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## **A future whose roots lean in the past “yahya kemal”**

### **Abstract**

*Yahya Kemal, who used the rules and principles of the old poetry, is one of the most important representatives of Turkish poetry and he placed the metaphor of Divan literature in his verses. However, it is not wise to accept Yahya Kemal as the representative of old poetry since he was stuck between the old and the new poetry. Based on his poems, a poetic evaluation about him is the idea that he is a “bridge between the old and the new poetry” and it is accepted by all the researchers. In this study, according to his own poems and the other works, Yahya Kemal’s poetic thought about the old and the new poetry will be put forth.*

**Key words:** *Yahya Kemal, poetic, Divan poetry, Modern poetry, interaction.*

## Introduction

Yahya Kemal is a monumental individual, who we can summarize as “a future whose roots lean in the past”. He is the gardener who planted the seeds coming by “The Wind of Old Poetry” to the garden of modern poetry. This statement, which we prepared with reference to the point in which he acted as a bridge between old poetry and new poetry, is not only the first study conducted within this scope, but also notable in terms of reminding our important poet once again. In this regard, our study is prepared as two chapters for its view on the old poetry and the new poetry.

In the first chapter, Yahya Kemal’ s relation with old poetry is examined. This examination was carried out based on the poems in especially his work called “With the Wind of Old Poetry” and was supported with his words that he has written in various places. Content, style, verse unit and rhyme are some of the issues that are examined with this perspective.

Second chapter, is the section in which modern poetry that he was written based on old times was examined. New poetry of Yahya Kemal, in which he composed his own poetry style, are included in his work called “Our celestial sphere”. While the characteristics of his poetry were being examined, this book was taken as basis.

### 1. Tendancy and Grounds of Yahya Kemal To old Poetry

Poetry that we name as old Turkish poetry of Divan poetry has sustained its existence to the mid Europe in the west; to the India in the east. On this whole geography, at some places, it has either presented itself before; at other places it has come to an end before other regions. It is considered that beginning of this poetry is based on 10th Century and ending is based on at the end of 19th Century and beginning of 20th Century. Divan poetry, which was written, told or listened for almost 600 years on Divan lands in Anatolia, become effected with the impression of Europe as from mid times of 19th century, it has changed its form and its content was varied. At this point, it is the effect of people that visited Europe and affected by the poetry of Europe. This interaction may be seen as the traces of socio-cultural change that the world is affected left on people.

Poet and poetry which have been changed with the change of the country have maintained the divan poetry both as content and form- and caused new subject and forms to be introduced into poetry. In fact, this change has begun with the appearance of Nedim, who is deemed as one of the important representatives of divan poetry. This change that occurred in Nedim, has added new excitement to the divan poetry and made it spicy. However, it has not separated from the line of classic tradition. Even Yahya Kemal is not close to old poetry as Nedim, he used symbols that belong to old poetry because he was connected to the culture of lands, in which he was born and raised. Yet, the poet is a person who reflects its inner world to its poetries. Straddle of poetry world of Yahya Kemal who has lived the Anatolian culture that is changed together both with the world and old cultures may be understood better. Consensus of researchers that study about the work of Yahya Kemal called With the Wind of Old Poetry, in which his older poetries are collected and Our Celestial Sphere, in which his poetries that he has written with new style, are collected, is that dividing the Turkish poetry into two as old and new is unnecessary. Tanpınar, who prepares monographic work about Yahya Kemal,

and student of Beyatlı, has mentioned that also Yahya Kemal is against this definite separation by saying “He was not accepting any interruption in our literature, he was asking me to say that this literature has renewed itself within its development. If we note his Prosody and Rhyme articles that he was written in dervish lodge, it may be perceived that this is the issue he was accenting on for a long time. Even though he mentions the effects that are originated from actual west even the imitation issues, he was trying to show our literature in same line in these articles, which is correct in a way (2001, 157)” .

