terms of this ideology and discourse, the poets of SN, at the early stages of the movement in late 50s, completely reject connection with all ideologies even though the way in which this transpires is distinct. Through the espousal of what is widely regarded as the movement that embodies modernist tastes and values, once established, the reaction of SN poets broadens to encompass the entirety of literature.

This movement's pessimism, in the form of a rejection of all rationalism characteristic to the post-World War and devastation period, brings to Turkish poetry a rule of rulelessness, an arbitrary automatism, laden with imagery presented through a closed language. The evident surrealist and Dadaist influences on the aesthetics of the movement's corresponded to the set of pessimistic, nihilistic moods shared by the intellectuals of the period. The lines of political demarcation of the movement are between those writing with Marxist precepts or sensibility including Cemal Süreya, Edip Cansever, İlhan Berk, Turgut Uyar, and those writing with an Islamic sensibility such as Sezai Karakoç (Korkmaz and Özcan 2006, 68). The turn towards a realism by the end of the 1960s for the younger generation, as exemplified by the poetry of Süreya, is contrasted with the older generation's continuing search for pure poetry, perhaps with the exception of Cansever who, arguably, followed in the direction of Süreya,

an example to which is a poem titled '*Mendilimden Kan Sesleri*' (The Sounds of Blood from my Handkerchief) written as a dialogue with the socialist realist Ahmed Arif, where the country and the period is thematised in direct reference and with a socially sensitive outlook (Cansever 1993, 402-405).

From 50s onwards, alongside the nationalist poetry, which continues to exist more as a matter of institutional necessity rather than one of prevalence in the literary sphere[21], the period's poetry also saw the evolving poetries of the nationalists and *Dergah* line as well as the non-aligned poets whose poetry was shadowed by the SN if not the nationalists. Just as the supposedly non-political middle strata's values and tastes shifted from a *Garip* version to SN, the nationalist poetry evolved to adapt to the new conditions of emerging after the founding period of the Turkish nation-state. Those who have been active in the period up to 1970's include Z. O. Defne, S. N. Başar, H. N. Zorlutuna, A. K. Tecer, A. N. Asya, O. S. Gökyay, B. R. Eyüboğlu and Cahit Külebi (Korkmaz and Özcan 2006, 83-85). Common thematic aspects include writing with a nationalistic if not a patriotic concept of their community which helps to create a uniform idea of the common or urban Turkish people, and thereby stipulate a community with unifying aspects and history. As the poet who successfully creates an original synthesis of the humanist nationalistic sentiments, Cahit Külebi, is one of the leading poets of this group. Representing a liberal version of nationalism, Külebi's realism, focusing on the here and now of the Anatolian people, marks a distinct synthesis of the advances made by the nationalist ideology in its progressive phase as well as the constrains it has set by consolidation as the official ruling paradigm.

As proposed by Korkmaz, in the post-1960 period, the poetry of B. S. Erdogan, N. Y. Gençosmanoğlu, Y. B. Bakiler, İ. Geçer, B. Karakoç, A. Karakoç, Coşkun Ertepınar, D. Cebeci and Y. Akengin represents a continuation of the official syllabist and *Dergah* poetry that is a reinterpretation of these 'national resources' in the light of new developments (2006, 100). Termed ambiguously as 'nationalist romantics' this grouping's poetry revolves around an effort to give poetical expression to what are often officially taken as the Turkish values through an emphasis on the way language acts as a part and means to poetically materialise these values (Korkmaz and Özcan, 2006, 100). A recurring theme is historic projections, where characters, events and imagery are borrowed from real or supposed histories to construct a myth centred around a prototype nation through the prism of nationalist

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[21] As suggested for instance by the relatively little interest or appeal they draw amongst other poets such as the main anthologies of Turkish poetry by Behramoğlu or Bezirci given at the bibliography.

agendas, in a way that accords with the official state rhetoric. The essentialist view of the Turkish updated in this way determines also the selection of formal poetical device and techniques, again, constructed in a linear view of the connection of Turkish past to Turkish present, in this case, in terms of the supposed continuity of Turkish nationalist aesthetics.

Opposition to this paradigm would be provided by the emerging generations of socialist realist poetry as well as a modern current of Islamic poetry. Not only do both these strands of poetry scrutinise and revise the idea of community represented by the nationalist and national poetries, but they also begin to render a treatment of Kurds both as a theme of Turkish poetry and as Kurdish literary activity in a fundamentally different way.

As Bezirci notes, in the first few years of the 50s, the Socialist Realist poetry (henceforth SR), subjected to authoritarian practises of the regime, comprises of works characterised by the restrictions of censorship (2002c, 27-35). After a period which saw the arrest, trial and imprisonment of poets, having been disposed of all freedoms for the publication of their work or expression of their literary preferences, the SR poets either faced exile as Hikmet did after his release from prison or adjusted the form of their activity in a hostile context that had given rise to the prevalence of a depressive mood amongst the intelligentsia as a reaction to the monolithic dogmatism.

The direction the SR poetry takes in 1960s is one of distancing itself from the Kemalist ideology which was utilised to compensate Marxism on the face of the single-party rule. This included specifically the progressive narrative of industrialisation, urbanisation and orientation towards the country and economic production they shared (Korkmaz and Özcan 2006, 92). Although the influence of poetry of the *Dergah*'s line such as those of Haşim and Tanpınar over the poetry of older generation of SR poets such as Ilgaz continued, the re-evaluation of the Marxism manifested with the new Marxist tradition emerging in the 1960s and the appearance of Turkish Workers Party (*Türkiye İşçi Partisi*) in 1961, impacted the notions and tastes of the Marxism assumed which in turn caused a shift in the idea of ideology's relation to poetry. As noted by Bezirci and others, a generation emerging in these conditions grew up reading Hikmet and the first translations of Marxist texts to Turkish (1997c, 35).

Some of the poets of the earlier generation, Ahmed Arif, Hasan Hüseyin, Enver Gökçe, went onto create a poetry which reflected the vein of Anatolian romanticism synthesised with the realism marking Hikmet's *The Epic of Shaikh Bedrettin.* Gökçe attempted to expound on

Hikmet's distinct attention to the rural and 'eastern' Anatolia, while the poetry of Arif and Hüseyin reflect the experience and sensibilities conditioned by regional and cultural systems through the perspective of a socialist persona.

The poetry of Arif, collected in *Hasretinden Prangalar Eskittim*, (I Have Worn My Chains Out Longing For You) (1969) exerts an influence on the poets of the later SR generation as a synthesis comparable to Hikmet's epic with its unification of the themes of the 'East' with a socialist perspective (Yetik 2007, 7-13). The socio-political content of his poetry is the experience of the Kurdish people and region even though this is not done overtly but by appeal to a relatively evolved view of Anatolia: "whose Homeland is it from Üsküdar[22] yonder?" (*Üsküdardan bu yanlı kimin yurdu?*). In his long poem titled, '*Diyarbakır Kalesinden Notlar*' (Notes from the Fortress of Diyarbakir), *the Lullaby of Baby Adiloş* (Adiloş Bebenin Ninnisi) and *Otuzüç Kurşun* (*Thirty-Three Bullets*), the subject is the persecution and repression of people living in the Kurdish regions by military forces (Arif, 2007). Even though the region is referred to as the 'East,' used in the period to refer to matters of Kurdish community in region, as reflected in the comments by Süreya about Arif's poetry "it represents the fearless lyricism of the cultural accumulation of the people of Eastern Anatolia" (Alakom 1991, 147-148).

The development of an anti-imperialist civil rights movement during the end of the 1960s also brings about the poetry of a new generation of SR poets, including those of İsmet Özel, Refik Durbaş, Özkan Mert, Süreya Berfe, Gülten Akın and Kemal Özer, Yaşar Miraç etc. As noted by Korkmaz and Özcan, the poetry of these poets, continuing the line of evolution taken by their predecessors such as Hikmet and Arif, no longer appealed to the east/west binary as the axis of their poetry was replaced with the imperialist-colonised binary which attempted a Third Worldist formulation of Turkish poetry.

Reflecting the evolution of the Turkish society in the 1950-80 period, the SR poetry of this period, parallels, as a whole, the development of oppositional left politics of the period and the tolerance developed within this perspective towards notions of the ethnically or regionally compositional nature of Turkish culture. The break with the nationalist paradigm deepens with the shift from Kemalist versions of Marxism, but as a product of censorship as much as the aspiration on the part of SR poets to create and embody universal values such as internationalism, the ethnic composition of Turkey, its culture and literature are tied into

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[22] A locality in Istanbul, which marks the Asian (or Anatolian) part of Turkey.

the socialist idea of community. While this provides an advance from the Kemalist incorporation of Kurds under 'Turkey', the SR's contribution has been the challenges it has levelled at the homogeneity of Turkish literature and poetry. In this, SR poets complement the poetics of SN in unravelling the dogmatics of the official poetry, even if they do not convey a mutually shared alternative idea of human community.

This period also witnesses the Islamic challenge resurface with a modernist character. Not being a direct continuation of classical or traditional approaches, Islamic poetry finds its key figure in Sezai Karakoç, who as a prominent poet of the SN provides a link between the thematic focus of the past and a formalistic direction that was to emerge in post-1950s (Korkmaz 2006, 90-110). Based on a sophisticated Islamic metaphysics and mythology, and a conception of poetry as a 'part of a particular view of the world', it seeks to recreate and reinterpret the past and provides connections to the present, using modern device and techniques such as an imagery laden symbolism characteristic to the SN poetry. As Korkmaz notes, the theological idealism which poets such as Karakoç views as the real realm of existence and its efforts to maintain and secure the perpetuation of Islamic civilisation and culture is the main motivation of this poetry (Korkmaz and Özcan 2006, 106-107). In the poetry of Cahit Zarifoğlu, this perspective manifests itself thematically as an effort to embrace the entire Islamic world, taken as a homogenous whole, while importance of family and spiritual love, love, children and religion are amongst the main themes rendered by poetics with no concern for meter or syllabic systems.

In this respect, the ideological significance of this Islamic current is not so much the creation or the accentuation of a religious aspect of the regime's official ideology but the way in which Islamic ideology and its aesthetic preferences came to be deployed in challenging the official ideology and the literary standards it would exemplify. Based on religion as an ideological framework, the view of Turkey presented in this poetry, for this reason, does not take class or national or ethnic characteristics as the focus but the Islamic faith community as a unifying beginning point for those who make up Turkey and beyond. Although there is no reference to social and political developments in this poetry, including any reference to Kurdish people or an aspect of their life and culture, the centrality of faith identity suggests an ambiguous approach to national questions.

Kurdish Involvement in Turkish-language literature in the 1950-1980 Period

As the discussion presented makes clear, as both a theme and a referential resource, Kurdish culture found expression mostly in the SR poetry written since 1950s. But several other poets

also dedicated some space to one or more aspect of Kurdish society and culture. Alongside Ahmed Arif, Hasan Hüseyin, Enver Gökçe and Mehmed Kemal's continuing socialist treatment of Kurdish identity, other poets also began to produce work about the theme and its politics. Hilmi Yavuz, in his collection titled 'Eastern Poems' ('*Doğu Şiirleri*') presents a panorama of persons from Kurdish regions such as Diyarbakır, Elazığ, Bingol, Van, Muş etc and makes reference to Kurdish poetry, women, the socio-political issues of the region. Although the question is reduced to those of 'East', it presents a contrasting point of view than the rejectionist nationalist school or the oblivion of the *Dergah* and SN line and comes to represent a shift in the Kurdish paradigm of liberal literary tastes. Yet another attitude to Kurdish people is exemplified by a poem of Bülent Ecevit (later the prime minister of Turkey) as one which continues to subsume Kurdish culture and civilisation under the Turkish, in Ecevit's case under a classicist framework alongside the departed/deported Hittites, the Seljuk and Armeanians (Alakom 1991, 158). Despite the increase in the examples of Kurdish theme rendered in liberal humanistic terms, such as 'East' to refer to the Kurdish regions, in the main, the political attitudes to the Kurdish question of denial and dismissal, mark the treatment of the theme of Kurdish life, culture and interaction in Turkish literature. The only alternative is provided by the socialists: in the period leading up to 1980s the Marxist/socialist treatment of the Kurdish question with a social or socialist concern was furthered by several poems by Gülten Akın, Ülkü Tamer and Ahmet Oktay about the people, history and culture of Kurdish regions (Alakom 1991, 161).

Ahmed Arif, the leading socialist poet of the 1960s generation, with a single collection of poetry that continues to be published and exerts influence, is held across the literary scene as one of the leading Turkish poets of late 20th century (Kaplan 1973; Behramoğlu 1991; Korkmaz and Özcan 2006 Yetik, 2007). However, just as Tarancı in the earlier period had exemplified, not all poets of Kurdish origin wrote with a social or socialist concern. Examples to this group of poets are Sezai Karakoç, Cemal Süreya and Tahsin Saraç who belongs to the modernist conception of the SN movement while Karakoç's connection to political Islam contrasts with the leftist liberalism of the latter two (Bezirci 1996). Süreya again is held as one of the leading and most influential poets of the 20th century, particularly by the literary establishment (Yalçın-Çelik, 2006).

But tied to the emergence of the Kurdish national question after 1960 and the efforts for the literary revival of Kurdish, signs of a new type of Kurdish involvement in Turkish poetry was embodied by writers and poets such as Musa Anter and Kemal Burkay who were directly

involved in Kurdish nationalist politics (Nezan, 1996) (Blau, 1996). With two collections, titled *Prangalar* (1974) and *Dersim* (1977), Burkay presents a poetry in Turkish that does not overtly express Kurdish nationalism but nevertheless exemplifies the sensibilities of a Kurdish intellectual about life in Turkey and in Turkish (Alakom 1991, 125). Another reason for the kind of involvement these two poets represent is their bilingualism, writing both in Turkish and Kurdish.

Despite this literary activity through separate avenues in Turkish, the work of Ahmed Arif, Cemal Süreya, Sezai Karakoç and Kemal Burkay is connected in many ways and does present a unifying character. As well as unity through the social and political taste and values they represent and embody as examples of diverse dissenting responses to the official ideology, their poetries are also connected through a rejection of Turkish nationalistic outlooks and a tendency to unify with non-mainstream political and ideological sensitivities, particularly such as Marxism and Islamism (Korkmaz and Özcan 2006, 90-110).

The poetry of Cemal Süreya and Sezai Karakoç, two prominent poets of the SN movement, represents two exclusive coordinates of the ideological searches of the urban Kurdish individual who have integrated to the social and cultural life in Turkey. In these poetries, Kurdish nationalist and socialist collective consciousness are rejected on grounds of aesthetics priority over politics. Despite shared aesthetics, the point of divergence is the ideological assumptions of the poetic persona, the politics of its sensibility: In Süreya's case, the sensibility was clearly mediated by leftist values: "The Kurds have to lie all the time whereas the Albanians have to tell the truth" (Süreya 1994, 321). His attitude to Kurdish as a language given to him, which seems to suggest a tacit acceptance that he has another, namely Kurdish, also confirms this leftist sensibility.[23] In contrast to the universality Süreya finds in socialism, Karakoç's poetry turns into Islam. Just as an ethnically or nationally determined sensibility like that of Kurdish people is not advocated, neither is a Turkish one; the point to relate is over and beyond in an Islamic notion of *ummet* community.

Ahmed Arif's and Kemal Burkay's poetry however presents, perhaps due to the appearance of their poetries in succeeding decades, a contrast of two principally socialist outlooks. Arif's

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[23] Despite his contrasting ideological disposition compared to other Kurdish poets mentioned, it is not clear whether Süreya regards himself as Turkish as these comments from his diary about the Turkish language are telling: "Here is my adventure with language: A child is given to a child minder; a better of way of saying it is, that child finds himself in the house of the childminder, and begins to love his childminder; and begins to call her mother. This is my relationship with Turkish. In a certain respect, it is the transformation of exile into love." (Süreya 1996, 179).

poetry is perhaps Kurdish in all respects but language, even though the language used is representative of the particularities of Turkish spoken in Kurdish regions. His poetry is widely regarded not only as a consummate continuation of the socialist vein created by Hikmet but is a synthesis of the multicultural sensitivities of the peoples of Anatolia. His success and influence are accepted across the literary scene but in the nationalist and national poetries and literary criticism, as in the case of commentators such as Özcan and Korkmaz, just as Mehmed Kaplan, the official view of his poetry is 'militarist' and 'pro-guerrilla'. Kaplan's attitude is representative of the colonising individual dismissing his poetry because it is ideological and is based on the false assumption that no such people as Kurds exist. But even Kaplan seems to have conceded the speciality of Arif's poetry, as evidenced by his inclusion of a poem by Arif, a relatively less politically intense one, in his seminal Cumhuriyet *Devri Türk Şiiri* (Republican Era Turkish Poetry) as the only socialist poet alongside Hikmet. The poetry of Burkay presents another kind of the melding of a socialist perspective, in his case, with an overt Kurdish nationalist sensitivity. This is certainly to do with his activity as a Kurdish nationalist politician, leading the Socialist Party of Turkish Kurdistan until 2002. Despite the relatively little success of Burkay's poetry, which is demonstrated by his limited activity in poetry and the little interest shown to his poetry,[24] his poetry signifies for the study an important coordinate for Kurdish literary activity as part of a bilingual Kurdish activity.

Broaching the Complex History and Politics of Kurdish Literary Writing in Turkish

As described in outline by the preceding historic overview of Republican era of Turkish poetry up to roughly 1980's, a variegated context is present both in terms of engagement of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish with ideas and narratives of Turkish nation and nationalism, but also with respect to the extent to which the same writing has been shaped and defined by the influential aesthetic formations during the same period. There is therefore adequate reason, at this stage of the discussion, to suggest the existence of a multiplicity of political positions within Kurdish literary writing in Turkish. This seemingly simple conclusion is remarkable for the research field in that it does not only place an onus on the research to reflect the diversity of this political formation, but it also raises the question as to which period would be most appropriate to focus on, given that it evidences the existence of

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[24] His poetry is usually to be found in anthologies by leftist critics such as Bezirci and Behramoğlu, whereas if not due directly to his Kurdish origins but due to his political disposition, he is omitted from analysis or mention in literary studies such as Halman's included in the bibliography.

political positions prevalent in the quite lengthy tradition of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish before and other than the Kurdish poets of *Yasakmeyve*.

Whatever political formations or aesthetic preferences may currently be influential over Kurdish literary writing in Turkish today, there is certainly a nexus of questions to be addressed in terms of linking the current state to its past, to contextualise it as a tradition if a distinct literature or strand of it is what is allegedly at stake. Otherwise there would be no basis to comprehensively qualify whether the current state of affairs vis-à-vis Kurdish literary writing in Turkish and its identitarian political enouncements are a singular occurrence particular to a period of Turkish history when the Kurdish question found a temporary respite of expression or if it is symptomatic of a lengthy history of ideological and aesthetic mediation.

It is with such concerns to inform the research by its current state as well as its history that poetry emerging in the immediate aftermath of 1980, 12 September military coup, regarded widely as a turning point in Turkish culture and literature as an onset of a period of aesthetic fragmentation, that it is proposed as the period of focus for the research (Yalçın-Çelik 2006) (Gürbilek 2011). While concentrating on this period informs the research field with the general evolution of this writing, it deals also with the poetry of the generation immediately preceding the contemporary one. In this way, while helping to develop a more comprehensive account of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish by showing its very recent evolution, the study also makes it possible to gauge the extent to which aesthetic fragmentation dominating the post-1980 period of Turkish literature, has been distinctly influential over the evolution and current state of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish.

Moreover, alongside reasons to do with research and criticism around the meaning and value of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish, there are also theoretic reasons stemming from the lack of due attention given to the aesthetic dimension of this literary strand; this seems to suggest the need for a comprehensive account going beyond prioritising the current period and analysis of particular periods or poetries in splendid isolation. For, as shown by the discussion in the historic overview, Kurdish literary writing in Turkish does not only distinguish with its political enouncements but also by its particular modes of alignment with aesthetic trends prevalent throughout this history. Hence involving a comparison, what this implies for the aspect of research with regards the aesthetic dimension of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish, is also a need to develop as representative an account of the evolution of this variegated engagement and its political impact which reasonably represents this diversity throughout

its evolution. To complement the effort of developing a representative account of this aspect of the question substantiated through a close textual reading, this research also notes the need for a comparative approach which can reflect a wider cross-section of this literature by including also comparisons with Kurdish poets of the earlier, post 1950's era as well as non-Kurdish contemporaries of Mungan, Odabaşı and Matur's poetries.

Given the prominence of Turkish nationalist, liberal humanist and socialist aesthetics dominating the cultural and literal history and providing, albeit schematically and to a different degree, the routes and contexts of this engagement, which the preceding overview has highlighted, the concerns around periodic focus of the study has therefore been reflected most strikingly in the choice of poetries under specific focus. As discussed in the review of current research on the subject in tandem with the methodological issues outlined, Murathan Mungan, Yılmaz Odabaşı and Bejan Matur's poetries, which form the immediate attention of this study, on the face of it, represent contrasting political perspectives and are seemingly animated by equally disparate aesthetic projects, instantiating as they do respectively, postmodern, socialist and metaphysical taste and values corresponding roughly to the theoretic formation sketched.

The selection of these poetries undoubtedly raises questions about the extent to which they can be representative of this complexity and to questions of their reception, the extent to which they belong to Turkish literary canon or deserve attention so as to be sufficient for an account that can redress the reduction of their meaning and value either to separatism or to mere identitarian subjectivism. To be sure, even if not taught in schools and colleges, these poetries are included in collections, anthologies, textbooks and are subject to some, if embryonic, scholarly attention in Turkish Language and Literature departments of both Turkish and west European and Anglo-Saxon metropolitan universities and have been to some public acclaim. Added to this is the fact that all three poets are three major living poets of the post 1980's period with poetries which appeared in the course of this period, which, to a considerable degree, captures its recent evolution.

On the basis of these considerations and added to lacunae in research field identified in the previous chapter of this study, it can therefore be asserted that reasons for selection of poetries for focus is to do also with questions of periodisation of the particular literary field, which this historic overview of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish in the course of the republican era has highlighted.

Chapter Two:

The Political Dimension of Kurdish Literary Writing in Turkish

Through a situated analysis of representative texts by three poets of contemporary Turkish language literature, this chapter attempts to explore the ideas of self and community represented in literary articulations by Kurdish authors and on this basis, to provide an account of the political dimension of this literature. The general aim of this chapter is to illuminate the extent to which this literature positions itself in relation to the political context, especially in relation to competing nationalism and identities, in a way which details the points of confluence and divergence of the diverse representational models constructed. It does this through a comparative reading which proceeds from a close reading of texts, the main focus of which is the simple yet laden questions, of how and whether literary articulations by Kurdish authors, as seen in the specific genre of poetry, distinguish themselves politically. On this basis, it assesses whether the literary articulations marking these works are motivated mainly by articulations of "identity" and where this may be the case, the kind of political and individual identities represented.

Since the purpose of this section is to broach questions of the representation of political domination by authors of the ethnic or national group subjected to this domination, although the focus of the study is the contemporary era of Turkish-language literature and poetry, the discussion, nonetheless, has to refer to the entirety of the historical context of this political domination. This is so that a more accurate characterisation of the political significance of this literary practise can be developed in a way which also clarifies the significance of the discourses in circulation which have been influential to the literary representations it has rendered.

For this reason, in this chapter, attention is first turned to readings of specimen texts by Murathan Mungan, Bejan Matur and Yılmaz Odabaşı based on a critical deployment of the theory and concepts of 'deterritorialisation,' 'immediacy of political content' and 'imagined community' in relation to the political response and representations effected in their poetries. In the following section titled "A Dialectical Overview of the Diversity of Kurdish Literary Politics," the politically diverse literary responses of Kurdish authors to a social context and history of political domination are examined through the textual analysis of the political sensibilities motivating the texts. In terms of the general purpose of the study to provide an account of the models of representation in Kurdish literary writing in Turkish-language, the specific function this section serves is, therefore, illustrating the content and political purport of the models which are currently being influential. Accordingly, it contextualises the state of this discourse by dedicating separate sections to the analysis of the three poetries to illustrate the diversity of political and ideological presuppositions motivating the particular political responses and the general political dimension of this literature.

In the following section titled "Evolving Political Trajectories of Kurdish Poetry in Turkish-language", the theoretical implications of this diversity of political interventions is interrogated through a comparison with the poetries of the previous generation of Kurdish authors of Turkish poetry, writing in between roughly 1960 and 1980. To this end, representative specimens of texts by Cemal Süreya, Sezai Karakoç, and Ahmed Arif are examined in order to develop a broader overview of both the Kurdish presence in Turkish-language literature but also the evolution of the political responses which have been defining to this history.

Based on both the diversity of the political response and interventions but also the competing theoretical frameworks through which such diversity is effected by Kurdish authors of Turkish-language poetry, the study argues that the political and ideological diversity comprised of modernist and postmodernist variations of socialist, liberal and conservative perspectives is suggestive of the literary construction and articulation of a multicultural community in Turkey, defined in terms of space rather than the enunciation of a dominated Kurdish national consciousness or subservience to Turkish nationalist approaches. Based on contrapuntal readings of these texts against experiences of self, nation, nationalism and community, it provides the diversity of specific and distinct dialectics which these texts form with the social context and to the world, which underpins the political responses they comprise. The evidence provided by the examination of these poetries,

demonstrates that, politically, Kurdish literary writing in Turkish-language, reflects the disparate attempts of modern historiography of engaging with the creation as much as critique of ideas of self, community and nation.

Set against conceptualisations of literature which problematizes the tendency to lump together a range of political artefacts as necessarily 'reterritorialized' and 'politically oppositional,' the discussion of the political dimension of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish in this chapter highlights that the presence of a diverse and eclectic range of perspectives is more accurately understood with attention to aesthetic projects motivating each of the poetries involved, aspects of the discussion to which the study turns in the remaining chapters.

A Dialectical Overview of the Diversity of Kurdish Poetic Discourses in the Contemporary Era

The politics of domination and how this moderate the "representational machineries" (Prasad 1992, 59) involved in national culture has been subject to the ostensible critical attention and motivation for postcolonial literary theories in literary theory since Edward Said's *Orientalism* and *Culture and Imperialism*. Just as in many Anglophone and Francophone cross-cultural contexts situated across the globe, there has been a visible surge in the textual reading strategies with a historicist and political agenda within Turkish-language written in Turkey. This has been due to do with the specific transformation Turkish society and culture was undergoing (Gürbilek 2011, 27) in the wake of 1980's military coup as much as a product of the period of decolonisation and national liberation struggles across Africa, Asia and Latin America in the latter half of 20th century on metropolitan academia's political sensibilities, (Ahmad 1992, 3-18).

As shown by Mignon and Scalbert-Yücel's studies alongside the discourse ongoing strictly within the confines of Turkish literature and culture, exemplified by Adak and Parla's work, the positive theoretic ramifications of this has been the accentuation of the need for readings of Turkish-language literature against a context of political and ethnic domination. Seemingly working within a wide and eclectic spectrum of theoretical oppositions including but not limited with Gramsician and Hegelian models of opposition of master/slave to Saidian binaries of colonized and decolonised and Deleuzuean notions of 'deterritorialization', this incipient discourse helped the development of our understanding of the diversity of political discourses which have been and continues to be prevalent within Turkish-language literature; especially the provision or construction of "counter-histories" which problematize

the normative history of Turkish modernity and political domination have been instrumental to these efforts. Moreover, the discourse also helped elucidate the extent to which different forms of political nationalism has politically and ideologically mediated the grand narratives of Turkish community and the representational machinery of Turkish literature produced.

However, as detailed in review of critical literature on the subject, despite such evident positive repercussions for questions of broaching the political dimension of the literary text, one of the pitfalls of such political and historicist criticism has been the reduction of the entire meaning of the literary text to political meaning alone. Put in simpler terms, the problematic tendency to lump together a diverse range of literary texts in terms of their political content, while rightly acknowledging that it has a certain political meaning, had nonetheless paradoxically paid scant attention to how this meaning is achieved, to how literature or poetry specifically means. In this regard, as highlighted by Eagleton, since in literature and "in poetry, what is said is largely matter of how it is said" (2009, 67), such inquiries must give due regard the entirety of conditions mediating it to develop accurate accounts of the purport of this literature. This includes the aesthetics underpinning the specific literary and poetic expressions of the political contradictions engaged.

Set against the state of either under or over-theorisation of the political dimension of literary texts, the following account of the political response and interventions distinguishing Kurdish poetry written in Turkish is presented with an approach motivated by the actual content of the texts. Before formulating a characterisation of the political and ideological differences of discourses produced by Kurdish literary writing, there follows an examination of the ideas of self, community and nation, which representative specimens from the poetries of Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı convey. The reading is against the binary concepts of colonised-decolonised, normative-other, power-resistance and hegemony-majority-minority. In this way, as well as testing the extent to which these texts constitute "reterritorializations" of the dominant majority culture, an account of the kind of ideas of 'imagined communities' they signify in general is provided.

Between self and you: the poststructuralist sensibilities of Kurdish literary writing in the contemporary era as exemplified by Murathan Mungan

Perhaps just as most poetries in prominence in Turkish literature today, the poetry of Murathan Mungan[25] is not regarded a particularly 'political poetry.' But despite this

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[25] See *Aeolian Visions/ Versions: Modern Classics and New Writing from Turkey*, (Kenne et al eds, 2013) which contains translations from contemporary Turkish literature including poetry and prose by Mungan as well as an overview of the current state of Turkish literature.

perception, the prolific author's output has been noted for its social(ist) realist sensitivities as much as its preoccupation with the surrealist and postmodern notions of self. Scholarship has suggested both social realists such as Atilla İlhan as well as the aesthetics of the modernist *Second New* school of Turkish poetry of the previous generation of Turkish literature, dominating the scene from around 1950 to 1980, as influences of his poetry (Behramoğlu 1991; Halman 2006).

Mungan was born in 1955 in Istanbul but was raised and educated in the province of Mardin, a city in the south-eastern region of Turkey where the bulk of the country's Kurdish population is settled. As remarked in a speech given in the London Book Fair in 2013 to which he was invited by the British Council as one of the authors in residence and as detailed in his *Paranın Cinleri* (The Jinns of Money), he is of mixed ethnic origin including Bosnian, Arabic and Kurdish cultural heritages (Mungan 1996b). Mungan is arguably one of the leading living poets of the Turkish literary field as evidenced by his inclusion in major anthologies, as much as the widespread publication of his collections and his appearances in public life. His poems were published from 1980 with collections including *Mahmud ile Yezida* (1980), *Osmanlıya Dair Hikayat* (1981) and *Sahtiyan* (1981) appearing to notable critical acclaim and receipt of prestigious awards, followed by a prolific writing career which includes some 21 collections of poetry as of 2015, and around 30 story and novels, plays, scripts, essay collections added to a large number of essays and contributions to literary and cultural journals. As a representative specimen of Mungan's poetry, this subsection of the study subjects the poet's 13-part poem *Sahtiyan* and selections from *Osmanlıya Dair Hikayat*, an epic and panoramic poem about late Ottoman history to a close reading in terms of the political positions and ideological presuppositions suggested by the text. Contrary to paradigmatic approaches amounting to arbitrary interpretations of his literature, based on an examination of major themes in these poems against concepts of 'deterritorialisation', 'imagined communities' and 'the immediacy of political content', this discussion illustrates how literary articulations of and responses to the political context in Mungan's poetry are shaped by a range of poststructuralist influences, inflected as much by a Marxian perspective as it is informed by identitarian precepts, with gender sensibilities in particular (Kenne et al 2013, 6). Additionally, as identified as a methodological pitfall of approaches to 'minority' writing, in order not to overstate the significance of the political dimension of his writing, the discussion demonstrates that the ideas of self and community which characterise Mungan's work, though clearly political in nature, do not strictly conform either to Turkish or Kurdish nationalist sense of ideas of community. Providing further evidence from his poetry,

attention is drawn especially to Althusserian concepts of 'self' and 'being oneself' with which Mungan's poetry engages ostensibly as a motivation for the explicit or implicit political articulations of his poetry.

Published in 1981, the title poem of the collection titled *Sahtiyan* is a poem in 13 detached stanzas, written in free verse with a range of narrative techniques including dreamlike and lyrical internal monologues as well as elements of a letter to a lover in prison. Mungan himself notes that the poem is about "something that have begun in 1971" and in which he employs "a cinematic technique in the last section" in order to convey that the subject of the poem belongs to the past (Mungan 1995, 353). Giving the impression of a stream of consciousness at first reading, through a succession of scenes, the poem deals with a romantic relationship in conditions of political domination and feudality and its dramatic withering away due to imprisonment and oblivion. The poem's title '*Sahtiyan*', a word which could be translated into English as leather or saffian leather[26], facilitates a certain equivocation between the senses of the word as an object of value and as an object symbolising the passage of time. In relation to the second sense of the word, there has even been a curious study suggesting that it is an example of linguistic variation whereby the word "*sahtiyan*" is derived from "*sahteleşmek*" meaning "becoming fake" (Balcı 2012, 46). This tension in between the different senses of the title word of the poem exemplifies the evocative way in which the poetic persona broaches the question of writing about and to a lover who is not only afar but is ambiguously in the past too.

The poem opens with a 4-line stanza which frames the social realist concerns of the poem from the point of view of a third-person narrator as pertaining to the politically contentious matter of dealing with the 'East' of Turkey. The reference to the city of Tunceli as Dersim, that is, its previous Kurdish name after it was changed by authorities following the repressed Kurdish rebellion of 1938 originating in the region, provides from the very start an integral element of the kind of political perspective his poetry typifies:

1.

the waters of Zap overflow ravines of Dersim

its floods velvet, edges bullet like

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[26] Leather made from goatskin or sheepskin tanned with sumac and dyed in bright colours. Also saffian leather.

and bullet cartridges are offerings of

children entrusted to others at peril (Mungan 1992b, 11).[27]

In these first lines, which the reader understands to be a flashback to past only in the second section of the poem, the imagery of the underlying fragmented and ambiguous plot is contextualised as the harsh environment of the 'East', where flooding rivers pass through mountains sheltering a community whose life is marred with a menacing violence as suggested particularly with the refrain on the word "bullet". With regards political underpinnings motivating his perspective, the opening lines are, however, noteworthy also in terms of providing a kernel of the distinct treatment of this issue effected in Mungan's poetry. As much as the enunciation of the name of a particular city and region rather than a uniform 'doğu' (east) and the reference to the city as Dersim as most Kurds do, the cryptic metaphor of "children entrusted to others" is indicative of the complex attitude with which Mungan chooses to elicit the scenery: what distinguishes *Sahtiyan* is the broaching of the question from the very start in terms of the kind of human tragedies involved in "children being entrusted to others" presumably to be looked after, on the condition that should their host fall short of that, they would have no blame but that it will be only a sin, that is, an abstract or arbitrary obligation. This characteristic of Mungan's response to the political context and the literary representation his poetry effects emerging in these lines becomes clearer as the aspects of the social context surrounding the "children being entrusted to others" and who these children are, unfolds with the progression of the poem.

Indeed, in the second section of the poem, turning to fist-person narration, the poetic persona defines itself as being of an "entangled identity" which indicates a reaction to monolithic views of self and community while confirming existing interpretation of his poetry as an expression of hybridity (Sayın 1997):

2.

which of its signs will this entangled[28] identity trace?
the feudal, the staunch deer of lakes fond of themselves
that creeps on my beards

---

[27]Zaplar taşar Dersim koyaklarından/selleri kadife uçları mermi/ve günahına emanet edilmiş çocukların/adağıdır mermi çekirdikleri.
[28] The Turkish Language Institute (Türk Dil Kurumu) dictionary provides the definition of the adjective "*dolaşık*" as "mixed" or "blended" although a sense of the word which means "indirect,""winding" or "sinuous" is also listed.

like a thin branch

the skin that remains from hunts and hunters

that leaves itself ajar to us

as it arrives at the forest of its mystery

explains the shrouded mystery of history, hence its sparsity

time passes, days pass, life passes to be sure

a poet who has taken to mountains I am

alas! Who nobody sees (ibid, 12).[29]

After the framing of the subject and themes of the poem established in the first two sections, the third section specifies the gender aspect of this entangled identity and how it relates to the symbol of "children entrusted to others" by allusion to the trauma of the experiences of social and political repression, with that of homosexuality in conditions of 'feudal' rurality in particular:

3.

…

with the amulet vessel I carry around my neck, a bleeding summer afternoon

for ten years

that tribal custom which has blemished my forehead with tattoo-roses

before history makes an appearance and questions its own identity

my heart remains covered with snow

nomadic hells

and my body, that clime of frontiers

its day arrives and reveals itself

anyway who could even write the entire hell of a society being industrialised

(…)

in other words, that is, it is absent fathers which is the entire

   homosexuality of some children (ibid 13).[30]

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[29] hangi izini sürecek şimdi bu dolaşık kimlik? /feodal, ince bir dal gibi/bıyıklarıma tırmanan/kendine tutkun göllerin o yaman geyiği/gizinin ormanına vardıkça/bize kendini aralayan(avlardan, avcılardan artakalan sahtiyan/açıklar tarihin kefenlenmiş gizini...

[30] boynumdaki hamayılla birlikte, kanayan bir yaz ikindisi/ on yıldan beri/ dövmegüllerle alnıma nişan düşüren o aşiret töresi/ tarihin önünde huzura çıka sual eder hüviyetini/yüreğim kar altındadır/cehenemler göçebe/ve bedenim, o sınır iklimi/gün gelir açıklar kendini/zaten kim yazabilir ki sanayileşmekte olan bir toplumun bütün cehennemini (...) yani ki eksik babalardır bazı çocukların bütün eşcinselliği.

This shows that, in this arguably tragic panorama of a homosexual love story depicted, the metaphor of "children entrusted to others" symbolises the innocence of this repressed love, which interestingly the poet attributes not to the "the tribal custom" but to the "hell of a society being industrialised." In the following three sections of the poem, *Sahtiyan* constructs a story of this stigmatised and forbidden relationship which takes places in secrecy and in fear; the lover as much as the love is associated with political opposition and rebellion using the imagery and metaphors reminiscent of forms of expression characteristic to socialist realist poetries of Turkish literature such as "mountains," "bandits" and "battalions which has flowed over the plain,".[31]

From section 7 onwards to the end, the poem takes on the form of a dialogue with an imprisoned lover, with epistolary features as suggested by the refrain in sections 7, 8, 9 and 13 of "don't you worry about me/I am well, I am well" as well as the way in which section 10 ends with a verbal formula used traditionally to end letters: "my venerable beloved/ with this mortal form of mine/ I bid you regards"[32] (ibid, 20). The progression of the poem's content represents the evolving attitude of the poetic persona to a lover who continues to remain away and/or imprisoned, changing in tone from adoration to lover as an "outlaw" bandit to frustration with an idealist 'bandit' with unrealistic expectations:

> 8.
> (…)
> to be sure, shallow sides I did have
> which I couldn't find time to work, for which time was not enough
> or other things
> let's say like the clouds coming in between the sun and us
> (…)
> that is why my beloved no matter how much we struggle
> there is no end to this fight, to this feudal typhoon (ibid, 18).[33]

The tone of the poems, especially from section 10 onwards, accordingly, turns into complaints to a lover, as indicated especially by the addition of "oh no" to precede the refrain, which makes its sound more reserved then reassuring since it seems the lover is

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[31] Such as Ahmed Arif as well as Yılmaz Odabaşı to which attention will be turning soon.
[32] pek muhterem sevdiğim/ şu fani suretimle/ mahsus selam ederim
[33] elbet sığ yanlarım vardır benim de/ işlemeye vakit bulamadığım, zamanın yetmediği/ ya da başka şeyler/ diyelim güneşle aramıza giren kara bulutlar gibi.

indifferent to this state of being apart, repressing the possibility of the development of the relationship because of involvement in an unidentified oppositional political struggle:

9.
(…)
and it is as though you are saying:
our struggle was a dragon of thousand heads, thousand wrongs
it will be recorded in the tag of history time and again, absolutely

did you ask if I was surprised?
oh no, don't you worry about me
I am well, I am well

the east, is a fetter to the sensibility of us all I know well (ibid, 19).[34]

The last line sounds like a scoff at being patronised, at not being regarded as belonging to this 'east' because of non-involvement in the political struggle of a distant lover, with whom a politicised version of the experience of "*gurbet*"[35], that of being apart from one's loved ones is being experienced, a theme which has found treatment time and again in folk culture (Bezirci and Özer 2002). This idea of the relationship with the East is further developed in section 11 of the poem, which is pitched from the present time of the poetic persona. Here, although the question is not displacement, belonging to East is counterposed with the reality of not being there, in the Mediterranean coast, in the "geography where discretion of the mountains continues":

11.
(…)

I woke up with the sound of sea
a side of me sweaty with mountain winds –my dreams-
a side of me the Mediterranean hurricane –that clime-
was it at all possible? I thought of you of course
more accurately, I woke up with you

---

[34] ve sanki der gibisin/ bin başlı, bin yanlışlı bir ejderhaydı mücadelemiz/ yeniden ve yeniden geçirilecektir tarihin künyesine, mutlaka/ şaşkın mıyım dedin?/ yoo, hayır merak etme sen beni/ iyiyim, iyiyim / doğu, bukağıdır cümle duyarlılığımıza iyi bilirim.
[35] The term it can be translated as being apart from one's home or homeland or as absence from home.

-that hazy breath of east, middle of one night, in the Mediterranean, during a summer's leisure, dividing my sleep, left me alone with your form.-

I couldn't sleep till the morning (ibid, 21).[36]

As the poem closes in the even more loosely connected 12th and 13th sections, the underlying plot of the poem is further compounded with the revelation of eventual loss of the lover, though the reasons are left poetically ambiguous. Nevertheless, these two sections give the impression that the relationship problematized is the drama of gender relationships in a context of political domination; in particular, section 11 is also representative of the politically sensitive yet unaligned poetic voice's contrast with the politically 'orthodox' and reductionist position of his lover, which seems to have been accorded to Marxism in this case:

12.
(…)
And a poem, a friend's poem: "the gun you rest on your temple

That enemy you have bred within

Is as enormous as a page of Marxism yet unwritten

A question on my mind" (ibid, 22).[37]

The poem closes by the lamenting the loss of this love, described as an "incomplete summer storm;" the poetic persona declares itself to be "a bullet cartridge entrusted to its own peril" on the face of this situation where the "last fortress of life has fallen." In this way, the poetic persona associates himself with the innocence of children, innocence of humans in conditions where children are entrusted to others, images which rings of the poverty, violence and strife associated with the East. The poem closes on itself with an emphasis of the symbol of *Sahtiyan* at the end of the last poem as an aspect of the poet's perception of the world, as the constant sorrowful reminder of a changed perspective:

13.
(…)
Now I am a bullet cartridge entrusted to its own peril

---

[36] denizin sesiyle uyandım/ bir yanım dağ rüzgârlarıyla terli -düşlerim-/ bir yanım akdeniz kasırgası -o iklim-/ mümkün mü? seni anımsadım elbet/ daha doğrusu seninle uyandım / -doğunun o tütsülü soluğu, bir gece yarısı, Akdeniz'de, bir yaz dinlencesinde, uykumu bölerek, beni senin suretinle baş başa bıraktı. -/ sabaha kadar uyuyamadım.

