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THE DAYDREAMS OF POLYPHONY: FROM THE MUSIC REVOLUTION TO THE BIRTH OF
TURKISH POPULAR CULTUREPoyraz KOLLUOĞLU¹

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Abstract

The Turkish Cultural Revolution has been a steady of debate and controversy for scholars coming from different disciplines of social science since the founding elites attempted to build the new secular society upon a disintegrating cosmopolitan empire in 1923. One of the off shoots of this modernization project championed by a group of elite soldiers under the leadership of Atatürk was the so-called Turkish music revolution. In this paper, I am defining the imagination of a nation and its cultural modular forms in an underdeveloped oriental milieu as that of Turkey as daydreaming because I would argue that the so-called music revolution of this total cultural fabrication throughout the 1930s, 1940s resulted in confusion, feelings of anxiety, artistic and cultural volatility, and, thereby, paved the way for an opportunity to navigate in a space between the Occident and the Orient spatio-temporality in parallel to ethno-racist discourses.

Keywords: The Turkish Music Revolution, Cultural Revolution, Nationalism, Occidentalism, Modernity, Popular culture.

**ÇOK SESLİLİĞİN GÜNDÜŞLERİ: MÜZİK DEVRİMİNDEN TÜRK POPÜLER KÜLTÜRÜN
DOĞUŞUNA****Öz**

Kurucu elitleri yeni seküler bir toplumu dağılmakta olan kozmopolit bir uygarlığın üzerine inşa etmeye teşebbüs ettiklerinden dolayı Türk Kültürel Devrimi sosyal bilimler disiplininin farklı alanlarından gelen pek çok akademisyen için değişemeyen tartışmalı bir konu olmuştur. Atatürk liderliği altındaki bir gurup elit asker grubu önderliğinde yürüyen bu modernleşme projesinin bir alt uzantısı Türk müzik devrimi olarak da bilinir. Bu makalede, Türkiye'nin ki gibi geç, az gelişmiş şarklı bir alan içinde zuhur eden bir ulusun ve onun kültürel formlarının tahayyülünü gündüşü olarak tanımlıyorum çünkü 1930'lar ve 1940'lar boyunca zuhur eden bu topyekûn kültürel dizaynın müzik devrimi etno-ırkçı söylemlere paralel olarak kafa karışıklığı, endişe hisleri, sanatsal ve kültürel uçuculuk ile sonuçlanmıştır ve nihayetinde Garp ve Şark zamansal-alansallığı arasında bir seyrinin önünü açmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Türkçe Müzik Devrimi, Kültürel devrim, Milliyetçilik, Garbiyatçılık, Modernite, Popüler Kültür.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Turkish Cultural Revolution has been a steady of debate and controversy for scholars coming from different disciplines of social science since the founding elites attempted to build the new secular society upon a disintegrating cosmopolitan empire in 1923. One of the off shoots of this modernization project championed by a group of elite soldiers under the leadership of Atatürk was the so-called Turkish music revolution. As a subject matter requiring an interdisciplinary approach, anthropologists, musicologists, sociologists and historians have directed the attention to the pros and cons of nationalization and “polyphonization”¹ processes imposed upon the Ottoman&Turkish music under the influence of cultural turn and identity politics (Paçacı, 1999; Tanrıkorur, 1998; Behar, 2005; Özbek, 1991; Sağlam, 2009; Şenay, 2004; Balkılıç, 2009; Aksoy, 2008; Orsanay, 1976; Tekelioğlu, 1998, Stokes, , 1988, 2012; Özdemir, 2005; Öztürk, 2006). By departing from clichéd critiques of Western modernity as well as top-down mentality of the Turkish nationalism in general, such critiques generally tended to point to ways in which attempts made for the sake of polyphony hollowed out the mystical texture of the Ottoman music, which is structured upon a dominant melodic voice harmony (homophony) accompanied by *makams*².

The 20-month *allaturca*³ music radiobroadcast censorship in 1934, the efforts to modernize the mystic Ottoman traditional music and its teaching methods, the language reforms manifesting itself upon the music pieces of the decade, the interventions made to bring “order” to “chaotic” folk songs of Anatolia by imposing seven-note scale⁴, the policing of İstanbul tavern nights by the state have been presented as empirical evidences in most of such approaches just for the sake of applying the modernization critique to the Turkish experience. Overly focusing on the critique itself nonetheless, I would argue, seems to be preventing us from drawing the main contours of this enigmatic sociocultural process from the below. In light of this gap in the literature, my primary aim in this paper is to rescue myself from this conundrum and reconstruct the history of music revolution years of Turkey with a micro-historical understanding. By providing a window into the life-world of actors who really experienced and lived the music revolution years, I am also hoping not to reiterate the clichéd critique of Kemalist elites who are generally depicted as ruthless ideologues and soulless army cadres immune to the reverberations of their own cultural policies. Hence, I intend to analyze the incident within the context of its own temporality.

I suggest that the microhistory (*microstoria*) approach to the Turkish music revolution will enable us to empirically see one of the groundbreaking statements made by Paratha Chatterjee in response to Benedict Anderson highly influential book “Imagined Communities” (Anderson, 1991). By pointing to the peculiarity of nationalisms in the third world, Chatterjee asks Anderson the question “if the nationalisms in the rest of

- 1 Polyphonic music is associated with the Western art music in the political imaginaries of Turkish ruling elite. The so-called Western polyphony symbolizes the secular-enlightenment values against the “obsolete” non-Turkish and Islamic elements, which had eclipsed the core of Turkish culture in the Ottoman Empire. Throughout this paper I will be using this term with respect to this semiotic politico-cultural representation, which, I suggest, has both Orientalist and Occidentalist connotations.
- 2 *Makam* corresponds to chords used in Western music. It is a system made up by different melodic pitches. Each *makam* designates a unique intervallic structure and melodic developments.
- 3 *Allaturca* is a less serious form of high art Ottoman&Turkish music usually performed by a solo vocal, or a chorus called *Fasil*, which is a group musicians playing traditional instruments such as *ud*, *kanun* and violin.
- 4 Banu Senay, for instance, addresses the implications of such efforts in her anthropological study by focusing on the *ney* instrument, which is an end-blown flute symbolizing the Islamic Sufi music in the 1920s and 1930s (Şenay, 2004).

world have to choose their 'imagined community' from certain modular forms already made available to them by Europe... what do they have left to imagine?" He nonetheless acknowledges that the "derivative discourse" function of the West might exist within anti and postcolonial nationalisms, yet he emphasizes that their "imagination" dynamics and nationalization reforms, notably in the realm of culture were never "constituted in a flattering way." Indeed, if there was an imitation, a "copy" of the West in every aspect of life, for then the distinction between the West and East would disappear, and "the self-identity of national culture would itself be threatened" as Chatterjee tells us (Chatterjee, 1990, p. 237) (Chatterjee, 1993, p. 3).

