



The Possibility of Being Don Quixote in The Face of Popular Postmodern Music

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Introduction

Popular music, which is one of the most important areas of popular culture, is daily and superficial. It is produced so as to satisfy the current taste of the society and it is consumed quickly. This consumption is so quick that a name or a song which you kept on saying a short while ago disappears in the course of time.

The trend of light music which started with arrangements in 1960s evolved into “rock” after a while, and then into “pop”, later into “arabesque”. From the 1960s until today, many artists have been producing original works in this area. Therefore, popular culture and popular music which is one of the elements of popular culture can not be indeed worthless and banal from a cultural point of view. It reflects the relevant period and it is a crucial part of the culture. However, the form of its production and presentation which is made with commercial concerns trivializes it from an artistic point of view.

In the study, the aim is to analyze for what and whom popular culture and its attendant popular music serves and the philosophy of music involved in this culture, instead of trying to understand what popular culture is. The main topic is to defend conventionalism as opposed to popular culture and to defend genuine music of the Turk as opposed to popular music.

Music is also a means of communication. It is a way of individual’s self-description and self-expression. So much so that it is possible to identify the individual with the music s/he listens to or sings. However, the concept of musical identity, in relation to this, is the object of another study. Here, the focus of attention is the way musical identity should be constructed and how and by whom the existing musical identity is made preferable.

In the study, concepts of pop, popular culture, popular music, modernism, postmodernism, ideology, alienation, globalization will be underlined as well. Especially,



postmodern popular music which takes the form of commercial commodity and is based on visuality and which consists of hollow words that do not make up a meaningful whole will be criticized; and social, visual and noise pollution, created by popular culture and thus popular musics, will be mentioned. Moreover, the role of mass media which is a means of transmission will be emphasized; and the responsibility of the intellectual and artist will be elaborated on.

The study basically aims at contributing to the field of philosophy of music. The absence of genuine study in the field of philosophy of music can be considered as a great lack. So far, the practical dimension of the music, originating from its structural function, has been at the forefront. However, music is a science; hence it is supposed to have a philosophy as well. Especially, in our era which we live in postmodern popular culture, the lack of philosophy of music has taken the commodification of music to its extreme. Only by touching this point and through the knowledge that will be produced in this field intervention will be possible. The intervention against degenerate, popular music brought by postmodernism can only be achieved by the rise of intellectuals in the field of musicology.

Preliminary condition for having musical consciousness is the development of intellectual, thus oppositional consciousness. What lies behind oppositional consciousness is the courage to create. For, the intellectual is the individual who has the ability to represent and materialize a message, a view, a stance, a philosophy or an opinion in the name of and for a specific public. The purpose of the intellectual's activity is to advance human freedom and knowledge (Yıldırım, Koç 2008, p. 83).

Globalization

Globalization is not a new phenomenon. It is a new term. It is the other name of imperialism. Globalization is the expansion of the market on a global scale, extension of the market beyond national borders, the process by which the world becomes a single market. It arose during the 1980s. Imperialism is composed of a strong, sovereign,



dominant center and dependent peoples. This dependence is not only economical, but also political, ideological and cultural. The concept of globalization implies these as well. If we acknowledge that imperialism emerged early in the 20th century, we can not consider globalization which had emerged during the 1980s as a new phenomenon. However, although that is the case substantially, some formal differences are also in question.

Finance capital is the most defining feature of globalization. Finance capital came to the forefront late in the 19th century, but later it was pushed aside. It reappeared again after 1980. The most important feature of finance capital is that it cuts across all boundaries and that the capital flows on a global scale.

Capitalism have not been able to overcome the crisis that begun in the 1970s and it is still in crisis today. The policy it has developed after 1980 in order to overcome the crisis is “globalization”. When capital does not face either any social or governmental barrier, flows into any state and widens the net of exploitation as much as possible, surplus value will be increased and capital accumulation will be achieved. “Globalization” or the formulation of “the new world order” which is considered to be the way to the solution of the world crisis is ultimately the maximization of surplus value.

Globalization is a model that is based on the free flow of capital in and out of the area where it obtains the maximum surplus value. To that end, states should be stripped of their interventionist and protectionist identities.

The most crucial result of globalization is the thought that nation-states will weaken. However, to what extent it is achieved in the last twenty years is disputable. Undoubtedly globalization is basically the maintenance of the dominance of financial capital throughout the world, on a supranational scale. This situation is not limited only to the sphere of capital; it has to join with the historical imperialist policies. Ultimately, nation states pose the greatest danger. Especially the penetration of the ideology of



globalization through the cultural spheres of societies, standardization of societies, destruction of essential qualities of nations, absence of public oppositions will smoothly construct the dominance of financial capital. Accordingly, “cultural imperialism” is supposed to play its proper role in globalization in order to achieve cultural standardization. In that sense, globalization has fostered the rise of popular culture in general and popular music in particular.

When considered from this point of view, it is possible to see globalization as a struggle for cultural domination. Nations have global dreams and the most peaceful way of realizing those dreams passes through the stage in which those local-national values will acquire a global nature. Globalization, while creating a similarity through imposing dominant cultural values on the whole nation, on the other hand it provides each nation with the means of and opportunity for spreading, introducing and promoting its own national values. If national values can be promoted on a global basis, globalization can be considered as an opportunity; if it can not, then it can be seen as a threat (Eroğlu, Köktan, 2002, p: 8-11). The best argument for the ways in which globalization is creating opportunity is the revolution of communication and the internet in this century.

Social and Cultural Impacts of Globalization

The process of globalization, which has recently gained acceleration with also the effect of the destruction of the walls between the blocks, has given social impacts a global dimension. As a result of the collapse of the Soviet Union there has been left scarcely any corner that can resist the global flow of capital and its cultural products. Global market economy is spreading “the dream of happiness through consumption” to the whole planet. The Gulf War, social tendencies and trends, social products such as Madonna, Rap music and Hollywood movies reach every corner of the world through global distribution networks and they determine “global popularity”. The spread of global popularity is achieved by means of global companies (AKKAŞ, 2008, p.61).