Muhammet Nur Doğan, who shares the same opinion with Yahya Kemal has mentioned this inseparableness as follows “Our literature is a whole and Turkish literature as literature of all nations, is a reality that maintains uninterruptedly as of the date our nation is appeared at the history till today. Therefore, it is not right to consider Turkish literature as interrupted into contrary two groups as old literature and new literature. Certainly it is inevitable for a literature of community, which has been the preparer and applier of great social and cultural change movements in world and that has the history of centuries, has periods with different characteristics that reflect the perceptions of different world opinions that are brought to the agenda mandatorily by more or less differed values, change and development. Acceptance of this separation is the identification of an important fact that includes all times... (2005, p.35)”

Beyatlı has mentioned the names of important representatives of Divan poetry in his poems and Works and has become the strongest name of ballad type after Nedim. He has written all his poems in aruz prosody except single poem; and adapted them to the rhyme of prosody in Turkish telling. Reason that he gives importance to the prosody and rhyme is that he is willing to approach the poetic music. He purports this condition as follows: “prosodies whether aruz or syllable are inanimate instruments: like musical instruments. Capability of both prosodies in harmony is not less or more than each other. Since, their latest form has not changed; this indicates that their harmony is complete” (Beyatlı, 1971, 116). As it may be perceived in his own words, giving importance to rhyme and end rhyme are other esthetic elements that he has contributed to the poem rather than loyalty to the Divan literature. One of these elements that draw the most attention is the music issue, on which people that have studied about Yahya Kemal, agreed.

As we all know, 44 poems of Yahya Kemal were composed by various composers. (Boz, 2008, 400) Actually, reason of why Yahya Kemal has interiorized, researched and included the important cornerstones of Turkish culture in his poems, may be expressed as it was caused by his connection with French poets and authors. One of the most important issues that separate French poets and authors from poets and authors that are leaned to new poems and have lived in the final era of Ottoman is that they do not deny the old ones completely. Also Yahya Kemal stood up against the ignorance of ancient poems in order to emerge new ones. However, he has linked being indefinite to looking for newer ones.

View of Yahya Kemal to Old and New Poems are briefly summarized in previous paragraphs through opinions of himself and people who conduct studies about him. Some other information shall be narrated through elements that are received from the old poems pool in his work and poems in next sections.

Yahya Kemal defines the poem as follows: "Poem is the manifestation of event that passes through your heart in language. Expression of our thoughts with prosody and language is not a poem. It is very obvious whether a sentence is poem or not. If it was expressed with deep harmony then it becomes a poem. Words that are not heard but expressed only with prosody and language also may not be a poem". (Beyatlı, 1971, 48) He responds to people who say "What kind of poem we ask for?": "If I say and you listen the poem you are asking for, it will not be perfect. You may say that poem better than me or anyone, me and people like me listen that poem and try understanding as much as we can. If we fail to understand, surely there will be people who can, then you will be head of some community. I, however, will have value only before people, if there is a poem that i can hear and if i can tell that poem as well". (Beyatlı, 1971, 14). As it can be perceived both in his expressions, he mentions that the mood of the poet is very important rather than the material characteristics of poem. We may consider poem as beams of word that emerge from the heart of poet like a water that comes out of its source. Issue of blowing soul that comes out of own life to the words, letters which we frequently see in Divan literature also applies for Yahya Kemal as well. As we all know, Divan poets include the word engineering that are granted them by God "blowing soul on the words" into their poems. Our poet stated that for poem to become a "Divan literature" poem, poet has to include various feelings from his world of thought with specially picked words that include harmony into poem.

Works of Yahya Kemal and poems, which are scattered around magazines and newspapers after his passing, were published as complete Works collected together by Institution of Yahya Kemal. Books that include his poems are called as Our Celestial Sphere, with the wind of old poetry, Rubais and Hayyam Rubais. Works rather than poetry books contain clues that give important information about his art of poetry. Many material and spiritual element of Divan Poetry was used in his Works as we have mentioned before, he also frequently cited poems such as Fuzûli, Yahyâ, Nef'i, Neşâti, Nâ'ili, Nâbi in his articles and discussions. (Mazıoğlu, 1994, 73). There are more information that will indicate the traces of his old poetry other than conditions such as these.