The Orient, therefore, did not "imagine" the same, or at least similar communities as that of the Occident. On the contrary, what the Orient performed rendered the cultural differences and rifts more apparent between East and West. And this performativity, I suggest, resulted in the (re)invention of the so called pre-existing linkages with the past in the non-metropolitan spatiality. In most aspects, rather than authentic modular forms, these (re)invented traditions (Hobsbawm, 1992) were more akin to recent cultural innovations for drawing the borders of the Eastern national identities against the West, or the illusion of West at the very least. Ironically, these efforts equipped some of the third world nationalisms with an artificial and fragile unity. Nonetheless, I would argue that this tenuous, volatile unity, or the state of being in the process itself in Deleuzen sense established against the Occident can be more characterized as a journey, that is, a search for their own destiny, or in Otto Bauer's words a "community of destiny," (Bauer, 1996) which ultimately prepared the ground for experimental and exploratory initiatives in an artistic sense.

In light of critique, I am defining the imagination of a nation and its cultural modular forms in an underdeveloped oriental milieu as that of Turkey as daydreaming because I would argue that the so-called music revolution of this total cultural fabrication throughout the 1930s, 1940s resulted in confusion, feelings of anxiety, artistic and cultural volatility as well as creativity, (Berman, 1982, pp. 15-36) in parallel to ethno-racist discourses. Although the subjects and performers of daydreaming found themselves caught in the vortex of ambiguity and creativity, in this vacuumed space and time frame, a new journey began, and this exploration seems to me more like a search for an authentic modernity rather than entirely purified secular and Occidental one that the Turkish administrative elites desired and envisaged. This authentic modernity did certainly incorporate some parts of the alluring fancy/illusion of the Occident. But it also included confusion, destructive creation, artistic exploration and experimental initiatives, as well as ethno-racist discourses with respect to the minorities of Asia minor, as well as hierarchical representation of European civilizations From the state-building elites, bureaucrats, organic intellectuals to common people, all, therefore, embarked on this journey that I would call as daydreaming. In my reading, daydreaming differs from Ahiska's magical but vogue concept of "Occidental Fantasy" (Ahiska, 2003) (Ahiska, 2002) in the sense that I am more inclined towards pointing to the creative artistic and aesthetical experience of modernity in the realm of music rather than the imposition of secular-Western capitalist logic in an institutional environment such as radio. This experience of daydreaming, I suggest, can be best followed through memory⁵ that is, the memoirs of the daydreaming actors of new Turkish nation. I will begin

5 I would like to elaborate what I mean here by addressing some critiques over historiography offered by Foucault. This historiography criticism, I suggest, is very vital for fully grasping the alternative methodological approach that I intend to bring to the Turkish music revolution years. Foucault writes "the history must be detached from the image that it satisfied for so long, and through which it found its anthropological justification: that of an old collective consciousness." Furthermore, he states that official documents and macro level approaches to history fixes "the sociological and cultural constants." To him, the historical analysis beneath official documents is not the "fortunate of a history" but

following the traces of daydreaming with a brief historical account of the music reforms, and then by addressing the confusion of the top man at the political hierarchy, that is, the founder figure of the secular Turkish state, Atatürk.

2. THE DAYDREAM OF WHITE POLYPHONY AND THE “ARAB NUMBNESS

As noted above, the ambitious Turkish governing elites’ initial objective was to carve a secular nation state out of a traditional, cosmopolitan empire. Within logic of creating a homogenous new, nation-state, they also aimed to “modernize,” “improve” the “inglorious,” “mystic,” religious Ottoman music. For them, the entertaining and melancholic *allaturca* songs, which evoke the Arab “numbness,” and “alien sounds of Byzantium-Persian civilizations,” were the “alien” ingredients to be removed from the authentic Turkish music. It was believed that the “ancient,” folk songs of Turkish music could be (re)created, or “resurrected” by blending Western chordal harmony—which corresponds to polyphony in the cultural imaginary—with “pure” folk tunes and lyrics of Anatolia. In the minds and fantasies of the romantic political elites, this symbolized the marriage of the “neglected” peasant Turks in the Ottoman Empire with the Europeans despising them, thereby, demonstrating the competence of Turkish culture in realm of art. This cultural project also included a messianic mission, that is, cultivating the society with “polyphonic listening culture.” In doing so, the ruling elites and organic intellectuals hoped that a novel but ancient Turkish music genre that the Europeans would not find “strange,” could be revived. The Turkish music revolution, actually, drew its inspiration from the success of “the Mighty Five” in the Russian music revolution, which more or less took place in the same decade. A group of musicians called “The Turkish Five” desiring to “reanimate” the Turkish folk songs with polyphonic sound structures in fact already crystallized in the 1930s.

Nevertheless, performing these acrobatics between the fantasmatic spatiality of the Occident and mythic ancient Turkish temporality was a hard mission to accomplish. The ordinary music audience was not equipped with the necessary western music culture and knowledge to do such a dazzling and dizzying jump. Ironically, the elites who ignited the sparks of the music revolution struggled in this cultural project they themselves designed. They, I suggest, began daydreaming of the polyphonic Turkish folk music along with the common people they desired to shape and remold.