[37] ve bir şiir, bir dostun şiiri: "senin şakağına dayadığın tabanca/ içinde büyüttüğün o gizli düşman/ marksizmin yazılmamış bir sahifesi kadar kocaman/ bir soru işareti kafamda."

> Of the sparseness of naphtha green are my eyes and a side of my face moist leather
>
> (ibid, 23).[38]

The sentiment with which the poem ends is significant in terms of the kind of political enunciation made by the poem: the refrain at the end of the poem suggests a return to the tone of a lover genuinely reassuring the beloved of the continuity of the sentiments and its political legacy:

> (…)
> Don't you mind me beloved, don't you worry
> With the amulet vessel around my neck
> For the last ten years, I am well, I am well (ibid, 23).[39]

In terms of the way in which this poem engages with questions of community and nation, Mungan's comments in a newspaper interview about its poetic persona are illuminating: he states that the poem is "the reproduction of a time that has passed" and that "Sahtiyan is something that have been passed down from what I have experienced but is not at all something that I have experienced" (Mungan 1995, 353). This accords with the equivocal reading the poem anticipates as a tragedy of both a personal love lost as much as that of the situation, of the social backdrop which defines the terms of broaching the intertwined relationship and the theme of love. It is for this reason that, even though the tensions of the relationship are framed against lovers' differences of political outlook, they are also associated with its socio-economic backdrop, "the hell of a country becoming industrialised," the pains and trauma of modernisation. As *Sahtiyan* instantiates in this way, thematically, Mungan's poetry is distinguished as a poetry that not only deals with a range of political themes but also as a form of representation engaging with particularly the psychology of the individual in relation to the political context broached.

With such of ideas of human subject and community articulated, the political approaches conveyed by Mungan's poetry seems to be at odds with readings of his poetry either as one functioning in relation to narratives of Turkish or any other national narrative, Kurdish or otherwise, developing in reaction to Turkish nationalism. The ambiguous contextualisation of the issue of the 'east' both in terms of the political tensions specific to Turkish cultural field as much as in terms of tragedy of society 'on its way to being industrialised,' that is, in

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[38] şimdi ben, günahına emanet edilmiş bir mermi çekirdeğiyim/ nefti seyrekliğindedir gözlerim ve yüzümün bir yanı nemli sahtiyan. sen bakma bana, aldırma sevdiğim

[39] sen bakma bana, aldırma sevdiğim/ boynumdaki hamayılla birlikte/ ben on yıldır iyiyim, iyiyim.

terms of the modernisation of Turkish society in relation to the 'west' demonstrates this adequately.

As *Sahtiyan* makes clear, Mungan's treatment of the issue is distinguished firstly by how the poetic persona views the 'East' as one of its components, as a part which comprises the 'geography,' the social space of Turkey. The 'east' represented is identified with the poet's childhood; the tragedy of 'east' becomes the tragedy of the poet's childhood; its people represented in both the lover but also the poetic persona, who is now in the Mediterranean, is therefore not through a casting of the 'east' as the Other of the modernised Turkey; but rather as exemplifying a perspective which already exists within Turkey as one that contains the sensibilities of the 'east.' Contextualisation of the question of 'east' as a product of national/ethnic domination and the identification of the tragedy of East with an ethnic dimension while approaching it as a component of the collective memory and consciousness of the community evidence this adequately. As a contradictory effect which defines the content of his poetry, such political purport is thereby counterposed with the monolithic definition of the both the 'east' and 'collective' imaginary of the community in purely Turkish nationalist terms. The existing interpretations of Mungan's poetry as an articulation of the tragedy of a 'diaspora' created in the East as a result of Turkish nationalist modernisation, as a poetry of the 'displaced' also supports this.

This is further reinforced by the identification and articulation of a range of social issues elsewhere in Mungan's poetry in terms parallel to those found in *Sahtiyan*. For instance, in poems such as *"Unutmadık"* (We Have not Forgotten), *"Alâcanım"* (My Dearest Urchin) and the panoramic epic of the *"Osmanlıya Dair Hikâyat"* (Stories about the Ottoman) not only are the cultural questions of East are treated to a pluralist outlook but the same questions are formulated as the questions of the very past, coming to terms with which seems to be a main theme and motivation for Mungan's poetry. For instance, in "We Have not Forgotten"[40] published first in his Omayra collection in 1993:

> (…)
> There a geography is being looted
> There newspapers are off-set printed

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[40] Orada bir coğrafya yağmalanıyor/ Orada gazetelerin ofset baskısı / Orada yeniden yazıyorlar 835 satir / Ve umudunu kaybetmeyen şehirler / Gökyüzünun karanlık kefeniyle örttük / Yıldızların delik deşik ettiği ölüleriz / Adsız ölüleriz / Adları bir coğrafya ile yan yana yazılan / Gövdelerinizi unutmadık, unutmadık hiçbirinizi / Savaşlar ve pazarlar cağıydı / Ayni silahlardı kullandığımız / Ayni carsılar ayni kandı / Sevgiye ve kursuna açılmayan yüreklerden geçtik / Pusu yataklarından, dağılmış bahçelerden / Viran tarihten.

There they are writing 835 Verses[41] once again

And there cities that doesn't lose their hope

We have covered it with the dark shroud of the sky

We are corpses torn to shreds by stars

We are nameless corpses

We have not forgotten your bodies

Whose names are written next to a geography, we haven't forgotten none of you

It was the age of wars and markets

It was the same weapons we have used

The same marketplaces the same blood

We have passed from hearts not open to love and bullets

From sites of ambushes, gardens torn apart

From the ruinous history (Mungan 1993a, 23).[42]

(…)

The attitude of viewing East as part of the cultural diversity of Turkey rather than solely in terms of questions of its modernisation and westernisation, as economically and culturally backward, is also present in "My Dearest Urchin" published first in 2001:

My dearest urchin

Your name was the name of a burnt village

No one saw it

In you I have burnt too

And the smoke that rises from the east of my heart ever since

Wherever you are I am always in your skies O history of blood

I am Mardin and Midyat

O my voice more famous than gold

It was my siblings who died, who did the killing too

In the wall between you

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[41] 835 Satir (835 Verses) is the first collection of poems published by the revolutionary poet Nazim Hikmet in 1927, considered as one of the first examples of socialist as well as modern poetry in Turkey (Kurdakul, 2000).

[42] Orada bir coğrafya yağmalanıyor/ Orada gazetelerin ofset baskısı/ Orada yeniden yazıyorlar 835 satir/ Ve umudunu kaybetmeyen şehirler/ Gökyüzünun karanlık kefeniyle örttük/ Yıldızların delik deşik ettiği ölüleriz/ Adsız ölüleriz /Adları bir coğrafya ile yan yana yazılan / Gövdelerinizi unutmadık, unutmadık hiçbirinizi / Savaşlar ve pazarlar cağıydı/ Ayni silahlardı kullandığımız / Ayni carsılar ayni kandı / Sevgiye ve kursuna açılmayan yüreklerden geçtik / Pusu yataklarından, dağılmış bahçelerden / Viran tarihten

I have remained buried (Mungan 2001, 12).[43]

For this reason, besides the implications of the distinct definition of the political context as one of displacement rendered in his poetry, the theme of engagement with past which Mungan's poetry involves has been subject to critical attention, including commentary provided by Mungan himself. For instance, writing on the political dimension of Mungan's poetry, Zeynep Sayın (1997, 112) notes how his poetry is open to readings in which the East is cast as the 'diaspora' resulting from the political project of Turkish nation building process:

> For this reason, the East of Turkey which forms Murathan Mungan's main theme has been subjected to violence and silence, not being able to speak for itself and has been forced to become a diaspora at the stage of forming its history.[44]

This presents a parallel with the account of the region Mungan provides in his autographical *Djinns of Money* about the social issues experienced in the particular context. In providing a history of Mardin, Mungan relates a history of violence following the Shaikh Said Kurdish rebellion in 1925, the forced exiles resulting from its repression which includes his family members, years of difficulties the exiles endure in parts of Turkey subsequent to forcible dispersal and conditions of repression continuing long after the rebellion. Mungan singles out the issue of the language, with examples of exiles who could not speak a word of Turkish when dispersed to different areas of Turkey, which added to their isolation and repression or the proscription of speaking in no language other than Turkish (Mungan 1996, 22-25).

The divergence of the political discourse signified by Mungan's poetry from Turkish national(ist) narratives is also evident from the recurrent use of concepts characteristic to Marxist political perspectives in his poetry. As in *Sahtiyan*, where the psychological ramifications of certain experiences are elicited with reference to the backdrop of economic problems of modernisation, an approach of dealing with the past and the social context in Marxian terms forms an element of his approach, evidenced across his oeuvre. For instance, in "Stories about the Ottoman," the trauma of nation-building process and transition to the

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[43] alacânım, / yakılmış bir köyün adıydı adın / görmedi kimse / içinde ben de yandım /o gün bugün kalbimin doğusunda tüten duman / nerede olursan ol göğündeyim kanlı tarih her zaman / Mardin'im, Midyat'ım / ah benim altından avaze sesim / kardeşlerimdi ölen de, öldüren de / aranızdaki duvarda /gömülü kaldım

[44] İşte bu yüzden Murathan Mungan'ın ana izleğini oluşturan Türkiye'nin Doğu'su şiddete ve suskunluğa maruz kalmış, kendi adına konuşamamış, kendi tarihini oluştururken dışarıdan gelen bir güçle diaspora olmaya zorlanmıştır.

republican era are evaluated in political-economical terms as what may be regarded as 'historicist' references to social classes makes clear:

FABLE XXX

the street of forgetful centuries

in which the sky has dissipated facedown

have fairly narrowed down

at times an Asiatic fleece of isolation

then again liable with western ornaments

the Ottoman state is the pederast of greatest of the lands

a historical and economic necessity

which passes through the knot of capital cities

collecting them like beads

in a single ring

is now entrusted to a class

and here the proletariat of the new ages (Mungan 1993b, 108).[45]

As demonstrated by the terms in which the thematic of East is treated in his poetry as much as the pluralist casting of the cultural and social past, the political intervention Mungan's poetry consists can therefore be regarded as politically oppositional to nationalist narratives of literature. In this regard, Mungan's poetry, on its own right, instantiates the extent to which Turkish-language literature can be broached in terms both of national narratives of community it constitutes but also in terms of the countercanonic narratives it contains as a discourse.

However, despite the positive role played in illuminating the political dimension of narratives produced by non-Turkish authors of Turkish-language literature, Mungan's poetry presents features which casts substantial doubts on its interpretation as a 'minor' or 'minority' literature. Firstly, even though Mungan's poetry is distinguished as a politically marked discourse, which Deleuze and Guattari (2003) offer as a characteristic all 'minor' literatures necessarily share, it is not so clear whether it conforms to the kind of contextualisation offered by minority approaches. The same can also be argued in relation to whether and how

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[45] gökyüzünün yüzü koyun dağıldığı / unutkan asırların hayli darlmıştır sokağı / ister asyatik bir tecrit hırkası / ister batılı bir ziynetle mükellef / osmanlı en büyük toprakların kulamparası / paytahtların ilmeğinden geçerek / hepsini bir halkada/ boncuk boncuk topladığı/ tarihsel ve iktisadi bir mecburiyet/ artık bir sınıfa emanet/ ve işte yeni devirlerin proletaryası

Mungan's poetry positions itself in relation to a context of major Turkish culture and literature, which, on minor approaches, is supposedly counterposed to a Kurdish culture and literature. And finally, another set of objections against minority interpretation of Mungan's work arise from the evident disparities between the kinds of political 'enunciations' effected by Mungan's poetry and the 'collective' kind of enunciations which Deleuze and Guattari offer as another characteristic which minor or minority literatures share. A brief consideration of these objections reveals, in turn, the problems of uniform interpretations of the political dimension of Mungan's work based on such poststructuralist theoretical presuppositions.

Epitomising the philosophically empiricist assumptions which motivates the existing 'minority' and 'postcolonial' interpretations of Mungan's work, in Kafka Toward a Minor Literature, Deleuze and Guattari (2003, 17) argue in formulaic fashion that:

> The second characteristic of minor literatures is that everything in them is political. In major literatures, in contrast, the individual concern (familial, marital, and so on) joins with other no less individual concerns, the social milieu serving as a mere environment or a background; this is so much the case that none of these Oedipal intrigues are specifically indispensable or absolutely necessary, but all become as one in a large space. Minor literature is completely different; its cramped space forces each individual intrigue to connect immediately to politics. The individual concern thus becomes all the more necessary, indispensable, magnified, because a whole other story is vibrating within it.

As the engagement with *Sahtiyan* and other examples indicate, it can, indeed, be argued that Mungan's work is distinguished with the way in which 'each individual intrigue … connect immediately to politics.' However, it is not so clear whether Mungan's poetry is not also distinguished as a poetry in which " the individual concern … joins with other no less individual concerns, " and that "…this is so much the case that none of these Oedipal intrigues are specifically indispensable or absolutely necessary but all become as one in a large space" (ibid, 17). In other words, just as much as the compliance of Mungan's poetry with the definition, there are problems with the terms and the modality of the definition too: it is not clear, for instance, how this contrast distinguishes between a 'minor' literature in relation to a 'major' literature and a counter discourse within the same major discourse, for instance, socialist and Marxist perspectives which almost all 'national' literatures across the globe contain. In this regard, what is exemplified in Mungan's work so clearly is the distinct

focus on the psychology of the individual, with the engagement with the political background, indeed, serving as a device to construct an intense narrative containing the complex mediations of the individual. However, as much as intervening in what has been repressed ethnically, Mungan's articulation is also motivated by other equally important 'individual concerns'; it subjects to focus both the gender concerns of the individual in a context of political domination but also draws from a Marxist political-economical assessment of the context of domination, rendering the discourse he generates not a distinctly nationalist one. For instance, Mungan's "The Minority Question" provides an apt example in which the theme is the repression of minorities whereas the terms with which this minority is to be identified is left nebulously ambiguous:

> Minority Question
>
> Incidentally I wonder round in my country in disguise
> If everyone is a sultan
> Due to fear of sultans
> They are without fabric
> My shirt is a red blood
> Pinned on Raphael's trumpet as a flag
> Have you ever asked yourself
> I am diaspora to myself
> If my sorrows are still an enweaved fabric
> There is no reason to be surprised at all
> To the indifferent question of a naked person
> In my own country,
> Why do I wonder in disguise? (Mungan 1992, 121).[46]

As shown by this poem, despite Mungan's poetry's evident problematisation and positive depiction of the repressed national identities, it is not marked as a poetry which presupposes or constructs a distinct 'national form' or a 'national myth.' In this respect, unlike Deleuze and Guattari's stipulation derived from an interpretation of Kafka's work as one which negates all mythology, including a Jewish one, for the purpose of complete negation of 'major' literatures, Mungan's work is not particularly characterised with such a line of escape

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[46] ben ki kendi ülkemde tebdil gezerim/ herkes bir padişahsa/ padişah korkusuna/ kumaşsızdır/ bir al kandır göyneğim/ bayrak diye takılmış İsrafil borusuna/ hiç sordun mu kendine/ ben ki bir kendine gurbetim/ kederlerim henüz dokunmamış bir kumaşsa/ hiç şaşmamak gerek/ bir çıplağın fütursuz sorusuna/ kendi ülkemde ben,/ niye tebdil gezerim?

from the mainstream Turkish-language literature. It falls short of according with the Deleuzean insight: "escape - in order to liberate a living and expressive material that speaks for itself and has no need of being put into a form" (2003, 21). Instead the recasting of Turkey's East as one of the components of the past which contextualises his poetry and the redefinition of this past in terms of cultures of Mesopotamia which marks his work (Sayın 1997, 110) suggests an interpretation of this aspect of his poetry as an attempt to redefine the social basis of Turkish-language literature rather than one of creation of a 'new' 'minor' literature.

The same multiculturalist/humanist political perspective which marks Mungan's work, therefore, also casts serious doubts on the extent to which interpretations of his poetry in terms of binaries of major/minor literatures, coloniser/colonised and repression/exile are justified. In this regard, although a comprehensive formulation of the function of the apparent political content of Mungan's poetry has to wait for the assessment of mediating language uses and aesthetic choices in the following chapters of this study, what the discussion has so far revealed is noteworthy as a basis to proceed from. Particularly in relation to the apparent political purport of Mungan's poetry, it shows that the pluralism implied by Mungan's work is offered only as an alternative to the nationalist narratives of the past rather than grounds for complete rejection of the forms and context of Turkish-language literature; this necessitates a characterisation of his work as a counter-discourse emerging within this literature. As such, interpretations of the political purport of Mungan's poetry, as the discussion of the its specific uses of language and aesthetic choices will also show later in this study, cannot accurately be approached within a context of deterritorialization.

And finally, the political statement, the kind of 'enunciations' resulting from Mungan's poetry: despite the pluralist cultural alternative advocated, it is not clear as whether the reconceptualization proposed relates to Kurdish or any other peoples' collectivity or it is at all 'collective', given the distinctly personal dimension of Mungan's poetry. As mentioned previously, a major indication of this is the extent to which Mungan takes as his cultural basis the cultures of Mesopotamia defined in terms of 'hybridity,' even of the East; for this reason, if anything, given that his poetry does not conform with any national narrative, the kind of plurality his work implies relates more accurately to discourses of a multicultural society comprised of a diversity of narratives and possibility of political positions. As he puts it clearly in an interview: "Whatever I write and however I write it, if I stand as a poet in the world, I am an easterner, but a western easterner. My feet are on eastern ground, but I want to

address the whole world standing there. I think this is difficult but not impossible" (Paydak 2013).[47]

Ambiguous Waters of Matur's Classicism

The second poet the study focusses on, Bejan Matur, was born in 1968 to a Kurdish Alevi family in the province of Maraş, located in south eastern Turkey; after completing her primary and secondary education in the region, at schools in the village she was born and in Antep, she received a law education in Ankara University but never practised it. Her poetry began to be published in the form of collections with *Rüzgâr Dolu Konaklar* (Winds Howl Through the Mansions), meeting the readership in 1996 and followed by the publications of *Tanrı Görmesin Harflerimi* (God Must Not See the Letter of My Script) in 1999 and *Ayın Büyüttüğü Oğullar* (Sons Reared by the Moon) and *Onun Çölünde* (In His Desert) both appearing in 1999. Her prolific poetry writing continued with four more collections appearing after these initial works, securing her place in the Turkish literary landscape: *İbrahim'in Beni Terk Etmesi* (Leaving of Abraham) published in 2008; *Doğunun Kapısı: Diyarbakır* (The Gate of East: Diyarbakir) in 2009, *Kader Denizi* (Sea of Fate) in 2010 and *Son Dağ (The Last Mountain)* appearing in 2014. Selections from her first three poems has been translated into English by Ruth Christie under a collection entitled *In the Temple of a Patient God in 2003.* Matur's oeuvre also includes a collection of essays entitled *Dağın Ardına Bakmak* (Looking Behind the Mountain), published in 2011, that brings together selections from her Zaman newspaper column as well as essays on the Kurdish question. Matur's poetry have been to positive critical acclaim as both the literary awards her collections received (1997 Halil Kocagöz Poetry Award and 1997 Orhan Murat Arıburnu Poetry Award) as much as her inclusion in major anthologies of poetry (Odabaşı 2000b)[48], which continues to be one of the main channels through which poetry meets the readership alongside the erstwhile poetry publication tradition of literary journals.

Just as Mungan's poetry, Matur's poetry has been noted for its engagement with social and political issues and has even been offered as a literary expression which problematizes the issues of ethnic and political domination within Turkey. In this regard, Matur's poetry has been subject to postcolonial readings, and although tentatively, has been cast both as an

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[47] Paydak (2006) presents the interview in English; see full interview entitled "Identities According to Murathan Mungan" on: http://eng.babelmed.net/cultura-e-societa/73-turkey/363-identities-according-to-murathan-mungan.html

[48] Odabaşı himself edited a major anthology of poetry for the 1975-2000 period (2000b).

expression of Kurdish national sensibilities as well as an instance of 'minority' writing (Christie 2004, 18).

In this section, based on a comparison with the pertinent political features of Mungan's poetry elicited above, Matur's poetry is subjected to a reading with the purpose of uncovering its political dimension. Proceeding from the concrete contents of examples of her poetry, the political elements of the narratives her poetry comprises are analysed. Once again, this is to provide a basis on which an accurate characterisation of the political purport of her poetry in relation to questions of nation and nationalism, ideas of self and community and the kind of enunciations distinguishing it can be made.

In parallel with Mungan's poetry, the argument of this section is that, although distinctly a political poetry, Matur's poetry is textually open to interpretations as a discourse motivated and developing against paradigmatic views of nation and nationalism as much as literary modes of the representation. As the discussion reveals in some detail, this is firstly underlined by the extent to which the political articulation her poetry constitutes can be considered as oppositional. Secondly, both the political presuppositions implied, and the resulting enunciations rendered by her poetry also raise substantial doubts about the extent to which her poetry could be regarded as an articulation of a national narrative. As it will become clearer, the pessimism marking her poetry and the spiritualistic mythology which frames it manifest these two observations adequately.

In relation to engagement with the social milieu, a major theme in Matur's poetry too is the 'east' of Turkey, which she also identifies with her childhood, hence with herself as a cultural and ethnic origin. The portrayals of the East, of the lands she was born into, is as a landscape of violence and war, of strife and exiles, and as a place where ancient belief and religions continue. In her Winds Howl Through Mansions, as well as associating herself with the mountains of the region, a haunted history of the people of the region is presented through an identification of the landscape with her mother who dies:

> When our brother
> Older than all of us
> And afraid of the distant war
> Never came home
> We too feared the war.
> But it wasn't war that kept him away.

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On his way back he fell asleep with his horse

On the snowy mountain facing our father's

As our mother's face grew thinner

And our mother's shoulders shrank

We wandered which mount to look at (Matur 2004, 27).[49]

This particular depiction of the east in terms of the tragedy of war and its ramifications is evident across Matur's poetry as is the violent ambiguity which marks her expression:

So we died.

We slipped away out of darkness

Beech trees saw us

And tiny stones.

Night and stars passed over us.

We were buried by the roadside (2004, 103).[50]

As seen in Winds Howl Through Mansions, an evident component typifying her mode of expression is also the distinct concern and articulations of women/gender sensibilities in the depiction of the region's people in a context of ethnic repression, strife and war. In these poems, the contextualisation of her particularly gender sensitive perspective is accentuated:

What's left from that flight

Everything, everyone is here

I am here

My brothers and sisters are here with their loss

My mother with her dresses

---

[49] Hepimizden büyük olan/ Ve uzaktaki savaştan korkan/ Erkek kardeşimiz/ Dönmeyince bir daha/ Biz de korktuk savaştan./ Ama savaş değildi onu bırakmayan./ Gelirken yanımıza/ Atıyla uyumuş/ Babamızın karşısındaki karlı dağda/ Annemizin yüzü azaldıkça/ Omuzları küçüldükçe annemizin/ Şaşırdık hangi dağa bakacağımıza

[50] Öldük işte./ Kaydık karanlıktan./ Kayın ağaçları da gördü,/ Ufak taşlar da./ Gece ve yıldızlar geçti üzerimizden./ Gömüldük yol kıyısına.

My brother with his fear of war

My father's here but not awake (ibid, 25).[51]

And while the brother who has died now lies "on the snowy mountain facing our father's" "a white mountain getting smaller every spring," the poetic persona wonders which mountain to look at, presumably counterposing two different political causes of death, hence, two different yet ambiguous political causes. But what is more interesting is the identification of Matur, of the poetic persona with her mother, who seems to symbolise the region itself, who is neither associated with the brother or the father. The following lines demonstrate this:

Lost every winter

Returning in spring

Our mother became a tree (ibid, 29).[52]

our mother

slept peacefully

between our father and brother (ibid, 31).[53]

This is also supported by reference to her brother not as "*ağabey*," Turkish word for older brother, but through the lengthy if warranted description of "our brother older than all of us" in Winds Howl through Mansions. As these examples suggest, in addition to the demarcation of her perspective from the familial male authority, with the attitude of placing poetic persona's perspective, through identification with the mother, in between the father and the brother, Matur's poetry is also marked with a distinct women's perspective, as demonstrated by variations of this formulation appearing in other poems:

My mother shows the dead

To my brother who made the journey

And has become the journey

They weep together (ibid, 98).[54]

---

[51] Gidişin kendisinden artakalan/ Her şey, herkes burada. / Ben buradayım/ Kardeşlerim yitikliğiyle burada/ Annem elbiseleriyle/ Erkek kardeşim savaş korkusuyla/ Babam burada hiç uyanmış olmasa da.

[52] Her kış kaybolan/ Ve baharda ortaya çıkan/ Bir ağaç oldu annemiz.

[53] Annemiz/ Babamızın ve kardeşimizin ortasında/ Usulca uyurken.

[54] Annem yoldan gelmiş yol olmuş kardeşime,/ Ölümleri gösteriyor. Birlikte ağlıyorlar.

In this portrayal of the social and cultural context, the political and gender sensitivities ascribed to the poetic persona, also provides focus for the articulations of ethnic/cultural domination such as displacement, exile and the function of being the voice for the modern 'nomads' rendered in Matur's poetry. In Winds Howl through Mansions as well as other poems such as "*Ada, Ben ve Defne*" (The Island, Myself and the Laurel) appearing in her 1999 *Tanrı Görmesin Harflerimi* (God Must Not See the Letter of My Script) collection, examples of the pessimistic and unsettling treatment of these themes is provided:

> We were like rocks rolling from mountains
>
> We were four sisters
>
> In a valley of deepening shadow
>
> Searched for the beds
>
> No longer ours
>
> Searched for days.
>
> With every mountain we crossed
>
> We were so far from each other
>
> So alone with ourselves (ibid, 31).[55]
>
> […]
>
> No beginning no end
>
> No inside no outside
>
> There we were
>
> In the midst of that world of stone
>
> As our paths lengthened
>
> Our mother's tattoos grew darker (ibid, 31). [56]

In The Island, Myself and the Laurel, the disconsolate rendition of the theme of exile surfaces once again:

> I went to the land of my kin
>
> Veiled in the waters of scattered womb

---

[55] Dağlardan yuvarlanan taşlar gibiydik./ Dört kızkardeş/ Gölgesiyle derinleşen bir vadide/ Artık bizim olmayan/ Yatağımızı aradık/ Aradık yatağımızı günlerce./ Kaç dağ gittiysek/ O kadar uzaktık birbirimizden/ O kadar yalnız kendimizle.

[56] Ne son ne başlangıç/ Ne içeri ne dışarı/ Oradaydık/ O taştan dünyanın ortasında./ Yollarımız uzadıkça/ Annemizin dövmeleri kararmakta.

Spread under the sun to dry, their hearts withered (ibid, 80).[57]

History and displacement are similarly tackled in a dejected light:

I went to the land of my kin

within me a deep love-longing

my body wants to break up,

to mix with their earth.

But they have no earth

Only rock.

And a dense history.

With their eyes' mystery

They search for life

Among stones (ibid, 80).[58]

Finally, related in some way to the grieved tone of her poetry, is the tropes/figures of 'god' frequently appearing across Matur's poetry. As noted by the translator of her work into English, Ruth Christie, two contrasting concepts of God evidence themselves in Matur's poetry (2004, 12). The first is the God of Islam which Christie, in consultation with Matur, has translated as Allah or God (upper case); the second is the concept of '*tanrı*' which Christie translates as 'the god' or 'god' in the lower case which corresponds to the secular use of the modern Turkish idiom even though the word '*tanrı*' itself is of ancient origin, associated with a 'sky-god' of Turkish mythology. Matur converses with and reacts to both Gods and this is moderated with the distinct senses in which the term is used. For instance, in *The Childhood of God,* the figure of 'God' presented is the God of the society the poet engages with, not necessarily the poet's God; it is connected and defined in terms of the pains of childhood, both of the poet herself but also of 'the childhood' of history, of the society of which she is a member:

A place we return to again and again

is our childhood.

That's why

---

[57] Gittim ülkesine kardeşlerimin/ Dağılmış bir rahmin suyuyla örtünmüş, / Güneşe serilmiş kalpleri kurumuş.

[58] Gittim ülkesine kardeşlerimin/ İçimde koyu bir aşk isteği. / Gövdem dağılmak istiyor,/ Karışmak istiyor topraklarına. / oysa yok toprakları / Her yer taş. / Ve orada, öyle ağır ki tarih. / Taşların arasında / Gözlerinin sırrıyla / Hayatı arıyorlar.

the morning call to prayer

teaches Moslems

God's blessing.

God's childhood

begins at daybreak

by remembering the dead.

The mother dies,

the mother dies at the call to morning prayer,

and every child who is blessed by God

thinks of God.

…

God's blessing

resting on the dead

in the land of Moslems

sheds the day's blood.

Our childhood starts with our mother's death

Their childhood never ends for those whose mothers are dead

Say –

You are not lord of the morning

nobody is.

I am tired

of looking with bleeding breath.

No one belongs to anyone (Matur 2018).[59]

The image of God presented and its connection to the society presented in the first stanza is startling: it is as though it is a God the image of which, whether false or true, must be reconstructed and impressed on minds of individuals every morning with the call to prayer; its persuasive power is due to its reference to the deaths the society has suffered, their sanctity: "God's childhood/ begins at daybreak/ by remembering the dead." What's more,

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[59] İnsanın dönüp döneceği yerdir/ Çocukluğu./ Sabah ezanı/ Bu yüzden/ Müslümanlara/ Allahın selamını öğretir./Allahın çocukluğu/ Gündoğumunda / Ölüleri anmakla başlar. / Ve anne ölür /Ezanda ölür anne / Selamı üzerine olan her çocuk / Allahı düşünür. (…) Allahın selamı / Müslümanların ülkesinde / Ölülerin üzerine olsun diyerek / Kanatır günü./ İnsanın çocukluğu annenin ölümüyle başlar / Bitmez çocukluğu annesi ölenin. / De ki ; / Sabahın efendisi sen değilsin / Kimse değil. / Kanamış bir solukla bakmaktan / Yoruldum. / Kimsesi yok kimsenin.

the image of God, thus impressed and produced, leaves every day to be lived as though it was not lived before, an eerie ground-hog day: "…the morning call to prayer/ teaches Moslems/ and every child who is blessed by God/ thinks of God." But the tragedy of the situation also results in the mother's death, the death of the real past, "at the call to morning prayer." This means that past remains there to be delved into again and again given especially how her past is a different one: it is not one that "rests on the dead" but is one that starts with "our mother's death." The impact of this collective 'death' is also its perpetual continuity as a defining character of who the poetic persona takes herself to be. As suggested both by this counterposing of the society's beliefs and notions with the poetic persona's 'real' past (a repressed past and history which presumably includes a Kurdish Alevi element as well as the reaction with which the poem closes), the figure of God in Matur's poetry is, therefore, receptive to an interpretation as a device with which dominant narratives of community and self are problematized. For instance:

> Women is a letter on Allah's wall
> She is like a black swan
> She has learned to wait (Matur 2004, 67).[60]

Alongside this, the following lines may also be suggestive of the rendition of God as a symbol for the narratives responsible for displacement and exile:

> Allah woke up in a mountain lake
> "Go" he said. "Remove your people from my land" (2004, 105).[61]

However, alongside the 'Allah' of Islam, the conversations, arguments with and descriptions of the '*tanrı*' indicates Matur's preoccupation with the metaphor also in terms of the trauma of the past and of history. For, as Christie as well as Matur herself comments, the latter god (lower case) is not a monotheistic god, it is a 'pagan, shamanistic' god (Matur 2004, 12). And in one sense, this is a god connected with history, with its tragedy. For instance, in poems such as Ceremonial Robes, the figure of god presented is of a dejected and confused state:

> Perhaps history is a mistake says the poet
> Mankind's a mistake says the god.
> Much later,

---

[60] Allahın duvarında bir harftir kadın/ Siyah kuğuya benzer/ Beklemeyi öğrenmiş.
[61] Bir dağ gölünde uyandı Allah/ "gidin" dedi. "soyunuzu çekin toprağımdan"

> In a future corrupt as the heart of these lands,
>
> mankind's a mistake says god,
>
> I'm here to correct it
>
> But too late (2004, 65).[62]

And although the metaphor is used conventionally at times to allude to an authority to which an account of guilt must be provided, even if in characteristically disturbing rendition, as in "Decay hidden from god/and the son to be sacrificed ready," (2004, 101) the 'god' of her poetry emerges again and again as an earthly god, that is, as benevolent and as helpless as the poet herself:

> The god with the severed head
>
> who looks at me through my window,
>
> Gathering dirt creates his face
>
> Gathering dirt he learns to look (ibid, 91).[63]

But as implied by these lines, the figure of 'god' can also be taken as poet's own conscience, and given the collective voice of most of her poems, the conscience of the world, with which the poet is conversing. This is also confirmed in the same poem:

> It is pointless
>
> To hide my face from the god
>
> My face belongs to him
>
> And is fine hands (2004, 91).[64]

And this god, given how he is constituted just as the poet by "gathering dirt," 'an equal god' as Christie puts it, is also what is innocent and traumatic about her childhood: "All the stones on earth are smeared/ with the blood of the god. / And that's why red stones/ teach our childhood. / When we are children, the god/ walks beside us." And it is a god, alongside the mother who "never abandons us" where "to be in the world is pain" (2004, 95). As also intimated by such opposition of the contrasting symbols of god, the discourse produced in Matur's poetry is also distinguished with what may loosely be a metaphysical conception of identity, where the repression of this identity, the tableau of desolation of 'displacement'

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[62] Tarih bir yanılgı olabilir diyor şair / İnsan bir yanılgıdır diyor tanrı. / Çok sonra / Bu toprakların kalbi kadar / Çürümüş bir sonrada / İnsan bir yanılgıdır diyor tanrı. / Ve düzeltmek için varım / Ama geciktim.
[63] Penceremden bana bakan kesik başlı tanrı/ Kirlendikçe yapıyor yüzünü/ Kirlendikçe öğreniyor bakmayı.
[64] Ben yüzümü saklarsam tanrıdan/ Yazık ederim./ Yüzüm onundur/ Onun ince ellerinin.

depicted is accounted for as a product of the reiterated evocations of this repressive God, whose image holds depressing sway.

With the kind social concerns typifying her poetry and their contextualisation in such metaphysical terms as this contrast of opposing symbols of 'gods' exemplifies, Matur's poetry has been circumspectly offered both by herself and critics alike as a literary expression relating to Kurdish people. In the introduction to *In the Temple of a Patient God*, the collection of English translations of her poems, Maureen Freely suggests that Matur's poems are better interpreted as being about a people rather the poet herself; and indeed, Matur herself too comments about the parallel her poetry presents with literatures mediated with similar contexts of national/ethnic domination such as the Irish-English or the Spanish-Andalusian contexts of opposition and interaction. But the connections she alludes to are provided only ambiguously; as suggested by Freely and as confirmed by the poet herself in a poetry reading event that took place in School of Oriental and African Studies on 18 April 2013, as part of the 2013 London Book Fair programme, the way in which she makes this connection is usually in terms of the survival of the sound patterns of Kurdish in her poetic voice in Turkish, even though how this specifically takes places remains unclear. Leaving aside the language aspect for the discussion in the following chapter, it is noteworthy that the politically non-aligned and ambiguous terms of the articulation of this supposed connection with or characterisation as a Kurdish voice in her poetry has been critically noted (Maureen Freely in Matur 2004, 16) and conforms with the poet's comments about this dimension of her writing and its ideological presuppositions: "I wanted to talk solely about humans and their story without resting on any ideologies" (Matur 2008). Because of this ambiguity, despite the connections attributed to a repressed Kurdish culture, her poetry has been described as one which is motivated by the image of the 'modern nomad' (Matur, 2004), that is, not only the displaced and politically repressed Kurds but presumably all the nomads involved in displacements emanating from the same social situation.

What this shows in terms of the modes of representation of political domination rendered in Matur's poetry, is that it does, indeed, constitute an oppositional discourse, a reaction to the 'major' culture. Her poetry's concern to undermine the dominant narrative and myths represented in the figure of God she converses with and reacts to continuously as much as the major focus of her poetry on the unsettling experiences and state of the 'displaced' supports this view. But despite this, in part similar to Mungan's poetry, in terms of the its political dimension, this poetry presents issues with the 'oppositional' nature of the political

discourse it conveys as much as the kind of 'collective imaginary' and 'political enunciations it involves; these make it problematic for it to be categorised as an instance of a postcolonial or Deleuzian 'minor' literature.

Firstly, with such composition of themes as 'displacement,' exile and challenging of hegemonic myths, Matur's poetry is, indeed, distinguished as a predominantly political poetry challenging Turkish nationalist myths of what the community is. However, although evidently oppositional, it is not clear as to whether the ground's for challenge articulated by Mungan's poetry are specifically political. As the readings of her poetry evidence, this is because the treatments of social questions moderated with ethnic/national domination found in her poetry are cast in ambiguously metaphysical rather than political terms. For instance, it is not clear from her poetry whether the picture of desolation, exile and domination she presents is due to the hegemony of a specific political structure or subjects, for instance the Turkish State, or whether this painful and depressing state occurs because we happen to live in a universe the main characteristic of which is sorrow, pain, loneliness and perpetual suffering. Her poetry's claim to be distinguished as one that is 'deliberately' not motivated by any 'fixed' position and the particularly grieved, if not masochistic tone of her poetry support this, such as the way in which the poem *The Childhood of God* ends*:* "No one belongs to anyone." This point about the metaphysical nature of her poetry is also noted by the poet herself (Matur 2012) who defines at least some of her poetry, as in those comprising the collection *How Abraham Abandoned Me* as a self-constructed 'ontology':

> I was snatching all those religious concepts from the hands of theology, stripping them of their meanings, loading them with an ontological meaning and rewriting them. It is as though a personal theology has been formed, a personal ontology at the same time… The origin of poetry is not with us. It is deep within the universe somewhere. Poetry is one of the purest means through which truth is heard (Matur 2012).[65]

Just as Ludwig Feuerbach's critique of Hegel's phenomenology in *The Essence of Christianity* (Marx 1974, 381-85) what this allusion to theology and 'ontology' suggests is that a paradoxical effort to found, to elicit a 'secular-religion' moderates the political dimension of Matur's poetry. And since repeated journeys back into childhood and the traumas of the childhood forms a major thematic trajectory of her writing, the psychological terms of such

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[65] Bütün o dini kavramları teolojinin alanından alıp, anlamlarından soyup, ontolojik bir anlam yükleyip yeniden yazıyordum. Bir tür kişisel teoloji oluştu sanki, kişisel bir ontoloji de aynı zamanda. […] Şiirin kaynağı bizde değil. Kainatın derinliklerinde bir yerde. şiir hakikati duymanın en saf araçlarından biri.

journeys which constitutes her poetry are what defines this ontology of identity. As such, an evaluation of the political concerns marking her writing as according with Deleuzean notion of 'the immediacy of the individual concern to politics,' which could thereby be proposed as grounds for its characterisation as an instance of a 'minor' literature, is problematic. For, paradoxically, as evidenced by the distinct psychoanalytic/metaphysical character of her writing elicited with examples, there is little in her poetry which express concrete concerns of individuals or group of peoples. It is perhaps for this reason that reading Matur's poetry leaves the reader usually with the sense that she is not trying to make a point based on her or other people's experiences but that she is deducing the meaning and significance of individual experiences, processes and figures from her point of view, free of 'fixed' political positions. With 'the individual' and 'the political' contextualised in this syncretism of psychoanalytic and metaphysical frameworks, the specific Deleuzean condition of 'the immediacy of the individual concern to politics,' and the uniformity of the nature and representation of such concerns it assumes, therefore, proves too general a basis for characterising the political purport of Matur's work merely as oppositional or necessarily political.

Secondly, with such political presuppositions or rather the specific elaborations of it, despite being counterposed to a 'major' hegemonic culture, Matur's poetry can hardly be labelled a 'minor' literature given the extent to which it is not written from the perspective, or on behalf of a distinct single colonised, displaced or repressed group, ethnically or nationally defined. Independent of what the poet or critics attribute to her work in this respect, the story told by her poetry is that her perspective does not draw from a singular 'Kurdish' culture as such: "Remember your ancestry, / they say history will end/ frozen in a photograph./ Man creates his face on his own/ and so there is wind" (Matur2004, 72). If there is no definitive history of which the poet can be the voice, then the solution Matur offers is to be the voice of 'nomads,' not solely of Turkey but of everywhere. But since her perspective does not assume any political categorisation as such, that is, a view of the individual isolated from all its social, political and ideological determinations, the social context is to be accounted for only in terms of the traumas of childhood, that is, psychoanalytically. This suggests her poetry to be a liberal humanist or even elitist rendition of a Kurdish literary voice, and the response to hegemonic cultural norms only from a section of the Kurdish community, from one of its individuals. As Selin Pelek notes (2011, 193), the problem Matur faces here is how to counter objections to her perspective as one which claims to be the only one defining the real lines of the self, that is, the charge that the perspective and the political purport of her poetry is

essentially a form of 'auto-orientalism.' What this consideration reinforces, once again, is that the eclectic political outlook her poetry conveys, comprised paradoxically of national and 'ontological' sensibilities, does not accord with a characterisation as a literature seeking to deterritorialise a major national culture. Given the fact that Matur is not the only or first Turkish-language poet that problematizes the East with such psychoanalytic and liberal taste and values, her poetry's sensibilities are more accurately viewed as yet another example of the counter-discourses arising within Turkish-language literature against the dominant nationalist discourses, rather than one distinguished with attempts to restructure a literary context.

And indeed, despite the collective features of her poetry, highlighted with the predominant use of 'us' as the subject of her poems, and the pluralist political sensibilities which it may be considered as expressing, it is hard to see how her poems advocate or enounce a new or alternative community other than the sense of a solipsism looming over her poetry and the political approach this entails. As magnified her poetry's predominant concern with questioning and eliciting the shattered and fragmented past, with regards questions of political domination, Matur's poetry is more accurately read as an expression of the experiences of repression and domination. And this aspect, although forms the kind of human experience with which any literature does and must engage, is not sufficient on its own for it to be considered as an instantiation of the enunciation of a collective identity.

The Socialist Underpinnings of Yılmaz Odabaşı's Kurdish Patriotism

In comparison to Mungan and Matur's poetry, Odabaşı's poetry is not only regarded as a poetry which distinctly foregrounds itself politically but as the poetry of a politically committed individual. This is reflective of his spells of imprisonment on political grounds and work as a journalist (1986-93) in the period when his poetry began to be published, amounting to 13 individual and several selected collections of his work. This includes: *Siste Kalabalıklar* (Crowds in the Mist 1985), *Yurtsuz Şiirler* (Poems without a Homeland 1987), *Talan İklimi* (The Climate of Loot, 1987), *Aynı Göğün Ezgisi* (The Song of the Same Sky, 1988), *Feride* (Feride, 1990), *Her Ömür Kendi Gençliğinden Vurulur* (Every Life is Shot from its own Youth, 1992), *Cehennem Bileti* (The Ticket for Hell, 1995), *Aşk Bize Küstü* (Love is Cross with Us, 1997), *Çalınmış Bir Mahşer İçin Ahval* (Situation for a Stolen Armageddon, 1999), *Aşk Tek Kişiliktir* (Love is per Person, 1999), *Ey Hayat* (O Life, 2000), *Buğulu Atlas* (The Misty Atlas, 2002), *Sakla Yamalarını Kalbim* (Hide Your Patches my Heart, essays, 2005), *Aşk Şiirleri* (Love

poems, a thematic selection, 2010) and *Bana Yasak Sözler Söyle*, (Tell me Forbidden Words, 2014) (Odabaşı 2000b, 496).