Companies which are the boss of globalization are selling concepts, promoting vanity, massifying cosmopolitanism, smoothing rigid cultural codes inherent to nations. They are also implicitly playing the role of disabling nerves and national reactions and trivializing ideals. In today's world not only knowledge, capital and initiatives but also culture of the dominant together with its commodities and administrations are globalized. Cultures of those who can produce high quality commodities, export their capital, well equip their entrepreneurs and are in control of information technologies are marketed together with their products. Until the midst of the last century people consider their businesses merely as a means of subsistence, because the most effective organizations of the world system are states. However today, 60 of the biggest and most important 100 organizations of the world are not states. In such a world it is not possible to consider companies as merely a means of subsistence. Companies are more important than states as means of surviving and leaving a mark on history individually or socially (AKKAŞ, 2008, p.61).

Globalizing capitalism is now not only selling goods, but also sound, image and connection. The flood of image and sound created by the advertising sector is standardizing modes of living, reducing differences, making attitudes and behaviors resemble each other. Collective identities and traditional cultures have begun to perish. Global ravishers are reconstructing their own values in the minds that are less developed than their own as universal values including supra-historical, supranational, ultramodern and civilized elements. In fact what is being constructed is not values, systems or philosophies, but is an artificial humanity. For, the essence and unconscious of the human is intervened. In order to realize this, American companies are exporting American lifestyle more than commodity, capital and service. Humans from all corners of the world are being rapidly predisposed to American lifestyle in terms of entertaining, commerce, banking, thinking, dressing, speaking, governing and behaving. In that sense the claim that globalization is indeed Americanization is as obvious as a fact (AKKAŞ, 2008, p.61).



One of the goals of globalization is to create a uniform world culture. This desirable world culture involves elements of culture such as language, religion, fine arts, food habits, ways of dressing, etc. Although believing in the impossibility of such a result, we can not ignore the damage globalization has been giving to national cultures. As a result of the intensive promotion of communication technologies such as internet and media which are in the hands of global powers, people from different nations began to take pleasure in same food culture, dressing and movies. National cultures are being affected negatively by the import of uniform culture which is merely based on consumption. Another impact of the cultural aspect of globalization on national cultures is the underlying of multiculturalism persistently by global powers. Micro nationalisms are being provoked through discourses such as human rights, democracy, ethnic identity, cultural mosaic, cultural rights and education in mother tongue and nation states are tried to be shattered. While a uniform culture is desired by global powers, it is easier to disintegrate national cultures so as to melt vulnerable ethnic cultures in the same pot of a single world culture. Elements of culture such as manners and customs, worldview, works of art and religion are being affected by the negative consequences of globalization by means of communication channels and as a result of missionary activities (AKKAŞ, 2008, p.61).

Uniformity as a result of globalization is as strong and serious as possible. Once every five hours a Mc Donald's is being opened in the world. Once every twenty four hours, 110.000 jeans are being sold. In 200 countries, young people care about Valentine's Day more than their own feasts and on that day they declare their love to their beloveds with cards prepared by Hall-Mark. Children know Mickey Mouse of Disney better than their own statesmen. In 1998, 19 over 20 films which made the most profit were American films. Still in the world at 300 million homes American channel MTV is being watched. In Southeast Asia young people have their haircut like that of Jennifer Lopez or Meg Ryan. Nike is gaining 9,2 billion dollars in each year from shoes it produces for athletic purposes and only %20 percent of sold shoes are used for athletic purpose. In Japan, the trend of augmentation rhinoplasty is spreading because of the desire to look like a



European. Same disease (aids), same medicine (Viagra), same drink (coca cola), same news channel (CNN), same news (love affairs of Clinton) and same match (European Football Championship Final) become popular at the same time all over the world (Dündar, 2005, p.98).

It would be inadequate to account for all these with the phenomenon of globalization. It would be good to recall other factors such as State and Ideology.

State and Ideology

The political power needs basically two things in order to govern. First of these is its materialized form which is the state. The other one is ideology which is shaped along with its political rationality. The political power produces a representation of the world according to its own worldview (and we call this representation ideology) and it conveys this representation and vision to individuals by means of some apparatuses. The political power governs individuals (subjects) through ideology and ideological apparatuses of the state. One of the most effective ideological apparatuses is popular music and media.

In that sense music confronts us starkly. Music is everywhere, packaged, ready for sale and hence easy to spread. Today, as a result of presentation of lives pursued under spotlights as a utopia to the public, people thinking that they their fate can change submerge in imaginary worlds they create and they lose touch with reality. Here, music functions as an ideological apparatus (Yıldırım, Koç 2008, p. 83).

Capitalist ideology is the ideology of commodification and alienation in every realm. Music gets its share from this as well.

Modernism and Postmodernism

Modernism began in the early 19th century with the Enlightenment movement. The Age of Enlightenment was the beginning of the age of modernism. The individual liberation and humanism were pushed to the forefront. In that sense the Romantic Movement was



effective. Scientific point of view and realism gained importance in this period. It contains a process which began with Industrial Revolution in economy and evolved with urbanization.

20th century provided the rapid spread of modernism throughout the world thanks to developments in science and technology. At the basis of modernism lies the liberation of individual and humanism. Hence there is not an inherent hegemonic oppression of other countries by the West. There is the belief in transferring the development in the West either in terms of the individual or technology to other countries. In that sense, modernism does not contradict tradition and indeed in theory aims for the development of the tradition (“the essence”). On the other hand, modernism contradicts traditionalism.

Postmodernism, on the other hand, was initially born in art and architecture through Western intellectuals and has spread onto all other disciplines. It brought a harsh criticism against the modernity created by the Age of Enlightenment.

We can cite the defining features of postmodernism as follows: Firstly, postmodernism as the name also implies means a time after modernism. It goes against tradition and modernity. It declares null and void all jargons belonging to modern times. Secondly, it rejects truth claims. Thirdly, it accepts the world in which dream and material reality intertwine. Fourthly, everything is meaningless according to postmodernism.