3. ATATÜRK AND THE ALLATURCA BROADCAST CENSORSHIP

In 1934 the cultural ministry issued a statement declaring the ban of *allaturca* songs along with the *fasıl*⁶ band performing them live from the Ankara radio, which arose as “the voice of the state” after the independent İstanbul station took off air. The censorship of *allaturca* lasted almost two years. In that

the memory. Put differently, alternative archival sources of history such as the ones depicting, narrating the experiences, memories, feelings, comments of ordinary people, which are mostly labeled as “trivial,” and not included in official documents, give us a chance to reanimate the history; not in a diachronic sense that the official historiography imposes but with “ruptures” that it tries to hide. (Foucault, 1972, pp. 2-7) In this context, when looked through the prism of genealogy to the music revolution in new Turkish republic, I argue, it becomes possible to reanimate the years of 1930s and 1940s, and the ways in which this offshoot of the whole cultural project had been experienced by the actors of the era. The authentic modernity experience of the ordinary people, artists and the state elites, and their daydreams about the Turkish music revolution years can, therefore, be better followed through their memoirs with a genealogical discussion in its intent.

6 *Fasıl* is mostly performed by a group of musicians with classical Ottoman-Arab instruments such as *Ney*, *Ud* and *Kanun* mostly in potpourri style including rhythmic entertaining songs and intense emotional love songs.

sense, it would not be entirely wrong to state that the new Turkish state used mere coercion rather than ideology to develop enthusiasm for the polyphonic music culture between the years of 1934 and 1936. During this period, the only music genre that was broadcasted in the voice of the state was Western art music along with the novel Turkish polyphonic folk songs, and the authentic folk tunes as well. Both entertaining *fasıl* music and religious Ottoman art music were, therefore, censored. However, this sudden, drastic state policy did not usher in the desired come. In other words, the audience of the new secular nation did not embrace the white, Occident polyphony. Ironically, they turned their ears to the Cairo radio station, Arab music, that is, the music genre that was found incompatible with the “noble,” and “ancient” Turkish “civilization” in the imaginations of Kemalist elites.

Atatürk, both being the leader of a modernizing nation and an ordinary person enjoying *allaturca* music during political receptions given at the presidential pavilion, was caught up in the vortex of daydreaming as well. He was experiencing paradoxical, conflicting feelings during the ban. As the leading figure of a modernizing nation and symbolic embodiment of enlightenment values, he outlined the musical reforms to improve the “quality” of music in his various speeches. Several times, he advocated the notion of ethnically Turkish polyphonic folk compositions. In an interview given to a Western journalist, Emil Ludwing on April 1930, he, for instance, quoted saying: “You can see we have been making a progress in the field of music, however it took 400 years for the western world to develop their music, we just do not have such time to wait. You see that we are incorporating the western music into ours.” He made another statement in the parliament, on 1st of October 1934: “New songs must be composed in accordance with the contemporary music techniques” he passionately announced that day in *acco*. And those novel songs, he noted, must reflect the “national, elegant thoughts and feelings of the new nation.” “Only through this way the Turkish music can take its place among the universal music. I wish the ministry of culture would assisted in this matter” he added (Turhan, 1973, p. 122). But then, as a passionate follower of *allaturca*, he was enjoying his personal *fasıl* band during the dinner receptions held for the elite bureaucrats, politicians at the Ankara presidential pavilion. He was even rumored to be a decent singer. As being the enlightened face of new secular nation, Atatürk, I argue, was experiencing confusing and contradictory feelings like the Avant-garde artists of modernity. He was trying to shape and give meaning to the new Turkish nation he was designing, as well as to the modern world surrounding him. But that world was just spinning too fast for him given the fact he was an ordinary man at the same time.

The cultural ministry decided to impose censorship on *allaturca* music following the Atatürk’s speech at the parliament. The station discontinued broadcasting this music genre for the sake of “spreading polyphonic music habit and culture.” Akin to other European radio stations at the short frequency such as Berlin and Milano, the Ankara station had played Western symphonies and polyphonic Turkish folk tunes for almost up to twenty months. Atatürk’s close friends and politicians around him politely asked to reconsider his “decision.” Against these requests, he responded saying: “I also enjoy listening to *allaturca* songs. However, it must not be forgotten that this generation is undergoing through a revolution, and they have to make sacrifices for it” (Turhan, 1973, p. 122).

As the Cairo radio station had grown famous, the news regarding the “threat of Arab music” spread among the ruling elites. Atatürk himself was also informed about this surprising, unforeseen incident. Upon all

these unwanted developments, one *fasıl* musician playing in the political receptions for Atatürk decided to bring forward the censorship matter again. Following his great performance applauded by Atatürk himself, this musician known as Tanburacı asked why “the Pasha” did not let his citizens to experience the “joy of *allaturca* music” and politely asked if the ban could be lifted. Atatürk, probably tired of a 400 year time jump, changed his mind all of a sudden that night. There was too much confusion in the air. The voice of the state was, in fact, not very much different from the Western radio stations. The citizens of modern state were following the Arab station, rather than the laic Turkish state set up for them. And suddenly the ban was lifted after Atatürk nodded his head in agreement.

Memoirs of one of the Turkish fives seems to be verifying Atatürk’s tense, contradictory emotions in the picture of the music revolution. Cemal Reşit Rey, a famous Western classical musician of the decade, writes as follows: “In 1925, we were on a boat trip...we were playing Cesar Franck’s *Kentet* for Atatürk and his foreign guests...after showing some interest in our performance, he began chatting with his guests. We thought that it was better to cut out our concert short. Since that day, I realized he was not really into Western classical art music, but I admired his efforts to spread the polyphonic music in our country” (Rey, 1963). Atatürk’s confusing daydreaming was not very productive. In fact, it was destructive enough to lead to unreasonable censorship. But professional and amateur musicians daydreamed of a different polyphony. And this daydreaming enabled them to make improvisations in a space between the Occidental and Oriental music genres. In this regard, I would argue that their daydreams had more creative implications.

4. “THE AMBIGUITY OF PRESENT:” THE JAZZ ENTHUSIASM, ETHNO RACIST TIMBRES AND MANDOLIN

Creating a modern and national music in a short period of time was not easy task to accomplish. It was as if doing a warp jump over a vast spatio-temporality lying between the mythic Turkish history and Western white modernity as I have noted above. There were not enough trained musicians and technical infrastructure to create and broadcast the so-called modern songs on the radio. A couple of new polyphonic folk tunes were composed by the Turkish five during the 20 months *allaturca* censorship but they were not enough to fill up the broadcast time. In fact, music followers found these first experimental pieces of music very “odd” and “grotesque.” A radio just broadcasting Western classical music was hardly different than other Western stations, and this condition produced what Ahiska defines as the ambiguity of present (Ahiska, 2002). But help came from the radio followers and amateur musicians; one important fact downplayed by Ahiska I would argue. They also embarked on a journey to explore an “appropriate,” modern music genre, which was modern-polyphonic and at the same time more appealing than the polyphonic folk tunes. The enthusiasm for jazz through the 1940s, I argue, was another embodiment of daydreaming.