His poetry is noted for its distinctive socialist outlook and connection with generations of socialist realist poetry that has figured distinctively in the history of Turkish literature, such as Ahmed Arif, representing a rural socialist sensibility prevalent in Turkish poetry from 1950s which Temo describes as the 'rule of periphery' (Temo 2011, 309-18). Major themes include the recent history and past of the East of Turkey, which he explicitly refers to as 'Kurdish' lands or Kurdistan as well as the social and political life of the people of the region. With what may be regarded as a realist approach to social issues and context, his poetry portrays the sensibilities of a politically committed individual with both Marxist and Kurdish 'patriotic' sensibilities, in which the treatment of the theme of love is incorporated throughout. Comprised of such thematic composition and perspective, his poetry is received as an example of modern socialist approaches to poetry (Behramoğlu 1991, 1131) and as such, provides a basis on which to analyse the political purport of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish by contributing to the account with a poetry underpinned with a contrasting set of political values compared to Mungan and Matur. The state of diversity of political responses to questions of nation and nationalism highlighted through the analysis of the transparent political content of these two poetries is confirmed and provided further terms with Odabaşı's poetry as evidenced the following discussion about the ideas of self and community projected by his poetry. In this regard, the distinct socialist and Kurdish narratives his poetry forms also provide another concrete basis for analysing the efficacy of reading strategies deployed to the research of the field.

In this section, based on a reading set against the oppositional nature of the political enunciations implied by distinct ideas of self and community, the political dimension of Odabaşı's poetry is discussed with the objective of verifying the specific kind of intervention it constitutes in relation to questions of nation and nationalism. Like the preceding two parts, the discussion proceeds from the analysis of representative selections from his poetry to provide another case study. In this regard, the discussion of Odabaşı's specific literary intervention provides another axis to the discussion of general political character of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish, which follows this section.

To this end, the following discussion, concentrating especially on two of his long and recognised poems, *Talan İklimi* (The Climate of Loot, 1987) and *Yurtsuz Şiirler* (Poems without a Country, 1987), presents the socialist 'collective imaginary' Odabaşı's poetry elicits, by

tracing a particular version of Kurdish history in response to social context. It argues that, even if constituting another instance of an intense political discourse by a non-Turkish author reacting and responding to official Turkish nationalist notions of community in Turkey, Odabaşı's poetry is motivated by a socialist rather than a nationalist conceptualisation of the relationship between ideas of self and of community. For this reason, just as other sympathetic pluralist literary articulations of the history, experience and 'imaginaries' of the repressed ethnic or national groups, the discourse produced in Odabaşı's cannot necessarily be subsumed under the aggregate concept of 'minor literature.' As the discussion demonstrates, this is underlined by the contextualisation of politics of domination within a political-economic referential framework as well as this poetry's integral socialist enunciations, which also moderate the kind of particular Kurdish voice involved in Odabaşı's poetry.

Odabaşı's lyrical poem in 22 parts, *The Climate of Loot* is also a poem of 'East'; it is dedicated to İsmail Beşikçi, a Turkish scholar who has been in the forefront of raising awareness about the Kurdish society and question since especially the publication of his *Order in Eastern Anatolia* in 1969, for which he has served prison sentences (Odabaşı 2000a, 249-52). The introductory poem is preceded by a prologue, which paraphrases a point the Marxist historian Eric Hobsbawn makes about 'social bandits':

> Social bandits to their people were more important than the real Napoleon and Bismarck about whom songs of pride and of longing has been made (Hobsbawn 2011, 33).

As this prologue hints from the very beginning, the poem utilises the image of social bandits, in this case, one about a Kurdish bandit[66] called Reşo[67] to problematise both the recent history as well as the socio-political problems of the eastern part of Turkey, which Odabaşı quite like Mungan refers to as 'my geography.' Through a narrative which gradually unfolds in poetically ambiguous terms, the life and demise of Reşo as a bandit is related in a culturally sensitive fashion but only to emphasise the limits of the political horizons of 'banditry' in response to problems of the East and its community. The portrayal of the character of Reşo and his story in terms of the political economical context of the region provides the distinct rendition of political domination in Odabaşı's poetry.

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[66] The term used in Turkish is *eşkıya*, referring to mountain-dwelling bandits.
[67] Kurdish word for black, nickname given to people with darker complexion.

In the introductory poem, the social context of the story related is disclosed as one of 'massacres', as a 'geography of loot,' which the poet claims is being ignored and defines as a national question. Against this lack of sensitivity and obliviousness towards what is certain to come, the poet pleads with 'those of the mountains' to open their heart to him, where he would be welcomed but noticeably only as a guest:

> Don't enter these gardens with songs of lies on your tongues
>
> Don't cover up genocides
>
> My geography is looted
>
> For days I have been saying there is something wrong with maps
>
> This voice will resonate one day, that I know
>
> A wind strikes the flame of my words and passes
>
> I am not being heard…
>
> …
>
> Open a place in your chest my mountaineer, my black one
>
> I want to stop over (Odabaşı 2000, 53).[68]

In the next two sections, the persona of Reşo is described as a 'rebel without cause' who emerges somewhere in 1950s as the following lines makes clear:

> In a pocket he had discharge documents from the Korean War
>
> In the other a watch chain, an heirloom from his father hanged in Dersim (ibid, 55).[69]

But the reasons why Reşo, the son of a rebel who was involved in the Dersim uprising of 1938 but who was also amongst the Turkish troops sent to fight in the Korean War as part of the NATO forces in 1950 is left ambiguous, not because the poet does not articulate it but because Reşo himself is a bandit due to his discontent with the situation he finds himself in, and not because he has a 'cause' or political project in mind as a response. Reşo is his own discontent:

> Reşo was a nudity which repeated itself
>
> An ugly bismillah that repeated itself
>
> A resistance without end

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[68] Girmeyin bu bahçelere dilinizde şarkılar yalan/ Bir yanlışlık büyüyor ayak seslerinizle/ Örtmeyin soykırımları benim coğrafyam talan/ Günlerdir haritalarda bir yanlışlık olduğunu söylüyorum/ Bu ses de gürleşir bir gün, biliyorum/ Bir rüzgar vurup geçiyor sesimin yalımına/ Duyulmuyorum…/ (…) Göğsünde yer aç dağlım, karalım /Konaklamak istiyorum.

[69] Bir cebinde Kore harbinden terhis belgesi/ diğerinde dersim`de asılan babadan yadigar kösteği.

And a depthless requiem in his own voice (ibid, 56).[70]

However, the summative reason provided for Reşo's discontent is given in terms of the exploitation of rural life he is a part of:

What you call cotton and wheat is blood

For this reason blood is transported to merchant markets

October is a moan

October is a loot

And in the climate of loot dwells Reşo

For the love of bandits!

…

And his land has been rendered unhospitable to him

And though unhospitable are also mountains

The entirety of the mountain is to those who take refuge

And to the bandit (56-57).[71]

An in the first six parts of the poem, the reader is provided with definitive if not explicit indication that Reşo is a Kurdish individual; the mountain where he dwells is 'Mount Botan,' Botan being the Kurdish name for the town of Cizre, located in the south-eastern Turkey, near the easternmost point of Turkey's border with Syria, a region known for its predominantly Kurdish population. Another indication of this is both uses of Kurmanji Kurdish words as well as examples of uses of Turkish words with a Kurdish accent attributed to Reşo: "*were hay lo hay lo hay looo*!,"[72] a stock refrain used in Kurdish songs and examples of colloquial if stereotypical uses of Turkish by Kurdish people such as "*vay babo*,"[73] "*he kurban*"[74] and "*jendırme*."[75]

In the midsection of the poem, from the eighth poem to the fifteenth, the apolitical stance and reaction of Reşo towards the state authorities is contrasted with the expectations of the

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[70] Kendini tekrarlayan bir çıplaklıktı Reşo/ Kendini tekrarlayan çirkin besmele/ Uçsuz bucaksız bir direnmeydi/ Ve dipsiz bir ağıttı kendi sesinde.

[71] pamuk ve buğday dediğin kan'dır./ bu yüzden kan talınır tüccar pazarlarına/ ekim, figandır/ ekim, talandır/ ve bir talan ikiliminde barınır reşo,/ eşkiya aşkına! (...) bir kez toprağı dar kılınmıştır ona/ dardır elbet dağlar da/ ama dağın tekmili sığınana/ ve eşkyayadır.

[72] Literarily meaning "Come this way o brother!"

[73] Literarilly "oh father" but capturing the senses of the exclamation "dear god!"

[74] "Kurban" means "sacrifice," an equivalent of the idiom could simply be "yes dear."

[75] A corruption of the Turkish word "jandarma" which means "gendarme."

local people from Reşo to be their voice in the face of repression, inequality and 'loot', to fight for them:

> XI
>
> And the women
>
> Poured their words on the words, on waters:
>
> -Reşo is the master of mountains
>
> His grief does not descend to the plains
>
> The road is steep, the traveller naked
>
> As though the reason is unknown
>
> They have suffocated our voice;
>
> Take it and bring it.
>
> Dead birds in our hearts…(ibid, 61).[76]

The poet also pleads with Reşo to be the voice of people: "Reşo, first give birth to yourself/ snatch and get rid of this rout from your lands as though a dirty handkerchief/ arm yourself, distinguish it from the dirtying majority/ don't leave your climate to those without a face, without ancestry." And Reşo, being just a human, is scared of death, afraid for himself and that is why even when he joins up with the people, the people do not accept him as the 'bandit' that he is:

> *-Reşo arms himself with sorrows*
>
> *Being in rebellions suits him*
>
> *But as he finds rebellions hard*
>
> *He mixes in only in the dances of the people*
>
> But people's dances does not mix with him
>
> And though Reşo is left to the mountains
>
> The mountains will not be left to Reşo (ibid, 66).[77]

And then Reşo is killed by soldiers since "each climate of loot/ gives birth to its own Reşo of a loot/ and then again suffocates him in its loot." And the poem ends tying the memory and

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[76] Ve kadınlar/ yollara, sulara döktüler seslerini:/ -Reşo dağların piri/ düze inmez kederi/ yol yokuş, yolcu çıplak/ bilinmez mi nedeni/ boğdular sesimizi/ al getir/ yüreklerimizde kuş ölüleri

[77] Reşo acıları takışır/ isyanlara yaraşır/ isyanı zor gelende/ Halaylara karışır/ Halaylar Reşo`ya karışmaz/ Dağlara kalır da Reşo/ dağlar Reşo`ya kalmaz

lessons of Reşo's predicament and plight to those great revolutionary poets and 'bandits' of the past, from Nazim Hikmet to Lorca to leaders of popular rebellions in the Ottoman period such as Şeyh Bedrettin[78] and Pir Sultan[79].

As *Talan İklimi* exemplifies, one of the main ways in which Odabaşı's poetry engages with the social context out of which it comes is by questioning the memory of the past the reader has, as having omitted the history of his 'geography' and of its people like Reşo; the poetic persona, from the very start removes himself from the story told in the form of a narrator who relates it. What unfolds as the poem itself is a product of and response to the state of maps that is "not being heard." Proceeding from this premise of being ignored, the poet sets out to uncover this very past and history by relating the story of one of its bandits, a Kurdish stereotype in the character of Reşo, in terms of the economical exploitation and military/political repression the East suffers. This is shown by the repeated allusion to 'loot' and 'massacres' as much as the Dersim rebellion of 1938; and it is significant that the narrative is not only a history but debunking of a Kurdish stereotype, whose actions, their significance and his limitations elicited by the poem. And at this juncture, as the closing parts of the poem show, another feature of the political intervention constituted by Odabaşı's poem emerges: his poetry does not only purport to witness and represent the situation but also is concerned with providing a distinct political perspective to it. This is shown most clearly in the fifteenth part of the poem, arguably its most poignant expression of its central contradiction between history and tradition:

> XV
> (he contradicts his age
> because both his tradition, his climate contradicts his age)
>
> o the rebellion with no bearings
> life without a route
>
> o

---

[78] Şeyh Bedreddin Mahmud or Simavnalı Bedreddin (of Simavna) (1359-1420) was an Ottoman military judge and mystic philosopher renowned for his populist leadership during the time of troubles (fetret devri) in Ottoman history (1402-1431). In the socialist poetry of Nazım Hikmet, Bedreddin's life and his populist policies against the Ottoman power struggle are elaborated in his epic poem Şeyh Bedreddin Destanı (The Epic of Shaikh Bedreddin) (Hikmet, 1987)

[79] Pir Sultan is a folk poet of 16th century renowned for his political attitude against the Ottoman bureaucracy, as a result of which he was tried and sentenced to death, the date for which remains inconclusive. Bezirci argues that he is a juxtaposition of a number of rebel figures of the middle to late Ottoman history (Bezirci, 1992).

clear air

open heart

dark loneliness… (Odabaşı 2000a, 64).[80]

Just as the appeal to poets mentioned at the end of the poem to underline the kind of socialist values with which the narrative wants to connect, the tradition's limited alternative political treatment of social and individual issues is also problematized. In relation to this aspect of the poem, Odabaşı's following comments are relevant (Odabaşı 2000, 250):

> Social banditry is a fact brought about by feudalism. It disappears in accordance with the development of capitalist relationships of production; Reşo, as the apolitical subject of the education he received and his objective reality, does not know this. Nevertheless his positions includes also rebellion against state authority as much as feudal masters. As a result we can state that social banditry is a primitive form of revolution and reform. Reşo is essentially a dissident. The aspect I share with Reşo is to be a dissident and to embody this as the rebellion; but whereas he prefers a form of struggle without any ideological messages, I offer more contemporary and organised mass struggles. In this regard, what is essential is the scope of outlook, it is ideological characterisation.

Concerning the way in which Odabaşı's poetry positions itself in relation to history and past, these comments, taken in conjunction with the enunciations of his poems, not only highlights his concern to interpret as well as witness the history of a certain people but also to connect this concrete history to that which ground Turkish-language in general. In other words, the responses to history and recent social reality which Odabaşı's poetry comprises is cast as a question not only of the people of the East and of Kurdish people but as an aspect of the social reality of which they constitute a part. The concern with uncovering, interpreting and providing an ideological perspective to the realities of this past with such terms emerges time and again across Odabaşı's poetry; for instance, *Yurtsuz Şiirler* (Poems without a Homeland) (Odabaşı 2000a, 109-114) sets the depressed psychology of a historically conscious political individual whose history, represented in the allusion to city of Diyarbekir,[81] has been one of genocide while the lack of sensitivity to it is endlessly ubiquitous:

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[80] (o, çağına ters düşüyor/ Çünkü töresi de, iklimi de çağına ters düşüyor)/ vay kıblesiz isyan/ rotasız ömür/ vay/ duru hava/ açık yürek/ koyu yalnızlık..

[81] As opposed to Diyarbakir currently used.

Can one start with these poems without a country

to a history remembered with genocides?

poems pour on those thresholds, daises become cold

what time is it I ask, did you buy a newspaper?

It doesn't matter whether it is Mount Erciyes, Ararat or Karacadag[82]

But children, death is incessantly becoming beautiful in this country, I am cold, a newspaper! (ibid, 109).[83]

The poem in this way problematizes the poet's ethnic identity but only against a social context which is entire Turkey, as references to the name of mountains from central, eastern and western Turkey makes clear. Indeed, Odabaşı details this further as being "without a country in one's own country" at the end of the poem: "as for spring it is spring in my country without a country/in my country/without a country" (Odabaşı 2000a, 113). In addition to the problematisation of the history of both the Kurdish community and of the society in Turkey which he tries to deal in tandem, the political dimension of Odabaşı's poetry is also distinguished with a concern to represent problems of the individual in the present political-social context. This makes itself most evident in the entire collection titled *Şeyh Said İsyanı* (The Shaikh Said Rebellion) comprised of 67 poems dealing with unearthing the 'real' account of this Kurdish rebellion which took place in 1925. The poet reacts to not being understood by a society he feels a part of, problematizing the repression of the ethnic identity of the Kurdish individual that forms a constant theme, in the Slumbers of Understanding:

And

We

Still

Alive

Were shrouded

In the disguise

Of history;

O

The identity

---

[82] Major mountains located in the centre, east and southeast Turkey respectively.

[83] başlanabilir mi bu yurtsuz şiirlerle/ soykırımlarla anılan bir tarihe?/ şiirler dökülür o eşiklere kürsüler soğur/ saat kaç diyorum, gazete aldınız mı?/ ha erciyes, ha ağrı, karacadağ ne farkeder/ ama ölüm ısrarla güzelleşiyor bu ülkede çocuklar,üşüyorum/ gazete...

Without a country

Tracing itself

For how many

Centuries! (1991, 73).[84]

And while this is the case for the poet, the lack of sensitivity he suffers compels him to plead from those who are present: "does my windows always open to death? / take it and leave, look he is the killer, I am the one dying…" (Odabaşı, 2000: 75). And the pain of not being recognised and not being actualised as an individual, as a self, spirals further down in other poems, such as in *Yanım Ağlama* (Don't Cry My Side) from his *Yurtsuz Şiirler* (Poems without a Homeland, 1987):

For this reason I am somewhere where I have been gnawing myself and am where the world gnaws itself. Where could I turn?

I can't turn! (Odabaşı 2000a, 90).[85]

But alongside such painful individual experiences contextualised in relation to the society, the experiences of individuals who are subject to political repression, as in prisons and or in courts is also subjected to focus. This arguably relates to Odabaşı's personal experience of imprisonment throughout his life. For instance, the collection titled *Feride*, published in 1990 and comprised of 54 poems, articulates experiences of an imprisoned individual in conversation with his lover, Feride, who is not in prison. Again, the main thrust of these poems is the representation of experiences in a social reality approached with a Marxist outlook as it is made clear from description of Feride as a "proletarian women" and references to the Kurdish identity of the poetic persona and the violence suffered at the hand of authorities. These distinct articulations of the political individual's experience, framed in some respects as a discourse of a Kurdish individual, which characterises his poetry, is constantly counterposed to the official Turkish nationalist dialogue, as in the following example:

XII

(*In the court*)

My country:

---

[84] biz/ ki/ diri/ diri/ tarihin/ gizinde/ kefelendik;/ ey/ kaç/ yüzyıldır/ iz/ süren/ o/ yurtsuz/ kimlik!

[85] Bu yüzden kendimin kendini kemirdiği bir yerde ve dünyanın kendini kemiren bir yerindeyim. nereye dönsem?/dönemem!

"With the

Intention of

Separating

A part

Or

The entirety

Of the lands

Of the country"

And

Secretly"

I love you

They said… (2000a, 191).[86]

Here, the rendition of personal experiences within a politically intense and repressive context which characterises Odabaşı's poetry is exemplified best: as the separation of the court official's statements in italics from the poetic persona's internal monologue accentuates, probably staring at Feride who has come to his court case, the poetic persona is coming to terms with being sentenced for being a separatist while what he feels is exactly the opposite, the sincerity of which is highlighted through the association of the love his for the country with the innocence of humane love he feels for Feride. As these examples show, the ideas of self foregrounded in Odabaşı's poetry are characterised with reference to the socio-political context surrounding them, which arguably distinguishes his poetry as one engaging specifically with such determinations of the individual.

Like Mungan and Matur poetries, with such elements of apparent political content, the discourse marking Odabaşı's poetry is also characterised as a challenge to the notions of an ethnically uniform Turkish community and social context. Specifically, Odabaşı's poetry instantiates another distinct articulation of Kurdish identity and history as one conditioned by a context of political domination and economic exploitation. Against the narrative of a community defined in Turkish nationalist terms, it attempts to provide a Marxist literary articulation to historical and social issues of republican Turkey; although the poet problematizes the national aspect of the issues of this context, he nevertheless combines this with a Marxist perspective that mediates his particular approach to a national question.

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[86] (mahkemede)/ yurdum,/ seni/ "devlet/ topraklarının/ bir/ kısmını/ veya/ tamamını/ ayırmaya/ yönelik/ ve/ gizli" seviyorum/ dediler

This makes itself evident especially with the effort of casting the community of the 'East' as the past of the entire community in Turkey. What exemplifies this most clearly is the poet's notion of 'us,' based on a sensitivity to cultural diversity as the following verse from a poem titled *Hayatın İvmesinde* (At the Acceleration of Life) from his Poems without a Homeland collection of 1987, makes clear: "it is from being us that our beauty is derived" (Odabaşı 2000a, 84).

Besides this, Odabaşı's poetry provides also a contrast with respect to the way in which it positions itself in relation to social class contradictions rather than a contradiction between nations or national identities. This is embodied most strikingly in the universal socialist values to which this poetry purportedly aspires. This is demonstrated adequately by his poetry's constant preoccupation with highlighting the presence of a multi-cultural society to counter the current context of social domination as much as its self-ascribed function as a means of the political struggle to this end. The intertextual allusion to Marxist poetry and writing across the world from Lorca to Hobsbawn can also be regarded in this light.

As such, Odabaşı's poetry also raises doubts about the extent to which it could be defined as a 'minor' literature and as anticipating a reading based on binary concepts of coloniser/colonised, major/minor and displacement/exile. The doubts raised relate both to inconclusiveness of the data provided to accord with such categorisation as well as the generality of the category, raised already during the discussion as one its pitfalls. Firstly, although the kind of discourse marking Odabaşı's poetry is open to an interpretation as a politically oppositional intervention, the fact that the specific articulations made are not motivated categorically by a nationalistic approach is of significance. Within the Deleuzean characterisation of minor literature, where the immediate concern defining the text is necessarily connected to politics of the social milieu, Odabaşı's poetry does not only provide a connection, but a strikingly distinct one informed by a socialist perspective. Specifically, as shown by the political determinations of the individual rendered in his poetry, bereft of the psychoanalytic preoccupations present in Matur and Mungan's poetry, not only does the individual concern connect to politics of the social milieu but seems, on the face of it, to be defined by it in Odabaşı's poetry. What this underlies, again, is the presence of the diverse range of articulations of questions of identity, some of which are not mutually compatible; this raises problems about the applicability of the concept of oppositional to Odabaşı's poetry, for even though Odabaşı's poetry expresses an identity, it expresses a socialist one. And this instantiates once again the limits of conceiving his poetry as merely opposition on a syncretism which collapses two contradictory theoretical/political positions, for instance,

the postmodernism of Mungan and 'orthodox' Turkish/Kurdish brand of Odabaşı's Marxism, into a mere 'oppositional.'

Similarly, it is hard to see as how the political enunciations Odabaşı's poetry makes are national enunciations given both the notions of multicultural community assumed and the socialist universals aspired. The collective Odabaşı's poetry assumes is as much the dominated classes as it is the Kurdish people; therefore, given its ethnically and nationally diverse notions of community reconstructed on a Marxian understanding of Turkish republican history, Odabaşı's poetry is distinguished as one providing a narrative challenging the hegemonic Turkish nationalist discourses of community as much as of the grand narrative of Turkish literature. The literary enunciation is subsumed under socialist ideals and this provides another case pointing to the aggregate nature of the characteristic of 'collectively of enunciation' accorded to counter narratives developed in such context.

The socialist tastes exemplified in Odabaşı's poetry also indicate the extent to which this poetry could be regarded as an instance of a 'minor' literature developing within a 'major' culture as an attempt to self-inscribe. Even if concerned with articulating the questions of Kurdish identity, Odabaşı's poetry assumes a multicultural society as the context to which it relates. In this respect, the socialist alternatives and ideals his poetry articulates relate to providing an alternative political conceptualisation of the context to which Turkish-language literature relates rather than creating a minor literature. This is in stark contrast to Deleuze and Guattari's characterisation of 'minor' literatures as being distinguished with a literary expression from a distinctly individual point of view connected with the repressed nature of the dominated culture and identity, or, to use Fanon's (1959) term, its 'frozen state'. Yet, this is not at all the case with Odabaşı; although the pains of 'not having an identity' are stated time and again in his poetry, Kurdish culture is taken as a given, with the issues and 'tradition' which animates his poetry already accounted for as those of the period of transition from a feudal society. What moderates the political dimension of his poetry, therefore is a Marxian approach to Kurdish national question. Thereby relating to socialist conceptions of collectivity present throughout the history of Turkish language literature in the 20th century as opposed to a Turkish or Kurdish nationalist narrative as such, this demonstrates that Odabaşı's discourse cannot simply be regarded as an instance of deterritorialisation of Turkish unless socialist or any other counter hegemonic sensitivity which has been with this literature are to be all offered as instances of 'minor.' This also highlights the aggregate nature of the concept of 'minor' literature and the limits of its application in interpreting the

representations of political domination produced in Odabaşı's poetry as an example of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish.

The Evolving Political Trajectories of Kurdish Literary Writing in Turkish

As the foregoing analysis of the political dimension of Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı's poetry demonstrate, Kurdish literary writing in Turkish is characterised with a diversity of mutually exclusive responses to the social context beset by a national question out of which it comes. Involving contrasting conceptualisations of the relationship between the political and the personal, the current political attitudes which these poetries evidence are postmodern identitarian sensibilities as in Mungan's work; apolitical liberal humanist approaches as in Matur's work and the socialist realist sensibilities exemplified in Odabaşı's work.

Despite the diversity of approach and the complexity of the situation, the case studies of these poetries suggest that Kurdish literary writing in Turkish nevertheless presents a collaborative model in terms of political opposition to Turkish nationalist modes of representation and engagement with their social milieu. As another aspect of this complexity, the examination of these poetries has also shown that, despite being defined with a reaction to Turkish nationalism, Kurdish literary writing in Turkish is not characterised with expressing a Kurdish national(ist) sensibility either. Although Odabaşı's poetry raises the possibility of its interpretation as a form of Kurdish nationalism with its explicit self-identification with Kurdish culture, the investigation has also shown that Kurdish literary writing in Turkish is remarkably characterised with a pluralist notion of community and the 'enunciations' it makes on this basis.

Despite constituting an account of the theoretical configuration within Kurdish literary writing in Turkish in terms of questions of nation and nationalism in the post-1980s period, to understand the significance of this state and its literary and theoretic implications, its historical contextualisation is necessary, which can said to be involving the following questions: what is the extent to which the current state of political diversity unique to the contemporary period? How does the three related but distinct sensibilities identified in Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı's poetries relate generally to the past of this writing? Does the current state represent a theoretical departure or continuity from the past in relation to political perspectives represented? And finally, what does the evolution of theoretical approaches within Kurdish literary writing in Turkish up until now suggest for its future?

Utilising the poetries of Cemal Süreya, Ahmed Arif and Sezai Karakoç, this section provides a comparison of the political sensibilities which has been influential in the past and present of

Kurdish literary writing in Turkish; it argues that the current theoretical configuration comprised of liberal humanist and socialist perspectives, while representing a continuing reaction towards Turkish nationalism, is also distinguished with the emergence of distinctly postmodern sensibilities alongside the lasting modernist agendas. Connecting the current political configurations of Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı's poetries with counter hegemonic political sensibilities existing within the Turkish literature, the discussion shows that the history of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish in the 20th century, too, highlights the limits of applicability of postcolonial approaches to the literary reflections of the Kurdish national question in Turkish-language literature.

The poetries of Cemal Süreya, Ahmed Arif and Sezai Karakoç belong to the post 1950s period of Turkish literature, which emerged in the wake of the period of modernisation it underwent in the first two decades of the founding of the republic (Kurdakul 2000, 27). To begin with, the poetry of Cemal Süreya is eponymous with the *Second New* Generation of Turkish poetry which emerged in early 1950's (Bezirci 1996, 12-13) and espoused a poetics reacting to the social aspects prevalent within poetry and emphasised a formalist and abstract approach to poetry, having been influenced by the modernist poetics of the Dadaism and Surrealism (Bezirci 1996, 15). Despite this backdrop of connections with an aesthetic tendency not particularly characterised as a political poetry, Süreya's poetry too is one that refers to and recognises the cultural diversity of the community as well as providing ample evidence of a non-nationalist approach to questions of nation and sympathy to issue of ethnic and national identity.

For instance, in poems like *Göçebe* (Nomad, 1965), *Ortadoğu* (Middle East, 1973), *Mardin* (Mardin, 1973) and *555K* (555K, 1960) an approach to questions of the society which contextualises them within relations of political domination is espoused. In Nomad, which gives the impression of being panoramic observations of someone travelling to Kars, a city located in Eastern Turkey with predominantly a Kurdish population, the region and its people are described as people of Anatolia[87] but are nevertheless contrasted with the other parts of this Anatolian geography. The people of the region are associated with the mountains and bandits but only in a sympathetic light while the social under-development of the region and

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[87] Asia Minor, the part of Turkish geography in Asia. The term has been extensively used by socialist as well as poets of other political positions to refer to the Turkish geography but usually to refer to its cultural diversity as opposed to the term "Türkiye" (Turkey). See examples of use in (Hikmet, 1997; Arif, 2007). For the symbology of Anatolia see Parla's (2007) *From Allegory to Parable: Inscriptions of Anatolia in the Turkish Novel*.

the contrast it presents with the rest of Turkey are also articulated as in *Göçebe* (Nomad, 1965):

> Soaked in blood and blood is the moon
>
> The bandits are watching the burning of the night from afar
>
> In an olden and angry coach I am circling the mountains of Kargapazarı
>
> The soldiers always remain in prose
>
> As the bandits hang their rifles criss-crossed to their songs
>
> And as these mountains retain the beauty of bandits (Süreya 1994, 63).[88]

And further down in the same poem:

> I am in Kars what kind of Kars is this on the side
>
> On a hilltop with a good claim to being slippery
>
> Rises above the ground the fortress of Kars
>
> If it was not for this fortress
>
> Which challenges the sky more abstractly and conveniently
>
> Than the fortress of Ankara
>
> What would happen if it was not for this fortress
>
> No doubt my loneliness will multiply dear child
>
> As you know whichever city I am in
>
> It is the capital city of loneliness (ibid, 64-65).[89]

While the representation of cultural identities is cast as the multiculturalism of Anatolian geography rather than that of Turkish people of Turkey, the melancholic positioning of the poetic persona against this socio-political context is ubiquitous in Süreya's poetry. In his *Ortadoğu* (Middle East, 1973), the social problems of the East/West divide of Turkey is contextualised as a fight between siblings:

> It is us who is broken and will continue to do so
>
> From East to West across the world
>
> But the knife a sibling stabs the other

---

[88] Ay kana kana batıyor/ Eşkiyalar gecenin yangınını izliyor uzakta / Kargapazarı dağlarını dolanan yaşlı ve öfkeli bir otobüsteyim / Jandarma daima nesirde kalacaktır / Eşkiyalar silahlarını çapraz astıkça türkülerine / Ve bu dağlar böyle eşkiya güzelliği taşıdıkça.

[89] (…) Kars'tayım bu ne biçim Kars bir kenarda/ Pekala yalçınlık iddiasında bulunabilecek bir tepenin üstünde/ Kars kalesi yükseliyor/ Gökyüzünü Ankara kalesine göre daha soyut ve daha elverişli bir şekilde/ Hırpalayan bu kale de olmasa/ N'olacak bakalım hırpalayan bu kale de olmasa/ Kuşkusuz artacak yalnızlığım sevgili çocuk/ Biliyorsun ben hangi şehirdeysem/ Yalnızlığın başkenti orası.

Forms a link between two lungs

Grows, one day, enriches there

But desolation is the poet's response and this situation continues:

It is us who is broken and will continue to do so

No one can touch our innocence (ibid, 126).[90]

Elsewhere in Süreya's poetry, political conflict and domination concerns specifically also issue of the 'East' and the state repression of politically oppositional individuals or communities. In *Mardin*, verses suggestive of the ethnic problems of the people of region are present as well as those which problematize its unknown, hidden history:

Nightmares turning into flower

It has transformed into a longing for a country

…

Sword, shield, mace and horse

Ever since my childhood

I read whatever I found

Finally it dawned on me that

A book needs its pictures (ibid, 130-131).[91]

In 555K, published before the events of a student protest that took place in 5th May 1960[92] in Ankara, regarded as the first instance of 'civil disobedience' in Turkish are subjected to attention where people across Turkey are counterposed with those who are in Ankara the capital, denoting representatives of state authority, who have blood on their hands:

For public enemies in the Ankaras

In Izmirs and Istanbuls of this country

For elsewhere in the country

Got into the innocent blood of innocent young people

---

[90] Biz kırıldık daha da kırılırız/Doğu'dan Batıya bütün dünyada/ Ama kardeşin kardeşe vurduğu hançer/ İki ciğer arasında bağlantı kurar/ Büyür, bir gün, zenginleşir orada/ (...) Biz kırıldık daha da kırılırız/ Kimse dokunamaz suçsuzluğumuza.

[91] Çiçeğe kesmiştir karabasan/ Dönüşmüştür bir yurtsamaya/ (...) Kılıç kalkan gürz ve at/Ta çocukluğumdan beri/ Ne buldumsa okudum/ Sonunda anladım ki/ Bir kitapta resim şart.

[92] The code "555K" refers to the date, time and venue of the protest event that was organised to take place at 5pm on the 5th day of the 5th month and assembling at **K**ızılay, a neigbourhod in Ankara. The event was in response to the death of two students a few days before, on 28-30th April, in clashes with the police. A military coup was to take place a few weeks after this event on 27th May 1960.

And it is for this reason that

Those ploughing the land in Erzurum have darker eyes (ibid, 311).[93]

The political content of his poetry, clearly moderated with leftist influences, is also underpinned by a pluralist perspective to the cultural life in Turkey as well as its Kurdish element and the context of political domination surrounding it:

The Kurds have to lie all the time

The Albanians have to tell the truth (ibid, 321).[94]

And also, in *Middle East*:

In those years in our country

Due to various legislation

Of the seventy two languages

Two were banned

The second was Turkish (ibid, 257).[95]

Finally, Süreya's intervention, although not conclusively, is suggestive of the kind of self-consciousness associated with speaking a language and being somewhere not connected with one's cultural identity. The following lines parallel Süreya's comment in his diaries about Turkish being a language into which he was brought rather than born:

Ankara Ankara

Kind-hearted stepmother (ibid, 188).[96]

This prioritisation of the personal concern over the political ones marking Süreya's poetry, embodied also in the major themes of his poetry in romanticism and eroticism, parallels perhaps the mode of representation evident in Mungan's poetry the most. Yet this also relates to psychoanalytic concerns of Matur in relation to preoccupation with differentiating his mode of expression, as a poetry which emphasises the originality of its form over content. In this way, Süreya's poetry provides further suggestion of the presence of liberal humanist

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[93] Çünkü millet hayınları ankaralarda/ çünkü izmirlerde, çünkü istanbullarda/ çünkü başka yerlerinde memleketin/ kanına girdiler masum gençlerin/ işte onun için karanlıktır gözleri/ şimdi erzurumda çift sürenlerin.

[94] Kürtler yalan söylemek zorunda;/ Arnavutlar, doğru.

[95] O yıllarda ülkemizde/ Çeşitli hükümetlerle/ Yetmiş iki dilden/ İkisi yasaklanmıştı:/ İkincisi Türkçe.

[96] Ankara Ankara./ En iyi kalpli üvey ana.

sensibilities which advocate the autonomy of literary expression to render a particularist engagement with the social milieu surrounding literature.

But where Süreya's poetry is at odds with Odabaşı's in terms of the social content it represents and the kind of political intervention it constitutes, the political concern marking the poetry of Ahmed Arif presents a good example to demonstrate the presence and influence of socialist perspectives on questions of national domination along the evolution of 20th century Turkish literature. The poetry of Ahmed Arif is distinguished as a political poetry from the perspective of an 'Easterner;' he never self-identifies as Kurdish but his poetry articulates a sensibility focusing almost exclusively on the life and experiences of the people of the region and one which frames this articulation in a context of political domination. Especially in his *Otuzüç Kurşun* (Thirty-three Bullets), published in his only collection of 1968 titled *Hasretinden Prangalar Eskittim* (Fetters Worn Out by Longing), the life and experiences of the people of East are related against the backdrop of the event of the killing of thirty-three 'smuggler's by the Turkish state forces in 1943. The rural socialist perspective attributed to Arif by Süreya (Arif 2007, 121) makes itself evident from the start with a sympathetic assessment of the cultural diversity of Anatolia that forms a constant social/cultural image in his poetry:

> I.
>
> This is the Mengene mountain
> When dawn creeps up at the lake Van
> This is the child of Nimrod
> When dawn creeps up against the Nimrod
> One side of you is avalanches, the Caucasian sky
> The other side a rug, Persia
> At mountain tops glaciers, in bunches
> Fugitive pigeons at water-pools
> And herds of deer
> And partridge flocks... (ibid, 105).[97]

Within this cultural diversity, the poem details the economic deprivation people of the region suffer as well as the problems brought about with the division of their lands with new country

---

[97] Bu dağ Mengene dağıdır/ Tanyeri atanda Van'da/ Bu dağ Nemrut yavrusudur/ Tanyeri atanda Nemruda karşı/ Bir yanın çığ tutar, Kafkas / Bir yanın seccade Acem mülküdür/ Doruklarda buzulların salkımı/ Firari güvercinler su başlarında/ Ve karaca sürüsü,/ Keklik takımı...

borders following the establishment of Turkish republic; this is the social background motivating the 'smugglers'' actions:

> We are guardians, relatives, tied by blood
>
> We exchange with families
>
> Across the river
>
> Our daughters, these many centuries
>
> we are neighbours
>
> Shoulder to shoulder
>
> Our chickens mingle together
>
> Not out of ignorance
>
> But poverty
>
> We never got used to passports
>
> This is the guilt that kills us
>
> We end up
>
> Being called
>
> Bandits
>
> Killers
>
> Traitors... (ibid, 115).[98]

The 'across the river' referred to are presumably the Syrian villages while "never getting used to passport" implies clearly it is a recent phenomenon; the implication is that the community is placed in a context where they are not only being misrepresented but are being demonised. The poem provides the political power relationships as the grounds for the distinct political evaluation it comprises:

> I have been shot
>
> My dreams are darker than night
>
> No one can find a good omen in them
>
> My life gone before its time
>
> I cannot put it into words
>
> A pasha sends a codded message

---

[98] Kirveyiz, kardeşiz, kanla bağlıyız/ Karşıyaka köyleri, obalarıyla Kız alıp vermişiz yüzyıllar boyu,/ Komşuyuz yaka yakaya/ Birbirine karışır tavuklarımız / Bilmezlikten değil,/ Fıkaralıktan/ Pasaporta ısınmamış içimiz/ Budur katlimize sebep suçumuz,/ Gayrı eşkiyaya çıkar adımız Kaçakçıya/ Soyguncuya/ Hayına...

And I am shot, without inquest, without judgment

Kinsman, write my story as it is

Or they might think it a fable

These are not rosy nipples

But a *dumdum* bullet

Shattered in my mouth... (ibid, 113).[99]

As well as stating the cause of the suffering inflicted as the arbitrary whim of a 'pasha,' a distinct figure of authority, the poet also pleads from the reader to be concerned with this history, for its memory to be retained. And the record of realities and histories to be recorded and remembered is also one of dehumanisation:

They applied the decree of death

They stained

The half-awakened wind of dawn

And the blue mist of the Nimrod

In blood

They stacked their guns there

Searched us

Feeling our corpses

They took away

My red sash of Kermanshah weave

My prayer beads and tobacco pouch

And left

Those were all gifts to me from friends

All from the Persian lands (ibid, 114). [100]

Nevertheless, despite the poet's interest in the people of the region and their plights, as evidenced by the ending of the poem, provided below, which alludes to the role of the people in the war against the common enemy in the Turkish War of Independence, the

---

[99] Vurulmuşum/ Düşüm, gecelerden kara/ Bir hayra yoranım çıkmaz/ Canım alırlar ecelsiz/ Sığdıramam kitaplara/ Şifre buyurmuş bir paşa/ Vurulmuşum hiç sorgusuz, yargısız/ Kirvem, hallarımı aynı böyle yaz/ Rivayet sanılır belki/ Gül memeler değil/ Domdom kurşunu/ Paramparça ağzımdaki...

[100] Ölüm buyruğunu uyguladılar,/ Mavi dağ dumanını/ ve uyur-uyanık seher yelini/ Kanlara buladılar./ Sonra oracıkta tüfek çattılar/ Koynumuzu usul-usul yoklayıp/ Aradılar./ Didik-didik ettiler/ Kirmanşah dokuması al kuşağımı/ Tespihimi, tabakamı alıp gittiler/ Hepsi de armağandı Acemelinden...

specific political intervention his poetry implies cannot be said to be determined by any nationalist perspective:

> Shoot, bastards
>
> Shoot me
>
> I do not die easily
>
> I am live under the ashes
>
> I have words buried in my belly
>
> For those who understand
>
> My father gave his eyes on the Urfa front
>
> And gave his three brothers
>
> Three young cypresses
>
> Three chunks of mountain without their share of life
>
> And when friends, guardians, kin
>
> Met the French bullets
>
> Out of towers, hills, minarets (ibid, 117).[101]

But despite the allusion to common collective consciousness of being Anatolian, the verse "I don't die easily" is intensively suggestive of a distinct identity even if it does not have to be cast in hostility to others. Nevertheless, according to Arif's poem, what is under threat is not a national identity but the diversity that Anatolia and its history is. In '*Anadoluyum Ben*' (I am Anatolia) Anatolia is described in relation to a cultural continuum which includes the ancient past, rebels of the Ottoman period as well as popular figures of the recent past such as Karayılan[102]:

> Ah , I wish you knew how much I love
>
> Köroğlu,[103]
>
> Karayılan,
>
> the unknown soldier,

---

[101] Vurun ulan,/ Vurun,/ Ben kolay ölmem./ Ocakta küllenmiş közüm,/ Karnımda sözüm var/ Haldan bilene./ Babam gözlerini verdi Urfa önünde/ Üç de kardaşını/ Üç nazlı selvi,/ Ömrüne doymamış üç dağ parçası./ Burçlardan, tepelerden, minarelerden/ Kirve, hısım, dağların çocukları/ Fransız Kuşatmasına karşı koyanda

[102] A figure appearing in the first part of the Nazim Hikmet's, *Kuvayi Milliye Destani,* an epic poem of the Turkish War of Independence; in the poem, Karayılan (meaning the black snake) appears first as a frightened villager, who the other villagers end up having to force to get down from a tree he climbs as he is too scared to join the war; forced into the battle, he hides behind a rose bush as the clashes are going on but sees how a bullet takes off the head of snake hiding behind a stone. Seeing this Karayılan resolves that being frightened is pointless and begins to fight heroically against the French in the southeastern Turkish city of Antep (Hikmet, 1997:19).

[103] A social bandit figure in in Turkic folk tales.