Postmodernism has developed as a revolt against 18th century European Enlightenment which is based on the human and reasoning as the most determining factor and which takes the European civilization, culture and society as a universal norm against which all other civilizations, societies, cultures, modes of thought and behavior should be judged and depicted. Postmodernism protests against absolute rationalism and European idea of racist culture and civilization; it tries to find ways of representing all classes and races (Serdar, 2001, p.18).



Postmodernism is the new name of the cultural imperialism (globalization). Globalization is the most systematized and organized stage of capitalism. It is the result of the supranational quality of capital. Nationalism is the only solution to global attacks.

Postmodernism has never been a theory of emancipation. It aims to invade the future and existence of Non-Western cultures through taking over their values, identities and histories. The only way of taking a stand against this Western hegemonic power is adopting traditionalism against postmodernism and protecting and developing essential qualities of one's nation.

Considered from the perspective of Non-Western societies, getting rid of postmodernism can be achieved by turning back to tradition. The resistance against postmodernism, as against modernity, starts with embracing tradition. Unlike what is expressed constantly, Non-Western cultural resistance does not represent discontinuity in history and modernity does not imply a radical rupture. On the contrary, this Non-Western resistance is the rejection of the Western grand narrative of secularity and its collaborators like bourgeois liberalism and capitalist ideology. This resistance can only emerge from Non-Western traditions. Moreover, traditions can convert Non-Western societies into resisting cultures (Serdar, 2001, p.342). Tradition and traditionalism do not imply the same thing.

Tradition is the summary of the absolute roof of reference which is provided by values and actions of a civilization. Forms of organization, ideas, lifestyles, techniques and products produce a unique point of view. Tradition can be treated as the study of a history of humanity going through change. The most outstanding tradition is the one that keeps pace with change and which is proactive. Traditionalism, on the other hand, is a reaction against external pressures. It is passive and it just works for conserving. Indeed, traditionalism results in an entrenched, oppressing and reactionist situation in many societies and cultures (Serdar, 2001, p.342).



Tradition is a way of knowing. Traditionalism is sticking onto what is known. Traditionalism, presentation of the past as a solution to the problems of the present amounts to both the falsification of the tradition and the failure of any living tradition in spreading the mobilizing knowledge essential to it. Traditionalism only works for destruction, but it can not reconstruct (Serdar, 2001, p.342).

Societies other than Western societies are defined as “other”. Tradition is the essence of those “other” societies and also the main obstruction against postmodernism.

Postmodernism, as its very meaning implies, is the peak of a transition period in which honest principles and fields of activity of modernism have been rendered useless, yet also have not been replaced by a totally new system of values throughout social, cultural, economic and ideological history.

Neither a truth nor a confirmed reality exists for postmodern “requests”. There is an ambiguous labyrinth for the “aftermath” of everything. Attentions are consigned to absolutist relativism together with speculations of the irrational. Postmodernity which clings to the presupposition that there is a basic rupture in social development is the claim that an epistemology which responds to new forms of knowledge has been established. “Postmodern theory” which brings new criticisms that do not depend on “traditional philosophical trivet” against modernity have limited suggestions regarding the way activities of life are established while also making some criticisms and “assessment”. Postmodernism intends to destroy totalities and truths with capital letter in order to emphasize truth particles within totalities and wants to be the eclectic umbrella of these particles (Demirer, 1998, p.225).

To sum up, modernism is the representation of modernization of the tradition (essence). On the contrary, postmodernism is the rejection of the tradition (essence) and the representation of cultural imposition (cultural imperialism). Hence, our musicologists should embrace modernism.



Culture

The concept of “culture” has Latin origin. It originates from words like “cultura”, “cultus” and “agrikultura”. Meaning of those words is “to cultivate”. The concept of “culture” which means cultivation here is the conceptualization of the mode of production and material and spiritual realms which express human labor, human’s effective and transformative activity just like in the case of “cultivating (the soil)”. For, the reflection of human’s material realm will eventually determine his/her consciousness (Demirer, 1998, p.512).

Culture is society’s way of living. It is every type of accumulation that is shaped throughout the history.

Since culture and ways of living of each society is determined by its own features societies have diverse cultural characteristics, yet we can also say that they have some common elements. These social institutions and elements have different structures, but in terms of their functions they resemble each other. The basic elements of culture can be cited as follows: material cultural elements (technology, architectural works, etc.), art, aesthetics, domestication process, religion, belief, system of values, social organization, social institutions and political lifestyle (Oktay, 2000, p.128).

Culture is the totality that involves labor and philosophical works both in material and spiritual sense, consisting of overt-covert behaviors that are sometimes internalized and conveyed through symbols. Traditional ideas and especially values that are dependent on those ideas constitute the core of the culture which is also impossible to be treated irregardless of its class characteristics (Demirer, 1998, p.85).

Each nation on earth has its own tradition, belief system, system of values, language, art, in short culture. There exists no nation without culture.



British anthropologist E. B. Taylor Edward Burnett (Taylor (1832-1917). The fields of his interest are technological evolution and the evolution of the language. His basic contribution to the history of anthropology is his views about the evolution of culture in general, and religious thought in particular) divided cultures in the world into three categories in his theory which he developed borrowing from ideas of Darwin Charles (Robert DARWIN (1809 –1882). He is a British natural historian. He claimed that all life forms, including humans, evolved from earlier one or more common-ancestors by means of natural selection and he provided proofs supportive of this theory according to conditions of the day). He put Western culture and civilization in the highest level, societies which are considered as primitive in the lowest and those in transition period in the middle. According to this theory, all societies in the world will reach the level of Western civilization by climbing these stairs. Around the same time, G. Adler Guido ADLER (1855-1941). He put forward crucial ideas about issues such as methods, goals and the systematization of musicology established comparative musicology by laying the foundations of ethnomusicology. This new field of science has tried to situate each society in the place it deserves in the stairs of civilization through the comparative study of world music. According to these musicologists who walk in the footsteps of Taylor, Turkish society is in the second step. The place of Ottoman Empire in the field of music did not change even in periods in which it was superior to the West in cultural and other realms. Researches which were done in 20th century, in fields of anthropology and other social sciences, showed that Tylor's theory is inconsistent and no culture is superior to other cultures, and it was emphasized that technological superiority does not imply cultural superiority. It is interesting that although Tylor's view has lost its validity, it is still accepted by some circles in Turkey (Eroğlu, Köktan, 2002, p: 8-11).