In the very first, primitive years of radio, gramophone records had filled up a great proportion of music broadcasting time, especially when the live *fasıl* music groups and symphonic orchestrates went away for the summer holidays. The records mostly included the jazz albums imported from the United States. Since the radio was the only entertainment and communication medium of the decade, there emerged an enthusiastic jazz followers and audience in time by itself. A genuine jazz audience truly crystalized in the 1940s. This jazz trend reached to such a point that these enthusiastic fans bombarded the Ankara

station with petitions demanding an increase in the “jazz music hours.” Upon this growing enthusiasm, several jazz and dancing bands were formed both in the İstanbul and the Ankara radio stations. This unbridled enthusiasm which I characterize as the jazz leakage surprisingly spread to the small cities in the countryside such as Uşak, as seen in the picture above. Even amateur musicians in Anatolia daydreamed of jazz. The logic of music revolution—aiming to create polyphonic folk songs—accidentally, therefore, opened the path for this entertaining music genre, which originated from African American communities of New Orleans. Hence, the Cairo radio station was not the only unpredictable element in the Turkish music revolution. I would argue that it generated an uncontrolled enthusiasm for jazz as well. Yet what this cultural policy itself in parallel to its modernist anxieties unwittingly, unintentionally produced arose as a threat in time, thereby, resulted in ethno-racist accounts and tunes. In other words, organic intellectuals and political elites did not find the polyphony of jazz acceptable for the nation.



A jazz group from a small city in Anatolia called “Uşak”.

(Photograph is taken from Nota Periodical, 1934, N.33, p.152.)

One of the organic intellectual and a leading political figure in the music reforms, İ.H.Baltacıoğlu for instance, compared jazz to *allaturca*. He states that both musical genres create “inappropriate” desires for modern Turkish citizens. He points to the ecstatic rhythmic oscillations of both music genre, likens the senses they stimulate to “cocaine” and “morphine” as if he used both drugs. *Fasıl* was also labeled as “melancholic” and “alcoholic” in his culture periodical called the “New Man” (Yeni Adam). Furthermore, as being the chief editor of the periodical, he adds “for the sake of the pure Turkish music and for the protection of” “Turkish children against its harmful side effects,” he declares “war” against jazz music, which he claims “contaminates the Turkish soil.” (Baltacıoğlu, 1934). In a similar fashion, Another man of letters in the same periodical quoted as saying: “*allaturca* pushed the old youngsters towards alcoholism and to melancholy. This new music,(jazz), the ethos of the cannibal souls of negroes, will encourage drinking wine, whisky and prostitution in the new youngsters of modern Turkey ” (Güresin, 1941).

Despite the fact that the new Turkish national character was assumed to be “happy” and “content” citizens attending to balls and new social spaces where they turn their ears to polyphonic music pieces,

there were lines not to be crossed. Jazz, as an example of the Western entertaining musical genre, was such a line where the “immoral” and “measureless” bourgeois life style “threatened” the distinctiveness of novel, humble, frugal Turkish citizen. In this regard, I argue that the entertaining pieces of the Western music such as the Afro-American improvisational music, flamenco and the Italian operas were codified as “inappropriate” elements by the intelligentsia of hegemonic culture. Only the “white,” central European art music was welcomed for the sake of “reanimating” Turkish folk songs. Any other polyphonic music genre than classical Western music was considered as threat for the novel, modern Turkish ethnicity and the corporatist social structure based on French notion of *laïcité*. Such a logic, I would argue, produced what I characterize as the ethno-fascist tunes; and the matter of jazz is not the only source that reveals the subtitles of racism encoded in Turkish nationalism.

Mandolin itself and the enthusiasm the common people showed for this Mediterranean instrument, for instance, also created similar ethno racist tunes and daydreams. The Kemalist-nationalist intelligentsia, in the 1930s and 1940s, did not appreciate much the local, non-Muslim folk songs played by the mandolin. Nonetheless, the audience letters written to the radio, the memories of amateur music groups from various parts of the country, the music news popping up on the edges of the radio periodical show us that there was an immense enthusiasm for this instrument, originally called *Mandolina*; an instrument that became very popular in Naples in Italy during the 18th century. The mandolin enthusiasm, I would suggest, was as widespread, uncontrolled and surprising as that of jazz. There were even some music followers desiring to hear mandolin in Turkish folk tunes and Ottoman high-art religious music (Ankete Cevaplar , 1948).

The cultural and musical journals of the era, I would suggest, demonstrate that Izmir (Smyrna)⁷ was the city where this “street instrument,” which is easy to learn and play, was very widespread. In an article, it is said that there had been many small children who was busking in the streets of Izmir with the mandolin. It was also stated there was a great demand for learning to play mandolin and Spanish guitar in the music schools and amateur education centers (İzmir’deki Mandolin Modası, 1935). In another article, one columnist expresses his dissatisfaction with the widespread enthusiasm for the mandolin and guitar in the city by mentioning a little Greek boy who was playing a song called “Tumalano Tumalano” with the mandolin. He says he cannot find any “practical reason” why this boy sings “in a language which he does not understand” as if there were not any non-Muslims living in Asia Minor and Smyrna after the great fire (Kolluoğlu, 2005). He compares this boy with another one that he ran into before in a small village located in the plains of central Turkey. “This clean boy that I met in Anatolia is very similar to the one in Göztepe...” says he “but, I would rather listen to *Çarşambayı Sel Aldı* by him, instead of a worthless one from the Greek seed” (Çiçekoğlu, 1935).