> then Pir Sultan[104] and Bedrettin[105].
>
> And many unwritten loves.
>
> And I wish you knew how much they loved me.
>
> I wish you knew the one, who fought in Urfa
>
> and how he would laugh to the death
>
> from minarets, from barricades
>
> from cypress trees.
>
> I really want you to know
>
> do you hear? (ibid, 80).[106]

Characterised as predominantly a socialist discourse, Arif's poetry connects with those of Matur, Mungan and Odabaşı in terms of the culturally sensitive perspective it provides as well as a historical precursor of the current socialist conceptualisation of Odabaşı's poetry. The image of Anatolia which underpins Arif's poetry finds a corollary in the search for the universal and the lack of explicit Kurdish nationalist perspectives marking current Kurdish literary writing in Turkish. Arif's poetry instantiates another case of the engagement of this literary writing with the socialist discourses emerging against paradigmatic nationalistic approaches. This is made evident in the presupposition of a historical materialist assessment of the political domination primarily as a product of class and economical contradictions between sections of the society in the city and rural communities of the East. But, despite sharing a common analysis of the social milieu, considerations of Arif's poetry highlight how poetrues differ in relation to the political function they attribute to their poetry; here, Arif's affinity with Odabaşı's poetry becomes accentuated as a precursor with the common feature of being examples of committed literature. Unlike Matur and Mungan's emphasis, the intervention offered is strictly political rather than personal or metaphysical:

> Don't feel so forlorn,
>
> Thus lamentable, such pitiful..
>
> wherever you are,
>
> inside or outside, in classrooms, in queues

---

[104] See Note 79.

[105] See Note 78.

[106] Nasıl severim bir bilsen./ Köroğlu'yu,/ Karayılanı,/ Meçhul Askeri.../ Sonra Pir Sultanı ve Bedrettini./ Sonra kalem yazmaz,/ Bir nice sevda.../ Bir bilsen,/ Onlar beni nasıl severdi./ Bir bilsen, Urfa'da kurşun atanı/ Minareden, barikattan,/ Selvi dalından,/ Ölüme nasıl gülerdi./ Bilmeni mutlak isterim,/ Duyuyor musun ?

be defiant.

spit on the face of the hangman,

on the face of the opportunist, the instigative, the treacherous..

resist with books.

resist with work.

with nails, with teeth,

with hope, with love, with dreams

resist

don't disgrace me (ibid, 81).[107]

Along with Arif and Süreya's poetry which confirm the continuing presence of non-nationalistic discourses as a tradition, Sezai Karakoç's poetry also presents another case to examine the extent of the impact of such perspectives within Kurdish literary writing in Turkish. It provides a pertinent basis to such analysis both as a poetry which has been influential but also as one which exemplifies the metaphysical approaches which has been with Turkish literature throughout its evolution in the 20th century. Sezai Karakoç's poetry, which is contemporary with that of Süreya and Arif, emerges as a poetry connected with the formalism of the *Second New* Generation but is distinguished as one underpinned by Islamist sensibilities. Providing a distinct political contrast with Süreya and Arif's sensibilities, his poetry is not known particularly as one concerned with questions of national domination or expressing notions of Kurdish self and community. In contrast, his poetry presents an apolitical discourse distinguished with a personal perspective shaped with a mystical and Islamist sensibility. Clearly removed from historicist or political perspectives, the personal and social experiences which his poetry reflects are contextualised in the continuum of a subjective time as the frequent allusion to childhood, the mother and life in his poetry demonstrates in his *Balkon* (Balcony, 1959) from his collection *Körfez* (Bay) of the same year:

If the child falls he dies because the balcony

Is the brave bay of death in houses

As the last smile withers away on children's faces

Mothers mothers with hands on balcony rails (Behramoğlu 1991, 721).[108]

---

[107] Öyle yıkma kendini,/ Öyle mahzun, öyle Garip.../ Nerede olursan ol,/ İçerde, dışarda, derste, sırada,/ Yürü üstüne - üstüne,/ Tükür yüzüne celladın,/ Fırsatçının, fesatçının, hayının.../ Dayan kitap ile/ Dayan iş ile./ Tırnak ile, diş ile,/ Umut ile, sevda ile, düş ile/ Dayan rüsva etme beni.

[108] Çocuk düşerse ölür çünkü balkon/ Ölümün cesur körfezidir evlerde/ Yüzünde son gülümseme kaybolurken çocukların/ Anneler anneler elleri balkonların demirlerinde.

And also in the last stanza of the poem:

> It escapes from everyone
>
> It does not stop anywhere
>
> The child when the mother dies
>
> The mother when the child dies (Behramoğlu 1991, 721).[109]

As shown by these examples, the sense of search for a mystical meaning beyond words with which this poetry leaves the reader is achieved both by the evocation of intense feelings associated with innocence of childhood and maternal concern but also by the allegorical characteristic of his poetry. The metaphysical meaning sought is also elaborated elsewhere explicitly as both a relationship between the subject and the God, but also as a matter of speculative or metaphysical reflection on this connection as in his *Kar Şiiri* (The Snow Poem, 1953; Şahdamar journal):

> As God pours like snow from the sky
>
> As the snow strikes your hair warmly
>
> As you bend your neck forward
>
> You will understand this poem of mine (ibid, 723).[110]

As these features clearly show, Karakoç's poems not only display an intensity of metaphorical expression but arguably act as a metaphor on their own right, with the allegorical effect constantly looming:

> Neither compassion nor love
>
> Is what people know
>
> Let's go and find out within humanity's
>
> Childhood's exhibitions, the dead and the mice (Bezirci 1974, 266).[111]

As in these examples, Karakoç's poetry is not particularly motivated by a desire to respond directly to the political questions of the social milieu out of which it comes; the major problematic of his poetry is a personal contradiction placed in a spiritual context, the context of the relationship between the subject and the god. But as has been noted by Behramoğlu

---

[109] Kaçar herkesten/ Durmaz bir yerde/ Anne ölünce çocuk/ Çocuk ölünce anne.

[110] Allah kar gibi gökten yağınca/ Karlar sıcak sıcak saçlarına değince/ Başını önüne eğince/ Benim bu şiirimi anlayacaksın.

[111] Ne acımak ne sevmek/ Bildiği insanların/ Gidelim bulmaya gerçek insanlığın/ Çocukluğun sergilerinde ölüleri ve fareleri.

(1991, 1118) Karakoç's poetry does indeed contain implicit elements which constitutes an Islamist intervention. For instance, based on interpretations of the metaphor of balcony as an addition to the house that is not necessary, readings of his poems such as "Balcony" as a criticism of western values by Karakoç has been suggested (Bezirci and Özer 2002c, 374).

In this regard, Karakoç's poetry, despite its evident lack of attention to political issues of nation and nationalism, as an instance of Islamic reaction to Kemalist forms of nationalism, can arguably be taken as another line through which Kurdish literary writing in Turkish have combined with counter hegemonic discourses present within Turkish literature. As such, Karakoç's poetry, instantiating another form of political discourse within this body of Kurdish writing relates only indirectly to Matur's poetry with both its metaphysical concerns and the contextualisation of its content in a subjective timeframe where the innocence, trauma and intensities of childhood are all too determining.

The presence of a diverse range of political projects animating the content of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish can, however, be taken as the validity of the postcolonialist or Deleuzean 'minor' models which depend on an empirical reading of such texts as corresponding to the 'states of desire.' After all, the examination of the poetries Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı and the comparisons with those of Süreya, Arif and Karakoç of the earlier era, has demonstrated that, to a different extent and with varying diversity, all these poetries subject themes of nation, identity, community and language to treatment. However, accepting the Deleuzean model raises a major contradiction about the nature of the external, social and political world to which the texts examined respond. Because on the face of it, models of reading which overvalue the political and especially the identitarian content of literature imply not only that the socio-cultural context out which this literature comes contains or has the appearance of national/identity conflict, but that this context is necessarily determined along identitarian, whether national or ethnic, political contradictions of domination. Is it really the case that all domination emanates from identity or national conflicts? Whatever the 'minor' model's response, inconsistencies of the perspective are magnified.

If only for the sake of argument, such necessity is granted where society and its cultural dynamics are conceived only in terms of a political domination determined by politics of nationalism, then Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı's poetry, belonging to the members of the dominated nation, are necessarily Kurdish nationalist discourses by implication and perhaps as a trope only, since whatever they write would be, considering thematic conforming of their poetries to Deluezean prescriptions which are supposed to apply to all contexts. But

this is plainly false given the empirical data provided by the examination of the content of their poetries. On the other hand, if the 'minor' model does not imply that nationalism is the only or determining political antagonism in contexts of national domination, then it would be granted that literature's content is determined also by other, and perhaps even equally important contradictions, and further that its content may not be restricted with the expressions of the ego but has a representative function too.

Literary practise, as the aesthetically reproduced truth-content not only of national but other very human contradiction and identifications, involves not only subjects who speak the same language and are divided along national origins but also according to other identity and social lines, for which the UK Equalities Act 2010's protected characteristics provide as concrete a list as would make any sociologist happy: age, disability, gender, race, ethnicity, nationality (UK Government 2015). Division along economic lines such as class divisions Odabaşı's poetry offers, and the individual/society divide of Mungan and Matur's poetry can also be added to these. As even this simplistic schema of social division shows, minor perspectives are those which ascribe an all determining character or primacy to politics of ethnicity and nationalism over those of other social division lines. The implication for the subject of study is not only that minor perspectives reduce literary meaning to political meaning alone, but that they are themselves better understood as products of period or conjectures when politics of ethnicity and nationalism hold sway. Fanon's observes this as the changing nature and forms of identity inscriptions as the national question proceeds from struggle to freedom (2004, 173). However, what this also magnifies is the extent to which minor literary models rely on a universalisation of particular conjectures of political domination and that the efficacy of the model owes more to its subjective, emotional and speculative value which could be associated with the earlier stages of this conjecture. And indeed, as tested by the diversity of distinct responses to the same social conjecture in the poetries of Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı, such generalisations of the contingent raise issues. Is it really the case that politics of nation have primacy over, for instance, politics of gender contradictions?

Depending on such a dominated/dominator binary isolated from the social and historical conditions surrounding it, minor and postcolonial approaches, for this reason, seems to be theories not of minority writing but theories of nationalist minority writing. They depend on a sublation of the status of the dominated nationalist author to theory, the personal to political. This defines the contradiction of its efficacy and importance. Although, Deleuze, unlike other less-able empiricists, recognises the procedural and transformative dimension

of literature, and likens Kafka's work to a rhizome and provides a more representative abstraction, he also asserts that any point of entry into the rhizome is as good as any other to enter and understand Kafka's work. One would have thought of suggesting an optimal point of entry with a good view after some scientific observation but then again, it is not true that Deleuze enters from anywhere, as on the same perspective, where he starts is selected according to what he desires to narrate.

The poetries of Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı also reveal the extent to which such postcolonialist rely and project the conditions of the period of national liberations and of decolonisation as universal constants. They do this by exemplifying aesthetic and political sensibilities which are not associated with the histories, subjectivities and events of such periods. On the face of such issues with the theoretic and political presumptions of these models, if literature is to be viewed as representing the diversity of social antagonisms, their social contexts as well as search for forms which will aesthetise this truth-content, then it will also be considered as a part of a process and history, which exists in a diversity of languages and is connected through shared forms, if nothing else. In this regard, as also a history of political divisions, literature is both a history of domination and of resistance; and as a literary art existing in all human languages, literature is also its relationships with literatures in other languages. In this context, while the term Turkish-language literature is the most accurate to describe the bounds of the activity clearly, strictly speaking, given the universal existence of literature in all languages, it is not so much that literatures belong to a language; different languages are forms in which literature actualises itself, as languages of literature. In any case, the Deleuzean cannot deny that there is no language without narration, no content without form.

In a way that could not have been predicted by the 'minor' approaches, what this shows is that, the meaning and value of the political content and identity inscriptions of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish has been to bring Turkish and Kurdish literatures closer and furthering the collectivisation of their political as much as aesthetic histories.

Concluding Remarks

Based on an interpretative stance which engages with the political dimension of a range of texts, this part of the discussion has provided an account of the diverse literary representations of the social milieu determined by a national question. Through a comparative reading centred on ideas of self, community and collectivity marking the politically distinct discourses produced, it demonstrated that Kurdish literary writing in

Turkish is a literature distinguished with a political character, which considerably positions itself according to this political context of national domination. Specifically, as demonstrated by literary articulations about the history, life and community of the people of the East of Turkey, Kurdish literary writing in Turkish is characterised as a counter nationalist discourse; the social and political questions of the East, its cultural value and sensibilities do not accord with the paradigmatic nationalist treatment of the unmodernised, underdeveloped and assimilated other of Turkish culture. The version of recent history Matur, Mungan and Odabaşı's poetry offer and elicit debunks the misrepresentation of the Kurdish history and emphasises cultural diversity.

However, where Kurdish literary writing in Turkish, almost unanimously provides a collaborative model in terms of the recognition and appreciation of a distinct Kurdish culture and element, the literary expressions involved differ substantially in relation to whether or how they position themselves as a Kurdish literary voice. Based on the divergent foregrounding of Kurdish national identity as much as on the diversity of political interventions constituted by the poetries analysed, it can be argued that Kurdish literary writing in Turkish is moderated by a range of mutually exclusive responses to a national question.

Specifically, as the discussion of the particular poetries as well as their comparison with those of Süreya, Arif and Karakoç has revealed; firstly, a tradition of socialist realist sensibility is present within Kurdish literary writing in Turkish. If not in Arif's poetry, in Odabaşı's poetry it gets as close to a Kurdish nationalism as it has, albeit through a typically collective Turkish socialist sensibility. On the other hand, the Matur and Mungan's poetries, characterised with psychological concerns and the experiences of individual, provide different versions of liberal humanist as well as metaphysical sensibilities animating this literature.

This discussion has also revealed that the current state of diverse, if mutually exclusive, theoretical formation is not idiosyncratic to the contemporary era but has clear links with the history of Turkish language literature. Comprising a diversity of positions representing major positions across the political spectrum, the comparison between poetries has also illustrated the extent to which discourses produced by Kurdish literary writing in Turkish are related to counter-hegemonic discourses present within Turkish-language literature, given that each of the positions discussed is not unique to non-Turkish authors and is representative of the theoretic formation within Turkish language literature.

What this state of disparity of response plainly shows is that the social milieu to which Turkish language literature corresponds is not a monolithically or singularly Turkish one. The implication of this is that Turkish language literature is the literature of a number of peoples; as in the suggestions put forward by postcolonialist commentators like Ashcroft for reconceptualization of English literatures as 'english' literatures to reflect the fact that it involves a number of national literatures, perhaps thinking about Turkish language literature as 'turkish literature' may help demarcate this reality in a way that amounts to a more accurate definition and categorisation of the very objects of its study.

A second implication of the discussion of the political dimension of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish is that, although not motivated distinctly by any Kurdish nationalist precepts, the diversity of political discourses marking Kurdish literary writing in Turkish can be attributed to a diversity of political configurations within the amorphous Kurdish community. What this means is that, in this sense, Kurdish literary writing in Turkish can be construed as constituting a Kurdish Literature of one kind, with a range of Kurdish voices involved as in any other national literature.

Both this complex set of implications and the presence of a diverse range of literary discourses also underline the pitfalls of theorising about literatures produced in such complex contexts of political domination under aggregate concepts of 'minor' literatures or the postcolonial binaries of coloniser/colonised and displacement/exile. Alongside the diversity of responses produced, the moderation of these discourses both by political sensibilities within Turkish language literature as well as the aesthetic choices of the authors, suggested only partially by this section of the discussion, have been adequately indicative of this.

Chapter Three:

Models of Language and Turkish Use in Kurdish Literary Writing in Turkish

The analysis of the possibility and forms of language variance in Kurdish literary writing in Turkish allows for the following questions to be posed: How does language use reflect the political articulations marking these texts? Is language variance constitutive of the political interventions conveyed? Does language variance in different poetries accord with the political dimension emerging superficially from these texts? And further, what does language use and variance imply in terms of the theoretical projects motivating these texts, especially with reference to the role played by aesthetic considerations? Based on a Marxist outlook that draws on Voloshinov's semiotic theory (Eagleton 1991, 195) in what follows, this study subjects to critical interrogation language uses in Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı's poetry in order to provide a general overview of the linguistic characteristics distinguishing Kurdish literary writing in Turkish, which accords with the needs of the incipient state of criticism on the subject.

With this purpose, the following discussion provides an analysis of language uses according to a classic categorisation of the ways in which such inquiry can be undertaken: through *logic, grammar* and *rhetoric*. As the theoretical positions motivating this discussion make clear, the intention here is not to accord methodological primacy to studying language in this way, which depends on a problematic counterpoising of 'language' against 'reality', but to provide a comprehensive overview incorporating the range of main linguistic properties forming the content and terms of current research on the function of language uses in literatures conditioned by contexts of political domination. As expounded upon in the discussion of theoretical questions of the field, it is a charge of this study that a dialectical approach to such cases can be elucidated on the critical basis which the research presents. In this way, one can avoid the pitfalls Williams draws attention to in relation to conceptualisations such as 'foreclosing the examination of the form of the basic distinction between "language" and

"reality"' and determining these terms as the absolute ground on which such examination may take place.

In relation to the logical aspect, which pertains to the aspect of language as a way of stating a 'truth' about the world, the discussion subjects texts to a comparative analysis in order to identify the extent to which language uses in Kurdish literary writing in Turkish involves linguistic strategies motivated by overturning the logic of culturally dominant power; it looks at the extent to which both 'binary structuralisms' of the dominant power are disturbed and whether the texts are marked by language uses indicating construction of Otherness, of individuation as difference. In what is generally referred to as the grammatical aspects of language use, the discussion focuses on those formal features of language that are part of the experienced reality – such as lexis, orthography, grammar and syntax – and distinctive to this writing. Finally, in relation to the rhetoric aspect of the inquiry, the use and functions of different rhetorical devices is brought under consideration, raising questions about the uses of language such as code-switching, vernacular and dialects.

The second section of this chapter turns to a comparison between the linguistic strategies involved in Kurdish literary writing in Turkish and those belonging to the Turkish literary canon. This discussion assesses the extent to which language variances in these poetries presents forms of abrogation and appropriation of Turkish distinctive enough to qualify as a collaborated model of resistance. Through this comparative examination, this chapter argues that, even though the logical, grammatical and rhetorical variance of the language in the poetries of Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı suggest abrogation and appropriations of Turkish, the readings these texts anticipate are as much metaphorical as they are metonymic, with clear connections to counter-discourses existing within Turkish poetry, equally preoccupied with inscribing political Otherness. Despite their instrumentality, this chapter concludes by pointing to the pitfalls of aggregate notions of abrogation and appropriation as a function of their eclectic theoretic presuppositions, which, as this section shows, includes an inability to distinguish aesthetic forms of rejection and appropriation.

Language Strategies in Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı's Poetries

In terms of the distinct uses of language in the poetries of Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı, as diverse a spectrum of perspectives as the variegated political configuration discussed in Chapter 1 is present. This applies to all the linguistic features this has study categorised, if relatively pragmatically, as the logical, grammatical and rhetorical features of language use. Apparent discrepancies between the implications of the distinct uses employed and the

putative political positioning of the texts also adds to this complexity; that is, as will become especially evident in the case of Matur's poetry, discrepancies between what language uses imply and what the author wants them to imply.

In what follows, the discussion starts by providing examples of language uses employed by the three poets to articulate a rejection of the cultural logic of monist myths of Turkish national identity, which postcolonial theories and minority approaches collect under processes of abrogation or deterritorialisation. Concentrating on language uses in poems with distinct political content, the discussion provides an overview of language uses in Kurdish literary writing in Turkish undermining the Turkish nationalist cultural logic and argues that this undermining involves a distinct concern for rejecting the 'standard' uses of Turkish. However, the discussion also shows that language uses in these poetries – self-inscriptions, language concerns and constructions of Otherness – present such a diverse array of discourses that makes it problematic to be elucidated on ethnic/national identity considerations alone. Having looked at this, the second part of this section concentrates on how linguistic strategies and devices are used to appropriate the Turkish language. To this end, the discussion concentrates on the formal grammatical and rhetorical features of these poetries and shows the diversity of mediations through which these poets present and realise their discrepant cultural logics. In addition, however, as it is not sufficient to conceptualise linguistic variance only in terms of the rejection of a certain cultural logic and its replacement, the section concludes by providing examples of language use showing how aesthetic considerations also moderate the language used in these poetries, thereby highlighting the impact of the specific social practise of literature. Due to the theoretical scope of the discussion and being under no illusion about the extent to which a single study at this incipient stage of the field of study could, at all, be comprehensive, the discussion aims to provide a modest overview of language variance in Kurdish literary writing in Turkish on which further research can be developed.

In relation to any rejection or abrogation of Turkish by Kurds, starting with the obvious is helpful as a definition of the scope of this analysis of language variance in the literature they produce: this is a body of literary by Kurds who have accepted using Turkish as a literary medium. Just as with Kurdish literary writing and criticism in the distinct regional contexts of Iraq, Iran and Syria, as well as Kurdish migrant writing in Europe, the use of Turkish as a literary medium has met with mixed reception amongst Kurdish authors. As research by Scalbert-Yücel shows, while there are instances of the complete rejection of Turkish as a literary medium, the context is one of bilingualism that includes authors writing in either or

both. There is also the presence of a diverse array of positions amongst contemporary Kurdish authors who current do not write in Kurdish about using Kurdish as a literary medium in the future, ranging from 'currently do not but would like to' to 'those who do not want to' or 'don't think it is possible' (Scalbert-Yücel 2012, 179-180). Set within such a context, as the scope of this section of the study, the following discussion concentrates specifically on the attitudes to the Turkish language emerging in these poetries rather than Kurdish attitudes to using Turkish language as a literary medium in general. In this regard, while examples from across Kurdish literary writing in Turkish are incorporated into the discussion, the impact of Kurdish attitudes to Turkish language in these poetries is discussed based on characteristics highlighted by close readings of the range of specimen texts.

Within the framework of abrogation and appropriation processes, to which the language of the hegemonic centre is subjected, analysis of the linguistic features of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish therefore transforms into questioning whether the Turkish used in these texts assumes a rejection of the standard uses of Turkish and, thus, whether the versions rendered can be regarded as appropriations of Turkish. Although limited in scope as a study taking Turkish-language literary texts as its basis, attempting to answer such questions can help identify the forms of abrogation of Turkish emerging explicitly or implied by forms of appropriation of Turkish taking place in these texts; this could thus contribute to the study of literary language uses by Kurdish authors in general, whether in Turkish or in other non-Kurdish languages, by providing the basis of a specific context in which these are manifested.

The question whether Kurdish literary writing in Turkish involves any rejection of Turkish and the undermining of its cultural logic which could be offered as a basis for it to be characterised as a discourse about identity is set against the diverse political configuration elaborated in the previous chapter. The intention is not to repeat the political responses present in this writing but, instead, to provide a brief account of how distinct language uses correspond to the political positions elucidated. In this way, the discussion also tests the validity of poststructuralist claims of the distinction of such literatures, as those necessarily characterised by self-inscription and expressions of difference against a dominant political power; and, as those which posit a cultural gap between the centre and the marginalised based on the connection between identity and language. Subsequent to the brief account of language uses underpinning identity in the poetries of Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı, the discussion focusses on the ways in which the relationship between language and identity is articulated in these poetries; this contextualises the account of variegated forms of

appropriation of Turkish based on the discussion of the grammatical and rhetorical uses of language involved in this writing.

Chapter 2 showed that the poetries discussed are indeed motivated by an expression of identity, ranging from the heterogeneous gender and cultural sensibilities of Mungan to the metaphysical aestheticism of Matur to Odabaşı's socialist realist political poetry. An emerging result of the debate so far, has been to demonstrate that the contrasting political terms in which these poetries articulate identity are associated with different strategies of undermining the cultural logic of the centre and further that, there are issues with aggregating these articulation as having been defined by common identity concerns in the first place.

In relation to challenging nationalist myths, all three poetries are distinguished as discourses associated with articulating either the perspective or representation of the East of Turkey. The representation of the East as a backward, uneducated and unmodernised part of the uniformly defined Turkish society and geography is challenged from a range of perspectives, even if the terms of this range of political alterity are not at all compatible. However, it is noteworthy that, although a difference with the cultural norm is expressed, this is not from a national perspective that problematises the question of language in a uniform colonised/coloniser or master/slave dialectic. In Mungan's case, the way in which identity concerns are articulated and counterposed to the ideas of self and community are ostensibly through a gender perspective sensitive to questions of national/ethnic domination. The complexity of the ideas of self articulation in Mungan's poetry is compounded by their conceptualisation in relation to the contradictions between socio-economic classes. In his *Sahtiyan* from the collection with the same name, which is a panorama of a love story between two revolutionary men, the differentiated self is a homosexual identity marked by an intensity of expression and constitutes a 'self-inscription' of sorts. The intensity with which this is articulated suggests an attitude of directly confronting stereotypes and 'self-inscription' as has readings of his *Sahtiyan* had evidenced in the last chapter:

> in other words, that is, it is absent fathers which is the entire
>
> homosexuality of some children (Mungan 1992b, 13).[112]

---

[112] yani ki eksik babalardır bazı çocukların bütün eşcinselliği

This can also be seen in other poems of the same collection as in *Ahmet ile Murathan* (Ahmet and Murathan):

> because of the early pains
>
> of a sexuality whose theory has not been written
>
> living with a borrowed ideology
>
> they began to bleed untimely
>
> they began to bleed
>
> Ahmet and Murathan (ibid, 25).[113]

This identity is indeed defined in terms which counterpose it to the norm. Specifically, in Mungan's case, this is done in terms of the East-centre divide in Turkey, as well as socio-economic questions of capitalist development. For instance, the poet contextualises his homosexuality in terms of the contrast between the 'mountain', symbolising East, and the 'city', standing for the metropolises in *Sahtiyan*:

> a poet who has taken to mountains I am
>
> alas! Who nobody sees (ibid, 12).[114]

And the distance, the isolation the self is enclosed within, is expressed from a collective point of view encapsulated within an expression of a personal reaction to a common social context of questions of political domination in poems in the same collection:

> we the third person in each love story
>
> difficult it is to understand our pain (ibid, 34).[115]

And as in *Azınlık Sorusu* (Minority Question) a poem written in 1978 but published in 1982 in this collection[116]:

> there is no reason to be surprised at all
>
> to the indifferent question of a naked person
>
> in my own country,

---

[113] ödünç bir ideolojiyle yaşayan/ teorisi henz yazılmamı bir cinselliğin/ erken acılarından/kanamaya başladılar zamansız/ kanamaya başladılar/ Ahmet ile Murathan.

[114] dağa çıkmış bir şairim ben/ ah! kimsenin görmediği

[115] biz her sevdanın üçüncü şahsı/ zordur acılarımızı anlaması

[116] See pp 525-533 in Murathan 95 for a detailed list of the publication dates of Mungan's writing including poetry between 1975 and 1995. The publication date of the poem in question according to this list is 1982 (Mungan 1996a, 528).

Why do I wonder in disguise? (Mungan 1992b, 121).[117]

This is contextualised through a Marxian understanding of society's problems, casting them as the symptoms of an underdeveloped modernity and the feudality of the East:

The millennium-old armour of feudality

The swagger of daily relationships to theory

The image of which future lies

Under a buffeted dawn

And to the pages of which betrayal will be rendered

The historical and representational depiction of

The proletariat stabbed from the back (ibid, 36).[118]

A similar rendition applies to the way in which the past is regarded:

A mineral that has but lost its first name

Its new shape a metal

And hereafter mystic page in our history is Blonde Anastas

What history withheld from Köroğlu on the other hand was Das Capital

Rotten is the requiem. It is Feudal (ibid, 114).[119]

Elsewhere, in his earlier The Story about The Ottoman, this is provided in much more formulaic fashion:

A historical and economic necessity

Which passes through the knot of capital cities

Collecting them like beads

In a single ring

Is now entrusted to a class

And here the proletariat of the new ages (Mungan 1993b, 128).[120]

---

[117] hiç şaşmamak gerek/ bir çıplağın fütursuz sorusuna/ kendi ülkemde ben,/ niye tebdil gezerim?

[118] feodalitenin binyıllık pusatları/ gündelik ilişkilerin teoriye bıyık burmaları/ hangi geleceğin imgesi yatmakta/ örselenmiş bir şafağın altında/ ve hangi ihanetin sayfalarına çizilecek/ tarihi ve temsili resmi/ sırtı hançerli proleteryanın

[119] bir maden ki yitirmiştir ilk adını/yeni şekli metaldir/ ve mutassavvıf bir sayfadır artık tarihimizde Sarı Anastas/ Köroğlu'ndan tarihin esirgediğiyse Kapital'dir/ çürümüştür ağıt. Feodaldir.

[120] paytahtların ilmeğinden geçerek / hepsini bir halkada/ boncuk boncuk topladığı/ tarihsel ve iktisadi bir mecburiyet/ artık bir sınıfa emanet/ ve işte yeni devirlerin proletaryası

As such, though distinguished by political opposition to the Turkish nationalist norms of community and self, Mungan's discourse does not foreground itself as a discourse of minority self-expression or differentiation. Indeed, despite the poet's identification with the East, Mungan also positions his perspective as cross-cultural. In "*Alâcanım*" (My Dearest Urchin, 1991), this confluence is observed in the following terms:

> My dearest urchin
>
> Your name was the name of a burnt village
>
> No one saw it
>
> In you I have burnt too
>
> And the smoke that rises from the east of my heart ever since
>
> Wherever you are I am always in your skies o history of blood
>
> I am Mardin and Midyat
>
> O my voice more famous than gold
>
> It was my siblings who dies, who did the killing too
>
> In the wall between you
>
> I have remained buried (Mungan 2001, 12).[121]

And the in-between poet is apparent also in the way he articulates his sensitivity as one rooted in the 'East', but currently in the West, as was the case in *Sahtiyan*:

> More accurately, I woke up with you
>
> -that hazy breath of east, middle of one night, in the Mediterranean, during a summer's leisure, dividing my sleep, left me alone with your form.-
>
> I couldn't sleep till the morning (Mungan 1992b, 12).[122]

With such terms of separation inscribing the self and the individual, Mungan's poetry does not characterise as the expression of a national/ethnic identity. In this regard, with reference to the kind of self-inscription involved in his poetry alone, it is hard to see how it instantiates an inscription of a Kurdish identity or a particular Kurdish use of Turkish. The ideas of self and community, and the contrasting conceptualisation of history and society on which this is

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[121] alacânım, / yakılmış bir köyün adıydı adın / görmedi kimse / içinde ben de yandım /o gün bugün kalbimin doğusunda tüten duman / nerede olursan ol göğündeyim kanlı tarih her zaman / Mardin'im, Midyat'ım / ah benim altından avaze sesim / kardeşlerimdi ölen de, öldüren de / aranızdaki duvarda /gömülü kaldım.

[122] daha doğrusu seninle uyandım/ -doğunun o tütsülü soluğu, bir gece yarısı, Akdeniz'de, bir yaz dinlencesinde, uykumu bölerek, beni senin suretinle baş başa bıraktı.-/ sabaha kadar uyuyamadım.

based, similarly present complexities of their own in Matur and Odabaşı's poetry. As a first shared characteristic, a poetic sensibility moderated by the East is also present in Matur's poetry, one which problematises East in relation to exile, displacement and forgotten/hidden history as in "*Ada, Ben ve Defne*" (The Island, Myself and the Laurel, 1999):

> I went to the land of my kin
>
> Veiled in the waters of a scattered womb,
>
> Spread under the sun to dry, their hearts withered (Matur 2004, 80).[123]

Elsewhere this is present in relation to the form of a direct experience:

> With the tremulous soul
>
> Of all migrant peoples
>
> We peered about us.
>
> First at the mountains
>
> Then the plain
>
> We peered at the rocks
>
> And the hot springs.
>
> We saw
>
> That nothing stirs
>
> From its bed.
>
> So then
>
> What curse
>
> What ill omen
>
> Deceived us?
>
> What made the sky above us shrink
>
> To become out fate? (ibid, 80).[124]

As a parallel with Mungan's poetry, the idea of self and community articulated in Matur's poetry also has a clear gender aspect situated between the history of the father and brother, as that of the 'mother', where the poet is torn between the death of the brother and father, and is with the surviving mother as in the Winds Howl Through the Mansions:

---

[123] Gittim ülkesine kardeşlerimin/ Dağılmış bir rahmin suyuyla örtünmüş, / Güneşe serilmiş kalpleri kurumuş.

[124] Göçle gelen/ Her kavmin/ Titrek ruhuyla / Bakındık etrafa./ Önce dağlara/ Sonra ovaya/ Taşlara bakındık/ Kaynayan suya./ Gördük ki,/ Hiçbir şey kıpırdamıyor/ Yatağında/ O zaman/ Hangi lanet/ Hangi âh/ Girdi kanımıza./ Neydi başımızda daralan göğü/ Yazgımız yapan.

As our mother's face grew thinner

And our mother's shoulders shrank

We wondered which mountain to look at (ibid, 26).[125]

The contextualisation of identity in terms of a politically undefined and metaphysical personal and social history, as allusions to her childhood and that of humanity, evidences the distinct gender element of her narratives as in poems in her God Must Not See My Letters collection of 1999:

God's blessing

resting on the dead

in the land of Moslems

sheds the day's blood.

Our childhood starts with our mother's death

Their childhood never ends for those whose mothers are dead (Matur, 2018).[126]

As well as placing her sensibility in a mountain-city dialectic, her poetry also problematises the cultural norm through reactions to 'God', as opposed to a personal 'god' or 'tanrı[127]', who acts as her interlocutor:

Woman is a letter on Allah's wall

She is like a black swan

She has learned to wait (Matur 2004, 67).[128]

Despite the lack of association with the centre of Turkey and the closer association with the Kurdish community and region, as opposed to the poetry of Mungan, Matur problematises the Kurdish aspect as the confrontation of people with no history, with a frozen culture:

They say history will end

Frozen in a photograph (ibid, 71).[129]

Matur's attitude or effort to distinguish her poetry as a cross-cultural text, as the literature of 'nomads', also parallels Mungan's pluralist political perspective. In this regard, although

---

[125] Annemizin yüzü azaldıkça/ Omuzları küçüldükçe annemizin/ Şaşırdık hangi dağa bakacağımıza
[126] Allahın selamı / Müslümanların ülkesinde / Ölülerin üzerine olsun diyerek / Kanatır günü./ İnsanın çocukluğu annenin ölümüyle başlar / Bitmez çocukluğu annesi ölenin.
[127] See page 199-120 for a discussion of the term.
[128] Allahın duvarında bir harftir kadın/ Siyah kuğuya benzer/ Beklemeyi öğrenmiş.
[129] Tarih bitecek diyorlar/ Donmuş bir fotoğrafla.

for different reasons, the way Matur's poetry connects to a national narrative presents an ambiguity couched as it is in such apolitical terms.

In contrast to Mungan and Matur's poetry, Odabaşı's poetry exemplifies a voice more attuned with the Kurdish origins of its author; the self articulated in Odabaşı's poetry is that of an 'identity without a land', a self that questions its lack of belonging, an 'identityless' self. His poems 'Şeyho from Siverek' (*Siverekli Şeyho)* and 'Names Without Names' (*Adsız Adlar*) of hıs first *Siste Kalabalıklar* (Crowds in the Mist, 1985) collection are excellent examples of this (Odabaşı 2000a, 13). In Odabaşı's poetry, the subjectivities of the politically dissident self are articulated as the determinations of a political context, the content of which is 'massacres' and 'loot' for the East and its people. Associating himself with the East, the symbology of 'mountains' set against 'the cities' is also present in Odabaşı's poetry as in his *Reşo, Talan İklimi* (The Climate of Loot, 1987):

> The plains of this mountain are landmine, its peak the loot
>
> He forgets his acts each night in a song (Odabaşı 2000a, 62).[130]

> The pride with which the mountains stand is ours
>
> The other bank of the water and lands belong to the beyond
>
> And to the other
>
> "the sword belongs to the one who wields it" used to say reşo
>
> And would walk (ibid, 55).[131]

The praising of mountains, of its social bandits, however, finds a treatment resembling Mungan's contextualisation of the cultural and economic issues of East, not as a matter of the inherent backwardness and ignorance of the region and its people but in terms of questions of capitalist underdevelopment and remnants of a feudal society. This is paralleled in Odabaşı as well:

> Up close şeyho of the rahman's would smell like the mountain winds
>
> Hair was şeyho if you kissed him, smoke if you smell
>
> He wouldn't know why the colour of his shalwar[132] changed

---

[130] Bu dağların düzlüğü mayın, doruğu talan/ o, unutur bir türküde eşgâlini her akşam

[131] -bu dağların mağrur duruşu bizim/ suyun ve toprağın öte kıyısı ötelerin/ ve ötekinindir/ "kılıç kuşananın" derdi reşo/ ve yürürdü

[132] Baggy trousers worn in southern and Eastern Turkey as well as elsewhere in Middle East.

Why graffiti has begun to disappear (ibid, 13).[133]

The treatment of the self, Kurdish individuals and the region in terms of these contradictions is also seen in other poems. In *The Climate of Loot*, for example, the social bandit Reşo is praised for his resistance to looting, but is also criticised for his limitation relating to forms of feudality:

XV

(he contradicts his age

because both his tradition, his climate contradicts his age)

o the rebellion with no bearings

life without a route!

o

clear air

open heart

dark loneliness (ibid, 64).[134]

However, as shown in this example, Odabaşı's poetry also positions itself as a cross-cultural text; a text that does not assume a national space as its context and attempts to relate to a socialistically construed universality.

As a whole, the poetries of Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı are distinguished as discourses undermining the culturally monist myths of Turkish identity, community and history. However, the diverse reasons why this is undertaken, as well as the personal and political values these poetries purport, makes it difficult to classify these discourses as those which uniformly and necessarily self-inscribing the identity of dominated or colonised social group. This is demonstrated also by the diversity and ambiguity with which the question of language is related to the questions of identity in these poetries.

In Mungan's poetry, both the poet's sensitivities and the social situation of the East are connected to the question of language. The poet responds to the issue of language

[133] Sokulsan rahmanların şeyho dağ rüzgârı kokardı/ öpsen kıl'dı şeyho, koklasan duman/ bilmezdi şalvarının renginin neden değiştiğini/ ve kentte/ duvar yazılarının neden eksildiğini
[134] (o, çağına ters düşüyor/ Çünkü töresi de, iklimi de çağına ters düşüyor)/ vay kıblesiz isyan/ rotasız ömür/ vay/ duru hava/ açık yürek/ koyu yalnızlık..

repression through the cultural plurality of the social context and the self of the poet as illustrated by poems from his *Sahtiyan* collection:

> from horsed/omitted[135] pages of history
>
> and misread lives
>
> someone who derives questions and sorrows for himself
>
> (…)
>
> using the common language of multi-national minorities
>
> using the second persons of history
>
> builds gradually
>
> builds what remains from fires
>
> the capital city of his dreams
>
> collects his images scattered across his childhood
>
> the flowers of the innocent
>
> he hid in the bosom of his epics
>
> under its scorpion branding flag (Mungan 1992b, 32).[136]

For instance, in the *Öteki Mitosu* (Myth of the Other) from his Mırıldandıklarım (Those I Whispered, 1990), collection, the dynamic of creation of personal language in relation to a common language finds an atypical poetic formulation:

> Mirror, myth and the other
>
> The irresistible elements of a personal-past[137]
>
> The mirror. The motherland of all of us is the mirror. From within it we emerged and
>
> attained language
>
> And we proceeded to action, and tested ourselves
>
> We placed heavy stones in the corners of our personality
>
> That is our laws to the gravity of our existence
>
> Without knowing and thus we denied all journeys to ourselves[138]
>
> Broken were the words, the mirror shattered

---

[135] A double entendre on the homonym *atlanma* that can be translated as "mounting a horse" or "jumping over" or "omitting" something.

[136] at/lanmış tarih sayfalarından/ ve yanlış okunmuş hayatlardan/ kendine sorular ve hüzünler çıkaran biri (...) kullanarak çokuluslu azınlıkların ortak dilni/ kullanarak tarihin ikinci kişilerini/ kuruyor ağır ağır/ kuruyor yangınlardan artakalan/ düşlerinin başkentini/ topluyor destanlarının koynunda sakladığı/ akrepli bayrağının altına/ çocukluğuna saçılmış imgelerinin/ masumların çiçeklerini.

[137] *Özgeçmiş* is the Turkish word used.

[138] Retaining the ambiguity of the conjunction.

We understood that our imagery was a cove to us

And in the migration of learning this

We scattered across the northern stars

Now after distant roads and lengthy adventures once again

We are returning

To our country, to our identity; we left our imagery there

The image games too

We aged leaving many a thing behind

Since the day we accepted leaving them […] (Mungan 1992a, 52).[139]

The development of a language against and in relation to the 'mirror' of the 'standard' is also accounted for through a repeated allusion to the silence and namelessness inflicted on the 'capital city' of his childhood, the East, elsewhere in his poetry, as in "*Unutmadık*" (We Have not Forgotten) appearing first in his 1993 collection, Omayra:

We covered with the dark shroud of the sky

Our dead riddled with stars

Our nameless dead

We forgot your bodies, did not forget any of you

The names of which written alongside a geography (Mungan 1993a, 25).[140]

Alongside these, perhaps one of the other ways in which the issue of language is connected to the question of identity is the extent to which Mungan's poetry is distinguished as writing about writing, writing to revise, with the implication that history has not been recorded fully or accurately. His poetry is offered as a solution to this as was underlined in *Sahtiyan*:

Anyway who could even write the entire hell of a society being industrialised (Mungan 1992b, 13).[141]

---

[139] ayna, mithos ve öteki/ özgeçmişin vazgeçilmez elementleri/ Ayna.Anayurdu ayna hepimizin.İçinden çıkıp kavuştuk dile/ ve eyleme geçtik, ve kendimizi sınadık/ ağır taşlar koyduk kişiliğimizin köşelerine/ yani kendi kanunlarımızı varlığımızın yerçekimine/ bilmeden ve böylelikle bütün yolcuları yasakladık kendimize/ kırılmıştı sözcükler, parçalanmıştı ayna/ anladık imgemizin yalnızca bir kovuk olduğunu/ ve bunu öğrenmenin göçünde/ dağıldık kuzey yıldızlarına/ Şimdi uzak yollardan ve uzun maceralardan sonra yeniden/ dönüyoruz ülkemize, kimliğimize; imgemizi orada bıraktık/ imge oyunlarını da/ bırakarak yaşlandık birçok şeyi/ Bırakmayı kabullendiğimiz günden beri.
[140] Gökyüzünun karanlık kefeniyle örttük/ Yıldızların delik deşik ettiği ölüleriz/ Adsız ölüleriz/ Adları bir coğrafya ile yan yana yazılan
[141] zaten kim yazabilir ki sanayileşmekte olan bir toplumun bütün cehennemini

With such clear statements of the question, which also confirm the extent to which Mungan's self-inscription involves an attempted linguistic differentiation, it is evident that Mungan's poetry rejects the standard use of Turkish. The terms with which the other two poets breach the question, however, do not present as concise a formulation as Mungan. In line with the non-political diction in her poetry, the questions in Matur's poetry are couched in or associated with the terms of the silence to which individuals and the community have been subjected. It is noteworthy also that the poetic persona undertakes this through the identification of this situation with her mother and childhood in Winds Howl Through the Mansions:

> VI
>
> When the cold spell began
>
> Horsemen came to take us away
>
> Horsemen old and strange
>
> Who made us afraid
>
> Snow veiled their eyes.
>
> Without a word
>
> Not looking at our little hands
>
> They came to carry us off to the mansions
>
> Mansions howling with winds (Matur 2004, 29).[142]

> XII
>
> Ten years I have spent with the wind
>
> I was cold in every mansion
>
> There's no sense in talking I said
>
> If there can't be a human echo
>
> I was like silent mansions
>
> With more and more doors (ibid, 33).[143]

The loss of the language and the ensuing silence is also contextualised in relation to displacement from 'mountains' to 'plains':

---

[142] Soğuklar başladığında/ Atlılar gelmişti bizi almaya/ Yaşlı ve tuhaf atlılardı/ Korkutmuşlardı bizi/ Kar yağmıştı bakışlarına./ Ve hiç konuşmadan bizimle/ Bakmadan ellerimizin küçüklüğüne/ Konaklara götüreceklerdi bizi/ Rüzgârla uğuldayan konaklara

[143] On yılım geçti rüzgârla/ Şüdüm her konakta/ Konuşmanın ne anlamı var diyordum/ İnsanın yankısı olmazsa/ Suskun konaklar gibiydim/ Kapıları gittikçe çoğalan

IV

Night was like an eye washed in water.

and the hand that knew fire.

