

# Moment JOURNAL

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## FROM THE THEME EDITORS

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Hello,

Here we are with another issue themed “Pop Islam”. In this issue, we would like to trace the interaction between popular culture and Islam, trying to figure out the daily manifestations of Islamic ideology. In the meanwhile, we try to discuss how the religious is integrated into popular culture on the basis of practices and discourse, and, of course, how popular culture itself is reproduced within a religious discourse.

We believe that our interview with Tayfun Atay will be as illuminating and inspiring for you as it has been for us. Addressing the bases of an anthropological approach towards religion and popular culture, the interview presents a thorough framework regarding the changing features of being religious. Atay invites the readers to read the relationship between Islam and popular culture parallel to the economic, cultural and class-based changes in Turkey rather than the essentialist generalizations.

In their article “1960’lardan 28 Şubat’a Cemaati Romanlarla İcat Etmek: Siyasal İslamın Popüler Tezahürleri” (Devising the Community by Novels from 1960s to February 28: Popular Manifestations of Political Islam), Çimen Günay Erkol and Uğur Çalışkan compare the 1960s *hidayet romanları* (novels of the right way) and the Islamic novels published after 1990. They claim that *hidayet romanları* played a significant role in the construction of Islamic cultural identity, while the Islamic novels of the 1990s possessed certain characteristics of self-criticism. The article focuses on the transformation in

Islamic novels following the 1980s when the market economy became determinant in Turkey and a new middle-class based on religion emerged.

Another article in this issue is Gökhan Arıkan's quite interesting and inspiring writing "Seviyor musun Beni? İdeolojinin Gündelikleşmesi Olarak Ahsen TV Röportajları" (Do You Love Me? Interviews of Ahsen TV as Ideology Becoming Quotidian). In this article, Arıkan examines the street interviews broadcast on Ahsen TV, and analyzes the body and emotion politics through which Bülent Yapraklıoğlu, who edits and also stars the shootings, talks. Calling attention to both the clothes, body and self-presentation of Yapraklıoğlu and the way he addresses the people he interviews and his strategies to position them, Arıkan presents examples of ideology becoming quotidian.

Halil İbrahim Gürel and Leyla Şimşek-Rathke's article "İslamcı Kimliğin Popüler Kültürel İfadeleri: Ehlisünnet TV Sokak Röportajları" (Popular Cultural Struggle of "Islamist" Identity: Ehlisünnet TV Street Interviews) is the second article focusing on the same material with a different problematic. The article mainly focuses on the fact that Ehlisünnet TV (now Ahsen TV) transformed the Republicanism-Islamism debate determining the political agenda in Turkey into a shallow and superficial debate of clothing norm, and discusses the severe ethical violations in the interviews.

In "Fethullah Gülen Portresi" (The Portrait of Fethullah Gülen), Yüksel Taşkın reflects on the ideological construction "from the butterfly to the cocoon, the retrieval of the hidden from our historical consciousness" as for with what motives it is surrounded, how it is read, and how it is circulated. We believe that you will find this article interesting in that it conducts a multi-level and multi-dimensional argument focusing on Fethullah Gülen, a popular figure producing "action" from the tense area between earthliness and spirituality, resembling the tension between popular culture and religion.

The article "Religious Broadcasting and the Fantastic Tele-Universe of Adnan Oktar's A9 TV" focuses on another popular figure, Adnan Oktar, and addresses televangelism, a form of religious broadcasting. Berfin Emre examines the issue of A9 TV programs within the question of what kind of a discourse Adnan Oktar's unique practice constructs.

Gökçe Baydar's article "Manevi Kişisel Gelişimde Öznellikler ve Duygulanımsal Bilgelik: *Allah De Ötesini Bırak*" (Subjectivities and Affective Wisdom in Spiritual Self-

Help: *Allah De Ötesini Bırak*) focuses on a self-help book selling over a 750.000 copies within a year, and indicates that the neoliberal self-help narrative and the text full of religious references actually belong to the same universe of discourse. It emphasizes the dilemma of this universe combining traditional expressions of common sense and the “responsible individual” argument of the self-help narrative, and its role in legitimizing the existing family and market order.

The article “Postmodern Tanrı Misafiri: Popüler Tasavvufçuluk” (The Postmodern Guest of God: Popular "Sufism") of Adem Bölükbaşı follows a similar path. It discusses the resurrection of Sufism within a context where distinctions between religious and secular and sacred and profane become blurred, and postmodern religiousness becomes one of the founding principles of popular culture, and questions the classical paradigm of secularization.

In his article “Money Talks: Turkish-Islamic Synthesis on Banknotes of Turkey”, Nail Elhan traces the Turkish-Islamic synthesis on banknotes. Thanks to Elhan’s article which shows us how and through which symbols and historical figures the Turkish-Islamic synthesis has been shaped becoming more hegemonic since the 1980’s in Turkey and enables us to look closely to the construction and change of a political discourse, we witness a quite productive intersection of political science and cultural studies.

In their article “Dini Çoğulculuk ve Kamusal Alanda Dindar Tüketim Kültürü” (Religious Pluralism and Religious Consumption Culture in the Public Sphere) regarding the daily manifestations of religious ideology in consuming culture, Hasan Hüseyin Aygül and Özgür Öztürk build up a framework worthy to discuss: consuming as a public activity.

Zeynep Işıl Işık Dursun examines the Islamic influences in popular music in her article “Uluslarötesi Birlikten Ecdada: Türkçe Sözlü İslami Hip-Hop” (From Transnational Unity to Ancestry: Turkish Spoken Islamic Hip-Hop). She inspires us to think whether Islamic punk and Islamic hip-hop mean the popularization of religion or indicate to the influence of religious ideology on the popular.

The final article in this Pop Islam themed issue is Erdem Çolak’s “İslam ile Görsel Mizah: Türkiye’de İslami Mizah Dergiciliğinin Dönüşümü” (Islam and Visual Humor: Transformation of The Islamic Humor Magazine Publishing in Turkey). Çolak invites us to think the possibilities and constraints of using humor on an Islamic basis while the

historical and cultural sources of humor magazines having political purposes indicate more to a leftist opposition, and shows us how this tendency has changed since the 1990s.

As a little “annex” to this issue, here, we would like to include the articles written by the students of the Popular Culture Studies class conducted within the Hacettepe University Department of Communication Sciences Postgraduate Program in the last semester. We believe that you will find these articles examining the first season of *Muhteşem Yüzyıl (The Magnificent Century)* interesting.

The only article out of the theme on this issue is “Stereoskopik Fotoğrafın Üretim Süreci ve Günümüzdeki Uygulamasına Bir Örnek: Ayağıma Gelen Tarih Projesi” (Production Process of Stereoscopic Photography and an Example of Its Recent Implementations: History on My Door Project). In his article, Evren Sertalp discusses the possibilities of stereoscopic photography through a history project he conducted with the Turkish people living in Nuremberg, Germany.

In our book review section, we introduce two books: First review is Yasin Karaman’s “Postille: Eco’dan Sonra *Gülü’n Adı*” (Postille: *The Name of the Rose* after Eco). Written after the death of Umberto Eco, this review is like a guidebook for not only *The Name of the Rose* but all the books of Eco.

The second review is by Göze Orhon. We believe that you will find this review of Elifhan Köse’s book *Sessizliği Söylemek: Dindar Kadın Edebiyatı, Cinsiyet ve Beden (Utterance of Silence: Pious Women’s Literature, Gender and Body)* interesting in that it places the book within a broader “geography”, the geography of feminist literature criticism.

Hope you enjoy...

**Aksu Bora**

**Burak Özçetin**