The ideologues of the *Yeni Adam* periodical who were not content with jazz also targeted the mandolin. “When I hear mandolin sound” the chief editor, Baltacıoğlu says “I hear a crying Italian.” Apparently, Italians were not white and modern enough for Baltacıoğlu. The battle against mandolin reached to such a point that Adnan Saygun, one of the Turkish Fives prepared a brochure depicting mandolin as a “wild” (*yaban*)

7 Izmir also known as Smyrna was a port-city in the Ottoman Empire along with its cosmopolitan socio-cultural texture which was composed of Catholic Levantines, Sephardi Jews and unorthodox Muslim communities of the time. For detailed historical account of the city’s demographic structure in the early 20th century and how that is remembered in the current Turkish national imaginary see Biray Kolluoğlu, “*Forgetting the Smyrna Fire*,” Historical Workshop Journal, N.60, 2005, Oxford University Press, pp.25-44 (Kolluoğlu, 2005).

instrument originating from “the low civilization of Southern Europe.” He urged authorities to impose ban on the instrument in the public education houses (*halk evleri*). (Mandolina, 1943).

Not only the busking boys and their instruments, the Greek women of İstanbul singing in a “promiscuous” and “seductive” fashion at taverns (*meyhanes*) were also targeted in the same racist and sexist manner. In the imaginations of state elites, the *meyhanes*, where monophonic underground Greco-Balkan songs fused with oriental rhythms, was against the logic of the dynamic, novel Turkish character. In other words, the chaotic, cosmopolite and “immoderate” bourgeois style entertaining nightlife of İstanbul was not compatible with the elegance of Ankara ball nights the elites desired for the common people (Refik, 1998, pp. 145-146).

5. THE BIRTH OF TURKISH POPULAR CULTURE: ON SEARCH FOR POLYPHONY AND HARMONY

Besides the censors, jazz enthusiasm and mandolin, the oscillations of Turkish music revolution has gradually opened the path for popular culture in the new secular nation in the course of time. The first sparks of the popular music, I suggest, were not entirely in the imagined and desired forms as that of the so-called polyphonic folk songs. They actually were also one part of the unpredictable reverberations of the music reforms implemented in a top-down manner. The censored *allaturca* musicians of the radio understandably began doing live gigs in the tavern nights of the 1940s to earn a living. They mostly played the soundtracks they heard in the Cairo radio station and Egyptian films, which emerged as a cultural industry even challenging Hollywood back then. By drawing their inspiration from the fusion of Arabic entertaining pieces and hypnotic rhythms of Ottoman religious music they also composed first pieces of popular culture songs that would please the tavern audience who were eager to hear entertaining pieces of songs in Turkish. Zeki Müren, who later one became one of the iconic figures in popular culture with his queer image in a Muslim-conservative country, for instance, grew famous in İstanbul tavern nights by singing the songs composed by Sadettin Kaynak who was involved among the alienated *allaturca* musicians of the era. The musical cooperation between Müren and Kaynak undoubtedly sowed the seeds of the music industry to come in Turkey's belated modern milieu by introducing the notion of “pop star” cult to audiences.

In a similar fashion, I would argue that jazz also contributed to the emergence of popular culture in Turkey. One famous music composer, Şanar Yurdatapan, who found several jazz and rock'n roll orchestrates in the 1950s, 1960s, for instance, says “he trained himself” while “he was listening to jazz on the radio when he was young” (Akkaya & Çelik, 2006, p. 8). Another jazz instrumentalist recounts his memories of a concert in the summer 1944 as follows: “One of the songs I really did not find very important was requested to be played for three times. The audience was so vigorous during the drum solo performed by Erdem Buri, I was really surprised.” It would not be entirely wrong to relate such an unexpected enthusiasm that this musician witnessed to the jazz leakage in the radio I addressed above. In fact, as the cultural borders of Turkey crystallized after the Marshall Plan in 1947 and the NATO membership in 1953, there emerged a young generation of elite musicians who prepared the ground for the first sparkles of popular culture music industry leaning toward Western style. These musicians put together music group inside the thick walls of growing universities where they fused the rock'n roll with the jazz music they heard on the Ankara radio station. Celal İnce, a former radio jazz musician with his famous tuxedo, for instance, became a popular

culture figure in the 1950s with his own composed song called “Cowboy’s Song” along with a music group he worked since university years. He is argued to be first performer who set the popular western music trend in Turkey’s popular culture history. His success inspired many other amateur musicians and motivated them to form jazz and rock bands across the country. (Meriç, 1999).

Nonetheless, other popular names of the decade did not succumb to the allure of western entertaining pieces in the way Celal İnce did. Ruhi Su, a visiting performer at the radio station, for instance, was in search for a magical formula that would successfully blend the Turkish folk tunes with the Western polyphony. In an interview he gave for the radio he points out that Turkish folk music was less “threatening to the occident music” when compared to *allaturca*. Also, he emphasizes that one of his primary objectives involved the “discovery” of an “original singing style of folk music” with the “occidental vocal techniques” (Münirebiceoğlu, Date Unknown, p. 18). Nonetheless, Su’s ambitious search for the Turkish authenticity in and through Western polyphony did not stop him from performing at various musical halls and on the radiobroadcast through the 1940s. Ironically, he could not find out the musical genre he daydreamed of because of the prosody and intonation problems he came across on the way. In other words, Turkish language was not that compatible with the heptatonic scale. Hence, Ruhi Su’s search was as futile as of the Turkish five in the 1930s. Turkish was just made for polyphonic structure.

Music is akin to a living organism like a butterfly that comes out of a language chrysalis. Hence, composing with the compass of a foreign music would inevitably lead to failure. But on top of that, the attempt to squeeze the richness of Ottoman&Turkish music, the 119 *makams* into seven-note scale was a harder task to accomplish. Nonetheless, such a daydream paved the way for innovations in Turkish music then. The chief editor of the *Nota* Periodical, Mildan Niyazi, for instance, publicly declared that he began working on a project called “the formulation of *beynenmilel* (international) music” after declaring “war” against the “Orient music” (Niyazi, 1933, p. 2). In the following issues, this new periodical itself, I would suggest, evolved into a discussion forum where the ordinary citizens, amateur and professional musicians and elites had debated over the “boundaries” of the international music they desired for a time. This short-lived musical periodical of the 1930s solved the conundrum by pointing to the invention of an instrument called *ahenk* (harmony.) “The revolution in instruments” reads the title of the article that introduced *Ahenk* to music audience. This new invented instrument, which actually looks like *ud* but with a scaled fretboard like guitar, was presented as a “miracle” “blending” the sounds of the occident with the orient. The periodical also advertised the inventor, as well as his atelier’s address along with the news of the new instrument. Hence, it would not be entirely wrong to state that the music audience was encouraged to buy this “magical” instrument (Sazda İnkilap, 1934). In other words, I would suggest that this instrument maker along with a confused music audience following the *Nota* periodical daydreamed of an international music with harmony, which eventually seemed to evolve into a lucrative initiation in the burgeoning capitalism of a belated modern milieu. Put shortly, daydreaming left the doors ajar for the logic of capitalism in the Turkish music in the making.