We came

and sheltered in the plain.

Wheat in our fields

bitter water in our well.

We dug earth's womb

and gave it our tongue.

We lost love with one shudder

on the edge of that charred mansion (ibid, 45-47).[144]

The language of arrival in the new place is also problematised in terms of the hegemonic centre, represented as 'God':

[..]
The olive trees were waiting

and the white earth with its nameless insects

were waiting for us (ibid, 57).[145]

IV.
The beggar in the courtyard sang

Those who don't know Allah's letters

Will come to sin

In the woman has mingled

The sound of a funeral-prayer and water (ibid, 69).[146]

The silence inflicted is also evaluated in terms of being left without a history and the perpetual pain this causes:

II.
I went to the land of my kin

---

[144] Ateşi tanıyan el/ Suyla yıkanan göz gibiydi gece/ Geldik/ Ve sığındık ovaya/ Tarlamızda buğday/ Kuyumuzda acı su/ Kazdık rahmini toprağın/ Dilimizi verdik ona/ Bir ürpermeyle yitirdik aşkı/ Yanmış o konağın kıyısında.
[145] Zeytin ağaçları bizi bekliyordu/ Bizi bekliyordu/ Adsız bçekleriyle topraklar.
[146] Avludaki dilenci/ Allahın harflerini bilmeyenler/ Günaha girecek diyordu şarksıında/ Sela sesiyle su/ karıştı kadında.

within me a deep love-longing.

My body wants to break up,

to mix with their earth.

But they have no earth

only rock.

And a dense history.

With their eyes' mystery

they search for life

among the stones (ibid, 80).[147]

However, unlike Mungan and Matur's poetry, the issue of language in Odabaşı's poetry is related to both Kurdish identity and the experiences of the politically committed oppositional individual, whose sensibilities his poetry articulates. Odabaşı's statement of the problem differs both from Mungan's cultural and psychologistic terms and Matur's metaphysical ambiguity. Specifically, Odabaşı's poetry articulates questions of language in relation to identity in four different ways.

Firstly, Odabaşı problematises the repression of language as part of the silenced history of the East and its culture, along with the loss of language because of displacement and exile as in his *Yurtsuz Şiirler* (Poems without a Homeland, 1987):

it beckoned and I gave my face to the wind coming with mountain smells

it was then I saw how our lives have been left to imprisoned songs

imprisoned songs… (Odabaşı 2000a, 110).[148]

And also, in other poems such as these lines from his *Görüntüler* (Scenes) from his later collection *Aynı Göğün Ezgisi* (The Song of the Same Sky, 1988):

we smile the malaria colour of life

we smile the language that routs destiny

history remains a footnote remaining from a photograph (ibid, 152).[149]

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[147] Gittim ülkesine kardeşlerimin/ İçimde koyu bir aşk isteği. / Gövdem dağılmak istiyor,/ Karışmak istiyor topraklarına. / oysa yok toprakları / Her yer taş. / Ve orada, öyle ağır ki tarih. / Taşların arasında / Gözlerinin sırrıyla / Hayatı arıyorlar.

[148] ses verdi yüzümü döndüm dağ kokularıyla gelen yele/ baktım ki salınmış ömrümüz hükümlü türkülere/ hükümlü türkülere

[149] hayatın sıtmalı rengini gülüyoruz/ gülümsüyoruz kederi bozguna uğratan dili/ tarih dipnot kalıyor geriye bir fotoğraftan.

Connected to this, as will elaborated below, Odabaşı problematises Turkish use of Kurdish people through the figure of Reşo. This question is treated through the lens of the silencing of the region, the poverty of language, and the simplicity of self-expression people have been reduced to: 'the rest was *vay babo*'[150] or '*he kurban*'" [151] (ibid, 56).

Alongside the connection of language with Kurdish identity, Odabaşı's texts are also marked by the expressions of silence faced by revolutionaries and their outlook, including language as in other poems in *Yurtsuz Şiirler* (Poems without a Homeland, 1987) such as *Konuşsam Sessizlik Gitsem Ayrılık* (Silence if I Speak Seperation if I Go):

> I don't know why the streets empty as the sun sets
> and my heart soars
> silence: if I speak/separation: if I go (ibid, 80).[152]

The silence is also the silence of those who dwell in the mountains, those who oppose the political power, those who are reduced to silence but cannot remain so; just like Mungan's Other, the political individual also develops her language against that of the cultural/political centre as in Poems without a Homeland, the poem giving the collection its title:

> don't bury me
> don't bury yourselves in silence!
> to be silent is an illusion… (ibid, 111).[153]

Being associated and reacting to the silence of a people and history, a fourth way in which language and identity is connected in Odabaşı's poetry is its distinction as a discourse about discourse; of creating a counter-hegemonic discourse, a counter language as in Adı Adsız (His Name Unnamed) from his *Aynı Göğün Ezgisi* (The Song of the Same Sky, 1988) collection:

> Don't ask about me: I exhaust myself writing or write myself to exhaustion. Don't ask about me: I go up and down, increasing and decreasing or crying and laughing.

---

[150] Literally, "Oh, father" but the word "babo," though it seems like an accented pronunciation of the Turkish word for father, "baba," it probably is a conjunction with the Kurmanji word for father, "bav." A translation for the phrase would be close to the sense of "oh deary me!"

[151] The word "kurban" literally means sacrifice whereas "he" is an informal form of "Yes"; as a conjunction, the phrase is again a vernacular form of address usually associated with pronunciations of Turkish by Kurds or of the people of Eastern Turkey.

[152] sokakların gün batınca neden boşaldığını/ ve yüreğimin neden kabardığını bilmiyorum/ konuşam: sessizlik/gitsem: ayrılık.

[153] beni gömmeyin/ susmaya gömülmeyin/ susmak, yanılsamadır.

Don't ask about me: I am here and naked as a sky! I have lost my voice; my voice for usurping as a landmine and in a geography as halal as my mother's milk (ibid, 163).[154]

Considered together, these poetries thus imply a rejection of the conventional use of Turkish through their use of the language to represent a community which is not uniformly Turkish; in this way, these discourses point to a cultural gap between the nationalist centre and the margins of 'Turkish' society, from where these poets speak. The use of Turkish to articulate a different community or express the voice of a self and community discordant with nationalist ideas of self can, therefore, be regarded as seeking to fill this gap. However, in addition to the disjunction between language and the Turkish space, these poetries, being remarkably formulaic forms of discourse, also make overt statements about the interdependence of language and identity, clearly implying that the ideas of alternative self are interwoven with the need for an alternative language to fill this cultural gap; a gap that was created and exists because of the social context of political domination.

As such, these poetries instantiate a rejection of Turkish in its paradigmatic or nationalistic use by how the question of language is problematised within them and through their distinct and diverse symbologies of 'East', 'mountains' and 'Gods'. However, merely rejecting does not entail an appropriation of language, for the combination/selection of use of language and different strategies are also possible. To identify the particular uses of Turkish effected in these poetries, attention therefore must turn to other features of language use – its formal grammatical features and rhetorical aspects – as a basis for comparison with canonic texts. This is necessary in that appropriation of a language, by definition, is a contrast between texts of the same 'national' literature, as analysis of the use of language in a text on its own cannot show its idiosyncrasies without comparison to the norm.

While the disjunction between language and space may signify a rejection of the normative uses of Turkish, the tensions marking the language of the text is what makes different uses of language apparent. As well as undermining the cultural logic dominating the forms of use of language, postcolonial literary theories offer a range of indicators of appropriation of a language. These include the main ways in which authors operating in similar contexts of political domination engage and adjust the formal features of language and bring to bear the

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[154] Beni sorma: yaza yaza tükenir, tükene tükene yazarım ya da. beni sorma: düşe kalka gider, eksile büyüye, ağlaya güle ölürüm ya da./ beni sorma: buradayım ve bir gökyüzü kadar çıplak! sesimi yitirdim; sesimi gasp için mayın ve anamın sütü kadar helâl coğrafyalarda…

features or aspects of the dominated language on the standard of the centre (Ashcroft 1989, 6).

Kurdish Language Uses

As a starting point for the formal grammatical uses of language, this discussion considers the ways in which Kurdish language uses reflect on the use of Turkish in the cross-cultural texts. With reference to vocabulary and diction, one of the first questions is whether the poetries of Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı use any word that can be related to Kurdish. Although these poetries do not include any form of gloss, that is parenthetic translations of Kurdish words, Odabaşı's poetry is distinguished as the one in which Kurdish language uses most reflect. For instance, again in his Poems without a Homeland:

> /ö-
>
> lü-
>
> me de tilili
>
> tilili ölüme de ömrümüz!/
>
> To death also a tilili
>
> A tilili to death is also our lives! (Odabaşı 2000a, 112).

Here, the Kurdish word 'tilili' is used, the definition of which Odabaşı provides as a footnote: "A form of verbal applause (sic) practised usually by women in weddings and festivities". This is significant for two reasons. First, as Ashcroft notes, this relocates the poet who is within the text to outside of it as an interpreter of the word for the reader, as the 'first-interpreter' (Ashcroft 1989, 61). This use places a certain gap between the uses of Turkish as a norm and as one signifying a difference, the gap between which is purportedly filled by this text. Secondly, the word itself, signifying a 'speech act' uttered in a cheerful occasion of a wedding, is counterposed to death, with the outcome that the word no longer retains its original, Kurdish meaning; a cheerful response in Kurdish transforms into either the sorrow or possibly, the defiance of women crying in the face of a death.

Similarly, Odabaşı's poetry also includes untranslated Kurdish words and sentences; for instance, '*de lori lori, kuremin lori… de lo-!*' (Odabaşı 2000a, 134).[155] These uses are distinguished as signifying aspects of Kurdish daily and literary cultural life, composed as they are of the Kurdish words used to informally address a man in the Kurdish vernacular (*lo*) as

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[155] Lyrics from Kurdish folk songs used as chorus device; an exclamation of sorrow and despair which literally translates as "oh dear, oh my son."

well as the refrain (*lori lori*) from the chorus part of Kurdish folk songs. Although not widespread, the use of Kurdish words or sentences in Odabaşı's poetry stands in stark contrast to diction in Matur and Mungan's poetry. In Mungan's poetry, this is only done through referring to places using their pre-Turkishised names, which includes place names in Kurdish, such as 'Dersim' to refer to the city currently known as Tunceli (Chaliand 1993, 52). In relation to this, Matur's poetry is distinguished by a lack of any Kurdish words, including place names, and a clear paucity of any proper names to refer either to places or people. In Odabaşı's poetry, along with the uses of Kurdish mentioned, there is also an abundant range of place and personal names, the latter of which includes '*hezal, zivo, berivan*' (Odabaşı 2000a, 113), as well as allusion to places with their 'old' or Kurdish names such as Amed (a name of the city of Diyarbakir) and Dersim.

In this respect, only Odabaşı's poetry is suggestive of a continuum between the vernacular in Kurdish areas and amongst Kurds (whether the vernacular is Turkish or Kurdish) on the one hand, and the literary language use on the other. Thus positioned, these poetries show a lack of any kind of literary interlanguage or register which the poets utilise.

Syntactic Interventions

While the impact of Kurdish manifests in this way, these poetries are also remarkable in terms of the absence of any syntactic fusion of Turkish words from a Kurdish linguistic point of view. However, in terms of the grammatical aspect of these poetries, the developments of neologisms and unusual conjunctions of words to invent new words are present in these poetries. This is especially apparent in Mungan's poetry: '*Yokülke*' (The Thereisn'tCountry), '*Yurtsa(y)ma*' (*LongingforCountry* or *Rendering*ItCountr*y*), '*tıpkıbasım*' (*Same*Presser) and '*at/lanmış tarih*' (the horsed history or omitted history) (Mungan 1992b, 32 and 74). Mungan's deployment of these words, especially in poems that respond to the political situation, in relation to questions of national domination is noteworthy. However, while this is superficially the case, it is also important to note that these are not poems in which the poetic persona is self-expressing, instead he is responding to the reality and narrating as an observer, as the 'first-interpreter':

> The Thereisn'tCountry
> From the current time of passion
> In which thereisntcountry were the descriptions
> As a hero who is an escapee of past times

Threw bridges to himself (Mungan 1992b, 74).[156]

This way of counterposing neologism and conjunctions connects Mungan's poetry to that of Cemal Süreya from the earlier period. Also known for its construction of neologisms, the poetry of Cemal Süreya is distinguished by unexpected and paradoxical combinations of two terms but also words with no referent (Bezirci 1996, 15) An example for this is the title of one of his influential collections, *Üvercinka*, a word with no apparent referent yet sounds like the word for 'dove', *güvercin,* while the suffix *-ka* has ambiguous locative associations which makes the term sound like a certain space.

These grammatical variances, despite exemplifying the impact of Kurdish language and the of 'sensibilities' of the Turkish language, arguably do not apply to all these poetries or particularly characterise any of them, in light of the relatively little extent to which they are foregrounded. However, while these grammatical language variances present inconclusive data to determine a particularly Kurdish form of appropriating Turkish, they nevertheless exemplify distinct attitudes to the language, which may still be suggestive of a form of appropriation based on the rhetorical uses of language, if not the disparate grammatical aspect discussed.

Rhetorical Variance in Kurdish Literary Writing in Turkish

First, in relation to the diction characterising these poetries, one could begin with the variegated lexis of Mungan's poetry, with its diverse vocabulary. In relation to Turkish use in this respect, one could talk about the presence and influence of two major trajectories, divided between approaches seeking to modernise Turkish by freeing it from words of Persian and Arabic origin as a heritage of Ottoman to modern Turkish, and those which consider these elements as integral parts of modern Turkish. Language use in Mungan's poetry does not seem to suggest prioritising either of these perspectives. What demonstrates this is the consistent if not widespread use of Ottoman or classic diction in his poetry, which, arguably, does not survive in the contemporary vernacular. For instance, consider the following stanza from), *Osmanlıya Dair Hikayat* (Stories about the Ottoman, 1981) where non-Turkish words not in use in the vernacular are underlined in its original in Turkish and its English translation:

Cedelgahın binyıllık yolculuğunda

Sabrın mahrem boyunduruğunda

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[156] Tutkunun şimdiki zamanından/ hangi yokülkedeydi tasvirler/ eski zaman firarı bir kahraman/ köprüler atarken kendine.

Yitirilmiş yurtlarını arayan

Tarih dışı

Toplum dışı

Tebaayız

In the thousand-year journey of the land of disputes

Under the confidential yoke of patience

Those who search for their homeland

Outside of history

Outside of the society

Subjects we are (Mungan 1992b, 74).

Rather than using the Turkish words or contemporary corollaries, Mungan's use of these words is moderated by the stress he places on certain words or concepts while, using these words, simultaneously, to refer to something not referred to, as in '*tebaa*', to describe the community of people without a land. Elsewhere, however, the use of such vocabulary seems to suggest an effort to deploy a theme-oriented use. Mungan's most inflated use of Persian and Arabic words is in *The Stories about the Ottoman* (Behramoğlu 1991, 1126), which presents a conjunction of the content and language use rather than use which points to a cultural gap by inscription of difference.

Apart from his rich diction, Mungan's poetry does not present any examples of switching between different language codes or use of vernacular in terms of syntax or transcription. In this regard, not characterised by a linguistic use inflected by a nationally or ethnically defined identity, the reading Mungan's poetry anticipates involves both a metaphor of representation – just like any other Turkish-language literary text – and a metonymic reading, given the extent to which it problematises identity issues and questions the very existence of the discourse in which it is involved. This is indeed in line with Mungan's purported linguistic strategy of considering the establishment of the Republic and the becoming Other of the East as the 'ground-zero' of his approach. As Sayın notes, Mungan considers the establishment of the Republic as the establishment of the Turkish linguistic standard; he develops his language in the context of reaction to as well as continuity with this standard (Sayın 1997, 112). In this respect, Mungan appears to be attempting to change the standard from within, appropriation by enrichment as it were.

In contrast, Matur's poetry is distinguished by a reversal of this strategy in relation to both diction and general linguistic strategy. In contrast to both Mungan and Odabaşı's poetries,

Matur's poetry is characterised by a non-adorned diction, lack of proper names and complex metaphors. For instance, as in Winds Howl through the Mansions:

> X.
> We would all separate
> Where the road split.
> But who would be the first
> The first to be afraid
> Of the way
> The night
> And the old horseman.
> We were in no order
> We trembled at every parting of the ways (Matur 2004, 31).[157]

This type of minimalist description of objects through mere designators, the way in which the relationship between object and subjects are left enigmatically ambiguous and an uninflated vocabulary, marks this aspect of her discourse. But in contrast to minimalist verbalisation of the subjects represented, what gives Matur's poetry the power it has is the simple polar tensions it asserts to ground the shocking, menacing effect which animates her poetry, prepared and enabled by the distinct plainness of the poetic voice that it is. Consider the following piece of haunting monologue from the same poem:

> […]
> Later
> She would put us in those caskets
> And whisper in our ears
> Of roads
> And winds
> And mansions.
> To stop us being lonely in the dark
> She would add our childhood too
> To comfort us
> With that childhood.
> But when we were left

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[157] Ayrılacaktık herbirimiz/ Bir yolağzında./ Ama önce kim/ Kim korkacaktı/ Yoldan/ Geceden/ Ve yaşlı atlıdan./ Sıramız yoktu/ Bu yüzden ürperiyorduk her ayrımda.

In the long river whose waters streamed

With blood that poured from ritual razor-slashes on our backs

Our mother never wanted such an outrage

And that is why

We kept telling the waters

While she was sleeping

We moved far away (Matur 2004, 24).[158]

In the narrative that proceeds slowly and gradually as each word is read, the reader is suddenly shocked with the violence of 'razor-slashes' yielding an effect that sharply contrasts with the sombre, emotionally composed effect of the preceding lines. The effect is the gap the reader is thrown into between the metonymic statement of her poems, as in this one, and the metaphoric or allegoric effect the poem has in total in relation to the subjects articulated. This metonymic character of her writing is accentuated once the lack of any appeal to code-switching or use of Kurdish vernacular in relation to her poetry's diction is considered; in contrast, shown both by the diction and the narrative style, her poetry seems to be constituted wholly of Turkish vernacular.

The metonymic character of her poetry and the difficulties identifying the connection between language use in her poetry and the Turkish standard, however, are more accurately understood in relation to her purported linguistic strategy. As she herself notes (Christie 2004, 10), her strategy is to avoid all forms of lyricism and cut down language to its bare minimum. She grounds this as the need to use the rhythms, sounds and stresses of the language of her childhood and the sounds of a Kurdish she could not speak to shape her Turkish use, to overlay it with a different rhyme pattern from outside Turkish. In other words, she wants to drive Turkish to its bare minimum, to its poverty, since it is the language she was brought into (Matur 2004). In this regard, one can consider Matur's poetry a form of appropriation, not through its diversification or appropriation in a clear Kurdish direction, but by reducing it to its bare structure.

However, this presents a contradiction between the aestheticism with which Matur approaches the political context and her linguistic strategy, which seems to imply a concern with a form of Kurdish authenticity. Why would one want to drive a language that is not

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[158] Bir zaman sonra / Bizi koyup o sandıklara/ Yol/ Rüzgâr/ Ve konakları fısıldayacaktı kulağımıza./ Yalnız kalmayalım diye karanlıkta/ Çocukluğumuzu ekleyecek/ Avunmamızı isteyecekti/ O çocuklukla./ Sırtımızdan jiletle akıtılan kanın/ Karıştığı uzun ırmağa/ Bırakıldığımızda/ Annemiz bu kadarını istemezdi/ Bu yüzden/ O uyurken/ Uzaklaştık/ Diyorduk sulara.

'one's own' if there is no concern for authenticity or constructing a Kurdish collective identity? Positing that language in her poetry 'is as it is' so that the structures, sounds and rhythms of Kurdish could be overlaid on it, assumes a view of meaning or ways of meaning which are independent of language or pre-language. Notwithstanding the fact that this conflates uses of language with the properties of language, her claim to authenticity seems to apply only superficially to language, as the thematic authenticity her poetry strives for is anything but Kurdish. For this reason, the language use in Matur's poetry is better understood by the paradoxes it comprises, which constitutes its political content.

The disjunction between language use and political content is felt relatively less in relation to rhetorical uses of language in Odabaşı' poetry. In contrast to Mungan and Matur's poetries, Odabaşı's poetry is distinguished as one in which devices which may be regarded as forms of code-switching or vernacular uses make a distinct appearance. The choice of diction in Odabaşı's poetry is arguably situated between that of Mungan and Matur in terms of its connection with vernacular Turkish. While the vocabulary is not as not elaborate as that of Mungan or as minimalist as that of Matur, relevant features of language use in Odabaşı's poetry include proper names, location names, political terminology and figurative uses of language. This is evident in poems such as *Sevinci Savrulmuş Haldaş Gözlerin* (Your Fellow Eyes Bereft of Love) from his *Aynı Göğün Ezgisi* (The Song of the Same Sky, 1988) collection:

> Now silence stole your voice that carries water to my heart
> With that stale shaded sorrow on your face
> Your voice, missing you
> And your eyes have been left to me… (Odabaşı 2000a, 136).[159]

As this stanza exemplifies, Odabaşı's narrative construction expresses a complexity characterised by a degree of immediate intelligibility, which is constructed based on language uses characteristic to the everyday vernacular. But along this lexis line, as evidenced by the verse above, Odabaşı's discourse is also marked by an incorporation of vernacular phrases and phrases uttered in the Eastern or Kurdish accents of Turkish: "the rest was "*vay babo*" or "he kurban"' (ibid, 56). However, other uses of language are also

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[159] Şimdi yüreğime su taşıyan sesini sessizlik çaldı/ yüzünde gölgelenmiş o bayat hüzünle/ senin sesin, hasretin/ ve gözlerin bana emanet kaldı…

incorporated as in *Fire Veren Coğrafyada* (In the Diminishing Geography) from the same collection:

> And we walk
>
> Walking is intoxicated with smells of daises each spring
>
> And then a letter I open with expectation:
>
> "çankırı prison, officially processed": from kadir; (Odabaşı 2000a, 137).[160]

As these examples show, the appeal to phrases from both the Turkish vernacular of Kurds and the official language seems to operate as a device relating to the subject matter of the poem. Although the use of such phrases seems due to their instrumentality in a narrative whose narrator is divorced from the subject in a way that makes it problematic to read as an expression of the poetic persona, the overall effect of the poem, nevertheless, facilitates this. This is because the narrator is present within the poem and, as one its character, expresses a certain difference in relation to language. Yet, the appeal to code switching and the vernacular use of language, despite constituting an expression of difference of the self in this way, cannot simply be read as a language variance mediated completely with a uniform ethnic identity perspective. This is evidenced also by the presence of different literary, if not linguistic, 'codes' and 'utterances' that continuously find their way into Odabaşı's discourse. This is indicated in his poetry by verses in italics or prologues to the poems or utterances rendered in a different typeface, which are a constant feature of his poetry. At times this takes the form of the poet's annotation of the poem such as the following starting lines to his *Göçebe Aşklar Takvimsiz Ayrılıklar* (Nomadic Loves Unscheduled Displacements) from his Poems without a Homeland collection:

> (*I spoke*
>
> *What I said bled at the very place it stood*
>
> *I named you silence…*) (ibid, 86).[161][162]

At other times, verses from other poets or quotes from other writers precede the text and contextualise it, including folk poets and modern poets and authors such as Louis Aragon (ibid, 169). Odabaşı's discourse and language use not only expresses a national sensibility by instantiating it, but also signifies a political difference through the inclusion of their putative

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[160] Ve yürürüz/ yürümek her bahar papatya kokularıyla sarhoş/ sonar merakla açtığım mektup: "çankırı cezaevi, görülmüştür": kadir'den.

[161] (konuştum/ yerli yerinde kanadı konuştuğum/ adını susmak koydum…)

[162] The italics preserve the typeface of the verse in the original.

sensibilities as well. This means that Odabaşı's poetry not only anticipates a metaphorical reading as much as any other Turkish-language literary text, but also expects a metonymic rendition, as an expression of a Kurdish voice that does not necessarily foreground its national identity.

Perhaps another linguistic feature of his poetry, its direct engagement with readership, in contrast with Mungan and Matur's poetry, is also an indicator of this. As well as the politically programmatic enunciations and implications of his discourse, Odabaşı's poetry is also marked with linguistic uses addressing the reader directly as in the Climate of the Loot:

> /become full and complete yourself O the word left half said/
>
> Let's then descend hand in hand to the blessing of this sky;
>
> To the blessing of soil,
>
> Wine
>
> And love
>
> Let's descend, if one descends… (ibid, 70). [163]

This is also evidenced by the fact that his poetry directly poses more questions than the other two poetries. Again, this suggests that any appropriation in Odabaşı's poetry is motivated by a cross-cultural political outlook.

With these linguistic features, Odabaşı poetry provides grounds for considering it as an instance of a discourse in which Turkish is appropriated for a different representational and expressive use. But once again, it is not so clear whether the contrasting language use marking his poetry implies a form of Kurdish appropriation of Turkish language rather than a form of an appropriation developed against Turkish nationalist standards of use. Not only in relation to Odabaşı's poetry but also in relation to Matur and Mungan's poetries, in order to verify whether the forms of language variance emerging in these poetries constitute a form of appropriation and a distinctly Kurdish form of appropriation at that, the discussion therefore turns to a comparison of language use in these poetries and those present in the poetries belonging to the Turkish literary canon.

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[163] /dol ey ve tamamla kendini yarım kalan söz//sonra ele ele inelim bu göğün rahmetine;/ toprağın/ şarabın/ ve sevmenin rahmetine/ inelim inilecekse…

The Differences That Do Not Make a Difference and Those That Do: A Comparison with Languages Uses in Poetries of Turkish-language Literary Canon

In so far as Turkish-language literature is conceived as a grand narrative corresponding to a monolithically defined Turkish society or nation, the examples the poetries of Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı constitute forms of appropriation of Turkish to speak about a different community and a different self. But since it is problematic to classify all literary discourses developing as a counter-narrative against official nationalist paradigms of literary representation and expression as assuming a rejection of the standard language used and thus constituting a form of its appropriation, the kind of linguistic variance constituted by these poetries is largely a matter of how their uses of language differs from all the major literary voices speaking from within the canon, the 'major' literature. In what follows, language use in the poetries of Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı is compared with those of Hilmi Yavuz, Gülten Akın and Küçük İskender, three prominent and canonised poets of the last century, in this context. The comparison takes as its basis a discussion of the following questions: is the use of language to express a different identity idiosyncratic to Kurdish literary writing in Turkish? Are they singular in terms of problematizing the language of the oppressed identities? Do any texts of the canon involve the positing of a cultural gap in between the cultural centre and are preoccupied with the construction of an Otherness within this gap? Alongside this, in relation to the formal features of language, are uses of language in Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı substantially different from those speaking from within the canon?

Through a discussion structured in a way that provides a general overview of language variance incorporating the logical, grammatical and rhetorical aspect of language, this section argues that, although not connected with a sensibility of the East as in the poetries of Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı, Turkish literary writing is also considerably characterised by problematizing issues of language in relation to forms of identity articulated. In this regard, the discussion illuminates the specific linguistic dimension of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish while highlighting the extent to which these language uses are influenced by linguistic strategies existing within the Turkish-language literature as discourses of alterity.

In order to determine the extent to which the rejection of standard Turkish implied is distinct to Kurdish literary writing in Turkish, the discussion examines the ways in which questions of identity and language are formulated in texts of Turkish-language literary canon. Through a

comparison with the grammatical and rhetorical uses of language effected in the poetries of Yavuz, Akın and İskender, it shows that, while language uses in Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı presents a variance suggesting a particular form of appropriation, it also shares language strategies with the texts of the Turkish-language literary canon in a way that relates it to counter-discourses already present within it. The chapter concludes by pointing to the impact of poetic form as a factor in language variance and confluence with the rest of Turkish-language literature.

The poetries of Yavuz, Akın and İskender belong to the post-1950s period of Turkish language poetry, representing poetries with variegated origin and strategies; individually all these poetries are regarded as poetries articulating and constituting distinct responses to social issues and the political context (Behramoğlu 1991, 1117). Even though all three poets are recognised with a political sensitivity influenced by a socialist outlook, as their inclusion in major anthologies and the curriculum (Kurdakul 2000; Odabaşı 2000b) evidences, their poetries speak from within the 'major' literature; notwithstanding the distinct nationalist poetries, these poetries therefore constitute as representative a comparative basis as possible characterised as they are as poetries existing within the nationalist and official standard (Halman 2006) (Kenne et al 2013) (Korkmaz and Özcan, 2006).

Gülten Akın

In amongst these poetries, Akın's poetry distinguishes as one that a distinct woman and mother's sensibilities shaped by a socialist republican perspective are articulated. In two respects, Akın's poetry might be offered as a discourse which involves the expression of a different identity in a way which makes the language of the different self and community an integral part of this discourse. Firstly, Akın's poetry is one which sensibilities of the common people placed in a class society are articulated. For instance, *Seyran Destanı* (The Epic of Seyran, 1992), subjects to attention the history of a slum (*gecekondu*) at the edge of Ankara. The poem's prologue is a quote from Atatürk about the importance of the Ankara for Turkey. Against this background, the story of the slum and its poor people is told, ironically offered as an epic, not about the acts of the political centre but of the people who have been disenfranchised by it. In the oppositional discourse constructed, the silence, the language of the people of Seyran is also referenced:

> We start life with a requiem
>
> Know how to swear before we speak
>
> If half our dictionary is applause

The rest is curse

What other jug fills as easily as us

Which other pool

We are tensest wire (Akın 1986, 13).[164]

The cultural gap her poetry implies, contextualised in a socialist outlook, also applies to the official version of past as well as the present social life determined by these power relations. In *Celaliler Destani* (The Epic of Celalis, 2007), concerning a 16th century popular rebellion in Ottoman history, Akın presents a rereading of this rebellion as one not particularly motivated by a religious or ideological character; but which is at odds with the conventional view of the rebellion as a religious movement (Alparslan 2014, 44). Questions of national/ethnic domination and the present social and personal implications of the power relations are included in her sober rendition. This includes recognition of the East and its problems as made evident in the *A Requiem of the Southeast* in which the problems of the people of the region stated in relation to their silence:

The stoneware courtyard have quietened, I have quietened

I waited for death for the first time

Waited it like waiting for a friend

Mountains (Behramoğlu 1991, 709).[165]

As well as the ramification of the power relations on the communities, acts of violence by the state also finds an antagonistic reaction in Akın's poetry. In a poem written in the aftermath of 1980 military coup and dedicated to its victims, especially to Erdal Eren, a 17-year-old arrested and sentenced to death in the wake of 1980's military coup, Akın's approach is as direct as it is antagonistic:

Grow up so that

Grow up so that when you reach seventeen

Grow up so that your father for you

Can buy executions (Akın 1992, 40).[166]

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[164] Ağıtla başlarız yaşamaya/ Konuşmadan önce sövmeyi biliriz/ Yarısı alkışsa sözlüğümüzün/ Gerisi ilenç/ Bizim kadar çabuk hangi desti dollar/ Akar hangi böğet/ En gergin tel biziz

[165] Taş avlular sustu, ben sustum/ İlk kez bekledim ölümü/ Dostu bekler gibi bekledim/ Dağlar.

[166] Büyü de/ Büyüyüp onyedine geldiğinde/ Büyü de baban sana/ İdamlar alacak

Read metonymically, the identity sensibilities articulated in Akın's poetry distinctly characterise as gender sensibilities, of a woman, of a mother. This is exemplified across her poetry as in examples such as *Kadın Olanın Türküsü* (Song of One Who is a Women):

> Taken leave has the flesh, the exile have arrived and knocks on the door
>
> The exile knocks on the door again
>
> I have collected the books, got the children to dress
>
> Let's now straighten up to the snow of Dranaz
>
> Wherever we fall, the people are poor (Behramoğlu 1991, 711).[167]

The particular way in which Akın problematizes the identity aspect of social realities including its linguistic dimension is captured in the following lines, which is arguably one of the most poignant elaboration of the issue found in Turkish-language literary representing the totality of its paradoxes as exemplified by the way her *Kuş Uçsa Gölge Kalır* (Shade will Remain if Birds were to Fly) collection:

> read the other
>
> the one dwelling
>
> deep down (Akın 1992, 326).[168]

Hilmi Yavuz

A similar synthesis of a culturally pluralist/socialist rendition of identity issues connected with language uses can also be seen in Yavuz's poetry. This is especially present in his *Doğu Şiirleri* (Poems of The East, 1977) collection as well as in other examples across his oeuvre. Yavuz too presents a discourse problematizing the social and cultural ramifications of political domination. In a poem from the collection, *Doğu'nun Ölümleri* (The Deaths of the East), he associates the region with the violence it was inflicted throughout history: "death is a tribe in the East." Further, he refers to the displacement/migration caused by its looting, by its rebellions, expressed through its 'never-ending requiems':

> death is a tribe in the east
>
> the moonlight more boorish than the rose
>
> its lakes more looted than beauty
>
> and with its rebellious, never ending requiems

---

[167] Git oldu can, sürgün geldi dayandı/ Sürgün yine geldi dayandı/ Kitapları topladım, çocukları giydirdim/ Hadi de doğrulalım Dranazın karına/ Biz nereye düşeriz, halk fakir fıkara

[168] ötekini oku./ derinde,/ dipte duranı

its boundless cranes

it is the one whose love is a migrant

with its spring facing migration time and again (Behramoğlu 1991, 764).[169]

The migrants, *gurbetçiler*, of the East, its people who have to go to metropolises to work because of poverty is subjected to attention in the *Doğu'nun Gurbetçileri* (Migrants of the East):

pain is us, it is us again

to great rout we have become a road for (Behramoğlu 1991, 765).[170]

The people of the East are presented in a sympathetic light, even if the poetic persona is distanced as a narrator, as in *Doğu 1310* (The East 1310) where the story of İbrahim Talu, another social bandit, is told:

it was thirteen hundred and ten[171] and you

İbrahim talu

In a winter of requiems

Faded and celibate

Hanged on your shoulders

Death like a sliding rifle

And that sliding rifle

Its trigger an eagle

Barrel the tribe

Handle burnt (Yavuz 1977, 44).[172]

As well as the articulation of these identity issues with a distant narration, the language aspect of the question is also subjected to attention in The Poems of the East as in elsewhere in his poetry:

Named a long silence

With hands thicker than those of gods

---

[169] ölüm bir aşirettir doğuda / ay ışığı gülden hoyrat / gölleri güzelden talandır / ve asi , durak bilmez ağıtlarıyla / uçsuz bucaksız turnalarını / kat kat gurbete durmuş evvel baharla / sevdası göçer olandır
[170] acı biziz, biziz yine /bir büyük bozguna yol olduğumuz
[171] 1310 in Rumi calendar; converted to Gregorian calendar, this would be 1894.
[172] bin üçyüz ondu ve sen / İbrahim talu / ağıtlardan bir kış / solgun ve mücerret / ölümü sürmeli bir tüfek / gibi omzuna asmış /o sürmeli tüfek ki / tetiği kartal / namlusu aşiret /kabzası yanmış

They regard rivers same as death (Behramoğlu 1991, 767).[173]

The contextualisation of language problems, similar to the perspective on social issues, is in terms of power relations of which it is a product:

As a convent breath covering itself with the yashmak of the day

Opens gently the earth

The sound turning itself into a rose

And rose turning itself into silence (Yavuz 1977, 40).[174]

But what also distinguishes Yavuz's particular approach to questions of identity and of linguistic silence is their contextualisation as the problem of the people of Turkey rather than of Turkish or for that matter Kurdish people. For instance, in his poem *Questions of the East*, the questions asked by East are posed to an ambiguous addressee but nevertheless are social questions which have not been articulated; the way in which the couplet refrain opening and closing the poem leaves this in the air, is penetratingly indicative of this:

Which hope, which love, which mountain

And which- (Yavuz 1977, 37).[175]

The synthesising of cultures implied here is articulated elsewhere with the description of East as a melting pot in which the literatures of the East and of the classical period combine to yield a contemporary, heterogenous culture of Rumeli, the term used to denote the European part of Turkey, as opposed to Asia Minor or Anatolia:

Here is the East, the verse which as though

Combining in a silver threaded crocus

Pir sultan and baki effendi

Renders it Rumeli (Yavuz, 1977, 46).[176]

The perspective that gives rise to this assessment is a revolutionary or socialist one, though the political details of which are not left unspecified. For instance:

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[173] The Colony: Uzun bir suskunluk adı verilen / Elleri daha kalın tanrılardan / Nehirlerle bir tutarlar ölümleri

[174] günün yasmağını örtünür bir tekke nefesi / gibi usulca açılır toprak / sesin kendini güle / ve gülün kendini sessizliğe dönüştürmesi

[175] hangi umut, hangi sevda, hangi dağ /ve hangi-

[176] işte doğu, ki sen ki sanki / pir sultan ile baki efendiyi / sırmalı bir çiğdemde birleştirerek / Rumeli kılan dize

The opening of a rose is a revolution

The revolution you know and understand (Behramoğlu 1991, 769).[177]

Küçük İskender

In contrast to the poetries of Yavuz and Akın, İskender's poetry presents a relatively individuated perspective on questions of identity and basis on which the way in which language relates to it may be considered. As a poetry belonging to post 1980s period, İskender's poetry distinguishes as one marked with a personal political response and expression rather than a representation of social issues evident in Akın and Yavuz' poetries. As it becomes evident in one of his better-known poems titled, *Şeysuvar*, from his 1988 collection *Gözlerim Sığmıyor Yüzüme* (My Eyes don't Fit My Face) comprised of six parts, in a way that parallels Mungan's socialist and gender sensibilities, the society's notion of love as a historically fabricated construct is subjected to a passionate reaction. The poem proceeds as a fragmented dialogue with the figure of *Seysuvar*, an Ottoman 'queen' of 18th century renowned for her beauty.

How his poetry can be regarded as a difference of identity is in terms of the putative gender point of view with which the false history of the society is challenged; the society's notions of love are ridiculed as superfluous, as is the self-history assumed by the society. The question of language is brought into İskender's animated narrative not in terms of linguistic disenfranchisement brought about by political domination but as a social lack of expressive means numbed by repetition and formulas:

> those nursery rhymes are not to be repeated!! those riddles cannot be asked!!
>
> how many of the fingers of my chagrin cracks
>
> however many of its lungs swells that I bury in *rakı*[178] bottles
>
> of my loves. Let's let love pass. Let that one go,
>
> forget that Şeysuvar (Behramoğlu 1997, 1044).[179]

The metonymic effect emanating from the explicit statement of the poetic persona's homosexual identity is invariably accompanied by a problematization of the issue of

---

[177] Bir gülün açılması devrimdir / Bildiğin anladığın bir devrim

[178] Rakı is an aniseed-flavoured alcoholic drink, it is one of the most popular in Turkey and is close in taste to Greek and Cypriot ouzo.

[179] o tekerlemeler soylenmeyecek!! o bilmeceler sorulmaz!! / kac parmagi catirdar ki husranimin / kac cigeri siser ki raki siselerinde gomdugum / asklarimin. Aski gecelim. Onu gecelim, / onu unut sehsuvar!!

language and is articulated through appeal to the depressing emotional climate the political power practices facilitate:

- Say you are right!! – the morality of empire,

The campaign of fulfilment!! And assume

That languageless name of weariness resembling a sucked language

Was a bodiless death hiding in me

And indeed excessively moody

And indeed excessively airy

Alas! I wonder why men who have grown tall don't wear bras,

On their feet,

So that their legs don't sag as they stop walking (ibid, 1044).[180]

This articulation is based on a socialist perspective, as its made clear by the ridiculing of a range of political positions as well as the 'false' socialists, again distinctly from a homosexual point of view and in humorously shocking terms:

Multifarious venerable coups

Those who are pure revolution in ambition and passions.. those who feign this!

Yes you!

Those who can get by, I don't carers, labourers,

Dummy-suckers, betrayers, eternal ones[181], laddies[182]!

You who ask the time to someone else on the street

Who borrows a light for your cigarettes

Those who reach fulfilment by hand in the taints of trade unions! Yes you!

Intellectuals! Intellectualists, wish-you-luckers,

The asymmetric inspirers (ibid).[183]

---

[180] - Haklısın de! - imparatorluk ahlağı, / doyum seferberliği! Ve emilmiş / bir dili andıran dilsiz adı usancın / bende gizlenen bedensiz bir ölümdü varsay / ki fazlaca huysuz / ki fazlaca havadar/ ah! Neden sütyen takmaz acaba / uzamış adamlar, / ayaklarına, /yürümedikçe sarkmasın diye bacakları!

[181] The word used here is "halidler," which has been translated literally though as the context indicates, the term is probably a slang term; despite a persistent search no conclusive result was reached. The word may refer to gambling or betting after a famous race of 1990's with the same name.

[182] Again another slang term, almost certainly a diminutive term for young gay man.

[183] muhtelif muhterem darbeler / heveslerde, tutkularda pür ihtilal.. geçinenler! / sizler! / geçinemeyenler, neme gerekçiler, emekçiler, /emzikçiler, hainler, halidler, oğlanlar! / yolda saati başkasına sorup / sigarasına ateş alıp / sendikaların apışarasında elle doyuma ulaşanlar! Sizler! / aydınlar! aydıngerler, kolay gelsinciler,/ asimetrik esinciler

Noteworthy is also the mentioning of East in a way which indicates the poet's awareness of the theme, if not evident sensitivity to or sensibility from it:

> Those who say my dear rose east, those who stick it to
>
> the logic of I love a bit of you, your obscene fascia!
>
> my pianist-chanteurs: my hormones you are!
>
> My Marxist-chanteurs: side of my buttocks you are! (ibid).[184]

And finally, in connection with the satirical manner in which the society's fabricated notions of love is associated with its fabricated history, the metaphor of *Şeysuvar*'s rectangle lips, which utter circle words, is suggestive of the disjunction the poet is drawing attention to, in between the language of power and realities of the social context:

> alas! queen! alas! Şeysuvar
>
> on rectangle lips
>
> so much
>
> circle words there were
>
> whichever of those did I divide with the other
>
> the other invited me to its crowded table! (ibid).[185]

A Complex Contrast of Language Variance

As the discussion of the examples of Yavuz, Akın and İskender's poetries show, there exists a distinct counter-discourse within Turkish-language literature canon which also is marked with the expression of ideas of self and community that provides a stark contrast to Turkish nationalist literary articulations. The literary narratives they create also problematize the cultural gap in between the centre and the community. The politically sensitive and oppositional versions of the 'self's belong to a cultural gap. These discourses too undermine the binary logic of the political centre by speaking about a different community than the one projected by official nationalist orthodoxy. Given this, the poetries of Yavuz, Akın and İskender, shows that the logic of rejection of Turkish standard to speak about the presence of a different community is not specific to Kurdish authors.