Culture may differ according to the ruling class in power. It may take on a shape in accordance with daily life. For example in this period, the culture of globalization is “postmodernism”. Here, it brings about cultural imperialism and hence plays the role of ideological apparatus which brings up the concept of alienation.



Alienation

The person who has become free is the ripe person. A free society is a society in which the individual is a self. Here the concept of “self” implies an individual who achieved becoming an “ego”. And to become a person (a self) is a process. The necessity that the society consists of individuals who are “selves” brings up the discussion of the concept of “alienation” (Tekin, 2009)

Alienation is a concept that has been used since the 14th century. It has undergone important changes throughout six centuries. In 14th century, it had rather a religious connotation. It had to do with the breaking off relations with God. On the other hand, in 15th century it was used to account for the change hands of ownership of anything, especially change hands of possession of rights, property or money. But above all, it is a concept that is implied to express what is negative in the mentioned activity. Another contemporary meaning and common usage of the concept has its origins in psychology: It is one’s disconnection from deepest and essential sensations and needs of oneself (Tezcan, 1985, p.121)

Modernity, which was brought up by the 18th Enlightenment thinkers, looked for the ways of “getting rid of” external authorities (tradition, God, etc.) while also showing his/her own potential to the person. With modernity, the human was almost reinvented or new missions were conferred on him/her and the phenomenon of man (human) was tried to be redefined. While man had existed in order to perform particular tasks until the end of the 18th century, now s/he has become a determining factor, an effective power who decides for his/her roles and future (Özgiraz, 2003, p.15).

Alienation in today’s sense implies the shattering of one’s personal integrity as a result of the effective and dominant external influences (economic, social or cultural). Breaking away from one’s own essential values, the failure in making use of the opportunities of being a human, submission to the rule of things which should indeed be ruled by oneself



are results of this shattering. Alienated person is the one whose capabilities like productivity, creativity and assessment are limited by external conditions.

The most debatable of all questions of the Age of Enlightenment was the concept of alienation. Alienation is especially a basic idea of Hegel's (Hegel, one of the most prominent philosophers of 19th century established the last systematized philosophy in the history of philosophy. He is the representative of idealist philosophy which defines existence on the basis of idea) philosophy and at the bottom of his whole thought. According to him, alienation is the phase in which the detachment from one's self occurs. He divides alienation into three stages. The first one is one's alienation from the nature. "Man, firstly, is estranged from the nature which the very substance of his labor. Yet through this estrangement he prepares the subjugation of nature so as to make the nature his inorganic body." The second one is the estrangement of man from other men. "Man is estranged from other men in whom he sees no more his species-being but an individual alien to him." Third one is man's estrangement from himself. "Eventually he's estranged from himself and this goes as far to the denial of one's personal life in order to achieve his physical life." (Marks;1844, El Yazmaları, 1993, p.65)

The alienation of the individual is manifested through his/her determination by external factors. And overcoming alienation is basically related with the process of resisting all these external factors. Globalization has brought about postmodernism, total alienation and popular culture.

Popular Culture

Popular culture is the culture of daily life. In a limited sense it involves entertainment. In a broad sense, it provides the preconditions for the ideological reproduction of a particular lifestyle. It creates a suitable environment for the official ideology to be widespread and confirmed. It is a drug in both quantitative and qualitative senses. It constantly produces unreal personalities and myths (Yıldırım, Koç 2008, p. 86).



The ruling power which controls daily life organizes alienation which imposes official ideology on the unconscious of masses while also producing popular culture and ideology in the negative sense in every instant of life. People who are imprisoned by the alienation which is intertwined with the capitalist consumer culture of the new world order have no strength to go beyond the world of their daily life. Moreover, this life which consists of relations of work, family and neighborhood is shaped by powers which can be neither governed nor comprehended by these ordinary people. “Big changes” are beyond their control, yet these changes also affect their actions and worldviews. With the oppressive enforcement of this same framework that is shaped by modern society, ordinary people can not think of changes other than these changes that shake the mass society, hence they are forced to consider themselves as people of an age which has left them powerless and aimless (Demirer, 1998, p.98-99).

The most common field of analysis under the subheading of subject of popular culture is music. Individual tries to overcome erosion of identity through having an existential struggle. The process of struggle amounts to the adoption of a fake identity. Concerts gone with a group of people, music “artists” which are made a cult and admiration felt for those artists... Individual who tries to be integrated with the crowd aims to be popular through ignoring the schizophrenia of his/her inner world and to melt his nihilism through the irony of integration. Everything made in the name of music, which is settled in the midst of the daily life, is supposed to be appropriated and consumed. Identity is determined only by what is consumed. If you can not croon the words of songs circulating in the media and if you do not know private lives of those who sing those songs, it means that you belong to nowhere. The lack of sense of belonging results in melancholy through creating marginalization. When apolitical stance created by cultural factors combines with melancholy, the person resorts to popular music as a way of escaping these. Although popular music is considered as the “cure”, on the contrary the atmosphere of popular culture captivates the individual. Popular culture is the realm of the manipulation of the sovereign and music is the transmission codes of this realm. Popular music as the intermediate moment of the process of adaptation to the city



transforms into the life itself through capturing the individual in the course of time. The problem of identity is resolved through popular music's "mediocrity" and fake group simulation it creates. Mediocrity is perceived as the metaphor of the traditional (Yıldırım, 20004, p.63-69).