6. THE RADIO STIGMATIZES, EXAMINES AND EDUCATES ALLATURCA

As I noted above the action of daydreaming does not entirely involve productive actions. Along with creative initiatives punitive measures were also very visible in this panorama, especially when the matter comes

to “the sole voice of nation,” that is, the radio. In fact, the ban on *allaturca* music was the embodiment of such punitive measures in that regard. In this last section, I will be following the footsteps of daydreaming deed by focusing on the incidents that took place within the corridors of radio institution itself. Thus this section is giving us a glimpse of daydreaming inside a state institution rather than the imagined nation, which was assumed to be navigating in a spatio-temporality between the mythic Turkish lands in Central Asia and Western white modernity.

Despite the fact that the radio declared “neutrality” in regards to the heated debates revolving around “the Occident and the Orient music,” the station underlined the necessity of “education,” and in this manner made several attempts to increase the quantity of national folk songs. As the new state governing capacity increased and intensified in the 1940s, this neutral stance, I would argue, leaned more toward an educative and punitive pole. It was, for instance, officially and publically announced that that the institution was absolutely determined to achieve the goal set by the top political figures, that is, the “national music revolution” (Nişbey, Alaturka, Alafrange ve Radyomuz, 1942, s. 2). Hence, it would not be entirely wrong to state that the radio was gradually dragged into the hegemony’s sphere of influence, especially following Atatürk’s speech on the parliament in 1934, which I addressed above. As the radio began to be associated with the logic of “sole voice of the nation,” indirect interventions made from the parliament left their places to the direct measures taken within the radio corridors. İsmet İnönü replacing Atatürk after his death, as the “chief” of the nation, for instance, once inspected the station himself and pointed to the necessity of “national tunes” to broadcast after his surprise visit. Right after that check, the ultimate aim of the station was announced as the “cultivation and elevating the cultural practices to the level of contemporary civilizations” (Nişbey, 1943, s. 2). Nonetheless, such a warp ump to the level of Western civilization was hard to accomplish when it comes to music, as I have indicated. There were not enough polyphonic folk songs, nor live orchestrates to fill up the broadcast time. Considering the radio’s technical insufficiency, I would argue that *allaturca* music and its small orchestra, *Fasıl Heyeti*, somehow had survived in the radio corridors despite the bans and punitive measures taken against them. In other words, the hegemonic state could not immediately invent any practical music genre to replace the “melancholic” *allaturca*.



The photograph shows the *Fasıl Heyeti* and its musicians, rehearsing before the live broadcast

(The photograph is taken from Radyo, *Müzik Hareketleri*, V.4, N.37 p.18.)

Nonetheless, it would not be entirely wrong to state that these musicians and singers had worked not in the best conditions throughout the 1940s. In various news and interviews, they, for instance, were introduced as “temporary visiting” artists, unlike their colleagues performing in Western symphonic and chamber orchestras. Worse than that, the station did not provide *Fasıl Heyeti* with the technical opportunities and venues, which were granted to the Western art musicians without a question. The band performed their songs in a non-acoustic small room only with one microphone. They literally endeavored to make music in the radio corridors I would suggest. They could not enjoy the live audience privilege in the way the Western orchestras did. More importantly, they were regularly asked to take “musical examinations” to meet the eligibility requirements to work since they were employed as “temporary musicians” (*Ses ve Saz Sanatkarlarımız*, 1942, s. 19). Ironically, the ardent supporter of music revolution, the *Yeni Adam* periodical admitted that *Fasıl Heyeti* was “in a miserable condition.” “But it is not their fault, the band’s poor performance” writes the periodical “stems from the crappy technical quality...” The same news also notes that the band did not have a pre-arranged play list but were playing and “improvising” the songs requested by audience; which I think, points to another obstacle put in the band’s way (*Radyo’da Müzik*, 1941, s. 5).

The miserable conditions that the the *allaturca* musicians had to endure and the “discrimination” they had to deal with were not just put into words by the partisan periodical. The radio also channeled the voices of the broken heart musicians as well. In an interview given to the institution monthly periodical, they recount how some of their colleagues resigned because of the “ideological pressures” applied on *allaturca* music.” (Volkan, 1949). The question I would like to pose here then is: If the state favors the Western polyphony against this melancholic music genre, if there is an apparent ideological support for the former, why still they let *allaturca* tunes and songs transmit through the magical radio waves? Memories of two famous stars of the era perfectly, I argue, provide answers for this question by depicting the humorous scenes of daydreaming in the radio corridors.



Perihan Altındağ rehearsing at the Ankara Radio station before her live performance

(The photograph is taken from *Radyo, Ses ve Saz Artislerimiz*, 15 June 1942, V.1, N.7, p.10.)

In an interview for the radio periodical, Perihan Altındağ and Müzzeyen Senar recount how they rehearse for their live vocal performances on the live broadcast as follows: “We were doing morning sports in the corridors of the radio building complex” they say “for warming up our voice to be ready for performing in the very early morning.” They were doing such exercises, reminiscent of acrobatics under the radio shelter, because they were usually asked to perform in the early morning or “whenever the radio needed them” (Özbek, 1991, s. 320). Hence, the radio needed *allaturca* music in times of need.