**Prosody:** First of these is prosody issue. He has written all of his poems with aruz prosody except a few his poems even though the syllabic meter was very important in his period. We have mentioned the reasons why he was writing with aruz prosody and explained its grounds. Verse units: Secondary important issue is the verse units that were used by Yahya Kemal. He has used couplet verse unit and he has written in trinity, quatrain, and pentad. Poet, who used ode verse style, has written pentads to the poetries of Divan poets. Even he has written pentad for his own odes. He has written elegy based on the elegy of Baki, and versified his poetry called "selimnâme" as epode. He has also written Rubais by taking example by Hayyam. Rhyme: Third issue is the subject of rhyme. Rhyme and end rhyme are important for him to include music and harmony into his poems. Our poet has expressed this matter as follows: "End rhyme is orderly in the poetry of Arabian; however it is wild, excessive, and fiery in the poetry of Turkish and Persian. Turkish and Persian poets examine ending rhyme rather than rhyme.

Especially, Turkish epodes virtually born from ending rhyme; when Turk found the ending rhyme, it means he told the essential of the poetry. For example ending rhyme: it is as one whether we are or not; this ending rhyme is definite philosophy, it

has malignity, sacrifice, emotionless to be told,..” (1990, 117) as may be understood from his words, he mentions that the ending rhyme can be a life saver for poetry which lacks emotion.

**Language and wording:** Next subject after mentioning rhyme is language and wording. It is not groundless that he has written similar poems to Divan poets in terms of language and wording. Language and wording issue is one of the most important criticisms that are made to Divan poetry as of Reform man of letters. Issues of not completely understanding the poem, orienting to national, using the language that public may understand have not successfully provided until Yahya Kemal. Even in the recent Turkey, it is obvious that if you have read one of the poems that is elected as “poetry of the year” to the Anatolian villager, they will understand nothing. Şengül describes this condition as follows: “... Turkish was developed by or ,of which the language that is developed by Bâki, Naili, Neşâti and Nedim. In Turkish poems, he has reached to white language that is used in Greek and Latin poems.” (Şengül, 2001, 5).

**World of Divan poetry words, meanings and poetic themes:** One of the primary issues that must be considered and show the inclination of Yahya Kemal into Divan poetry is the poetic theme, words, metaphor and comparison that are received from the meaning world of divan poetry. Purpose of writing a poetry for him is not writing the beautiful one. He tried to give the kind thinking and extraordinary beauty of human in Divan poetry. “He has not written his poetry in old style with the competition of telling better and with the passion of appreciation and pleasure such as parallelism of older poets. He oriented to our old poetry with the awareness of giving the essential that is the real poetry by filtering the defects such as poetry perception that concerns with the esthetic, surreal human beauty, word play and poetic theme and details instead of the whole beauty of our old poetry. He gave us the pleasure of our old poetry by using the material that is foundation of the poetry and words and epodes of old poetry world.” (2001, 74) by saying the aforementioned, Mazıoğlu has summarized why he has leaned into old poetry and why he has used the word world of old poetry.

World of words are another important element that closes him to the old poetry. This world of words shows similarities with Divan poetry in terms of various aspects. Sufism: first of such similarities is Sufism. Sufism that we encounter in the poetry of Yahya Kemal is also one of the milestones in the Divan poetry in terms of subject. Expressions that give a link to the sincere joy of Sufism in his poetry, present us his Sufi approach. However, subject, on which everyone that has studied on religious and Sufism in the poems agreed on, is “that he sees Islam as an element of Turkish”. So, words that are included to Sufism terminology or that are religious concepts such as “Names of the God, prophet, devotee-ascetic, spirit, desire, fate-fortune, death, perpetuity-mortal, offering, etc” were used outside of the meaning world of the words that is used by Sufi poet. Likewise, Banarlı has mentioned the pietism of him by his words and quoting from Yahya Kemal “My faith in the God was shaken since i was raised in Paris in an era when material ideas were ruling” (Banarlı, 1984, 13). Once he was searching however it is obvious that this search of him would not affect his interest into Islam.