Scientific point of view is basically a theoretical point of view. It is geared towards seeing what lies behind the visible and it requires knowledge. On the contrary, empiricism provides shallow knowledge which has no basis and it is based on observation. In a society devoid of knowledge this observational approach is undoubtedly active. Ünsal Oskay explains this situation in his book entitled "Müzik ve Yabancılaşma" as follows: "The greatest problem of music, today, is that it is produced and consumed in the life of a society level of consciousness of which is attained through today's social life which is dominated by empiricism and in the life of a society which can not go beyond real level of consciousness" (Oskay, 2001, p.43).

A class needs to make use of some ideological apparatuses in order to maintain itself. In these hegemonic relations, music style which is under the effect of empiricism plays a crucial role. "In the majority of today's societies, empiricist consciousness has been made to reach almost the level of a neurotic stultifying in order to maintain class hegemony" (Oskay, 2001, p.43).

We are pulled by the realm of standard living by the music to which we listen in order to get rid of the stress of daily life. Maybe we relax but we are also pacified. We become players of political arena without becoming aware of it. We think of music or art independently of society which has its unique rules and politics. Considering music as a means of escape and/or treating it in terms of its entertaining aspect and ignoring its dimension of social analogy results in the confirmation and defense of the dominant discourse through alienation from cultural structure. (Oskay, 2001, p.43).

As mentioned above, this process of alienation can be struggled with only by the rise of musicologist intellectuals.



Musical work involves the hegemony, opposition, discourses of public and the power and ways of living. Interpretation of the work resembles the quest for the meaning of sacred words. The only precondition of pursuing the quest is to be wise in the name of existence and music (Oskay, 2001, p.43).

Popular culture can create impacts and be experienced rapidly throughout the world in this age of communication. It penetrates not only into music but into all spheres. Uniformity is being created. Local diversities and cultural richnesses are perishing rapidly.

Popular Music

“Richard Middleton, whose book entitled *Studying Popular Music* is considered as an important reference book in discussions on popular music, analyzes Franz Birrer’s summary of popular music definitions in four categories. Although he points out that these definitions are not satisfactory in the last analysis, criticisms he made about these definitions are crucial. First one is the normative definition which says that popular music is a simple and banal genre. This definition also brings up the idea that popular music is an easily understood and banal music which has no aesthetic value. “Low” and “high” cultural definitions and musical distinctions on the basis of those definitions, rising from the evaluations of types of music, are surely fictional and generally assessed within the framework of principles of Western music. Western Classical Music is generally considered as complex, difficult and as a result good and high quality music. It is hard to produce and perform what is complex; and it is important and valuable to achieve what is difficult.

However, this problem of simplicity and complexity is also extremely subjective and perceptions of subjects develop in relation with their personal and cultural characteristics. For example, rhythms of Africa may be considered as difficult for a person who received education of Western music, but this is not the case for an African. Similarly, while it can



be said that some arias of Verdi or songs of Schubert contains qualities of simplicity, it is disputable whether a song of Billie Holliday or Frank Zappa is “simple” or not. On the other hand, the simplicity of popular music is usually explained by its being “entertainment” music. However, it is not that easy to entertain people and the fact that a piece of music is produced in order to entertain people does not trivialize that music. Hence the definition which is based on the claim that popular music is banal is highly arbitrary.

Another attempt for defining is based on the description of popular music in negative terms through expressing what it is “not”. In general, popular music is the music which is not “folk” or “art” music. However boundaries of music genres is so blurred with the development of music industry that while it has become harder to even designate a piece of music as folk music or art music, considering popular music as the negative of those music genres that can not be clearly defined complicates things more. The chaos of naming on the shelves of music markets and the presence of each album in a different category in every market make the situation more visible.

The third category discussed by Middleton is the sociological approach that associates popular music with a particular social group. But, it is usually observed that a piece of music may have very different meanings for different groups and that the audience may undergo change in the course of time. Popular musics have been a music genre that are listened and liked by a heterogeneous group of people ranging from a socialist to a bourgeois, from an urbanite to a villager, from a young person to an old one. It would be a very insufficient definition to say that arabesque is the music of a new urbanite populace who has migrated from the village to the city. Or to say that the arrangement music which became an important musical channel in the 60s and 70s is the music of the urbanite and elite class would be barely realist considering the audience of those songs. It is known that arrangements of 45-rpm discs that emerged at that period were listened and become popular at many places in Anatolia by means of radios. Therefore, the association of popular music with social groups is not a satisfactory criterion for defining popular music” (Yıldız, 2008).



As explicit above there are many studies on popular culture. As stated before, this study does not aim to question the meaning of popular music and to get lost among those meanings. On the contrary, what should be understood by musicologist intellectuals is not what popular music is but for whom it serves and the fact that it can not be structurally independent from the totality.

Popular music and popular culture, because of synchrony in place and time, continue their existence as integrated with each other (Yıldırım, 20004, p.63-69).

The model of symbolic heroes created by popular music pushes us into the state of insensibleness through destructing our cultural background. In this state, individual judgments have been replaced by the dazzling pleasure of commonly consumed products. Taste in music has been transformed in regard with the extent to which presented models impress us in terms of their visuality (Yıldırım, 20004, p.63-69).

In music just like in all fields of art, art is replaced by the pleasure taken from visuality. Visual messages and visual pollution together with noise pollution as a result of popular music are so great that they would turn the whole social structure upside down. Indeed in recent years things have been carried too far to the extent of damaging the social structure.

Music industry which has been integrated into capitalist system, profits by fostering mass commodity demand with transfer of musics, borrowed from what tradition produces, into popular culture. Popular culture appropriates all aspects of tradition that would be useful and profitable and then it processes those aspects and presents them to the public. One of the reasons why social common sense finds itself in popular music is that it finds the remnants of the tradition metaphorically in those works. Popular culture, the pseudo-cradle of equality of the high class level it can never reach, is legitimizing its individual existence (Yıldırım, Koç 2008, p. 96).



Determination of needs and supply of objects in response to the demand created in parallel with those needs point to the existence of an economic activity of its own right. Music is only one of those needs. Music the content of which changed again has metamorphosed this time. It is art in its first form. And then suddenly it confronts us as a commodity. After a while, its value as a commodity will get ahead of its aesthetic value as an art work; it will be “reified” through estranging from itself; and the same vicious circle will be repeated through particular social activities and relations as a result of which its nature will shatter and will no more be identifiable (Yıldırım, Koç 2008, p. 96).