But where Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı's poetries differ is the particularly Eastern perspective with which this logic of undermining is enacted. One may retort: what else could

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[184] vay gülüm doğu diyenler, yesinler seni müstehcen bantını / mantığına yapıştıranlar! / piyanist-şantörlerim: hormonlarım benim! / marxist-şantörlerim: kabaetimin kenarları!

[185] ah! sultan! ah! şehsuvar!/ dikdörtgen dudaklarda / ne çok /yuvarlak sözcükler vardı./ hangi birini böldüm ötekine / diğeri beni kalabalık masasına çağırdı!

Turkish authors do but express their Turkish 'national' if not 'nationalist' point of view? As such, the question turns to the extent to which the East as a theme and as a cultural context mediates the sensibilities of Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı's poetries. In this regard, considering the evident moderation of these narratives by East as a theme and perspective but also the extent to which language variance is constitutive of this, the intensity, the "higher coefficient of reterritorialization" may said to be present. While this implies the presence of a Kurdish form of appropriation in terms of its logic, it also underlines that in terms of the enunciations made, these poetries share a common set of values as a schematic association between poetries discussion and political perspectives reveal: the gendered socialist taste and values of Mungan and İskender; the socialist/Marxist underpinnings of Odabaşı, Akın and Yavuz' narratives as well as the mother/women/childhood corollaries between Akın and Matur's poetries.

Besides distinction by the evident proliferation as a theme and focus with which East is spoken about, the range of tastes shared, as implied by diverse language deployment strategies, also raise the question whether language variance in these poetries present any parallels with regards specifically the formal grammatical and rhetorical forms of language use. In relation to these elements of language use, the clear, if not general influence of Kurdish langue and language on Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı's poetries can be offered as examples of contrasting dictions between these two set of poets. As well as examples of untranslated words, Kurdish sentences, expressions from the vernacular and neologisms, the elements of intertextuality appearing as footnotes, quotes, prologues in Odabaşı's poetry demonstrates this. Although it is understandably the case with Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı's poetries, the uses of Kurdish place names in Yavuz's poetry is noteworthy as exemplifying a contrasting attitude to the Kurdish question from within the canon, which thereby illustrates that this is not unique to Kurdish authors. The difference, however, is the relatively widespread extent to which this is taken up in the poetries of Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı alongside direct references.

In terms of diction, Odabaşı's socialism also conjoins with the similar perspectives implied both by Yavuz and Akın's poetry; where this is most evident is in terms of political terminology which finds its way into all these poetries as the concern with themes of 'looting' 'the poor' and 'deaths' evidence. As the discussion above has shown about Yavuz and Akın's poetry, the use of a plain Turkish, not especially inflated with a classic diction also is suggestive of this. But where a difference emerges within this comparison is the evident

'pure-Turkish'[186] (*Öztürkçe*) concerns which emerge in Akın's poetry. For instance, in the poem below, the language is largely free of any Persian or Arabic root words.

This distinct Turkish character of Akın's poetry is manifested incidentally with the use of the term 'southeast' rather than East to differentiate or even imply a homogeneity which suggests a pluralist view of the East. In addition to this kind of pluralism rendered as a perspective, specifically in relation to diction, the appeal to a plain vernacular Turkish in Akın's poetry provides another parallel with Matur's poetry. Even if Akın's poetry is clearly not preoccupied with the same effort of minimalizing the language, of cutting it down to its bare bones, a concern with plain diction is apparent as a device to gradually construct convoluted relationships between objects and events. For instance, in her *Telörgüde Sarı Çiğdem* (Saffron on the Barbwire):

> I saw them on the mountains, I saw them on the roads
>
> A fox sired fox was climbing a slope
>
> Cats on trees all day
>
> What is the relation to wind of the tortoise
>
> The pigs stretch facing the day
>
> The rhinoceros is on the descent (Akın 1992, 225).[187]

The deployment of a plain language linguistic strategy to articulate a women's sensibilities which Akın and Matur share in this way, are provided a stark contrast with the inflated use of a diction to express a homosexual identity as seen in both Mungan and Iskender's poetries. Even though İskender's use of Ottoman or classic terms is not seen as extensively as in Mungan's poetry, the inflated use of language with neologisms and dense metaphors provides a clear parallel where intense use of colloquial terms by İskender's seems to replace Mungan's intermittent and context-based classic diction. While Mungan's similarly overloaded language use acts to articulate both a personal and collective perspective as a community or history, in İskender's poetry similar uses seems to be restricted with personal response and reactions, ostensibly anticipating a reading as an outburst as examples from his poetry evidence.

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[186] For a background of attempt to modernise Turkish by 'purifying' of foreign words, with Arabic and Persian ones in particular, see Geoffrey Lewis' (1999, 52-57) *The Turkish Language Reform A Catastrophic Success*.

[187] Dağlarda gördüm onları yollarda gördüm/ Bir yokuşu çıkıyordu tilki oğlu tilki/ Kediler bütün gün ağaçlarda/ Nedir yelle ilintisi kaplumbağanın/ Domuzlar gerinip güne karşı/ Gergedan inişte.

As highlighted with the discussion of discordant uses to which Turkish has been put in the poetries of Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı in the previous section of this chapter, this comparison also shows that the linguistic strategies marking Kurdish literary writing in Turkish do not share a single attitude to Turkish use. It has demonstrated that, although Kurdish literary writing in Turkish is, indeed, distinguished by the extent and intensity with which it speaks about a different community and from perspectives within that community, the language uses and the linguistic strategies marking them are not anything clearly specific to them. Appearing in Mungan's poetry as a celebration and enrichment of Turkish, in Matur's poetry as a deprivation of language and in Odabaşı's poetry as a connection with Kurdish and socialist politics, the different forms of appropriation rendering a politicised language use, are also a characteristic shared by poetries speaking from within the canon. While this does indeed demonstrate the diversity of use to which Turkish has been put in the hands of Kurdish authors, it makes it problematic to accord forms of appropriation of Turkish to Kurdish authors alone. Instead, what this comparison shows is that while Kurdish literary writing in Turkish is marked with specific uses of language, there is a substantial amount of features that it shares with non-nationalistic narratives within Turkish language poetry.

Pertinently, the existence of such a variegated political configuration with regards distinct uses of language, to be sure, raise important doubts about reading Kurdish literary writing in Turkish as metonym only, and by implication, about arguing for its distinction or difference on this basis. But this is not simply a matter of the correspondence of such elements of language use as those transparent in this body of literature with a categorisation of what constitutes a metonymic expression of a defined identity position. For the examination of language uses in Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı's poetries and their comparison with those speaking from the canon has not only demonstrated the presence of thematic parallels with the theme of East and in general, with the sensibility and aesthetics of literature of periphery (*Taşra Edebiyatı*). Additionally, it has highlighted inadequacies of theoretic perspectives on literary meaning which underpin and accord such importance to the 'metonymic function' of literatures produced in contexts of political domination. This is supported with the impact of aesthetic preferences and formal trends, including both classicist as well as modernist challenges to language, discussed only partially in this section of the discussion. Highlighted by the study as problems of the limits of the applicability and importance of the metaphor/metonym distinction for understanding the status, political import and value of minority and 'minor' literary practices, expounding on such theoretical issues and

considering the ramifications of this state *vis-a-vis* language variance is, therefore, important for Turkish literary studies as it is for literary theory and criticism.

Firstly, this state is remarkable in exemplifying the extent to which the counterposing of the metaphoric and metonymic functions of literature and the foregrounding of textual reading as metonymic, presumes an empiricist epistemological position emphasising the subjective element of meaning, that is, in terms of "*an utterer's meaning something by an audience-directed utterance on a particular occasion*" (Strawson 1970, 105). On this view, meaning is largely a matter of the possession by speakers of audience directed intentions or desires as in the post-structuralist and particularly Deleuzean models under consideration. Finding an analogue in literary and postcolonial theory, this primary position about the nature of meaning is placed in the context of political domination and ideological determination, with a resultant a view of language use and meaning not only in terms of some politically undefined convention but a 'system of signs and meanings' of the dominant culture or the centre, that is, its ideology. Ashcroft in The Empire Writes Back, formulates this position succinctly:

> Language exists, therefore, neither before the fact nor after the fact but in the fact. Language constitutes reality in an obvious way: it provides some terms and not others with which to talk about the world (Ashcroft 1989, 44).

Beyond evidencing itself as a position which reduces even the authors' desires to the content of the 'fact' that the text is, this view, nevertheless, is of import for highlighting the essential social practical aspect of literary and artistic meaning creation. It draws attention to an important dialectic determining literary-meaning production by the minority author by problematising that, even though meaning is largely a desire driven process, the particular language which the author uses, does not arrive free of ideological position and prejudices. It is because of this liminality, because "worlds exist by means of languages" that language, on this view, can be said to "'use' the speaker, rather than vice versa" (Ashcroft 1989, 44). But the same world-creating potential of the language can also be used to inscribe or assert the difference with the world out of which it comes. Within this framework, it is linguistic variation, namely the effect as well as the results of the processes of abrogation and/or appropriation which the minor(ity) author subjects the dominant language, which exists as the fact that the text is, that inscribes the difference of the speaker or her desires, by signifying a different cultural experience made possible only by using the abrogated or appropriated language. It is because of such foregrounding of the difference of the author's

ego that, on this view, minor or dominated literatures can be said to be anticipating a metonymic reading, with especially the synecdoche, that is, the implication of a totally different cultural world by the part of that world expressed by the text, offered as a particular form of metonym exemplifying this (Ashcroft 1989, 53).

Despite contributing to the understanding of the linguistic functions of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish by providing, in this way, a certain systematisation of the role of authorial intention and desires in producing the subjectivities which mark this literary practice, the application of this approach to questions of linguistic variance and meaning to this case reiterates problems with empiricist approaches to language, which yield only a partial understanding of its function. As has been central to both the debate about linguistic and literary meaning[188], this is because of foregrounding of the relationship between the author and the text as the basis of meaning as opposed to rationalist, eclectic or dialectic positions which accord also a distinct status and function to the relationship in between the text and the reality/world to which it seems to correspond somehow. And indeed, the consideration of the applicability of abrogation and appropriation strategies in Kurdish literary writing in Turkish, has not only underlined difficulties with aggregating diverse linguistic strategies marking them under the category but also with the categorisation itself, pointing, once again, to the classic fallacies of the empiricist position in language alongside problems with its partial and eclectic applications.

This empiricist reaction to the representative function of language is given its clearest expression in the very principles offered which are claimed to be 'central to all postcolonial literatures' and which renders it metonymic and forms the rationale for reading it as such. The first is the characterisation of texts produced in conditions of political domination along lines of nation and nationalism as being particularly clear and distinct expressions of the idea of the interdependence of language and identity; that the readings they anticipate and meanings which this can release are what they are only in virtue of the difference constituted against the system of signs and meanings that the language of power is. Not only are you the way you speak but you are only or mostly so. Put more simply and applied to the case, this is the suggestion that such literary political writing as Kurdish literary writing in Turkish has a meaning only in relation to extent to which it is read as an expression of its difference with the metaphors of Turkish identity and totality of the literary mainstream.

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[188] See for instance J. R. Searle's (1962) "Meaning and Speech Acts."

But as the analysis of these poetries demonstrate, this is simply not the case. Not only do these poetries evidence the presence of a variegated theoretic configuration with regards the kind of identities and subjectivities they render but also, with respect to the response to the metaphors of the literary milieu, representing as they do the political spectrum (and confluence with which) ranging from a militant socialism to metropolitan liberalism to shades of political and/or aesthetic conservatism. This is both the case in between these poetries as well as within the various identity inscriptions each of these poetries effect, where identity/language interdependence finds ethnic, gender, geography or class identity sensibilities set in and against a similarly diversified configuration of responses to the politics of Turkish language. Matur's poetry sets Kurdish/women/Eastern identity against a distinct external language, Odabaşı's socialist/Kurdish/Eastern identity against a collective/dominant language, while Mungan's focusses on gender/Eastern identity against a collective/dominant language; and this presents such a vast array that it problematises the specificity and thus adequacy of the category itself.

The status of a second and strictly speaking non-linguistic principle offered as evidencing the need for metonymic reading is similarly suspect; and as such, deserves some attention considering its implications for the linguistic element of the discussion. According to this principle, language, being a matter of social practice and communication, can also be thought as an action, as an act, the 'enunciation' of the Deleuzean account. Inspired by such empiricist notions of language popular in positivist philosophy as speech acts, this second principle relates to a distinction made between "locutionary acts," that is, acts of making a meaningful utterance and "illocutionary acts," that is utterances with which an act is performed, such as statements "I hereby name this ship Queen Elizabeth" or "I apologise." Proposed first by positivist philosopher J. L. Austin (1994 and 1996), the distinction is supposed to be about utterances which are sayings, and utterances which are doings; and the illocutionary acts are offered as those utterances which do not have a truth-content yet have meaning. Extrapolated into the 'colonial context,' this logic raises the literary text onto the level of a speech act or an illocution specifically to perform the action of positing a difference. According to this view, the metonymic character of literatures produced in contexts of political domination is also evident from the gap posited by such an act as the literary text, which refers to no clear cultural experience in that it is an act of inscribing a difference in relation to the dominant culture and hence, implying the existence of a space between them. Ashcroft calls the result of metonymic function of language variance 'cultural

space' while Deleuze and Guattari, on their own brand of 'materialist' empiricism, provides this as a textual feature of 'collectivity.'

Again, the preceding analysis of Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı's poetries, provides ample ground to doubt the implication of a cultural gap, with clear boundaries and operational binaries, which could help improve understanding of the kind of political or minority identities articulated in Kurdish literary writing in Turkish. With such a vast array of identity positions articulated and linguistic strategies undertaken which coalesce with existing discourses within the Turkish literary field such as that of 'periphery,' it is difficult to distinguish what kind of cultural gap or space is implied: one populated by a binary of nations/minority groups, by patriarchal heterosexuality and women and/or gender plurality, by Istanbul and the periphery, by Istanbul and particularly the 'eastern' periphery or by the state and Odabaşı's revolutionaries? Many spaces and gaps, to be sure, spaces that actually seem like two-dimensional matrices, populated only with agents and timeless space/gap in between them. Forcing this spatial metaphor, perhaps the empiricists may do well to argue that it is the totality of these matrices that comprise the cultural space yet would still have to account for the distinct specificity of the difference inscribed. This is added to the fact that the identity positions articulated in Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı's poetries are not as distinctly foregrounded as the poststructuralists or Deleuzeans have argued or predicted. Once again, the criterion fails the test of specificity.

This is significant for the study in that it is the theoretic basis of the reduction of literary/aesthetic meaning to mere linguistic meaning, inspired as it is by the subjective/empirical aspect of meaning as opposed to, say, rationalist theories emphasising the objective nature of language as a system of syntax and grammar or those 'compatibilist' or dialectical theories attempting to correlate both aspects. It is obvious that on an epistemology where meaning is only a matter of expression of desires and intentions, political contexts of domination can avail only assent or dissent, or combinations thereof to the political centre. Yet on rationalist or dialectical views, where meaning is as much a matter of the truth validity[189] as it is of expression, the possibility of representation of reality and its materialities including those political questions forming the context of the study are afforded; and not depending of a conception of reality reduced to personal events, representation also subjects the complexity, contradiction and antagonisms of this reality

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[189] That is, correspondence with an externally existing reality, which the empiricist would be at odds to presuppose given how desires are meant to construct that reality.

rather than one aspect of it, that is, not only a system of signs of the particular language rendered in a single discourse of a poet but also the interaction in between them. To mean is to inscribe difference but it is to inscribe identity too; political contexts are those of domination, but they are also those of resistance; identify statements imply a cultural gap but also cultural congruity.

On such non-empiricist epistemology, literary meaning and language strategies, conceived as incorporating a representational function, incorporate this contradictory nature of linguistic meaning as a quality of the reproduction of social and historical reality in the text. On, for instance, dialectical views of language and artistic reproduction, such as that of Hegel, the reproduction of reality as language, posits a certain contradiction between the reality ascribed to both the world produced in the language and the represented world itself. A statement about the world such as "It is raining now" can only be true and have meaning if the state of affairs is indeed the case that it is raining. But the meaning and the utterance of the statement itself, while positing something about the world, also forms a nexus of contradictions by implying what is not the case in the represented world (If it is the case that it is raining now, it is also the case that it is not sunny) or positing an identity between the sign that represents and represented reality itself. A word can be a copy of the world but how does the world fit into the word?

Based on such basic positions about the nature of linguistic meaning, on rationalist or dialectic views of representation, as can be seen in Kantian, Hegelian and Marxist approaches, literary representation and meaning, as a form of aesthetic representation is distinct from those objective or scientific representations of the world. What distinguishes aesthetic representation is its subjectivity of representation, which the world created through the text problematises from an individual perspective as opposed to the monist/diagnostic scientific approach. Not forgetting that both these forms of representations are those of the of the same reality, it is this individual/subjective nature of aesthetic representation that makes possible the plural quality of its field of expression (Lukacs 1992, 221). And this subjective element of aesthetic representation is most evident in the character of literary representation as a part of the represented reality, which implies an effort or purpose to represent the totality of that reality, while the formation of the content and form of the artwork is from a subjective perspective. The way aesthetic representation deals with this contradiction is, as Lukacs puts it, is to comprise of a content which relates to human experience, where an experience is expressed or represented as the

experience of a particular subject to arrive at an observation about the world and the subject's experience as a social, historical and, last but not least, as an individual being.

It is this plurality of individual perspectives that renders the normative effect of a specific work of art unreplaceable or incompletable by any other (Lukacs 1992, 221). And, as a literary expression or representation with an experiential dimension, which makes the subjective point of view as much as the experiences rendered an effect, poetry, in particular, exemplifies this un-substitutability with the special way in which it uses language, where the content of the poem cannot be conceived in isolation from the transparently elaborate use of language that is its form. The correspondence between the represented content and that to which it refers is possible only through the aesthetic form. With such dialectical perspectives on aesthetic and literary meaning which pays due regard to the relationship between the world and the text as well as those foregrounded between the text, the author and the reader, an unintended dimension is also afforded to the meaning conveyed. As Hegel puts it: "We mean more than we meant to mean" (Bahri 2003, 14). Surely this is in some way to do with the plurality of the autonomous field of representation that art and literature is (as opposed to scientific or everyday representations of empirical reality) or with the kind of complexity some may to consider attributing to the reality represented. For instance, with whatever political or artistic intentions Balzac may have written his novels as a monarchist, this did not stop Engels (2000) later offering his work as a basis of understanding "the downfall of his favourite nobles" and development of capitalism in France. As Engels notes, this was because of the role of Balzac's method and style of literary production, his realism, which, as it were, seems to have transcended his political intentions with regards meanings effected.

This is important in two ways for understanding the impact of aesthetic form over its content, which always incorporate an explicit or implicit political position: first, that the political positions and subjectivities literature articulates depends on the artistic tradition and milieu, the social and historical human practice that art and literature is as much as author's desires. Art's content is art's form, the point it arrived in a history of forms with mutually exclusive responses to the history of realities, of the world, of its nations and individuals. This shows that the meanings and acts it constitutes cannot be thought without appeal to formative forms and artistic trends as influences, preferences and determinations of the authorship as a matter of a living social and economic practice. And this is one of the areas the defects of the postcolonial and minor literary approaches become nuanced: according to the Deleuzean framework, for instance, the only signifier of the desires, the ideological signs which Kafka

brings to the fore are a matter of an 'empirical' confrontation of a particular kind with the entirety of Kafka's oeuvre, his literature, that is, his language use. But this is contentious in that it reduces meaning, knowledge and truth to an internal quality of language rather than a relationship between the subject and objective world.

So, there is a need to distinguish in between the act that the literary practise is, that is, an author's social practice and life, and the act that the literary text is. Language is not the only the signifier of ideology, so is work, that is, social practice. Not only are we the way we speak but we are also the way we do things. It is because of this that while the impact of aesthetic trends is appreciated over an artist's work, the possibility of the forms and styles afforded by the same aesthetic trends to be used for different expressive or representative end remains. The basic role of the social processes in which an author is involved and of the kind of milieu or tradition to which the author relates for the kind of meanings that may be conveyed through the text, may be illustrated with the following thought experiment: Consider for instance that you come upon an unauthored book, which, upon reading, you discover to be as good a specimen of conceptual poetry as you have seen recently. Consider also that, a few days later, you discover the author of the book to be none other than her right honourable lady Mrs Margaret Thatcher. Would your evaluation of the political purport and aesthetic value of the book change and why?

The attempts to reply the question are illuminating in that it shows the extent to which literary conventions of meaning creation are not conventions of speech that retain the same contents upon or after reception. Indeed, as shown by the analysis of Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı's poetries, the identity discourses reflect the linguistic concerns and political sensibilities subjected to treatment in the aesthetic formation dominating the field. Exemplifying this are the links with the symbolism and abstraction of *Second New* poetry which Mungan poetry has, or the epic and lyrical language of the periphery reminiscent of realists of all kinds with which Odabaşı and Mungan's poetry grapples, while in Matur's poetry, the minimalism of language idiosyncratic to pessimism of classicists or the *Second New* is how this is transparently manifested. How forms determine the content, in that case, is only intelligible in relation to the past and present of the interaction between the forms and aesthetic trajectories in question, which precede, condition and exist independently of the author. Language use not only as difference but as a negotiation in the individual and convergent uses of Turkish rendered in poetries examined demonstrates this adequately.

But as the question evidences, the author's desire and intentions, only partially account for the metonym of the inscriptions of identity or difference the text may comprise. This is because, as shown by the thought-experiment, although we did not know the author, we did interpret the artwork in a way which made it susceptible to the fancy of the postcolonialist, as for instance, by raising its deterritorialising potential as a particularly original specimen of the genre. This is the second implication of 'meaning more than meaning to mean': that the form and language in literature is also a negotiation with the world it connects. As Adorno observes, whatever the interpretation of a text may be, it has a truth-validity; plurality of interpretation does not entail its infinity or indeterminacy. For instance, whatever Matur's poetry may be about, on the face it, her poetry is not happy! Moreover, as well as reflecting the kind of question and contradictions they represent, the forms distinguishing artworks are also products of the potential or actual interaction they have with the concrete world of consumerism, the ambiguous status and value of literature and the myriad of politics of domination, resistance and submission which surrounds them. Identity inscriptions, inscriptions of difference are only so in relation to the state of the world to which they relate, it is as much the reception of the work as it is author's desires that decides metonymy. Even if an author writes with the single purpose of self inscription, be it on Saidian or Deleuzuan lines, whether it anticipates a metonymic meaning is a possible question if it can interact with the world of culture and literature out of which it comes, that is, its reception. On the Fanonian line, it is indeed correct that genres of choice for identity inscriptions vary from poetry and drama to novel in a way which reflects the intensity and nature of political struggles for freedom, but this is stated the wrong way up. It is rather that the receptibility by the world, the susceptibility of its socio-cultural sensibilities in such stages that decides the choice of genre and the intensity which conditions its metonymic reception. To be sure, the ascendency of the Kurdish national question and its recognition over the last half century or so, which raised the relevance of its potential identity inscriptions in Kurdish writing, as seen in the *Yasakmeyve* debate and in its aftermath, must have something to do with this.

But further, if one reason for the existence of such historicist identitarian considerations is the susceptibility of the current theoretic formation, the other is the absence of others, its contradictions. Even the empiricist Deleuze has to refer to other writers to differentiate Kafka's escapism than his return to Judaic mythology. This is another aspect of the mediation of the content by the contradictions of the world it represents, itself determinable only in terms of form. As Adorno (1997, 6) puts it:

The basic levels of experience that motivate art are related to those of the objective world from which they recoil. The unsolved antagonisms of reality return in artworks as immanent problems of form. This, not the insertion of objective elements, defines the relation of art to society. The complex of tensions in artworks crystallizes undisturbed in these problems of form and through emancipation from the external world's factual facade converges with the real essence.

What this implies for the interdependence of language and identity, with literature conceived as form-that-has become-content, is that it is a quality which all literature trivially shares. However, as the diversity of perspective with which identity positions are articulated in Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı's poetry evidence, what this implies for literatures produced in contexts of political domination along questions of nationalism and minority rights is that, their aesthetic and artist production is as much a history of the contradictions of their identities as it is a history of forms, to which all literatures belong. And this is a history of domination, resistance, escape and submission, and it is a history of modernism and realism. Despite its distinct singularity, its identity inscriptions are never free of its form, and thus with its heightened status as content which has become form, it is a synecdoche of both the reality it represents and the forms to which it relates. To assert that literature is this or that is to miss this point and is to reduce it to political or scientific representation alone. As Adorno puts its about its converse: "Art perceived strictly aesthetically is art aesthetically misperceived." It seems that the Deleuzean and postcolonialist assertions about language variance in literatures produced in national binaries, concern how abrogation and appropriation of language has been deployed in some cases rather than providing the necessary characteristics which such literatures are supposed to share, that is, 'common sense' theorisation that has creeped into literary theory through the door left ajar by its erstwhile and generous host, empiricism. Yet to account for how identities are constructed is one thing, to claim that all their literature is characterised by identity constructions is another; that is confusing the explanation with rationalisation of the question.

What such considerations imply for the questions of the meaning of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish is that its meaning cannot be restricted to a political meaning alone, to the kind of statement X is Y. It seems that the poststructuralist confuses the subjective aspect of meaning with subjective quality of art and literature by expecting such a response. In this respect, while this theoretical consideration based on the language strategies discussed has shown that the meaning of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish is also literary, it also demonstrated, to a certain degree, that the boundaries of literature are those of language,

not politics. As such the question as to how to objectively define the Turkish literary field finds an answer: it is the literature of Turkish, not of Turkey or Turks alone; it is Turkish-language literature.

Although the next chapter will turn to a consideration of the general impact of the aesthetic dimension of these poetries in forming the kind of political discourses they comprise, as the discussion of language variance in Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı's poetry has shown alone, defining the status, boundaries, import and even the aesthetic value of literatures of dominated nations such as Kurdish literary writing in Turkish presupposes a view of literature which reduces it to a scientific representation. But as the comparison of contrasting language uses have shown, there is a need to consider the questions of both language difference in general but also those differences in terms of the language uses specific to genre of literature that poetry is, that is, literary meaning. For, as shown by the way in which language uses in Kurdish literary writing in Turkish connect to counter-hegemonic discourses present within Turkish-language literature, poetries of Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı anticipate both readings as metonymic and metaphorical entries into the literary space. What this implies is that, the language variance in Kurdish literary writing in Turkish also deserve an analysis in terms of the specifically metaphorical reading they anticipate, in other words, in terms of the of the poetic form of language use, covered in the next chapter of this study. So as not to reduce language uses in these poetries to those in any other political narrative without any attention to its poetic form in a way that can account for its political diversity, attention, therefore, has to turn also to variance in poetic form so that a more accurate understanding of language use and variance in these poetries can be developed.

What this demonstrates specifically is the aspect of language use that has begun to assert itself in the course of this comparison: the variance and diversity of poetic form in between both the poetries of Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı as well as between this set of poets and Yavuz, Akın and İskender. Specifically, as shown by especially the comparison with the latter, Kurdish literary writing in Turkish, on the evidence provided by the cases of Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı's poetries, is arguably characterised mainly with the uptake of free verse poetry and lack of metric construction as poetic form in contrast to poetries of Yavuz and Akın. What supports this also is the parallel in this respect between the poetries of Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı and those Kurdish poets of earlier generation such as Ahmed Arif, Cemal Süreya and partially perhaps, Sezai Karakoç. In order not to restrict the significance of language variance and the meaning of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish with an analysis that regards the

literary text as any other text such as a political rally promotion leaflet, the poetic form, that is, the specific forms of a literary genre and how this mediates the meanings of the text, thus, needs close attention. This is because the question of meaning in poetry is not solely one of how meaning is achieved but also one of how it is achieved poetically. Given that discourses produced by these poets as well as other Kurdish poets are received as poetry, presenting an account of how and whether artistic forms moderate the meaning of these texts, the aesthetic strategies motivating these discourses and the theoretical/ideological presuppositions of poetics animating these poetries is therefore necessary. The following chapter will concentrate on these questions to complement the account of the political dimension and language variance of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish elucidated so far.

Concluding Remarks

Depending on theories of language use both as a representation of the world and expression of identity as a perspective, this chapter provided an account of the linguistic strategies constitutive of the political dimension of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish. It demonstrated that discourses produced by Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı articulate an interdependence between language and the ideas of self inscribed by these poetries in a variety of forms but always through a sensibility shaped and moderated in relation to the East of Turkey. In this regard, as much as the rejection of standards of Turkish use and the particular uses of language effected in Kurdish literary writing in Turkish, the discussion has also highlighted problems with aggregating the linguistic distinction manifested in these poetries under forms of 'abrogation,' 'appropriation' and 'deterritorialisation' processes.

While all three poetries share a common position of rejection of standard Turkish by speaking about a different community, the discussion has shown that what really distinguishes their poetry is the intensity and widespread extent to which the East and its perspectives have been thematised. But where the poets converge in rejecting the use of conventional Turkish, their reasons for doing so, as implied by their poetries present substantial differences. This is especially clear from the different ways in which Turkish has been put to use in these poetries. Specifically, in relation to the particular use and forms of appropriation of Turkish, this discussion outlined the presence of three distinct strategies present within Kurdish literary writing in Turkish.

The consideration of Odabaşı's poetry provided a clear case of the impact of Kurdish on Turkish use with loan words, untranslated sentence and phrases. But while this example pointed out to a distinct Kurdish form of appropriation of Turkish, it also underlined the

extent to which it shared linguistic strategies with counter-hegemonic discourses already present in Turkish as the comparison with Yavuz and Akın's poetries has revealed. It showed that despite appeal to specific devices such as insertion of both literary and extra-literary interventions into his poetry, Odabaşı's language use is crucially characterised by a diction, political sensitivity and imagery which it shares with socialist realist discourses such as the poetry of Ahmed Arif.

As a second form of appropriation of Turkish, the discussion has also revealed the presence of an approach to celebrate and enrich Turkish; nonetheless, as comparison with İskender's poetry has revealed, just like Odabaşı's poetries is connected with discourses present in Turkish-language literature, Mungan's poetry too shares a range of linguistic features with personal poetries which are underpinned by socialist political perspectives. Despite arguably constituting one of its most accomplished examples, the distinction of Mungan's diction with dense, metaphorical language use, neologisms and use of obsolete and obscure Ottoman or classic words have proven not to be anything particular to his poetry as highlighted through parallels with İskender's poetry.

A third strategy has been implied by Matur's poetry as an exhausting struggle with Turkish, a struggle to exhaust it and drive it to its bare minimum. While this strategy implied the influence of Kurdish cultural points of view if not the repercussion of Kurdish language uses of Turkish, this particular attitude also has been found not to be idiosyncratic to Matur at all, even if the intensity with which this is done may be attributed to her poetry. Again, the connections with Akın's poetry demonstrated this parallel as well as the possibility of a woman poet's perspective considered as moderating this particular mode of Turkish use.

Comprised of such variegated yet interconnected strategies, what this state of affairs vis-à-vis language use has shown is that Turkish use in Kurdish literary writing in Turkish is a loose form of appropriation of Turkish with clear links to similar discourses active within the Turkish-language literary canon in relation to hegemonic nationalistic literary perspectives. But although not exclusively characteristic to Kurdish literary writing in Turkish, the common features shared across Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı's poetry in relation to langue use has clearly underlined the presence of a Kurdish literature in Turkish. The intensity and the widespread extent to which representations of and expressions inflected by East marking these poetries; the cultural gap in between the centre and the East each of these discourses point to in a complex variety of ways; and finally, the parallels these linguistic strategies

present with language uses in other Kurdish poets such as Arif, Süreya and Karakoç which confirms its historical continuity are the main linguistic grounds indicative of this.

The comparative discussion of the chapter has also underlined the need to focus on poetic form as a factor not only moderating language use but the totality of the semantic function of these poetries. In this respect, besides providing a comparative account of language uses specific to Kurdish literary writing in Turkish, this section also presented a detailed discussion of the theoretic issues underpinning the restrictions of the its meaning and value of with metonymy and argued for considerations of its metaphorical dimension, its poetic form. As a manifestation of this, the discussion has also highlighted a discontinuity in terms of verse form and construction in between the poetries of Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı and those of the Turkish-language literary canon. It is on this basis that the discussion in the following chapter turns to a consideration of the formal aesthetic dimension of Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı's poetries and how this moderates their political content and language uses.

Chapter Four:

The Contrasting Aesthetic Models of Kurdish Literary Writing in Turkish

The previous two chapters focussed on what may be regarded as the content of representational models emerging in Kurdish literary writing in Turkish and associated language uses marking the discourses it comprises. As such, up to this point, the exposition of what may be regarded as the formal aspects of this writing has been limited as shown by the confinement of the discussion of language uses solely in terms of their function with respect to the political enunciations imparted. Set against an approach which regards poetic form and content in terms of each other, even if not necessarily unified, what this means for the current study is that the consideration of formal aspects of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish has been examined so far only in terms of their non-literary literal and metonymic meanings. So, in order to complement the analysis undertaken in a way that reflects this perspective which regards form and content in terms of one another, attention therefore needs to be dedicated to understanding whether and how aesthetic choices embodied by the poetries of Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı moderate the kind of political enunciations they make.

To this end, this chapter provides a general overview of the aesthetics, the value and tastes shaping these poetries in a way that illustrates the extent to which formal aesthetic choices are responsible for the kind of discourses marking these poetries. The discussion demonstrates that, although not always through an espousal, Kurdish literary writing in Turkish is a writing which develops in relation and reaction to aesthetic configurations present within Turkish-language literature and offers its engagement and connections with realism as a major factor shaping both its representational models as well as the way in which it is received by the literary establishment: the perception of the artistic significance and

value of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish is more or less as that of social realism if not the same.

For this task, this chapter provides an overview of the ways in which the content of these poetries is moderated by their form with special attention to formal aspects such as tone, pitch, rhythm, verse form and structure, system of rhymes, syntax and register. It shows that the interrelationship between the form and content of these poetries suggest that these discourses are partly a product of the poets' efforts to come to terms with complexities of mimetic representation which accounts for both the political enunciations produced by these discourses as well as their reduction by forms of official aestheticism to a form of social(ist) realist discourse, as a result of which its distinct value and significance is disregarded. The discussion starts with examples of the interaction between form and content in the respective poetries of Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı before turning to draw conclusions on the repercussions of the aesthetic consideration thus undertaken.

Framing the question of form in relation to political content, presupposes a conceptualisation of the literary text both as a political and aesthetic artefact. An appeal to aesthetic dimension of literature in a study about the political significance of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish may at first appear paradoxical. For it is the very aestheticism of the Turkish-language literary establishment that may justifiably be offered as the major factor for the current view of the significance of ethnic minority writing in Turkish, including that of its specific Kurdish element. However, the current aestheticism marking the paradigms of ethnic minority writing is only but one view of aesthetic autonomy and dimension of art, and in fact represents a conceptualisation which has been heavily influenced by apolitical aesthetic theories which continue to exert a substantial influence within the official paradigms of literary value in the West.

For Kurdish literary writing in Turkish, the broaching of questions of literary form in terms of its transformative relationship with its content therefore has the potential to reach a more nuanced appreciation of the discourses produced by Kurdish authors which does not limit their value and meaning with the representation of social realities in their work. This appeal to consider the aesthetic and literary mode of production mediating the social content by mobilising its form (aesthetically reproduced truth-content) against its evident political discourses undermines its undervaluation based on its aesthetical qualities by providing an alternative strategy with which its aesthetic dimension is given its proper due. But this strategy also runs counter to overvaluation of the political character of ethnic minority

writing by pointing out to the extent to which its aesthetic dimension mediates its political content.

In what follows, the discussion mobilises the aesthetic form of Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı's poetries against their transparent social and political content examined in the previous parts of this study. It identifies formal features which these poetries present and examines the way in which it relates to its content and shows the diversity of connections these poetries establish with their truth content, which is not always a matter of simple unity between form and content. From the point of view provided by Marcuse's foregrounding of "aesthetic form" which places it in a dialectical relationship with historical conditions (Marcuse 2007), the following questions are posed in relation to the form in these poetries: How do the aesthetic considerations moderate the diverse political responses which seem to emerge from these poetries? What are the particular aesthetic challenges posed by these poetries in relation to their content? And finally, in relation specifically to the ideological determinations of the author, how does the aesthetic considerations moderate the distinct articulations of identity questions?

As outlined above, the argument of the following section is that the poetries of Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı share common concerns of engagement with versions of literary realism which has been present throughout the history of Turkish-language literature in the 20th century, which accounts for the way in which it has been valued by the literary establishment thus far. The discussion thereby demonstrates that the political discourses produced in Kurdish literary writing in Turkish are significantly moderated by aesthetic concerns which cannot be regarded as distinct to this subset of literary writing but are shared by the cross-cultural literary space which Turkish-language literature constitutes. In this regard, this part of the discussion contributes to the current conceptualisations of literatures operating within contexts of national and political domination with a case study which demonstrates the significant extent to which non-Western forms of Marxism and classicism moderates Kurdish minority writing in Turkish.

Content vs Form in Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı's Poetries

Except for Matur's poetry, it may be asserted that the poetries of Mungan and Odabaşı involve poems of all three major categories of poetry in dramatic, epic and lyrical poetry. Whereas Matur's poetry with its distinct tone, pitch, voice as well as its themes could probably be argued as presenting a dramatic poetry, it is noteworthy that in terms of verse form and construction and rhyme structure, all these poetries distinguish as forms of free

verse poetry. While this cannot be associated solely with their poetries or those poetries sharing the same if variegated political sensibilities enunciated, as the setting of the formal aspects of these poetries against their content show, these characteristics prove instrumental in elucidating the kind of attitude each poet articulates on the face of the questions of the representation of social reality. The interplay in between form and content in the following poem, forming a part of the long poem "Ahmet ile Murathan" by Mungan, in his *Sahtiyan* collection, exemplifies this tension:

> 6.
>
> from horsed/omitted[190] pages of history
>
> and misread lives
>
> someone who derives questions and sorrows for himself
>
> in other words, a Dîvan poet who trails carefully
>
> Althusser, Gramsci and the like
>
> and reaps from this gleaming verses for himself
>
> > (recorded in the census files
> >
> > of a hidden republic
> >
> > with an injured ear, nose-pierced
>
> and under his arms
>
> written out of hemlocks, invocations, hunts, his Dîvan
>
> the debris of disguised seas in his eyes
>
> on whose face where caravans forever set camp here he is
>
> the poet of pitch-dark countries with scorpion branding flags)
>
> using the common language of multi-national minorities
>
> using the second persons of history
>
> builds gradually
>
> builds what remains from fires
>
> the capital city of his dreams
>
> collects his images scattered across his childhood
>
> the flowers of the innocent
>
> he hid in the bosom of his epics
>
> under its scorpion branding flag

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[190] See Note 135.

each of whom who held his heart towards his love as a warrior

these two fugitives of love, these two brunet heroes

came and passed by the pivot of a hunt

came and passed by the delusional sheath of a forest

without touching a single flower

and now henceforth

in all tragedies written for

blood god sacrifice

it's the silence of the choir

Ahmet with Murathan (Mungan 1992b, 32).[191]

One of the first things to be noticed about the form of the poem is that this is a poem that is part of a long poem comprised of multiple poems; this is also true for the physical shape of the poetries of Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı. Although these poets, to be sure, write detached, stand-alone poems, alongside their frequency, what is remarkable about these poems is also the extent which they act as representations and/or reaction towards social and political issues. And this poem is a case in point from Mungan.

The story of the poem sets the isolation of Ahmet and Murathan against a context of social issues of nation-state building where all identities are flattened under the "scorpion branding flag," referring either to crescent shape(s) in Ottoman or Turkish flags, nonetheless offering an original symbol for political power, to the social context of which Ahmet and Murathan belong but does not conform since "they have not touched any of the flowers of this hallucination." The poem develops as a reaction to the social context rather than a defined figure or location of authority and closes with underlining the Otherness of the poet in the face of this situation.

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[191] at/lanmış tarih sayfalarından/ ve yanlış okunmuş hayatlardan/ kendine sorular ve hüzünler çıkaran biri/ yani Althusser'i, Gramsci'yi ve benzerlerini/ dikkatle izleyen ve bunlardan kendine/ sırmalı dizler biçen bir Dîvan şairi/ (kulağı yaralı, burnu hızmalı/ ve gizli cumhuriyetin/ nüfus kütüklerine kayıtlı/ ve koltuğunun altında/ ağulardan, zikirlerden, avlardan yazılmış Dîvan'ı/ gözlerinde gizlenmş denizlerin enkazı/ ve yüzünde her daim kervanlar konaklayan/işte bu/ bayrağı akrepli zifiri ülkelerin şairi)/ kullanarak çokuluslu azınlıkların ortak dilni/ kullanarak tarihin ikinci kişilerini/ kuruyor ağır ağır/ kuruyor yangınlardan artakalan/ düşlerinin başkentini/ topluyor destanlarının koynunda sakladığı/ akrepli bayrağının altına/ çocukluğuna saçılmış imgelerinin/ masumların çiçeklerini/ her biri yüreğini sevdasına cengaver tutan/ bu iki sevda firarı, bu şarapnel esmeri iki kahraman/ gelp geçtiler dönencesinden bir avın/ gel,p geçtiler bir ormanın sanrılı kınından/ hiçbir çiçeğe dokunmadan/ ve şimdi artık/ kantanrısı kurban/ için yazılmış bütün tragedyalarda/ koronun sessizliğidir/ Ahmet ile Murathan.

While this is the basic, superficial argument of the poem, the formal aspect of the poem provides a stark contrast; for one thing even though the poem is politically pitched, it is not about an event. What evidences this is that the imagery of the poem is not special, quite the converse, it is recent history and its social context. And despite the counterposing of an ambiguously homosexual identity with the social context, the tone of the poem is neither camp nor distinctly aggravated considering the isolation and disenfranchisement articulated. Rather, the tone is composed and authoritative; additionally, even though the authorial voice seems to be set against the context and its political authority, he speaks simultaneously from within the context and outside of it as the contrast of being a Divan poet who also knows about Althusser and Gramsci indicates.