Contrary to this ambiguous spatio-temporality—not just in the literal sense but in regards to hegemonic cultural imaginary—where *allaturca* music was placed in, the station rewarded the large presidential philharmonic orchestra, (*risyaset-i cumhur flarmoni orkestrasi*), with a grand concert hall. They allocated another large acoustic concert venue to a new western mandolin orchestra, as well as for other small sized chamber orchestras. These bands, as that of chief conductor Ferit Alınar’s philharmonic orchestra along with 64 instrumentalists and the “hall orchestra” conducted by Necip Aşkın and Halil Oyman, began making live performances in these brand new music halls along with the audience applauds in the following months (Müzik Hareketleri , s. 18).



The Presidential Orchestrate is rehearsing at the grand concert hall right before a gig.

(The photograph is taken from Radyo, *Müzik Hareketleri*, V.4, N.37, p.18.)

The radio had also operated as an educative apparatus, especially in regards to music throughout the 1930s and 1940s. One of the famous Istanbulite *allaturca* singer, Radife Erten, for instance, likens the station to a school. “Sometimes we would work three or four hours a day in the dark studio. Our teachers usually come and check whether we work. Those who do not work take warnings” she adds. Ahıska emphasizes that the intention behind such surveillance-like activities was to bring order to chaos, which arose out of a desire to bring Western capitalist working principles to a state institution located in the Orient. She furthermore notes that the state officials believed this was the only way to overcome the problem of what she calls of the “ambiguity of the present.” As a result, the ruling elites hoped that the new nation

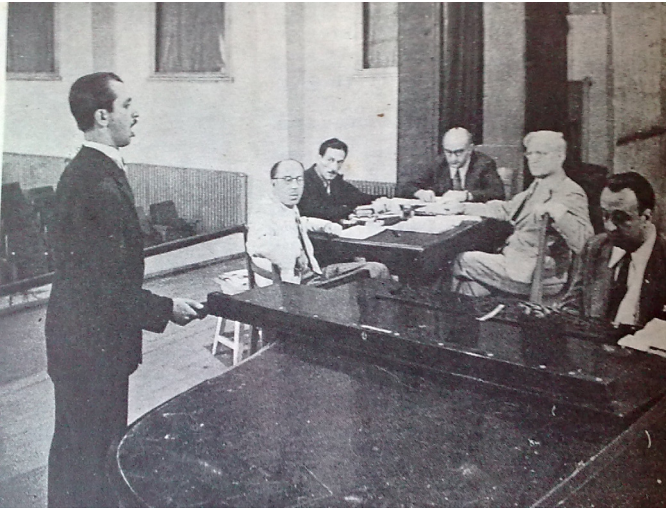
could catch up with the occidental temporality. Ahıska also states that this urge to catch the modern-secular temporality, “the Occidental fantasy” was exaggerated to such an extent that the Turkish citizens were assumed, imagined to be actors capable of operating in accordance with the capitalist work discipline already. (Ahıska, 2002, pp. 61-63).

Ahıska puts forward this argument in relation to the archival findings on the administrative personal in the radio as an institution in general. In this regard, I shall limit the empirical scope of the argument by focusing on the issue of music, and by doing so I am taking this assessment one step further: I am arguing that not only the radio staff but also ordinary citizens believed that they already had caught the so-called higher standards of Western secular norms and values. In other words, they themselves, I argue, accompanied the elites’ daydreaming. Nonetheless, this daydreaming, which I also associate with the cultural colonization of the Orient, also included ambivalent reverberations. Put differently, some of the music followers were very well aware and critical of the state elites’ “fantasies.”

In one of the music competitions organized for hiring new singers and musicians to the station, the radio officials and responsible authorities announced they were searching for “talented” and “educated” musicians in the radio journal. What they meant by the “educated” expression was that the instrumentalists who has sufficient knowledge on *solfège* skills and “the Western vocal techniques.” Given the limited number of conservatories and schools of music teaching those methods in the newly founded nation-state erected upon the values of enlightenment, the radio’s search for such musicians, I would suggest, was futile. In fact, the hiring committee itself was not pleased with the “quality” of the competitors despite the fact that there were over hundred applicants coming from various cities of the republic such as Izmir, Adana, Sivas, Konya. The head chief of the radio station, Vedat Nedim Tör describes the quality of competitors with words such as “misery” and “heartbreaking.” He complained that not even a single musician in the competition could “recognize” the musical notation signs, and majority of the vocals sung by using their “throats making sounds like they were ill” (Tör V. , s. 3). Given the fact that the traditional, mystic teaching methods of Ottoman music based on the master-apprentice relationship did not require learning *solfège*, and its vocal techniques requires improvising throat movements for *makam* structure, finding amateur musicians equipped with such Western musical skills, I would suggest, would actually be like finding a needle in the haystack. Certainly there were several schools then such as *Dârülelhan* in İstanbul, *Musiki Muallim Mektebi* in Ankara teaching the western art music, but as I said the competitors were coming from various cities in particular from the ones on the fringes of country where enlightening and educative apparatus of new secular state could not penetrate in. Nonetheless, the young amateurish musicians of the republic were expected to fulfill the fantasy, or the daydreams of the elites

The search committee composed of nine authorities including well know names coming from the station such as Cevat Memduh persistently kept searching for “educated” singers and they were really “happy” and content when they come across with someone who were singing in a fashion leaning to “western style voice” (Beğenç & Cahit, 1946, s. 11-12). What was ironic about this search is that ordinary people pointed out that their efforts were “in vain.” One of the competitors responding aggressively yelled to them “he was not ashamed for not knowing *solfège*.” He also noted he did not understand why the selecting community “persistently was searching for musicians with *solfège* knowledge” since there were not any

conservatory schools out of İstanbul and Ankara teaching that. "It does not make any sense to know musical note signs to sing Ottoman&Turkish music" he added on that. (Edipoğlu, 1946, s. 15) Another competitor, an old woman around her fifties daydreamed of polyphony along with the committee. When she was asked whether she "knew *sofêge*" she quoted saying: "I have never had education in this Occident technique." But ironically when the musical notation signs were shown to her she was able to recognize and name them (İstanbul Radyo'sunda bir İmtihan). In other words, daydreaming about Western polyphony made her believe that she did not know *sofêge* despite she actually knew. To put it simply, the cultural colonization of the Orient persuaded common people like her living there that they were ignorant of Western enlightenment values despite the fact they actually were not.



(The photograph is taken Radyo, *Radyomuzda Saz ve Ses İmtihanları*, V.1, N.9, p.11.)