Capitalist ideology creates fetish in every sphere out of consumer culture of commodity rationality. It has reached to such a point that it covers even folk music.

Folk songs undergo change because of the industrial dynamic in the urban atmosphere while they are fulfilling the longing for “homeland”. Baglama is performed either with a guitar or it becomes electronic. Folk songs return to the village taking instruments they have internalized along with themselves. Popular culture which is supported by mass media absorbs all the values in music and then re-presents them in its own way. Hence music has got standardized within popular culture and hence it has been alienated from the environment in which it is produced (Yıldırım, Koç 2008, p. 96).

The first thing to be confessed is that “popular culture is bought and sold to the masses for profit”. Folk music has also been brought to this position. Music is no more produced by the people, but is produced in order to be sold to the people. It is sure that the question is not that simple. Popular culture is spreading through mass media. Thereby, values are reduced to images, the reality is replaced by those created images, and music is made functional as the bearer and ideologue of dominant ideology just like clips suggest (Yıldırım, Koç 2008, p. 83).



Even though popular culture is showed as “it belongs to the people”, indeed it is presented to the people in order to reinforce the domination of the sovereign. Since popular music is an important realm of popular culture it can not escape being another element of the same presentation.

Popular music is the material of entertainment sector and is the music of the daily life. Its relation of production and consumption is parallel to the complexity of the capitalist system. The development and prevalence of popular music are proportionate with the development of the system. The capital required for the production is obtained more easily in the capitalist system and hence the commodification of the product is easier. Although the company producing popular music and the individual who performs, namely the musician are at the forefront of these relations, they are at the lower stairs of transformation of capital. For, product distribution, presentation, advertisement and a series of relations form a full industry network (Yıldırım, Koç 2008, p. 83).

The dominants of the system are also the directors of popular culture and popular music. Society is integrated with the political power through the channel of music. The sector which leads the music also manipulates the individual from outside. Cultural background has an affect on what underlies the taste of the individual (Yıldırım, 20004, p.63-69).

Postmodern Popular Music

Postmodern popular music is a concept that is not defined terminologically. While on the one hand it has a complementary effect on this study, on the other hand philosophy of music needs a terminological definition of this kind. What does postmodern popular music cover? What does it not? Initially explaining these points will be meaningful for terminological defining. The birth of postmodern popular music is historically simultaneous with the rise of the postmodern culture. Both of them cover especially the last twenty years.



Postmodern popular music is composed of hollow words that do not make up a meaningful whole. It is nonsense, chaotic, superficial and even banal. There is not any tiny trace of art in it. Moreover it has no concern for the art. However subjects such as sex and love are depicted impolitely.

Postmodernist imposition groups those who produce this kind of music under the name of the artist and pushes them to the forefront with also the effect of the media. And those people are selling their subculture identities mixed with lyrics and compositions, in a banal way, to the people. Theoretically, this situation is the expression of postmodern culture in the field of music.

In our age of communication which is based partly on technological developments this type of music has been listened now in nearly all segments of the society. On the other hand, classical art music which has a dimension of art and classical folk music are not sought after very much, although they should be. This situation is very terrible. Undoubtedly it can not be thought independently of the totality. This period is the political and cultural result of globalization. It is the success of postmodern imposition on traditions.

Intellectual musicologists are supposed to stand out against this corrupt situation. They need to consider what is artistic in art as valuable and to work on it. The appreciation of artistic dimension in music will mean the rejection of postmodern cultural imposition. “Don Quixote” musicologists are required at this point. It is possible to explain popular culture and popular musics which are products of it with many examples. However, since they are too many, it will take pages to write if one song is taken from every album. For that reason it will be enough to give some striking examples.

ANKARALI NAMIK (Elmadağda) (Namık, 2010)

Elmadağda dostun var atıyon havanı

Gölbaşında tarlan var sürüyon sefanı



Yaşlanınca görecem yavrum ben seni
Bulabilecen mi böyle balı reçeli
Gızlar dura dura iç olur oğlan dura dura goç olur
Angarada bir hoca var üflediğmi uçurur
Hış hış cinler hış hış yallah cinler yallah
Dağlara taşlara

ANKARALI NAMIK (Dokumacı Kızlar) (Namık, 2010)

Hamam taşı gümüştan yeni gelmiş o işten parttayım çalışıyo
Beni pavyona alıştırın diyecek bir şey bilemiyom da dur sölücem
Dokumacı gızlar yalellim ya Allah
Yar saçların ne gara ondan olur mahara
İyi guaföre boyatmışsın maaşşallah garagözlü yarime yakışmıyo sigara

CAN-KAN (Sıkılıyorum) (Can-Kan, 2010)

Sıkılıyorum yavrum aklıma kötü şeyler geliyor
Çatlıyorum patlıyorum beni zindan ediyor
Hani söz vermiştin bana hareket çekmeyecektin
Yakalarsam eğer seni evirip çevirip kırarım belini

DEMET AKALIN (Bu benim partim) (Akalin, 2010)

Bu benim partim
Tüm dostlarımı davet ettim
Giyindim biraz da süslendim
Şık olmaya özen gösterdim

AYÇA (yıkılıyo) (Ayça, 2004)

Görünce beni küçük dili tutuldu, kalbinin atışı uzağa duyuldu
Hadi bana hadi bana söyle, seviyorum de acemi aşık
Aşk sözde anlatılmaz sevmeden yaşanmaz aşkta oyun olmaz



Buraları yıkılıyo benden yıkılıyo hergün peşim bıyıklı takılıyo
Ben seni seçtim acemi aşık, yasla başımı degajeme doğru

AYÇA (çikibu) (Namık, 2010)

Sen iste yeter arabama atlar gelirim
Söz ver öpecen dudağına şeker sürerim
Öpemezsem ölecem öptürümezsem ölecem
İki gönül bir olunca samanlık seyran olur
Bum çiki çikibum bum çiki çiki çiki bumbum