This is also confirmed by formal features of the poem; although written in free verse with no discernible rhythmic structure, the poem makes sparing use of devices such as alliteration (lines beginning with *kullanarak* and *kuruyor*) and assonance, with rhyming verses. The poem's overall logic of identifying a personal past with a social past is reinforced through formal features that display a level of elaborateness, claiming a degree of distinction of the poet's artistry. What this reveals about the narrator is that, though concerned with representing reality, the poet is not just content with creating a 'replica' of reality and further, is indeed in anticipation of this charge as shown both by the reference to Divan poetry as much as the elaborateness which formal aspects facilitate. Specifically, given the poem's articulation of personal/gender sensitivities, this indicates the poet's concern to include his personal perspective as part of the reality represented, that is, that he himself is a part of the reality represented and thus is constitutive of it. It is on this background that the imagery of the poem as history and as writing relates to the content of the poem as the individual writing himself. Although this shows how aesthetic concerns are linked to the identitarian content or the celebration of Turkish in Mungan's poetry, it equally makes it problematic to reduce form in his poetry to a matter of content since the poem itself suggest the reverse by making the very identity expressed a part of the reality represented, a part of the writing undertaken.

The narrator implied in Odabaşı's poems, the aesthetic of representation that can be traced from the formal aspects of his poetry, however, provides a contrasting attitude towards the reality represented. For from amongst the three poets, Odabaşı's predominantly lyric poetry seems as an attempt to harmonise form with content in a way that derives form from content. Consider the following poem which again forms a part of the lyrical epic *The Climate of Loot*:

I

Reşo was a nudity which repeated itself

another one of his names the longest alas!

leaning his back on mount botan every night

"were hay lo hay lo hay loo!"[192]

bellowing like orphaned oxes on mount sides

he used to sit and laugh at the echo of his voice

when he ran, wind used to enter his shalwar

he, a man of a dark fate a dark man

forgetting his breath standing along grave sides

to a rebellion he has scattered his voice

silence gives consent

he does not speak…

and pressing on the ground with a grudge he passes

jolting it he passes

kissing everything in its womb that has silenced in abundance he passes

his voice, his love echoless… (Odabaşı 2000a, 54).[193]

As part of the story of Reşo, the poem provides a lyrical description of the figure: he is a bandit who does not account for his actions and the sole motives for which is his vengeance following the death of someone close as the couplet suggests: "forgetting his name standing over cemetery stones/…." Despite this, the poet describes Reşo's silence and actions of taking to mountains in a sympathetic light as his repressed 'voice' "repressed dreams" are due to injustices he has suffered, leaving him 'echoless.'

The formal aspects of the poem present a unity with its content; the composed if firm tone of the poem, characteristic to some of Odabaşı's poems counterbalances the tension of the statement and resolution of the contradiction that the figure of Reşo is. The poetic persona

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[192] A chorus entrance in Kurdish; literally meaning and forming a repetition of the phrase "come o brother," the phrase is well known and often used chorus device in Kurdish folk songs.

[193] kendini tekrarlayan bir çıplaklıktı Reso/ bir başka adı da en uzun eyvah/ her akşam sırtını dayayıp Botan Dağı`na/ "Were hay lo hay lo hay loo"/ bağırıp dağlarda öksüz öküzler gibi/ oturup sesinin yankısına gülerdi/ koşardı, şalvarına rüzgar girerdi/ o kara yazılı bir kara adam/ mezar başlarında unutup nefesini/ bir isyana dağıtmıştır sesini/ sükut ikrardan/ konuşmaz…/ ve toprağa hınçla basarak geçer/ sarsarak geçer/ rahminde bin bereket susan ne varsa öperek geçer/ sesi de, sevdası da yankısız…

is divorced from what is related and stands as an impersonal observer. The seeming congruity between form and content of the poem is indicated by its pastoral imagery, vernacular diction, and intense rhyming verses to describe and reinforce identification with Reşo as in the second and third verses. In this regard, the poem is representative of formal distinctions of Odabaşı's free verse lyrical poetry and tone as well as the use of a simple rhyme structure. With the use of other devices, the poem proceeds in a contradictory pace, starting flatly in the first two stanzas only to pick up from there on and ends in a stress; the refrains of the last stanza come to standstill with the alliterative rhythmic final line connecting to the last line of the previous stanza. The effect is a stress on the inevitably of Reşo's actions.

As such, being a poetry that involves representing real events or events as though they were real, from an impersonal point of view, this exemplifies Odabaşı's concern with the determinations of the individual, both himself as the narrator and the figure of Reşo by social and historical context. Although at this juncture Odabaşı's poetry faces issues relating to the reduction of representation to 'copy' or 'reproduction,' for the purposes of our discussion, that his poetry is motivated by these concerns is adequate in itself to identify since the intention is not to assess the quality of his poetry but to understand its aesthetic dimension. In any case, this is not a complete account of Odabaşı's attitude to representation as the consideration of the formal aspects of his poetry reveals. As in the above poem, the individual whose determinations are to be subject to literary articulation is defined as a Kurdish individual, that the poem is about Reşo and uses his Kurdish expressions are the pointers to crucial difference of his poetry. Although in contrast to Mungan's poetry where identity and reality is given equal weighing in terms of each other as the content represented, Odabaşı's poetry takes a view starting from the reality, and nevertheless posits and defines an identity too. In this regard, while Odabaşı's poetry too brings identity concerns into social realism, it does this by contextualising the Kurdish identity as a part of the reality towards which his poetry is positioned.

Where Mungan and Odabaşı's poetry display strategies of interaction of form and content, Matur's stresses the distance between the two. For it is in her poetry that one witnesses representation of reality being inflected by form even if what is represented is often the real events, parts of history or a recasting of them. Given the abstract and metaphysical nature of the discourses she produces which renders it problematic to regard her oeuvre as a form of realist poetry, consider the following excerpt from Winds Howl through the Mansions, as an example of how the formal aspects function in relation to its representational dimension:

X

We would all separate

Where the road split.

But who would be the first

The first to be afraid

Of the way

The night

And the old horseman.

We were in no order

We trembled at every parting of the ways.

I was the last

The narrow road stretched before me

Gathering strength from their grief

I was the traveller (Matur2004, 30-32).[194]

As the previous parts of the poem evidence, the poem is about a group of people on their way to a place of exile or migration after being displaced due to events that are left typically ambiguous. The group of people are moving towards a road split but seem disunited with the poet following at rear, having lagged behind, yet walking on, in defiance if not in anger. Acting as an allegory for a tragedy, the poem's tone, however, does not relate to its content immediately. Similar to most of Matur's poetry, the poem moves slowly with a dejected yet calm tone, containing no emotional outburst from the narrator who is in the tableau related but only to make an appearance in the second stanza of the poem as its subject shifts from first person plural to singular. The imagery of the poem rendered through its economic diction is minimal and includes only the mountain, the night sky and the narrow road.

The poem is typical of Matur's poetry with its unelaborate diction and selective rhyme use and devices besides short verses; as a first impression it provides a contrast to the tragedy of the content implied, yet as the poem unfolds, the tone and form applies more pertinently to the aftermath of a tragedy rather than the tragedy itself. It is in this detail that something significant about the narrator is revealed; the realities implied are not so much

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[194] Ayrılacaktık herbirimiz/ Bir yolağzında./ Ama önce kim/ Kim korkacaktı/ Yoldan/ Geceden/ Ve yaşlı atlıdan./ Sıramız yoktu/ Bu yüzden ürperiyorduk her ayrımda./ Ben kalmıştım sona/ Önümde uzanan dar yolla/ Acılarından güç alan/ Bir yolcuydum artık hayatta.

representations of the social reality by the narrator but social realities of the narrator persona: for, as the poem shows, whatever the imagery of the poem, it is the imagery of the poetic persona. The poem is about the poet. Although like Mungan, the poetic persona is involved in the representation the poem renders, the reality represented is that of the individual herself. The way in which the form builds on the social content represented as the poet's experiences, which renders the poetic persona as the represented, leaves the reader of Matur's poetry with the feeling that the style of narration itself is the consequence of the tragedy related; it does this by bringing into attention the very discontinuity between the narrative and what is narrated through the depravation of the act of narration itself. In this regard, Matur's poetry distinguishes as one in which representation of reality becomes a question in so far as it relates to personal reality, to the self-referentiality, which is at the centre of her poetry.

In terms of ideas of self and community, collective history and political enunciations which limits the scope of this study's discussion of the transparent social content of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish, this examination of the formal aspect of Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı's poetries have shown that the identity antagonisms articulated in these works owe this largely to the particular arrangement of formal qualities which make them a self-contained whole. Furthermore, in relation to aesthetic form, that is language variance as well as the variegated utilisations of other poetic formal device and techniques in these poetries, on the one hand, we may arguably propose a set of common qualities shared by Kurdish poets, Kurdish styles in Turkish, as it were. But on the other, there is much in the aesthetics underpinning these poetries which connect the universals enunciated and forms which are intelligible only in terms of the very aesthetic contradictions shaping the cross-cultural Turkish-language literary space: from Mungan's gender sensibilities to Odabaşı's patriotism and Matur's metaphysical approach, language appropriation strategies by celebration, depravation or political aestheticization of language are nothing particular to Kurdish literary writing in Turkish. Neither is free verse poetry, irregular rhyming schemes, use of folkloric elements or the distinction of being a discourse about discourse. But while not constituting a difference in these senses, the Kurdish literary writing in Turkish is what is new about Turkish-language literature, especially in terms of the notions of alternative self and community as well as its distinction as a discourse about language use, for this is what exists outside nationalist and classicist literary analogues. For Kurdish literary writing in Turkish, this implies that its preoccupation with questions of form in relation to political articulations correlate significantly with the general contradictions of creating aesthetics against or

instead of aestheticism prevailing within Turkish-language literature, currently ongoing in a context of aesthetic fragmentation since the 1980's.

Briefly characterising the mediation of content with form in each of the poetries reveals these points of aesthetic confluence and divergence and helps contextualise the kind of concerns marking them against specific aesthetic contradictions defining the Turkish-language literary space in the contemporary era. To begin with, in Mungan's poetry, we may arguably talk about two different ways in which the formal qualities moderate and define the content of the social contradictions represented. Firstly, through a variegated and consummate use of language, with a diction appealing to both classicist sensibilities as seen in the intermittent use of classic diction combined with relatively contemporary concerns for poetic language as seen in the abstract and dense use of language and syntactic derivations discussed such as in "*Yokülke*," (The Thereisn'tCountry). Mungan creates a distinct contrast between the subjects, the selves of the reality represented, and the narrator implied; alongside the social reality represented, what is represented also is the contrast produced, that is, the contradiction between the identity expressed and the state of the social reality as it is (1992b, 74). Here, the free verse form, which does not follow any metric system or rhyming scheme, facilitates the lyricism anticipated by the task of articulating such complexities while in Odabaşı, the same seems to relate to his romanticism. The characterisation of Mungan's poetry with such formal qualities, considered in tandem with its content as a distinct literary articulation of questions of language and self set against a cross-cultural space, brings Mungan's poetry closer perhaps to the poetry of Cemal Süreya and the *Second New* school. And in general, this highlights the impact of perspectives emerging in the 20th century concerned specifically with modernising Turkish poetry over his poetry, which indicates an espousal of its political positions against the nationalist or classicist cultural logic if not its modernistic renditions. This also provides a line of confluence Mungan's poetry has with those of contemporaries such as Küçük İskender, discussed in the previous chapter, in terms of shared strategies of form and language use. The novelty in Mungan's poetry is arguably the aestheticization of the gender of the Other identity in a multicultural social reality.

A second way in which formal qualities seem to moderate the presentation of political domination in Mungan's poetry seems to be the contrast it provides between the homosexual gender sensibilities it is supposed to express and the not-particularly-gender inflection of its aesthetic choices. And this is not simply a matter of whether or not the tone of his poetry is particularly camp or whether his poetry can be read as the poetic reactions

of a homosexual sensibility. It is rather that the total effect of Mungan's poetry, such as in *Sahtiyan*, where the narrator is from the East and West of Turkey at the same time, may arguably be its formulation of the contradiction, the tension involved in defining a gendered self within the particular social reality and historical conditions represented. In this regard, both the explicit questioning of ideology and hegemony, but also as a representation set against the cross-cultural context, Mungan's poetry presents formal aspects which seem to have emerged out of negotiation with realist aesthetics past and present within Turkish-language literature. This shown clearly with the shared problematization of East and its identity in Yavuz's poetry and the similar class perspectives assumed in Gülten Akın's poetry.

Whereas intensity seems to be the effect of Mungan's poetry, in Odabaşı's poetry contradictions characterising the content of his poetry seems to be reconciling the ideological determination of the self with its national sensibilities; the tone, languages uses including both the vernacular and political diction, even when Odabaşı is not the impersonal narrator, sets the political sensibilities of the reader with those of the expressed self of the text; it speaks to the readership rather than the literary field *per se*. This is evident from the political diction used as well as the questions and appeals to the reader. In Eagleton's sense of the field of aesthetics as also a field of political resistance and struggle against the hegemonic ideology and its rationalisation through aesthetics, Odabaşı's poetry takes this challenge more literally than Mungan and Matur with formal qualities which leaves little room in between the implied narrator and the author. This is probably one of the main reasons why his poetry is received as a programmatic poetry and as exemplifying the aestheticization of politics rather than a politicisation of aesthetics (Korkmaz and Özcan 2006, 90-110); and, it is noteworthy that his poetry is open to interpretations as one constituting an overturn of the logic of paradigmatic aesthetics only by a substitution of Turkish nationalist politics with a Marxian perspective. However, whatever one makes out of this form of Marxism, this shows that Odabaşı's poetry is also characterised with questions of representation which have been a major concern for forms of social and socialist realist perspectives influential in 20th century Turkish-language literature. What the aesthetic dimension of Odabaşı poetry shows, however, also is the distinctly political aesthetics of a Kurdish identity it constitutes, again providing a coordinate of continuity and development of sensibilities with poets such as Nazım Hikmet and Ahmed Arif before him.

Where Odabaşı and Mungan's poetries assume a realist political conceptualisation of social reality, Matur's poetry distinguishes as one in which the social content represented is arranged according to psychology of the narrator and her formal preferences. Whereas the

poetry of the former two elaborate and detail the social reality from the particular basis of personal experiences which forms the themes and tropes of the text, Matur's use of plain language, an unelaborate diction, limited or selective use of poetic devices such as irregular rhymes stifle the social reality represented to a personal one. Although her poetry assumes a contrasting view of history and reality than the Turkish nationalist literary articulations, the apolitical perspecctive of her poetry highlighted in a personal language seeking to deprive it of all lyricism emphasises the narrator rather the content; this places a distance between the identity, the woman's voice expressed and the social reality to which it corresponds. The contradiction most of Matur's poetry thus builds on seems to concern the determinations of the subject by the social reality against which it is mostly powerless; the contradictions of constructing a self is not a question to be resolved in terms of the particular historical and social conjecture her poetry or herself relates but to a somewhat personal particular history. Mediated with a linguistic strategy of depriving language which invariably emphasises the trauma of the narrator, the forms of narration in her poetry highlight its formalist concerns; this brings Matur's poetry close to the aestheticism of both the nationalist and classicist trajectories but also to the metaphysical approaches developing against these. The parallels her poetry presents with Sezai Karakoç and Gülten Akın's poetry in terms of themes of a metaphysical history elaborated through tropes of childhood and motherhood as much as astute if minimalistic language use and poetic form is strongly suggestive of this. But as an aesthetic difference, even though she claims her poetry has no precursors, her poetry, nonetheless, is distinguished as one of the only few metaphysical poetries in Turkish-language literature which does not use forms of syllabic line construction or the classic *Aruz* as poetic form; being an astute free verse metaphysical poetry moderated with subtle gender sensibilities adequately distinguishes her self-contained style.

This discussion, however, does not simply highlight the presence of an aesthetic value which could be accorded to Kurdish literary writing in Turkish alongside its political evaluation. It shows also that the political expressions of the respective poetries, as well as owing their political content and value to the the political positions of its authors, are also determined by this aesthetic dimension. Given that the current aesthetic formation within Kurdish literary writing in Turkish is shaped by a diversity of response to questions of representation mirroring the formation with Turkish language literary field, this shows that its political articulations are also a product of the period in Turkish, Kurdish and world literatures defined by contrasting postmodernist and modernist perspectives. In this respect, there is a need to consider the impact of the current aesthetic formation present within Turkish literature on

Kurdish literary writing in Turkish in terms especially of its state of plurality and the value ascribed to it aesthetic dimension. To do this in a way which provides a basis to the discussion of the value and importance of this case for literary conceptions of the national, political and aesthetic dimensions of literature, the discussion will now turn to comparison between such aspects of Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı's poetries and two examples of Kurdish poetry from the present day.

Form vs Content in Metin Kaygalak and Mehmet Butakın's Poetry

Metin Kaygalak and Mehmet Butakın's poetry are products of the current period of Turkish poetry, which saw the upheaval of literary scene dominated by the polarity between the literature of cannon reflecting an official or traditional view of society and the individual, and those realist trends which opposed them aesthetics (Korkmaz and Özcan 2006, 90-110). What has facilitated this has been the proliferation in both apolitical as well as politically plural approaches to literature, with the result of the political and artistic fragmentation of poetry currently ongoing. Reasons for this evolution of Turkish poetry has also been the confrontation of Turkish nationalism in the 1980's, the completion of the integration of Turkey into market economy as well as evolution of the theoretic formation to include forms of particularism, nihilism and identity approaches as reflected in the liberalism of one kind or another prevalent within the field. The exponential increase in quantity of the poems comprising the poetry annals published in 1990s and the proliferation of poetry journals and anthologies was subjected to debate as was its lack of standard, automatism, abstractedness, a formalism akin to SN, classicism and nihilism. Now in the first quarter of the new century, although, the initial pace of this proliferation has somewhat waned, with poetry as popular as it has been amongst the urban literate. It is remarkable to note the increased cultural and literary activity extending to all sections of the country, including Kurdish regions in the current period of Turkish history due to onset of marketisation as much as the completion of the industrialisation of society (Somer, 2006).

The poetries of Kaygalak and Butakın are offered for this part of the examination not as representative examples of the current period Kurdish literary writing in Turkish but as that of its diversity. But it is noteworthy that these poetries also represent, to a certain extent, the aesthetic questions animating the milieu out of which it comes. Considering these poetries is, therefore, important, also because of the extent to which they exemplify the dominant aesthetic challenges of the period, defined by the decreasing influence of realist approaches and influence of individual perspectives conditioned to a certain extent by

western metaphors and tropes of individuality. Predictably, as the following discussion of the content demonstrates, the poetries of Kaygalak and Butakın, who came to the fore with explicit identity functions attributed to it, present thematic and aesthetic parallels with those of Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı. Indeed, the contrasting ideas of human subject and community as well as aesthetics marking these poetries, the differences constituted with the poetries of Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı's presents an axis through which its current fragmentation can also be understood. This is because the meanings and aesthetic value attributed to Kurdish literary writing in Turkish up till now, both in this study as in elsewhere, has been done so despite its state of plurality of aesthetic and political positions, that is, its fragmentary nature. How can it be that a diverse and disparate discourse yet has aesthetic value as a whole? As examples of the current state of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish, the poetries of Kaygalak and Butakın also provide a basis to assess the importance and ramifications of this aesthetic plurality for Turkish and Kurdish literatures as well as literature in general, from the very perspective of representation theories of literature, which has made the examination of this diversity possible by its dialectical approach to the relationship between the form and content of an artwork.

To start of the discussion of the poetries of Kurdish authors who have problematised their identity, with regards both the Kurdishness as well as 'identityless' status of their poetry, Kaygalak has been surprisingly the most vocal considering the abstract melancholia which characterises his poetry. Involved in the Yasakmeyve debate and in other journals subsequent to it, Kaygalak's poetry came into recognition with the publication of his collections *Yüzümdeki Kuyu*[195] (1998), *Nar Defteri*[196] (2006), *Ortadoks Oğlanlar için Fücur*[197] (2006) and *Doğu Kapısında Jonglör*[198] (2013). Another of his collections, *Suya Okunan Dua*[199] (2000) was published to some acclaim as well as the appearance of his poems in literary journals (Uluçay 2006, 17-29). As a poet born in 1968, his poetry is contemporaneous with that that of Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı as the publication of his first poem in *Güneş Gazetesi Genç Şairler Antolojisi* (The *Güneş* Newspaper Anthology of Young Poets) of 1987 evidences.

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[195] The Well in my Face.
[196] The Pomegrande Notebook.
[197] Mischief for Orthodox Boys.
[198] Jonglör at the Door of East. (The word Jonglör is an invention by the poem probably relating and ridiculing folkloric approaches to literature and to East.
[199] The Prayer to the Water

Translation of two of his poems, *Yüzümdeki Kuyu* (The Well in My Face) and *Mil Çekilmiş Sözler* (Poker Blinded Words) from his collection *Yüzümdeki Kuyu* (1998) provide an excellent basis for the interpretations of his poetry as being underpinned by a mysticism and aestheticism offered as transparent features of his poetry. Based on questions which has formed the structure of the discussion so far, the kind of themes dealt with and the immediate transparent content of Kaygalak's poems does not, at first sight, seem particularly political. Although the looming possibility that the author is subjected to or a surviving victim of a trauma, which is invariably associative of questions of silence and language, of the East and of an implied Kurdish nationality, the references are not ideological. Consider, for instance, the following passages, from The Well in My Face:

> The Well in My Face
>
> to a pearl coffin was inscribed, the
> well left to the eyes of a child.
> I touched a sapphire-made towel with my eyes,
> catching fire, no one saw. no one saw
> that my face fell in a well. at that final
> desire, that everybody with asp flowers
> opened their arms, that it forgot itself in itself at that
> final word. that in the waters of sorrow bathed
> his language, that each thing was burnt, each thing and
> its heart. the times I forget when all existed
> at a breath, that each thing started and ended with a blind dream
> No one understands,
>
> Oh, each thing has an autumn of their own, in itself
> …
> from the last notebook I left in the north
> nothing else is left to hide. Nor is
> the wickedness I recounted to my face
> any longer. left to my mother Faris[200] was right,
> the human should be a *yasin*[201] in every prayer

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[200] Translates as 'horseman' or 'Persian horseman'.
[201] The thirty-sixth sura of the Koran.

and Mem[202] at every age.

whereas everything in the East

held onto one another with a language disjointed from it.

for it was a feeling of nothingness without a story,

The feeling of a frenzy left to a faith leader[203]

at every ritual. I was hidden in every picture,

the assailant and possessed everywhere. I was quiet

How much is to be quiet to be quiet in East

Oh, how of itself was suffering.[204]

A cursory reading of the poem reveals that the transparent content is not a recounting of an event or reaction to one but rather a reminiscence or a silent mourning about a personal past. The well, suggestive of symbolist influences, is the object of the incipient and defines the content of the poem as well as the terms with which it unfolds. The well that is condemned to the child's eyes is a scene of death, although the reasons and context for the death is left unresolved enigmatically as a death contained in a 'pearl coffin,' implying that the death is either of a person close to the narrator or that it is normalised. The death, the emptiness is condemned to the eyes of the child as a way in which he begins to perceive things, a blemished sight. Looking at the coffin changes the child's eyes. The first couplet, thereby, creates the anticipation that the poem will comprise of the poet relating what he sees with this new blemished sight as well as the way of seeing it has rendered. Remarkable is the fact that the poem starts with allusion to childhood, from which the poetic persona alienates himself. In relation to the childhood element, although ambiguous at this stage in the poem, the possibility of a death of a close one looms with the pearl adorning of the coffin, even if its effect seems to be the evocation of the theme of death as a determinant. That the

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[202] Mem is the male protagonist in Ehmede Xani's (1651-1707) *Mem u Zin,* a classic love story considered the épopée of Kurdish literature.

[203] The Turkish word provided is "seyyid".

[204] Yüzümdeki Kuyu - sedeften bir tabuta işlendi, bir / çocuğun gözlerine terkedilen kuyu./dokundum safirden bir avluya tutuşan/gözlerimle, kimse görmedi. kimse görmedi/bir kuyuya düştüğünü yüzümün. o son/arzuda herkesin kollarını yılan çiçekleriyle/açtığını,unuttuğunu kendini kendinde o/son kelamda, acının sularında yıkandığını/dilinin, her şeyin yakıldığını, her şeyin ve/kalbinin. her şeyin bir nefeste varolduğunu/unuttuğum vakitler, her şeyin kör bir/rüyayla başladığını ve bittiğini her şeyin.../kimse anlamıyor,/ah, her şeyin kendinde bir sonbaharı var. … kuzeyde bıraktığım son defterden/bir şey kalmadı saklayacak. Yüzüme/saydığım kötülükler de yok/artık.anneme kalsa Faris haklıydı,/insan okunan her duada yasin,/yaşanan her yaşta Mem olmalıydı./oysa Doğu'da her şey kendine kopuk/bir dille tutunmaktaydı.hikayesi/olmayan bir hiçlik duygusuydu çünkü,/her ayinde bir seyyide bırakılmış/cinnet duygusu. saklıydım her resimde,/heryerde fail ve meczub. sustum,/Doğu'da susmak ne kadar susmak,/ah, acı ne kadar kendiydi.

poem is looking at the cycle of life from the perspective of the enigma and suffering of death, symbolised as a well, content without end and order, is reinforced in the rest of the stanza, as the way of seeing which looking at the coffin has caused is obscured, since it is the poet whose face have fallen into the well. Not only the nothingness and suffering, but the hopeless desolation caused by no one seeing the loss of his face in the unknowability of the well, becomes the perspective of the inner monologue.

The reader makes out a complete perspective by the end of the first stanza when it becomes clear that the poetic persona, as the perspective appearing subsequent to the trauma has blemished language 'washed in the waters of suffering' and that has burnt and destroyed everything. Whether the trauma is that of a social context, childhood or generally that of existence is left mystically enigmatic by the repetition of 'each thing.' Although given as the raison d'être of the poem in a way which refers to the reasons why the narrator may be saying these words, the last three lines of the poem remarkably exemplify the tone and spirit of Kaygalak's poetry: "The times I forget when all exists at a breath / That each thing started and ended with a blind dream / No one understands,". This basically equates the content of the form to the psychology of suffering, where a poem is what it is as a matter of starting and ending as a bad dream.

The next two stanzas seem to be relaying how the poetic persona has confronted over his life the perspective given to him after seeing the coffin during childhood; this is despite the poem turning into an instance of childhood or an instance when the inevitably of returning to childhood and mother arises. It is as though the poetic persona and voice is speaking to an emptiness as the references and distances to others at the end of second stanza makes clear. If not explicit, taken together with the last stanza, it sounds as though the poet either forgot the outlook of death and suffering but in time remembered it anew or that this is simply the human condition. The poet realises this and has now closed the 'notebook' of its questions, turning his back to death by dying as a child. Once again what this implies is left in the very ambiguity of staying as a child where so long as the trauma of childhood is retained, this state continues: we are all children and that is why we think of childhood. Given we are suffering, we will remain children.

The last stanza turns the poem on itself by transposing what has been said so far into the last contents of a notebook, a part of a life the poet left behind at north as he pontificates now in the East. He knows what he does about emptiness, nothingness and suffering of childhood because there everything tries to relate to itself, express itself through a language that is

'disjointed' from there, presumably Turkish. The reason for this is the memoryless state that has been rendered to it, presumably because it did not or could not speak a language of its own. So, no definitive characterisations hold, as the retort to his mother's symbols of Islamic and Kurdish culture, *yasin* and Mem respectively, makes clear. A nothingness caused by suffering as the downtrodden scapegoat, the possessed and the forgotten is an existential condition; and language, given that it does not exist anyway, does not make silence possible in the East since the East itself is silence. As a form of suffering East is, therefore, that which becomes itself the most fully, an Althusserian ideal with a difference indeed!

As demonstrated by this brief consideration of one of his poems, the connection of the self to the social context takes a contrasting treatment in Kaygalak's poetry: Kurdish national references, *Mem*, faith references of Sunni Islam such as *yasin*[205], geographical references such as the East and the North as well as liberal humanist references evidenced by his reaction to these poetries and the confining of his poetry to a particularly personal and metaphysical perspective. While it is true that the poetic personal distances himself from the cultural centre which he posits due to reasons, which on the face of it looks to be characterised as those of minority/faith politics, it is not so clear whether this is the point of his poetry or its representations. A consideration of the literary language use strategy and the formal concerns of the poem, that is, the interaction between its form and content, suggests a primary role accorded to an essentially metaphysical perspective for which the questions of identity are about the futility of the human condition as much as the social context giving it a national packaging.

Considering its treatment of such themes as Kurdish faith, national identity, political domination and devastation, the periphery of the East as well as a metaphysical outlook reminiscent of Matur's poetics, Kaygalak's poetry relates to those of Mungan and Odabaşı both as a continuation but also as a reaction to the current theoretic formation of nationalisms, socialism, liberalism and pluralism prevalent across the Turkish language literary field. This is reflected in the parallels provided in problematising language as a question of identity but understandably, to a different effect. Direct references to the question of language are in such terms as one that is 'blemished,' having been 'washed in the waters' of funerals or as the description of literary language, that is Turkish, as one that is disjointed form the region, the East. Although the metaphysical perspective and the mirror of childhood provides the prism through which the issues of language are treated, the

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[205] See note 201.

absence, distance and the existential condition his poetry highlights are actually indicative of a more concretely grounded perspective despite the evident use of diction and verse constructions inspired by sacred texts. There is repeated reference to the Word, the final Word, to rites, rituals and Islamic architecture as terms such as *nezir, sela, seyyid* (sacrifice, call to prayer, sayyid respectively). If one feature of his language use is the selective use of this mystical diction, the other is the utilisation of contrasting attitudes to the language with user of pure Turkish derivations (such as *yunmak* (to bathe) or *yılkı* (herds of animals let free to graze) in poem above), as well as words in common use but not frequently in literature[206]. This visibly eclectic diction is also accompanied by a very selective verse construction, free of metaphors, with few descriptives as well as an enigmatic punctuation comprised only of comma and full stops used at mid-verse as in the poem above. This is reminiscent of the deployment of the same punctuation style in the novels of the Nobel prize winning Portuguese writer Jose Saramago, who cites the example of the classic medieval texts to insist that "his prose style adheres to the basic principle that everything *said* is destined to be *heard*" (Saramago 1994, 1). This principle seems, indeed, operational in Kaygalak's poetry in relation both to the accurate use of the full stop to end sentences and the particularly mystical undertones of his diction. Suggestive is also being a representative of the oral traditions of Kurds.

If his poetry presents parallels with the form of Matur's metaphysical perspective, this is only so on the surface. Even though the themes of suffering, trauma, childhood are shared, the contents and the terms, that is, language uses with which it is effected in Kaygalak's poetry is much more intense and active, which is perhaps due to the poet's atheism and materialist framing of his metaphysics. Where Matur impoverishes language to create an alienating effect, Kaygalak activates it to achieve this but only to convey a personal suffering and absence deeper and more haunting than Matur's poetry. His strictly philosophical metaphysics becomes evident in this language strategy of saying a lot to mean precious little in that it forms one of the structural devices to move the content of the poem: the abrogation and appropriation of language forms contradictions, which spiral out, only for Kaygalak to appear at the last stanza to quell the issue if not to resolve it just like a parent appearing to separate quarrelling children. The alienation provides an extensive volume of abstract literary space-time where the poet occasionally appears, with good sense of timing

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[206] Such as these words in 'Mil Çekilmiş Sözler' below: "*sahih, tandır, recmedildiği".*

and reserved frequency to make assertions meant to capture timeless pieces of wisdom about the human condition and existence in general.

The interplay between the form and content both in this poem and in the following sections from his *Mil Çekilmiş Sözler* (Poker Blinded Words), also from his The Well in My Face collection, exemplifies this:

Poker Blinded Words

I.

of stones forgotten

I am the face.

of the word

of the language

and of time…

like sacrificial blood

I was rubbed out

On the sinful door of the word[207]

II.

throw me… throw me…

let it bath in leprous waters

the face I was washed

with gazes of snakes.[208]

III.

With locked faces

Of the mountains

I was branded,

with the language pictures forgot in stones

I walked

it was an unbranded time,

the roads long…

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[207]I /taşların unutulan/yüzüyüm ben. /söz'ün/dil'in/ve zaman'ın… /bir kurban kanı gibi/sürüldüm, /söz'ün günahkâr kapısına.

[208]II / beni atın…beni atın…/cüzamlı sularda yunsun/yılanların bakışıyla/yıkandığım yüz.

we were forgotten property as we walked

and a desert as we talked…[209]

VII.

I was driven out in the end

From all languages I knew

Like a guilty child

I took sanctuary

From the allusion

Of all those true words

which patched themselves to a sin.[210]

XII.

As all doors

I rubbed my faced on

I was prostrated

At the feet of love

Burning

Me with a great twitch.

Whereas I had given my secret

To the loves

I remained broken and a child within.

It was I who shivered with a discontent,

The one that wondered around with snake signs in his pockets.[211]

The tone of both the poems is grieved; neither are representations of any concrete reality, social context or event. The subject matter of the poem above is the poet's reflection or another articulation of the progress over time of the plight of suffering, devastation as well as existential futility that marks the beginning of time frame of the poem, that is either childhood or big-bang. The poet is the forgotten face of not only language and stones, but that of the Word and of time, which presumably contains all these. Just like in his previous

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[209] III / dağların/ kilitlenmiş yüzüyle/ mühürlendim,/ resimlerin taşlarda unuttuğu dile./ yürüdüm /mühürsüz bir zamandı,/yollar uzun…/yürüdükçe unutulan mülk/konuştukça çöl'dük…

[210] VII / kovuldum sonunda / bildiğim bütün dillerden /kabahatli bir çocuk gibi / sığındım /bütün o sahih sözlerin/kendini bir günaha yamayan/zikrinden.

[211] XII / yüzümü sürdüğüm/ her kapı gibi/ kapandım/ beni büyük bir cezbeyle/ yakan/ aşkın ayakucuna./ oysa sırrımı verdim/ kırıldığım veçocuk kaldığım/ aşklara./ bendim o, ürperen bir sızıntıyla,/cebinde yılan işaretleriyle dolaşan.

poem, the identityless state the poet has been left with is articulated with a similarly hardboiled and authoritative mysticism that renders striking associations to social realities: 'We were forgotten property as we walked / A desert when we talk'.

Again, his identiyless state is defined in ambiguous terms although this is conditioned on inclusion or exclusion in language; whereas he is the forgotten face of language and the Word at the beginning, he later is driven out of all languages. But as revealed at the end, not only the mystical light in which the connections between language, personal and social contexts but the idea of the poem is the same. In Poker Blinded Words too, the poem ends with a stanza that reveals the subtext of the poem up to that point to be the same idea: that all this devastation and identityless state is both a cause and effect. The poet's existential suffering, which renders him an eternal child, is the secret he gives to prospective lovers, presumably, so that he gets loved, so that missing part of his personality, his childhood is acknowledged. This articulation marks the closing of both poems.

In terms of the formal moderation of this overriding idea, seemingly central to his poetry, the differences between the poems may be pointed out, such as shorter verse form, the even more conceptual diction and the lack of imagery in the latter. But parallels if not the identity of the poetic persona, as well as congruent rhyme, alliteration uses, in the beginning of the poem to reinforce the seriousness of suffering and its inevitability; at the end, the use of couplets as breaks to express another reason why he remains a child and ended up needing to look into this mirror, evidence the determining role played by formal features which determine the doppler-effect quality his poems render. The use of formal device and schemes according to the poem's structure mirrors the method of its progress comprised of positing two contradictory viewpoints, their spirals and rotations, and then the collapsing or synthesising them by use of different poetic voices, only for the narrator to come at the end to assert something prophetic which ironically fades out.

While this is how the overall meaning is produced as an effect of the formal features which comprise his poetry, both this interdependence of form and content as well as the variation of form according to theme, evidences the presence of parallel language uses and thematic concerns which connects Kaygalak's poetry with those of Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı. As shown by this contrast of form and content, the poetic persona presented in both poems and the implied narrator are not quite the same. That his poetry is a discourse of the self, that the self represented is the expressed self provides a good point as a sensitivity from

which connections to the aesthetic formation of the literary field can be traced in a way that demonstrates their impact on his poetry.

The poetic persona as one that self inscribes, not only as a part of theme presented but as the source from which its content emanates, to be sure, brings his verse as close to as Matur more than any other poetry discussed. But where they share a common metaphysical concern and an evident aestheticism about poetic diction, the way in which this is actualised provides quite a contrast. While the depravation of form and content is the strategy in Matur's poetry, in Kaygalak no such depravation takes place as a matter of principle, with the central idea remaining the same but quite surprisingly with the form being adjusted according to the theme. When dealing with death, a social question, the language is elaborate; with the theme of love marking the latter poem, the brevity of form enables the transitory treatment rendered. His poems, as seen in the examples considered, defined as forms of variation on the same difference shows this unity to be of a different kind: the content of the poems are forms of poet's attempts to articulate the same idea. The content is a logic which the poet constructs only with metaphysical fundamentals such as death, childhood, silence, suffering and futility combined only with connections to other objects or events without which it cannot be conceived, that is, a logical form of empiricism, also known as positivism. Here Kaygalak's poetry comes as close to that of Karakoç, Akın and Matur even if as a very particular rendition; while language and literary concerns indicate the impact of aestheticism of both the SN and classicism alike.

The last example of Kurdish poetry in Turkish to be discussed is that of Mehmet Butakın, the youngest poet of the selection, born in 1979 in the mainly Kurdish populated province of Bingol in eastern Turkey. He has published two collections of poetry to date, *Israr Falcıları* (Fortune-tellers of Persistence 2003) and *Yaylılar için Dörtlü* (String Quartet, 2006). In addition to winning the prestigious *Yaşar Nabi Nayır Young Poets Award* in 2001, his *Üniter Düşüncenin Sonu: Özgürlük Önermeleri* (The End of Unitary Idea: Propositions for Liberty) won the Milliyet Newspaper Social Sciences award in the same year. Despite the considerable lapse of time since his last collection, he remains actively involved in political life as an activist.

As a background to his poetry, the specimens provided below, at first strike the reader as texts produced as a stream of consciousness, reminiscent of the surrealist rendition found in the SN poetry; the little explicit meaning and political content found only after repeated attempts at his overloaded verse, does include reference to such political articulations of

questions as nation, nationalism, minority, the East and in connection Kurdish identity and culture. Poems in his last collection *Yaylılar için Dörtlü* (String Quartet, 2006) exemplify this:

> the hybrid lapwing
>
> From now on with this minority voice of mine, that I resemble you
>
> I am sure. A sterile value on my hunch and
>
> In the rooms where sorrow swelled I am ready
>
> to falsify myself. Yet suffering, is the qibla of fathers
>
> who know how to die. Whenever I look at my face,
>
> a silent rose I memorised bleeds itself (Butakın 2006, 71).[212]

Where social issues are present in his poetry, this is as a term only, with the use of proper nouns in his poetry reserved only for place names, even in a poem titled *İki Ulusun Şarkısı* (The song of Two Nations) from the same collection that probably involves as a subtext, the relationship between two nations, Turks and Kurds:

> the song of two nations
>
> I.
>
> No need to render the situation traumatic. If you had a history I would have come to get the smell of roses in your hand. I cannot say what I resemble it from afar but it resembles something, to the things whose name I don't know for instance. Devshirme[213] giants who at the sultan's mush at palace doors, tree shades, influential slaves. Saying you will be sad one day don't see me, you showed me the blood of your hands, I took it. The day will come and you will understand it is a <u>latent</u> <u>doctor</u> splitting <u>middle east</u>[214]. The seeing eye, the evident and the subjects; it gets consumed but does not change that state history with a trembling barrel keeping records that contains obvious strings. Horseback javelin[215] for instance is good, even though it is meaningless it is important take a rest for half a day! And dies in a well-recorded event the sheikh of seven worlds, in his blurry and mirage-like eyes an intimate love. Who else would

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[212] Melez Kızkuşu/ Artık bu azınlık sesimle, sana benzediğime/ eminim. Kamburumda kısır bir kıymet ve/ kahrın büyüdüğü odalarda hazırım kendimi/ tarhrif etmeye. Lakin elem, kıblesidir ölmeyi/ bilen babaların./ ne zaman yüzüne baksam,/ ezeberimde sükut bir gül kanatır kendini.

[213] *Devshirme,* literally meaning "collecting" (TDKDictionary 2018) was a practise during the Ottoman era of taking non-Muslim young boys, usually from the Balkans in order to serve the state as a form of tax/tribute. The recruited would be called *Devshirme* too.

[214] The original poem contains the Arabic/Ottoman versions of these words underlined, cerrah-I gayb and ortaşark respectively.

[215] Cirit, horseback javelin game, usually associated with Turkish history as a national game.

love you then! You are not a kid to be duped with these say, of course, shout! I doubt whether I could remember its words anyway. Its music is different.

No one heard of a god who wrote its last poem but so what.

These are the things I don't about rudiments:

Horses drawn to not so obvious loves, don't neglect it chisel it and under mean begs at times breathless. A place that hurts.

Remember what you wanted then.
Can what we call a horse be like this.[216]

In this, one of his more intelligible poems and in other, there is a very strong suggestion of the deployment of his poetry to the national political binary; this finds lesser elaboration in his poems in verse form even though the polarisation itself remains: "hey how could you hang an island to death, without shedding blood?"[217] (Butakın 2006, 60). Although left poetically ambiguous, given that Istanbul is the background to the poem, this is suggestive of İmralı Ada, where Abdullah Öcalan, still considered by many as the leader of Kurdish national movement in Turkeyö has been held in detention since 1999. As such, this suggests the political Kurdish outlook Butakın himself attributes to his poetry.

The themes of identity inscriptions, difference and implied distance from the mainstream is also depicted in the same light, as in: "And we who do not resemble a lot so much so that to resemble is a lie" (Butakın 2006, 15). Although the counterposing formed in this last passage is present elsewhere in his poetry, in terms of language use, however, a structural integrity is almost totally absent in his poetry as the dense convolutedness marking them evidences. While this does not concern the nature of the uses of language made, it is arguably the most transparent distinction of his language use where meaningful phrase or sentence formations are only an intermittent element of his poems. Expression of representation of ideas and

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[216] İki Ulusun Şarkısı/ I./ durumu tramvatik kulmanın anlamı yok. Senin tarihin olsa gelir alırdım ellerindeki yaz kokusunu. Uzaktan neye benzettiğimi hep unuturum ama benzer birşeylere, adını bilmediğim şeylere mesela. Saray kapısında padişah lapası yiyen devşirme devler,ağaç gölgeleri, nüfuzlu köleler. Bir gün üzülürsün beni göre diyen ellerinin kanını gösterdin, aldım. Gün olur anlarsın bir cerrah-ı gayb. Gören göz, ayan ve reaya; tükenir bahir telli tutanaklar tutan o titrek namlulu devlet, tarihini değişmez bişeye. Cirit iyidir mesela, anlamsız da olsa mühimdir bir yarım gün dinlen! ve ölür nânüvis bir vaka'da yedi cihan şeyhi, yalgın ve pusarık gözlerinde deruni bir aşk. Kim sever sonra seni! Bunlarla kandırılır bir çocuk değilsin söyle tabi, haykır! Sözlerini hatırlayacağımdan kuşkuluyum zaten. Müziği ayrı. / Son şiirini yazan bir tanrı duyulmamıştır ama olsun. /Esasa ilişkin bilmediğin şeylerdir bunlar: /Belli başsız aşka koşulmuş atlar, ihmale gelmez yont ve güre beylerin dibinde yer yer soluksuz. Acıyan bir yerleri /O zaman ne istediğini hatırla./At dediğin böyle m'olur.