Following the spreading news about this nation-wide competition, music followers sent letters to the radio station, asking how they could better be prepared for it. In a letter from Erzurum, one amateur musician, for instance, writes he plays *duduk* instrument; a wood flute indigenous to Armenian culture. He also emphasizes he is "well-skilled in Turkish music," but wonders whether these "qualities" are enough to get into the competition. The radio responded by suggesting he either enrolls in conservatory music classes or "take private lessons from elder musicians" (Ecipoğlu, 1946, s. 15). Contrary to this fastidious approach in the competition, the station welcomed an eight-year old child playing the Turkish folkloric instrument *saz*. It was also announced that they proudly enrolled this child into the conservatory although he was illiterate then. Moreover, the boy was also afforded with the opportunity to make a live performance along with the best technical opportunities (Radyo'da Sazınızı Dinlediğimiz Yeni Harika Çocuk, 1946, s. 20). The reason behind the motivation for putting this kid on the air, I would argue, was more about the ethno-racist concerns that come along with daydreaming. The logic of creating a national music genre that could lift up the pride of the nation was a matter that eclipsed

the daydreaming about polyphony at some points. The young boy playing the “national” instrument was the embodiment of that national pride. It was also a visible proof for the “sublimity” of the Turkish folks songs, which “were carried on the veins of the Turks,” whereas the Ottoman musicians or the *duduk* instrumentalist from Erzurum tripped over the daydreaming of national elites. In fact, in the response letter the radio underlined that *duduk* “was not available in the national repertoire” (Radyo’da Sazınızı Dinlediğimiz Yeni Harika Çocuk, 1946, s. 20).

As the comments about the *duduk* instrument of Armenian origin shows, as well as reaction directed towards the Greek busking boys and mandolin I addressed about, there was not any space left for ethnically non-Turkish tunes and tones in the music revolution. The new national music raising the spirit of masses had to be genuinely Turkish, it had to be modelled on Western choral music. Not even a polyphony blending the touch of An Armenian musician with the local, vernacular taste was acceptable.

7. IN LIEU OF CONCLUSION: THE RISE OF POPULAR CULTURE IN TURKEY

In search of polyphony, advisors and consultants around Atatürk once went to Tatyos *Efendi* of Armenian origin who was one of the pioneering Ottoman music composers of the era. They requested a new polyphonic composition from the famous musician not only to mitigate the confusion their *Pasha* was going through during the *allaturca* ban, also find a remedy for the failure of new Western style national songs. The project of polyphonic national folk tunes was already a complete failure because of the prosody problems I addressed above. Dance of language and music was not harmonious, in other words. These new symphonic songs were labeled as “groans” even by the organic intellectual and ruling elites themselves. The radio’s new program, the “Commentary Opera Hours” broadcasted live was not enough to win the hearts and minds and convince the music audience otherwise (Tör V. N., 1943, s. 13). There had to be solution. And Atatürk’s advisors were determined to find that magical formula both to please their leader and to prove that polyphony could exist with the local culture of the country.

Upon the request, Tatyos *Efendi* composed a new *semai* in harmonic form to be played by a chamber orchestrate. It was entirely designed for Western-style instruments. The song was presented to Atatürk during another big dinner event organized at the pavilion. After giving ear to the song, which was believed to be bringing the polyphony of West with vernacular culture, “This is *irtical!*” he shouted out. “I do not want Sir Tatyos’s polyphonic compositions, I want the new pieces of art composed by the Turkish children and reflecting their emotions” he added on in rage (Paçacı, 1999, s. 23). Atatürk’s desire not see or hear any non-Turkish elements even led to creative destructive artistic initiatives at some points. Saygun, one of the Turkish Five, praised his “passion” to write purified, modern Turkish lyrics over the folk songs of other communities of Asia Minor (Saygun, 1985, s. 45). Greek, Kurdish and Armenian folk songs became Turkish over a night with Atatürk’s stroke of a pen, in other words.

Despite all these interventions made to create a modern genuine Turkish national music genre and spark curiosity for the Western music culture, the nation-wide survey conducted by the radio in 1948 shows us that the common people were actually willing to hear sounds and beats of folk instruments such as *darbuka*, (goblet drum), *kaval* (chromatic-blown flute played throughout the Balkans and

Anatolia) and mandolin; (Radyo, 1948) the instruments which actually contradict with the imagination of elegant Turk entranced in Western classical music. In this regard, it would not be entirely wrong to state that the music followers in the 1930s and 1940s, did not daydream of the polyphonic national tunes and songs. They were more willing to hear music tunes that were not contaminated by any modernist desire and anxiety.

Ironically, it was *allaturca* music itself that had acquired a more polyphonic texture in time. As I noted above, *allaturca* musicians who could not find any job opportunities in the state musical institutions began doing live performances on the entertainment avenues and music halls of Turkey, which was drifting towards the cultural, capitalist life-style of West in the 1950s after NATO membership. Also known as the *Gazino* nights, these musicians were left with no choice but to incorporate melodic forms akin to Western chords, harmonies and tonalities into their repertoires to please a music audience yearning to get down and party like other Westerners. The polyphony daydream, therefore, truly manifested itself in the arabesque themed, improvisational songs of the *Gazino* entertainment industry, which emerged in response to that yearning and desire.

The industrializing music trend made its peak in neoliberalizing Turkey in 1980s. Years after Tatyos Efendi, another Armenian composer created popular culture pieces that blended Western chordal harmonic structure with Sezen Aksu's smoky, melancholic voice representing the complexity and life-world of vernacular culture. The song called "Sen Ağlama" and its derivations that Tunç composed were Western and polyphonic enough to please an elite music audience, perhaps even Atatürk if he could find a chance to hear, and at the same time it was local and sincere enough to appeal to masses who were caught in the allure of melancholy of Arabesque dominating the cultural life of the era. The daydreaming that Tunç brought to Turkish music not only solved the conundrum of the West-East incongruence, but also left the door ajar for sort of a space of cultural resistance for non-Turkish musicians like Garo Mafyan, Uzeyr Heparı of Jewish-Armenian origin and their pioneers like Nina Varon in the following years, along with Sezen Aksu who became one of the iconographic representations dominating the popular culture of the 1990s.

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