ATHENA (fik fik) (Athena, 2002)

Bana her zaman deli manyak derler
Evet bazen öyle gelip giderler
İşte ben zaten bu yüzden
Güzel güzel güzel güzel
Başından beri hiç normal olmadım
Normallerden çok uzaktaydım
Ne dedilerse kale almadım
Devam devam devam devam
Tamam hepsine her şeye
Tamam sen ne diyorsan tamam
Senin sorunun ne biliyor musun bence
Kazıp kazıp duruyorsun köşede
Ne kadar sürecek bu iş böyle
Olmaz olmaz olmaz olmaz
Deli Olalım Deli Olalım

ATHENA (Öpücük) (Athena, 2002)

Pardon seni rahatsız etmek istememiştim
Sadece dudağından öpmek istedim



Tamam belki pek ince teklif edemedim
Ama ben bildiğin romantiklerden değilim
Sen yine de karar ver söyle istiyorsun bence
Öpücem öpücem dedim sana artık yapma yapma

Artık yapma yapma tık yapmasana bana
Nasıl oldu bir anda bende çok şaşırdım
Ben ilk görüşte hiç aşık olmamıştım
Öpücem öpücem...

İSMAİL YK (Bas Gaza) (İsmail YK, 2008)

Sıfır km yeni bir araba alırım, mahallede kızlara ben havamı atarım
Sağ çek sol çek bir caka satarım, gözlüğümü takar birden gaza basarım
Uy vay aman anasını satarım aman ben tozu toza katarım
Yollar tıklım olsa ne yazar söyle yavrum beni kim tutar
Vay aman belalıyım ben vay anam gözlerim toz pembe
Direksiyonu çeviriyorum bir sağ bir sol
Ey anam tekerim fır dönüyor ey anam kızlar bakıyor, çekilin yoldan bir bela geliyor
Bas gaza aşkım bas gaza kim tutar seni bas gaza
yollar senin hiç durma ah uçur beni buradan

İSMAİL YK (Allah Belanı Versin) (İsmail YK, 2006)

Benim için hep sen vardın
Bunu hep senden senden duyardım
İki gözüm kör olsun of sana nasıl inandım
Bin cefa gördüm bin defa öldürdün
Kahrolsun bıktım ya artık
Beni benden aldın attın beni sattın yazıklar olsun
Nakarat
Beni benden aldın attın beni sattın yazıklar olsun



Allah belanı versin Allah seni kahretsin bana gelen sana gelsin yar
Hayatımı sen mahvettin acımadın neler çektim kader seni de kör etsin
Bomboş yere yaşıyorum her gün acı çekiyorum her dakika eriyorum
Yeter artık senden nefret ediyorum

RAFET EL ROMAN (Kumral Bomba) (Rafet El Roman, 2004)

Gece vakti olunca kapı tak tak çalınca kim var kim var orda
Gece vakti olunca cama tık tık vurunca kim var kim var orda
Kumral bomba gözleri ela sözleri bela yine çıktın karşıma ne işler açtın başıma
artık bitmişti hani oldu mu şimdi yani
kumral bombam bam bam bam kumral bombam bam bam bam
kaç yıl geçti ardından bitmek bilmedi sevdan
kaç yıl geçti ardından uslanmaz mı hiç insan

Sabotaj Lordstar, Sgopa Kajmer, Ceza, Duman, Ankaralı Namık, Ankaralı Turgut and many other people can be given as examples under this definition.

Two of these examples, namely bands Athena and Duman represented Turkey in Eurovision song contest in recent years. Considering from the perspective of the entire article, it is quite normal that bands such as Athena and Duman were sent to Eurovision song contest. Isn't it problematic to attend Eurovision song contest with these bands as representative of Turkey and with "rap" which is completely the postmodern popular music of the West and has had no place in Turkish music history, instead of attending with a piece of music, as representative of Turkey, that bears the norms compatible with our music tradition? Isn't it a contradiction? It seems possible that in following years Ankaralı Namık may attend Eurovision as well. On the other hand, it constitutes a perfect example for postmodernist imposition.

We can not expect our youth who has been exposed to these kinds of music and noise pollution in the last twenty years to neither know nor understand Yahya Kemal, Münir



Nurettin Selçuk, Selahattin Pınar, Alaeddin Yavaşca, Selahattin İçli, Erol Sayan, Aşık Veysel and Pir Sultan Abdal.

Münir Nurettin Selçuk composed the poem (Beyatlı, 1994, p.86) of Yahya Kemal Beyatlı given below in the Segâh Makam (mode). The depth in the lyrics and the artistic approach in the composition as well as the harmony of the composition with the lyrics are at the high level.

*Dönülmez Akşamın Ufkundayız Vakit Çok Geç
Bu Son Fasıldır Ey Ömrüm Nasıl Geçersen Geç
Cihana Bir Daha Gelmek Hayal Edilse Bile
Avunmak İstemeyiz Böyle Bir Teselliyle
Geniş Kanatları Boşlukta Simsiyah Açılan
Ve Arkasında Güneş Doğmayan Büyük Kapıdan
Geçince Başlayacak Bitmeyen Sükûnlu Gece
Guruba Karşı Son Bahçelerde Keyfince
Ya Aşk İçinde Harâb Ol Ya Şevk İçinde gönül
Ya Lale Açmalıdır Göğsümüzde Yahut Gül*

When we compare this poem with banal pieces of music above the point we have reached in the last twenty years is simply a disaster. Another upsetting point is that the depth in the artistic poem is not only not understood by the young but also considered as boring by them.

The Reflection of Popular Culture on the Society: Media

The most effective apparatus of the imposition of postmodern popular culture is media. Especially broadcasts made in television and internet in which visuality is heavily promoted influence people and play a crucial role in standardization.



Media has long since lost its feature of being the conscience and voice of the majority of the society which acts independently. Media is acting in line with ideas of postmodern popular culture. Searches for an alternative media are unable to take a place in social platforms.