[217] Ya siz bir adayı nasıl idam edersiniz, /kan dökmeden.

political positions of the self or the community, that is, explicit meaning is only but an element of the contents of his poems. Not only is it incredibly hard to make any sense of most of his verse but it is also very rare when one of his poems, taken as a whole, have any stable meaning, although of course meanings could well be associated with his poetry as a matter of their general effect as well as a function of its parts as the discussion of its formal features below reveal.

Butakın's rendition of a poetry comprised of intelligible as well as highly abstract and convoluted sections without a verifiable meaning, however, considered with other language uses, causes a challenge to the definition of the poem itself. Specific poetic language uses in Butakın includes enjambment, an elaborate if daily diction (which includes classic as well as other non-Turkish words underlined in the poem above), lack of descriptions and the sway of lyrical expression with few metaphors, with any meaning made possible being circumstantial to the strength of the intelligible expressions appearing usually at the beginning of the poem. Although, to be sure, qualifications of deterritorialisation, abrogation or appropriation of language may be attributed to his poetry, the meaning of the poems, taken as a whole, suggests that such language use inscribes only the self, if only an amorphous Kurdish self, as the distinction of his poetry is being a form deprived of content. If his own interpretation has prejudiced the debate about the Kurdishness of his inscription, it can also spur a questioning whether this is the case. The following contrast of form and content in his *Dağ Kantatı* (The Mountain Quintet) shows the impact of formal features in creating the overall effect of his poems and considers the implications of this for the identity the text reveals:

The Mountain Quintet

To Lorin

That I was a statue of an old tale

You could have been told. You a water

Growing up for it without forgetting its memory.

You return from a known hospital

The smell of pens on your neck.

You fall into the community of garden of secrets.

I may understand it perhaps if I were to look at the colours I your dreams.

It was not in my hands those winding roads

Which all stole a meaning from those things that were nothing.

standing upright on the debris of a burnt book commentary,

or the autumnal treasure I left a part

to the sprained heart of all the silent

without a touch, at each residue.

Why would you bother coming all the way for a poem

carrying a few dead with words you should wait

yourself. What part of this is a question anyway?

Can one arrive at your heart, whereas a reclusive I am

Who believes in Allah anew as though I am at a ritual

each time of remembering you?

Remember a distant mountain[218] (Butakın 2006, 69-70).

The first impression the poem gives is that it is a poem in virtue of being poetic, as opposed to being a poem about a poem as in Matur's renditions. What is evident is that there is no discernible, unitary content as such; no events recounted, no introspection related or no observation of concrete or otherwise contexts shared. There are associations and intermittent intelligibility. Dedicated to *Lorin*, a female Kurdish name, the poem opens by the poet's declaration that he could be described as 'the statue of an old tale', and for a while, intelligibility remains unreachable, with no connections between words or sentence structures at times except symbols or images: 'growing up without forgetting its memory', 'a well-known deck light', 'the winding roads from which all stole'... then an almost political 'standing upright on the debris of a burnt book commentary,' which sounds like a 'burnt city,'[219] yet, no, it proves illusive and circumstantial: 'Why would you bother coming all the way for a poem.'

Although, whether it should be taken as such is itself suspect, the images, what the Deleuzian would call 'intensities' end as abruptly as they make an appearance, with a rare intelligible statement that makes refence to mountains, possibly a Kurdish or East reference. With such content which seems to defy reasonable efforts to interpret the poem, it is remarkable how poetic the text is, with an elaborate diction, rhetorical questions, powerful possessive and

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[218] Dağ Kantatı/ Lorin'e/eski bir masal yontusu olduğum/ söylenebilirdi sana. sen ki bir su/ hatırasını unutmadan büyürsün için/ bir aşina ispiralya'dan dönersin/ boyunda kalem kokusu./ düşersin gülşen-i râz'ın tayfına./ rüyandaki elvana baksam anlarım belki./ elimde değildi o hiçbir şeylerden /herkesin bir anlam çaldığı burgaçlı yollar./ yanmış bir şerhin enkazı üzerinde dimdik/ ya da bütün ahrazların burkulmuş kalbine/ dokunmadan,her tortuda/ bir parçasını bıraktığım güz definesi.//bir şiir için gelinir mi buralara ta uzaklardan/ taşıyarak birkaç ölü kelimeyle beklemelisin/ kendini. hem bunun neresi soru?/ kalbine gelini mi, her hatırladığında seni/ bir âyindeymiş gibi allah'a yeniden inanan/ bir münzeviyim oysa?/ uzak bir dağı hatırla.
[219] *Şerh* (commentary book) as opposed *Şehir-Şehr* (City).

adjective constructions (debris of an old book, statue of an old tale) and strikingly musical and compact lyrical verse out of which it is produced. What marks the distinct interaction of form and content in Butakın's poetry is the reduction of content purely to form; the poem is the expression that it is. The lyrical expressive voice of the poetic persona, ubiquitous to his poems, is also the narrator. As a distinct configuration of the formal aspects of his poetry in relation to their content, this rendition of poetry as purely form is interestingly the exact opposite of Odabaşı's attitude, the extreme of Matur's, while poetics of choice are those of Mungan. But here lies the paradox of his poetry: the absence of content leaves the reader only with the poet as the content. The poet becomes the poem, supplants it. Butakın manages to successfully self inscribe and his Kurdishness but arguably at the expense of poetry, since poetry is content too.

Given the consideration of Kaygalak and Butakın's poetry as examples of contemporary Kurdish literary writing in Turkish whose authorship has problematised identity questions rather than as representative examples of current theoretic formation present within the field, these poetries cannot be cited as conclusive evidence of its evolving political and aesthetic trajectory. However, the contradiction of form and content defining the meaning of these poetries provide ample confirmation of the presence of a diversity, a plurality of discourses, which the previous section of the discussion offered as characterising the poetries of Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı. This discussion demonstrated, once again, the constitutive role played by poetic influences as diverse as aestheticism, concern with literariness, automatism and individualism reminiscent as well as indicative of continuing connections with the poetics of SN school of poetry and classicism. Examples for this include poetic diction, mysticism and connections to sacred texts, theme of childhood, symbolic language and a liberal political perspective. The contrasts between the intended identity expression and the represented content also emerged as a conclusion despite the varying deployment of such aesthetic considerations allegedly to inscribe the same difference.

While these considerations do indeed highlight the need to consider the aesthetic dimension of literature for a fuller understanding of its political content by showing how it moderates the specific content, it has also shown that their entire meaning cannot be reduced to political meaning. Identity inscriptions is not what literature does. What has shown this most clearly has been the varying degrees to and theoretical models in which the poetic persona and the narrator has been set against each other, that is, the difference between its intended and represented content which the contrast of form and content of these poetries revealed. The meaning of literature is the experience of contradictions it represents as forms.

In this respect, since aesthetic value cannot be reduced to political meaning, even if always contains such a function, Kurdish literary writing in Turkish has a distinct value with the diversity, the plurality it comprises. And its status as a political content in an aesthetic form and apparently received as such, shows clearly that any value it has is not despite but because of the plurality of its aesthetics and the plurality, mutual exclusivity of its political responses. Forming a paradox as such, the question of aesthetic value despite plurality, therefore, needs a brief consideration as the concrete context which determines the aesthetic value of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish. As a conclusion, the following section, to this end, considers this question as well as its ramifications for the way in which we think about the political content of Turkish and Kurdish literatures as well as literature in general.

The Plurality of the Aesthetic Field

From the point of view of postcolonialist or minor literary approaches as well as aestheticism which dominates literature anywhere, this appeal to aesthetic dimension for a fuller understanding of the content or indeed the particularly political meaning of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish may well be granted and limited to this. For the postcolonialist or Deleuzian, the integral role of the aesthetic conventions, conceived in the ideological binary of domination as a device which can be abrogated or appropriated, only confirms that literature is a form of expression as any other. From the point of aestheticism, which includes Turkish nationalist perspectives on literature, the demonstration of the defining role of concerns of form and language, only proves the circumstantial and secondary role of the political function of literature including identity inscriptions. Despite the contrast, both these approaches offer these reasons for accounting for the plurality of political and aesthetic positions as well as of connections to such positions present within Turkish literary field.

What this contrast underlies is problems with approaches which foreground either one of art's aesthetic and political dimensions over one another, with regards accounting for the plurality of aesthetic field. For the postcolonialist and Deleuzean approaches, this plurality exists presumably because there is a plurality of subjects which express themselves in a diverse range of ways against and in favour of the political centre, which is also the reason for the existence of artistic conventions: expressions relate to one another as a matter of repetition and difference. For the aestheticist, on the other hand, plurality is a matter of good and bad art; although canons change, they set standards and writing, being subjective by virtue, accords or does not accord with these standards; plurality is the result.

From the perspective of dialectical theories of literature, which view literature as having both a sensuous and a rational component, the plurality of the aesthetic field is formed out of the contradiction which defines it: on the one hand, the subjective character of art, as presenting a single perspective embodied in the uniqueness of the form of the specific artwork, and on the other, the unintentional function of meaning as evidenced by the difference of intended and actual meaning (Lukacs 1992, 223). The way in which a work of art resolves this contradiction is by forming another contradiction; constructing as form a section of the reality represented as part of a homogenous 'world,' that is, what the Deleuzean considers as the synecdoche. It is in this respect that a work of art is what it is due to its character as a relatable experience of the content it represents. On this view, a representation of the world can never be a copy of the world or merely an expression of desire in that being only a form of the content of the world represented, it comprises only the most important factors and aspects of the reality represented. Although it represents these aspect and factors only, the work of art, the text it is not a system of references only; its meanings are a function of contradictions between both the references but also negations of the world, of the content represented.

It is both the subjective aspect of art as well as its negations/references which provides it with the plurality of possibility it constitutes. Where this is suggested most is in the synecdoche function of literature, which suggests that what is represented seems to be motivated with representing the world it infers as fully as possible. But synecdoche, that is explicit and implicit references to the world, is not the only relationship literature develops with it and is not the only element of literary meaning; just as in music where the content is not comprised of sound but also by the absence of it, especially in between the notes. Literary representation involving similar references as well as negations, absences, therefore, gives rise to its plurality since the presence of a certain perspective implies and makes possible the perspectives negated or implied unintentionally. Just as for the meaning of work art and for the meaning of a plurality of perspectives, what is absent is as defining as what is present.

Identified only as a result of appeal to its aesthetic dimension, the aesthetic value of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish, needs a consideration from this perspective and in terms of elements rendering it a diverse spectrum of literary writing as a conclusion to this section. Emerging as result of the analysis so far, the current plurality of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish is comprised of disparate politics, diverse aesthetic positions and a complex nexus of connections to Turkish, Kurdish and other literatures through shared sensibilities. If anything,

the discussion of its aesthetic dimension has demonstrated the position of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish at the confluence of history of forms, history of literatures and history of international relationships, which has raised the questions of its status, meaning and value.

To begin with, the diversity of identity politics presented in each of these poetries, both as a matter of contrast between them as well as confluence/divergence with the literary field, demonstrates that the political functions of these poetries cannot be reduced to Kurdish or other identity expressions. In terms of politics shared, as emphasised earlier in the discussion, while the presence of political agendas to inscribe a Kurdish identity are clearly present, both the actual meanings represented in these poetries (Matur, Kaygalak, Butakın) in addition to presence of pluralist approaches to identity, as evidenced in the socialism of Odabaşı and the postmodernism of Mungan, indicate that Kurdish literary writing in Turkish inscribes also other identities such as gender, geography of East, homosexuality and political perspectives. Not only does Kurdish literary writing in Turkish inscribe difference, it inscribes similarity even in poetries where the implied perspective of the downtrodden Kurd relates to other ethnic identity, gender, geography sensitivities in Matur's poetry, to the plight of entire humanity and gender sensitivities in Kaygalak's poetry or the urban liberalism of Butakın, that is, identities are articulated in terms of their relationships with other identities.

While what is present within Kurdish literary writing in Turkish as shared approaches to the question of identity, provides an aspect of its political meaning in this way, the absence of certain elements helps identify its political purport further. For instance the absence of any acceptance of Turkish nationalist or explicit Kurdish perspectives, considered in conjunction with socialist, humanist and metaphysical values shared with Turkish-language literary mainstream, has been indicative of the plurality of identity inscriptions Turkish literature as a whole can be conceived as articulating: Turkish literature inscribes Turkish identity but it inscribes Kurdish, Islamic, gender, geographical, urban and politically plural identities too. Turkish literature is Kurdish too. Kurdish literary writing in Turkish inscribes Kurdish identity but it also negates it by articulating and integrating with others.

Nonetheless, one of the conclusions of the study has also been to identify the confluence of projects of Kurdish self-inscription around liberal as well as liberal Kurdish nationalist voices of Matur, Kaygalak and Butakın respectively. This has been indicative of the impact of the ascendency of the Kurdish national question. But as the consideration of the actual content of their poetries revealed, the quality of Kurdish identity ascribed to these poetries is largely a matter of authorial intention and the deployment of poetry to inscribe a Kurdish identity

for political ends. As a theory of the particulars of one's specific position as a universal, this discussion has also shown how reducing or conceiving literature in terms only of its political function is due to the one-sided empiricist perspective or its corollary in liberal humanism. Kurdish literary writing in Turkish as identity inscription is strictly a liberal Kurdish nationalist endeavour. Its development depends on the likely impact the Kurdish national question will have on Kurdish and Turkish cultural life. Yet there are other Kurds too, not to mention other universals besides liberalism and other Kurdish politics. The political use of literature is a political question; its tactical use is a matter of a political tactic, not aesthetic strategy.

While the double-sided function of literature in terms of identity inscriptions have highlighted problems with reducing the entire meaning of literature to political meaning, the consideration of the aesthetic dimension of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish have shown the extent to which it is a part of the history of forms and of Turkish-language literary politics. The diversity ranging from modernist, realist, postmodern and classicist syncretism has been highlighted not only as constitutive of the diversity of political positions intended but as determining the actual representations they render. As well as illustrating that the political content of the poetries discussed is symptomatic of concerns for form shared with the literary mainstream, the contrasting contradictions of form and content which characterise these poetries, have also demonstrated the presence of current day negotiations with questions of literary representation and realism.

The congruity between socialist realist aesthetics of Odabaşı and Arif, aestheticism of Süreya and Mungan, the connections with classicism and SN symbolism present within Matur, Kaygalak and Butakın's poetries but also with the literary mainstream as such, from a dialectic perspective, is suggestive of the presence of a search for form to represent the reality. The presence of poetries such as that of Matur but even more, those of Kaygalak and Butakın, which claims to be a political discourse and is seemingly united in an aestheticism to inscribe a self is not a counter-example to this. This is because the case of these poetries can also be conceived as a reflection of the current state of these efforts. The distancing of content and form which grounds these poetries exemplify this by demonstrating that the current modes of a Kurdish representation in Turkish are dominated by a perspective which reduces content to form, at the expense of the content. It can be noted that while in Matur, Kaygalak and Butakın's poetry a Kurdish self and its realities are inscribed, the same cannot be said of a Kurdish content that easily. What this signifies for political approaches to literature is that the reduction of a text's form to content seen in such approaches as postcolonialist and Deleuzean perspectives are, takes an inverted rendition in Kurdish

literary writing in Turkish where identity inscriptions are undertaken as form only, that is, the reduction of content to form.

This state is significant in that poetries of Matur, Kaygalak and Butakın, taken also in tandem with those of Mungan and Odabaşı where representation is a more direct concern, reflect the position of both Kurdish literary writing in Turkish as well as the literary mainstream on the face of current asymmetry determining the search for form: that between the proliferation of the search and the scarcity of results for form, which will represent the current human condition fully and harmoniously while forming a real contradiction with it. Contextualised in this perspective, the identity inscriptions, which Kurdish literary writing in Turkish articulates are not political articulations at all: it is Kurds' involvement, as Kurds, in the creation and criticism of contemporary realism. What the *Yasakmeyve* debate comprised was a declaration of this, exemplified best in Butakın's poetry as this very act, implying this difference at the expense of content.

These complex and variegated forms of negotiation with realism seems to be indicative of the literary establishment's rationale for aesthetic dismissal as well as the categorisation of ethnic minority writing in Turkish-language literature. For as exemplified by Korkmaz and Özcan, social realism or for that matter, any poetry outside nationalist and Islamic discourse is simply an ideological artefact and a Marxist rendition of daily life. Following in the footsteps of Kaplan, Korkmaz and Özcan also classify social realist poetry as "militarist" and "ideological," itself an ideological statement, exemplifying a liberal-conservative system of ideas one could find in Turkey or elsewhere (Korkmaz 2006, 91). On this view, since social realist poetry is "an ideological perception" of poetry, it, thus, is no poetry. And as the following declaration from Kormaz in his exposition of 'Marxist' realist poetry in a publication in the curriculum demonstrates, this attitude does not always meet exposition in strictest of academic terms: "poetry for these [people] is a mode of production" (ibid, 91). The attitude also applies to non-inclusion of any socialist poets to their evaluation of post-1980s poetry as well as their curious choice to describe non-socialist poets as 'artists' whereas Haydar Ergülen, a socialist poet, just about makes the 'poet'. Although obviously inconclusive from this example alone, underpinned by varying degrees of bias and bigotry as well as aestheticism, such attitudes to social(ist) realist poetry account for the political and literary conditions which facilitate the paucity of critical attention shown to ethnic minority writing in Turkish, including its specific Kurdish component.

Conceived as part of the history of forms, which implies literature is not merely its content but its aesthetic content, the bounds of literature are not political alone. Despite the domination of Turkish-language literature by aestheticist nationalist outlooks, Kurdish literary writing in Turkish itself has shown that it can be a scene of resistance as much as domination, a political space as much as a personal one, and can be means to inscribe difference as well as identity and solidarity. The presence of links with the aesthetic and political formation within the literary mainstream, not only highlights the presence of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish within literary alterity as one of its components but also the efforts within this alterity to construct ideas of community which goes beyond nationalism. In this respect, as the examination of its aesthetic and political dimension have demonstrated, one of the functions Kurdish literary writing in Turkish has been to bring these nations, which have lived together for the last millennia, and their literatures even closer. Mirroring literature's nature as being determined by language which all humans share, the cross-cultural links between tastes and values shared have also underlined this unintended function of identity discourses added to the development of comparative approaches to literature developed over the last century. Kurdish literary writing in Turkish is also valuable in respect of bringing these two literatures together as parts of world literature.

Concluding Remarks

The assessment of the function of formal aspects of Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı's poetry have revealed the role of engagement with questions of literary representation which moderate the discourses produced by Kurdish authors of Turkish. It showed that while a variegated theoretical configuration exists with respect to the conceptualization of identity, concern with identity questions is involved invariably in the representational projects of these poetries.

Specifically, the discussion has shown that in Mungan and Odabaşı's poetry, the ideas of self conveyed are mediated by aesthetic perspectives concerned with deploying literary expression in relation to social reality with which it interacts. In Matur's poetry, by contrast, the foregrounding of aesthetic concerns has been taken a remove further with the representation effected confirming to the relatively stricter notions of form, which relates her discourse interestingly to conservative discourses of Turkish literature such as that of İsmet Özel[220], which defines one of the creative paradoxes of her poetry.

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[220] İsmet Özel is a poet of the post 1960's generation, who became renowned with original uses of language and a urbanised socialist sensibility but then in the 1970's, in a complete overturn of

Moreover, this discussion has underlined the impact of a range of modernist and postmodernist notions of representation on Kurdish literary writing in Turkish comprised as it is with different conceptualisations of interdependence of form and content. Given the extent to which aesthetic considerations moderate the political purport of the discourses involved and that these include the confluence of modernist and postmodernist perspectives, a repercussion of this is that the ideas of self and community, the kinds of enunciations these discourses convey can be more accurately read also as a confluence of modernist and postmodernist perspectives to questions of nation and nationalism. That is perhaps why there is not one single idea of Kurdishness the Kurdish literary writing in Turkish articulates. And furthermore, perhaps one reason for not considering Kurdish literary writing in Turkish as a 'minor' literature is this very context of theoretical and political confluence.

Once again, we are confronted with the pitfalls of presenting a range of literary representational practises under the aggregate concept of 'minor' literature since as this discussion has shown aesthetic form has an importance for all these poets and poetries in a way that cannot be reduced to content. As this contrasting of the formal qualities marking Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı's poetry against its social content has shown, the very aesthetic preferences of the authors substantially moderate the social content and contradictions their poetries articulate. While language use and appropriation, poetic form, verse construction and irregular rhyming schemes are not particular to their poetries neither are the tropes of East and centre, childhood or the articulation of heterogeneous identity sensibilities as the connection with realist and classicist trajectories they present evidence. In this respect, the consideration of the aesthetic dimension of Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı's poetries have illustrated the limitations of notions of a Kurdish literature based solely on readings centred around the ideological locations by distinguishing the authorial intention from the objective content of the text, that is, the distance between the real and the implied narrator in each of the poetries examined in this chapter.

But while problems with reading strategies which reduce the literary text to a mere political report by appeal to authorial politics have been highlighted in this way, the discussion of the form in Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı's poetries has also indicated that the aesthetics moderating these poetries are almost always connected with the counter-discourses or alternative aesthetics evolving within the Turkish-language literary space. The negotiation

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aesthetics began to produce poetry with an Islamist outlook; this upheaveal of his outlook is elaborated in a poem titled *Amentü* (Behramoğlu 1991, 1138).

with social realism through contrasting forms of political identity foregrounded in Mungan and Matur's poetry is diversified even further with Matur's aestheticism; further, these poetries do not just emulate these literary forms and styles, they construct a variegated range of synthesises with varying degrees of connection to any Kurdish national sensibility. In this regard, while we cannot talk about a Kurdish "literary form" in Turkish as such, notwithstanding the quality of their work, the variation of aesthetic projects in a way which reflects and connects with political/ideological positions across the spectrum including, Mungan's libertarian and Marxist sensibilities, Odabaşı's socialism and Kurdish patriotism and Matur's apolitical aestheticism, provide the very indications for both the paradigmatic perception of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish as a part of Turkish-language literature as well as the assessments of the value of their work. As shown by the discussion, displaying a writing with such aesthetic concerns, the examples of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish do not conform to the apolitical aestheticism of the Turkish nationalist and classicist paradigms of literature and are undervalued for this reason. But moreover, since the paradigmatic aestheticism does not recognise any ideological determination, notwithstanding its forms of Turkishism or Islamism, and considers distinctly political literatures such as the poetries of Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı, both as a part of Turkish-language literature and of no value in and on itself.

And even if we cannot talk about the existence of a distinct Kurdish aesthetics as such, it is noteworthy that the aesthetics preferences marking Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı's poetries are as distinct as one may find in any society or community. Even if these poetries are distinguished with a political aesthetics, they manifest different forms of the aestheticization of Kurdish and/or pluralist identity questions which constitutes one of their distinctions. In this respect, this negotiation with, reaction to and continuation from aesthetic trajectories prevalent within the cross-cultural space out of which Kurdish literary writing in Turkish comes, shows the definitive role of aesthetic dimension of literary writing that has to be taken into consideration in readings concerned with the value and political significance of literatures produced in conditions of political and national domination.

Conclusion

Through an analysis which proceeds from the literary text, this study examined the models of representation in the poetries of Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı with specific attention to both the transparent social content and the aesthetics marking these discourses. Alongside providing an overview of the political significance and value of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish, this examination served to illuminate the ramifications of this writing for the Turkish-language literature, as well as for the theoretical conceptualisation of literatures produced in conditions of political and national domination. It demonstrated that current assessments of the political import and artistic value of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish are symptomatic of the literary theoretical conceptualisations which foreground either of the two distinct dimensions of literature over one another, that is, a conflation of its nature as a social product which is simultaneously a political and aesthetic artefact.

With respect to the political dimension of the literary representations constructed in Kurdish literary writing in Turkish, the study's second chapter examined the ideas of self and community, notions of collective history and memory, and attitudes towards questions of national identity and nationalism in these poetries. It did this by way of testing the characteristics attributed to literatures operating in social conditions of domination by postcolonial and "minor" literary theoretical perspectives which the author-based perspectives seem to presuppose. The discussion built on the critical basis provided by Deleuzian minor literary perspectives, considered by the study as the most text orientated model among the theoretical perspectives currently influential in the field of study of the political dimension of literature due to its thorough-going empiricism that ensures focus to the particulars of the text.

To this end, it examined the representations of social reality marking these poetries in terms of the mediation and determinations of the distinct political identity positions articulated, defined by the prevalent postcolonial and minor literary perspectives as necessarily characterised with a political opposition and collective enunciations of an alternative community. Through a comparative analysis of ideas of self, community and collectivity marking Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı's poetry, it demonstrated that, while Kurdish literary writing in Turkish is indeed a literature distinguished by positioning itself according to this political context of national domination, the interventions these texts comprise present such a variegated political configuration that it is problematic to broach this literature as relating

specifically either to a Turkish or Kurdish national narrative. As detailed by the focussed comparative analysis of Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı's poetry as well as those of Cemal Süreya, Ahmed Arif and Sezai Karakoç, this diverse spectrum of perspectives on questions of nation and nationalism ranges from Mungan's more contemporary libertarian and identitarian perspective to the orthodox socialist approach of Odabaşı and to Matur's personalised particular metaphysical approach.

Specifically, these poetries problematize the culturally monist articulation of a Turkish society to which Turkish-language literature is supposed to correspond by presenting literary articulations of the history, life and community of the people of Turkey. The endeavour is undertaken from perspectives with varying degrees of connection to the East of Turkey which is represented in terms of political domination rather the paradigmatic nationalist treatment of the unmodernised, underdeveloped and assimilated other of Turkish culture. In a way which the minor perspectives could not perhaps imagined, the cultural gap thus placed between the social reality and the Turkish nationalist literary representations of the society is evidenced ironically by the plurality of political enunciations and utopias each of these poetries render in their own way: Mungan's poetry exemplifies a trajectory that runs from Süreya and the Second New school which counterposes the cross-cultural gendered self and particular of the East against the universal, the west, the contemporary. The Marxist understanding of society Mungan and Süreya's poetry imply is accentuated further in Odabaşı's poetry that itself has a precursor in the poetry of Ahmed Arif and other socialist realist poetries of preceding generations, which appreciates cultural diversity yet subsumes it under a class perspective to society. Matur's poetry complements the configuration by way of providing a contrast, which despite its personalised perspective, provides again a version of the society and community which is at odds, exemplifying the unearthing of history and dealing with its trauma on the literary level as it does. Although a contrast to Marxian conceptualisations in Mungan and Odabaşı's poetries, Matur's poetry is not without precedence in terms of the apolitical counter-hegemonic discourse it constitutes; appeal to terms other than a culturally monolithic Turkish nation, is shared by Sezai Karakoç's poetry, the political features of which have been examined as an example of the Kurdish literary writing in Turkish of pre-1980 period and presents a similar metaphysical literary rendition underpinned by an Islamic perspective.

These variegated forms of representations of political domination offered in Kurdish literary writing in Turkish debunk the misrepresentation of both the Turkish as well as Kurdish identity, community and history by emphasising the cultural diversity which defines it. Firstly,

with respect to Turkish-language literary space, one of the implications of this cultural gap is that the social reality to which Turkish language literature corresponds is not a monolithically or singularly Turkish one. In addition to highlighting the presence of the trivially obvious yet politically sensitive widescale presence of non-Turkish authorship of this literature, what this means is that Turkish-language literature is not completely about a single nation, single identity articulations; that as well as being positioned against the West as a matter of modernisation in the process of nation-building process, it has political relationships of domination existing within it. Considered schematically in the coloniser/colonised binary, it is a body of writing that is both the literature of Turkey in relation to West but also comprise contradictions between the Turkish hegemonic cultural logic and ethnic minority political positions.

In addition to pointing to the need for further study on the cultural sociology of interaction and opposition between different ethnic groups and the power relationships in which they are located, the cultural pluralism implied by Kurdish literary writing in Turkish is that Turkish-language literature is the literature of several peoples. In this regard, in terms of the question of whether the literary activities of authors of Kurdish origin or heritage constitute "poetry in Turkish" (*Türkçe Şiir*), "Turkish Poetry" (*Türk Şiiri*) or "poetry of Turkey" (*Türkiye Şiiri*), it seems that the first option describes the social practise that is Kurdish literary writing in Turkish, not because it reflects its plurality of identity articulations but because literature in general and Turkish-language literature in particular is involved in identity inscriptions which assume a subjectivity. This loose categorisation accords with the authorial multiculturality of the Turkish-language literary field, in and outside Turkey, which the latter two do not reflect as fully. As well as the plausible term "Turkish-language literature" Mignon proposes (2014, 198), which highlights the central function of a shared language, perhaps a cue from postcolonialist commentators may be taken up here: as Ashcroft (1989, 8) suggest for English literatures to be conceptualised as 'english' literatures, in the lower case, to reflect the fact that it involves a number of national literatures, perhaps thinking about Turkish language literature as 'turkish literature' may help demarcate this reality in a way that yields a more accurate definition and categorisation of the very objects of its study.

Secondly, the discussion specifically of the political dimension of Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı's poetries illustrated that, while not constituting literary expressions of a Kurdish national voice as such, Kurdish literary writing in Turkish, nonetheless, provides a collaborative model in terms of the recognition and appreciation of a distinct Kurdish culture and element of social reality. Providing discourses marked with a distinct reaction to Turkish

official and literary nationalism can be added to this too. On the other hand, the divergent foregrounding of Kurdish national identity observed in these poetries indicated the presence of mutually exclusive responses to a national question. Crucially, the culturally pluralist terms with which the history and questions of the society has been broached and the forms of identity offered by these poetries have also emphasised the problems with the categorisation of such literatures based on political readings alone. Even on such basis, the study demonstrated that one could assert the presence of a 'Kurdish literature in Turkish' only by negation in that it constitutes, in general, a counter-hegemonic discourse within Turkish-language literature, albeit inflected with a distinct Eastern sensibility. An indication of this has been once again the liberal humanist, socialist and metaphysical sensibilities expressed by poetries of Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı respectively, which are not idiosyncratic to Kurdish literature alone. However, the political plurality of the representations rendered has been shown to be noteworthy in both practical and theoretical respects: first, they provide a range of connections with the literal alterity of the Turkish-cultural context, in relation especially to questions of self and community, which mobilise and mediate the political dimension of these poetries. And secondly, as a good case study illustrating the pitfalls of conceptualisations of literatures produced in such complex contexts of political domination under aggregate concepts of 'minor' literatures or the postcolonial binaries of coloniser/colonised and displacement/exile.

The third and fourth chapters of this study have demonstrated the extent to which social content of these poetries is moderated with their aesthetic qualities with focussed attention on questions of Turkish language use and poetic form in the poetries of Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı. Drawing on theories of language use as both a representation of the world and expression of identity, it illustrated that Kurdish literary writing in Turkish is characterised as a discourse exhibiting an interdependence between language and the ideas of self in a variety of forms but always through a sensibility shaped and moderated in relation to the East of Turkey. In this respect, the discussion has also shown that language variance in the poetries of Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı is constitutive of the kind of representations they produce. Despite being mediated by the diversity of counter-hegemonic discourses they comprise, the cultural logic of the standard Turkish nationalist uses of language is nonetheless unanimously rejected; the tangible language variance marking these poetries in terms of the grammatical and rhetorical uses of Turkish is the appearance of this reality. However, neither the rejection nor the alternative language uses put forward permit a categorisation as being determined by a distinctly Kurdish identity position. Instead, the examination of language uses has shown

that a range of linguistic strategies have been mobilised to articulate a range of inscriptions of the self that always places a gap in between the social reality and the monistic nationalist articulations of community. They speak about a different self and community by speaking differently about them.

In relation specifically to the distinct use and forms of appropriation of Turkish, a certain trajectory is provided by Odabaşı's poetry with a clear case of the impact of Kurdish on Turkish use with loan words, untranslated sentence and phrases, uses of the Turkish vernacular of the East as well as the trope of East, mountains, the politically committed individual and everyday figures from Kurdish life like Reşo. The politicised form of appropriation of Turkish in Odabaşı's poetry, however, presents parallels through its tropes as well as politicised language with socialist terminology and imagery, including those of Ahmed Arif before him as much as Turkish poets such as Hilmi Yavuz, Gülten Akın and Nazim Hikmet. Related but distinct from this particularly Kurdish social realist synthesis reached in Odabaşı's poetry, a second form of appropriation by the celebration and enrichment of Turkish is provided by Mungan's work characterised with its dense, metaphorical language, neologisms and intermittent use of classic words as well as a rich diction in general; but again, notwithstanding questions of the quality of his poetry, as highlighted through parallels with İskender's poetry as much as the erudite identity concerns of Hilmi Yavuz's poetry, the form of appropriation of Turkish through such a linguistic strategy is nothing particular to Mungan's poetry. The third strategy of appropriation by reduction reflected by Matur's poetry, even if marked with a distinct intensity, all of its own kind, as has been shown, is shared as a linguistic strategy in poetries such as that of Gülten Akın discussed, with which characteristics of the inscription of female identity through an intense and economic use of language is shared.

In terms of the relationship between language uses and political articulation rendered, and whether any "deterritorilisation" of language is effected, the poetries of Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı's are not characterised by appropriation of Turkish based on a Kurdish perspective. However, several other features relating to both forms of language use as well as models of its conceptualisation has been highlighted in a way which suggests a distinctive Kurdish element to Turkish-language literature. The examination of language use and comparison with their Turkish counterparts have revealed the following linguistic grounds for thinking this: The intensity and the widespread extent to which representations of and expressions inflected by East marking these poetries; the cultural gap in between the centre and the East each of these discourses point to in a complex variety of ways; and finally, the parallels these

linguistic strategies present with language uses in other Kurdish poets such as Arif, Süreya and Karakoç which confirms its historical continuity.

However, despite a similar counterposition of language use in relation to political content, the linguistic strategies shared with Turkish-language literary alterity have also underlined the problems with its conceptualisation. As such the assumptions of minor literary perspectives as those restricting interpretation with the states of desires of the writing subject has come under focus. The study has shown that while Kurdish literary writing in Turkish is indeed distinguished with a "higher coefficient of deterritorialisation" (Deleuze 2003, 16) of language, this is nothing unique to it. This was adequately illustrated by the comparative discussion on the impact of linguistic concerns existing within the literary field in mediating the kind of representations produced in these poetries. The presence of linguistic strategies shared as much as the discontinuity in terms of verse form and construction (highlighted as connections of the poetries of Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı and those of the Turkish-language literary canon) have been suggestive of this. By implication, this also highlighted the need for the study of the subject to focus further on how the aesthetic dimension of a literary text moderate the political significance and value of literatures operating in conditions of political domination.

The consideration of the aesthetic dimension of Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı's poetries have shown the limitations of perspectives based on readings centred solely around the ideological location of authors as one failing to demarcate authorial intention from the objective content of the text. It illustrated the instrumental role played by the formal features of these poetries in establishing the contradictions between the self and the social reality, which define the content of their poetries. Particularly suggestive of this has been contrasting features in each of the poetries: the elaborate uses of language and the distinction of being a literature about literature as much as a representation that mark Mungan's work, which enables the delivery of the tensions between the homosexual self and the ethnically heterogeneous social context. In Odabaşı's Kurdish synthesis of social realism, a lyrical free verse poetry, political terminology, tropes of feudality and East as well as a utopianism shared with his Turkish and other social realist counterparts facilitates his political project: to take Kurdish sensibilities further than Matur and Mungan as well as poets such as Ahmed Arif before him even if the Kurdish identity is still subsumed under a multicultural political identity. And while lines of aesthetic confluence with Turkish-language literature is not so clear from the transparent social content of Matur's poetry, scrutiny of the formal qualities of her poetry reveal diverse lines of influence; this encompasses the

current identity thematics of the period's literature as well as non-nationalist counter-hegemonic poetries emerging within 20th century Turkish-language literature such as those of Sezai Karakoç and Gülten Akın, with whom her poetry shares similar metaphysical and a select linguistic strategy respectively.

What this shows is that, on the basis of the evidence provided by Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı's poetries and their aesthetic correlation with the rest of Turkish-language literature, the models of representation of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish are distinctly moderated with major aesthetic trajectories which has been and continues to be active within Turkish-language literature, independent of its Kurdish authorship. And amongst these, negotiation with forms of literary realism seems to have been particularly influential with varying degrees of continuity from and reaction to it shaping the poetries of Odabaşı, Mungan and Matur. And indeed, it is this engagement with realism and distinction as a political poetry operating against grand narratives of Turkish community and literature that defines the major reason for its current perception and categorisation as Turkish literature or as a part of it. For, from the point of view of the aestheticism of Turkish nationalist literary positions, any poetry which does not assume a culturally Turkish monist community and history and its putative traditional linguistic and poetic forms, does not present any literary value and can, therefore, be regarded as examples of this literature better-forgotten.

There is further repercussions of the moderation of the political projects of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish by aesthetic tastes it shares with the cross-cultural literary alterity in Turkish-language literature as well as its distinctive political aesthetic: Kurdish literary writing in Turkish is more accurately read in terms of the tension in between its aesthetic and political dimension, as mutually exclusive forms of aesthetic responses conditioned by a cross-cultural literary space to questions of nation and nationalism. In this respect, this study has been significant in terms also of illustrating the consequences of perspectives failing to consider the double-sided sided content of the literary text: readings based solely on the political dimension or authorial ideological positions of literature inevitably renders its overvaluation as a political artefact alone. By implication, this also renders its undervaluation as an aesthetic artefact owing to the lack of regard for the very aspect of the text, its aesthetic dimension, which defines the form of articulations of its content, and thereby, its artistic value and political import. The consequence of such undervaluation is a perception of such literatures as Kurdish literary writing in Turkish as an inscription of difference that serves only to enrich the cultural centre, whether that is in Turkey or Western Europe or North America –a difference that does not seem to be making much of a difference.

The consideration of the aesthetic dimension of the poetries of Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı has also been noteworthy in terms of highlighting specifically the insufficiency of arbitrary deployment of general theories of postcolonial identity and Deleuzian minor literary perspectives as reading and resistance strategies to Kurdish literary writing in Turkish. In this respect, this study has contributed to the critique of literary analogues of postcolonial identity politics raised by Maxim Silverman, Ella Shohat and Anne MClintock as "paying insufficient attention to the wider historical determination" (Behdad, 2005, 237). But further, it provided a specific aesthetic dimension to this. The consideration of this dimension comprised of an account of a nexus of mediation in relation to specific social practise of literature, and the examination of poetic form in Kurdish literary writing in Turkish. On the methodological level, this consideration of the aesthetic questions of representation of political domination highlighted also the need for, to use Franco Moretti's term, "distant" reading models capturing its interrelationship with the evolution of aesthetic forms in the particular cultural and historical conjecture (1998).

The discussion of poetic form in Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı's poetries have also shown that the aesthetics moderating these poetries are generally characterised with an aesthetic negotiation with literary realism as evidenced especially with contrasting forms of political identity represented. The examination of formal qualities of Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı's poetry has illustrated this mediation by subjecting to analysis the concerns for reconciling ethnic, gender and political differences with their equally disparate social realities shared with Turkish-language literary alterity. Besides this, the characterisation of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish as aesthetic syntheses with varying degrees of connection to the sensibilities the East as constructed in these poetries, also provides a specifically aesthetic ground for considering the presence of a distinctive Kurdish literary element in Turkish-language literature. In addition to distinct forms of the aestheticization of Eastern, Kurdish and/or pluralist identities, this is also supported by the diversity with which Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı's poetries represent with their liberal humanist, socialist and particularist perspectives, which arguably is as broad as one may find in any culture or society. In this sense at least, Kurdish literary writing in Turkish can be construed as constituting a distinct strand of Turkish-language literature, with a range of Kurdish voices involved as in any other national literature. However, what this further signifies by forming such discourses is that the society represented is a politically divided one. Its repercussion for conceptualisations of the political dimensions of literature is that in contexts like the Turkish-Kurdish literary

interaction, there are distinct aesthetic contradictions involved which has to be sufficiently considered; the attempts of reconciling identity differences within aesthetics that is not connected to the social reality out which it comes, marking Kurdish literary writing in Turkish, has evidenced this. In this respect, the study also highlights the need for further consideration of such literatures from representational perspectives and in terms of questions of literary realism mediating the political content and value of the discourses produced.

But where the diversity of literary articulations suggests the presence of voices from across the Kurdish community or space, they also draw attention to two limitations of this study. Firstly, the different enunciations Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı's poetries make as much as the mutually exclusive aesthetics projects involved, highlight the important role of ideological class configurations of this literary space as a factor impacting this writing. This means that this study can be complemented further by being contextualised against text-based readings of ethnic minority writing and considerations of the relationships between different ideological dispositions and aesthetic choices in Turkish-language literature. This has been due this study's limited focus on three poets and to Kurdish poetry of Turkish alone, as opposed to the development of entire ethnic minority writing in 20th century Turkish literature, which includes other genres and non-Kurds too. Combining this study with kinds focussing on the aesthetic and ideological dimension of literary discourses produced in other genres and by other non-Turkish authors is, for this reason, likely to facilitate a more nuanced reading of the artistic value and political significance of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish. Secondly and in relation this, the lack of comparison with Kurdish poets writing in other national contexts (such as Iraq, Iran, Syria and now Rojava or in the migrant communities in large metropolises across the world) has also been a limitation of this study, the surmounting of which can develop a more accurate understanding of the distinct significance of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish.

In any case, as hopefully illustrated with its general findings, which can be summarised as forms of negotiations with questions of literary representation as well as the cultural determination of this writing by the wider context of Kurdish national question, this study has highlighted the importance of not limiting readings of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish with its transparent social content and with no attention to its aesthetic dimension. As especially emphasised by the consideration of the formal aspects of these poetries, it is one thing to consider the content of literature as a statement, as a form of X is Y and completely another to consider it in terms of the contradictions it constitutes, whether or however those

contradictions may be resolved. It has been only through this appeal to aesthetical dimension that the study has been able to provide an account of the relevance of this literary production's presence in the confluence of a nexus of historical, ideological and aesthetic determinations and authorial intentions. What this shows is that while there is a need to improve our understanding of the literary artefact in relation to each line of this confluence, the meaning of the text is a function of the totality of the contradictions it forms with the rest of the world out of which it comes and into which it dissolves.

In reading the poetry of Mungan, Matur and Odabaşı, the connections, contradictions and transformations between these layers of meaning are felt most strikingly in a perplexing feature which, as the study shows, all these poetries share: they are poetries which explicitly assert theoretical positions informed by current trajectories existing within the literary theoretical field as exemplified by allusion to Althusser and Gramsci in Mungan's poetry as much as the allussions of Odabaşı's poetry. What this shows is that Kurdish literary writing in Turkish is as critical a practise as it is a creative one, blurring the difference between the objects and subject of literary study. It is this in-betweenness and the processes of negation and transformation into each other that defines the political significance and aesthetic value of Kurdish literary writing in Turkish. For as this study shows, the question for Kurds is not only to create a language but it is also to have a language in which they can be with others.

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