In this postmodern edge in which everything has lost its validity except for what is daily, social relations are being reconstructed in terms of indication values of commodities. What lies in spatial-temporal order lasts only one day in this postmodern condition while the single dominant urge, there is, is based on the extremely fast consumption of everything. A totally virtual/visual lifestyle is penetrating through all dimensions of social life (Demirer, 1998, p.83).

This situation can best be followed on televisions. In “the society of the spectacle”, television, because of its position and functionality, is one of the most important producers of indication values. For, no person presented on television has significance as a living being; s/he is just an image carrying an indication value. Media has the right to present (=presentation) a commodity in whatever form it wants (Demirer, 1998, p.83).

Since those who have the economic power are also the owners of the media, the whole power belongs to those who have the economic power and control the media. Hence, media is not only in the service of the economically and politically powerful, but it is part of that power mechanism itself (Başkaya, 2002, p.8).

Today, global cultural flows are being established and led by global media empires that rely upon powerful communication technologies so as to convey their messages. In the last twenty years, a group of companies which are composed of great transnational companies have begun to dominate the market of global entertainment, news, television and movie. Values promoted by transnational media organizations do not only secure the indisputable domination of popular culture, but at the same time pave the way for depoliticization of social reality and weakening of dazzling social ties. The most popular



development of the last twenty years is the transformation of news broadcasts and education programs on TV into superficial entertainments shows. Another way of measuring and assessing cultural transformations created by globalization is the analysis of global changes that have come out in the use of language. We see that process of globalization is moving towards the stage in which English would be the single world language. On the one hand a similar culture is being created while on the other hand different cultures are being emphasized by media organizations (Akkaş, 2008, p.32).

While globalization which is the product of the new world order and which fosters inequalities is returning the whole globe into a homogenous “one small village”; as Clinton’s advisor Benjamin Barber has put, world is being condemned to an economic-political globalization which we can call “Mc World”. In the vicious circle of “the society of the spectacle” of the “Mc World” culture that is patented by Hollywood, image is preferred over words, simple over complex and supra-classes over classes. In other words, watching TV or a football match is easier than reading a book, thinking or making research. “Dream factory”, which finds its expression in the manipulations of the culture of (or uncultured) “Mc Word” of “the society of the spectacle” that is patented by Hollywood, carries momentary excitements and entertainments to people (Demirer, 1998, p.82).

We live in the virtual age of the culture of (or uncultured) “crème de la crème” in “the society of the spectacle” of the postmodern condition. Postmodern culture industry of the new world order replaced the model of tired, ignorant, pedantic, arrogant, self-suspicious “semi-intellectuals” with a new model of human: robust, ignorant, pedantic, arrogant, self-assured, avaricious, practical, scorning, culture vampire, TV kid, power-hungry and insensitive football fanatic, hooligan postmodern intellectuals (Demirer, 1998, p.83).

Of course in a world where everything is corrupted, degenerated and is alienated from its “own” ethics, the sordidness of media is not surprising. Media is also working for the acceleration of banality and moral corruption. All sorts of money-based competition



programs on TV are promoting the view that gaining money without laboring and even gaining a lot of money is good and possible. It promotes the idea of “immorality of practicalness”, pillage and banditry. Television series, only purpose of which is taking ads and increasing profits, is serving for turning people into submissive customers through stultifying them (Başkaya, 2002, p.9).

Football players, singers/folksingers, TV anchor people, media clowns, fashion models who display their bodies in order to advertise goods and services, etc. can all make million-dollar fortunes easily. This situation seems to bother no one and no one tries to question. Once the ethics of making money without endeavoring becomes established...So much so that mother-in-law of a famous person can easily have a reputation and a fortune. S/he can also well become a singer/folk singer even if it is late (these singers are somehow called artists). In the age of modern technology, there is no more a need for a special talent in order for one to be a musician, singer/folk singer, etc. If s/he does not have a talent s/he can perform in advertisements, they are not differentiated as rich/poor but as famous/fameless (Başkaya, 2002, p.10).

Banality increases with the richness. Each increase in wealth is accompanied by “moral” corruption. Artists act in advertisements or those who act in advertisements are counted as artists! No one is bothered with the fact that putting one’s aesthetic talents into the service of selling goods or profiting is in fact the rejection of art and artist! What is the artist doing in advertisements which are stultifying people? Can there be a man/woman with a sense of aesthetics yet estranged from ethical concerns? Can a person who betrays his/her own ethics speak of art and artist (Başkaya, 2002, p.5)?

Conclusion

We can stand against postmodern popular music by raising musicologist intellectuals. Musicologist intellectuals should not receive an education based solely on practical training. They should learn philosophy of music, question which music serves to what and to whom for what purpose and learn the responsibility of the intellectual through



comprehending critical point of view. To this end, in Faculty of education and in music schools giving conservative education courses regarding the subject should be opened in the undergraduate program.

Philosophy of music, tries to define postmodern popular music instead of understanding it. Our musicologist intellectuals are supposed to know philosophy of art. Standing against postmodern popular music begins with protecting existing music tradition. Turkish music constitutes the essence of our music tradition. Our musicologist intellectuals can reject postmodern popular music by starting to protect the essence.

Musicologist intellectuals are supposed to stand like “Don Quixote” against postmodern popular music in whatever condition. Here, drawing the analogy of “Don Quixote” implies the attack on the impossible.

Don Quixote knows no bounds. He has a sincerity that reminds people of being sincere, clear, open and decisive. He is a person who is non-conformist, who risks everything and endures consequences of his own action, who flourishes with passions and picks up persistently where he leaves off, who wants the impossible and has dreams about achieving the impossible. In short he is the man of streets. We are again in need of “Don Quixote”’s! (Demirer, 1998, p.225).

Standing against the imposition of postmodern music is a historical necessity, and within this period in which we are living it is also a historical responsibility.

As an epilogue, we can say that musicologist intellectual;

1. Is, first of all, supposed to be “Don Quixote”.
2. Is supposed to know philosophy of music.
3. Is traditionalist.
4. Rejects postmodern popular culture as a totality.
5. Represents modernism.

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