Terms regarding to Islamic grounds that compose the source of Sufism seemed that they include the expressions based on “love and respect” when examined in

the poetry of Yahya Kemal.

“Praise to God that i have seen at this sacred sepulcher” and “Attack of free people shouting God, God” sentences that are included to quadrant with title of imperial ode pendant indicate that how he is filled with love before God. (Beyatlı, 1962, 109) Poet reflects the war condition in the times that he was lived in. He tried to make heard the voiced of soldiers that attempt to attack by wishing the help of God in wars.

Another names that are included to his poetry to identify the Supreme Being rather than God are “Kirdgigar, Hallak, Hik, Hudâ, İzed, Kibriyâ, Müste’an, Rabb, Tanrı, Zülcelâl”. Since it is not possible to give all examples that are included to his book called With then wind of Old Poetry in which poetry of Yahya Kemal in nature of Divan Poetry are contained, we will confine ourselves to give only a few examples that we elected among them.

In his referred poetry “Ode to Kadri” contains,  
Her rind-i Hak dolup boşalan bir piyâleden  
Dünyâyı refte refte saran bir ziyâ içer (Beyatlı, 1962, 77)

He draws the tavern local who has taken the wine of love in his hand in the council of disloyalty like in the Divan poetry. If we interpret in current Turkish, it says death is a right and every living shall experience it when we consider them with the other couplet of the ode by telling “the entire devotee of the God drink light that surrounds the world from a chalice that continuously filled and emptied”. Words like rind, Hak, piyâle, ziyâ that are used in the couplet are originated from Sufism and used frequently in the Divan poetry.

The Prophet, whom Beyatlı has developed a bond with love is included to poetry of him besides God. – It is written with recollection of Muhammad ending rhyme- we may see the eternal love and respect that he has for The Prophet in the poetry with title of “Ezân-ı Muhammedî”.

Gök nûra garkolur nice yüzbin minâreden  
Şehbâl açınca rûh-ı revân-ı Muhammedî (Beyatlı, 1962,43)

Divan poetry is the poems that contain de facto feelings and expressions rather than the feelings that are written under general rules. In this aspect, feelings that are included to poems of Yahya Kemal constitute the own feelings of the poet. Reason of him including a theme and short story is probably caused by this. Titles that are in the poetry are already in nature of summarizing the content of the poetry. Şengül has mentioned those stories, prophet deeds and vesicles, references; miracles of prophet, famous people and legendary heroes in divan poetry for the aforementioned reasons are not included as much as in the divan poetry. (2001, 7)

Vahdet that means union in Arabic expresses the union of God. Its opposite is crowd. (Vahdet article). Also Yahya Kemal has referred to vahdet issue that is included almost all poetry of other poets whether written in Sufism (Kadı Burhanettin) or in coquette manner (Nedim) after the beginning of divan poetry.

**Human:** element that indicates utmost similarities with the old Turkish poetry of Yahya Kemal are human after Sufism in terms of content. In his poetry, human gender and nationality has reached to certain position. Human typing in divan poetry was expressed with words “cân, cânân, padişah, şûh, bût etc) that will remind “beloved” or loved ones. Words that defined the human being rather than beloved in his poetry is heroes (Leyla, Mecnun, Fehad, Behzad, etc) sultans (Kanuni Sultan Süleyman, Fatih Sultan Mehmet) like the ones that step forward in the community. Memorial identities such as “Hayyam, Neşâtî Itrî, Dede Efendi, Tanbûri Cemil Bey vd” who have important position in our cultural history are included to the divan poetry that are written by Yahya Kemal. This is the conclusion of the manner of Yahya Kemal against history. Besides these personalities, also the beloved is frequently included to his poetry just like divan poetry.

Her cevr her cefâ yaraşır hüsn ü ânına  
Bîdâd kıl keremse de şâyân olan sana (Beyatlı, 1962, 25)

This couplet that is contained in his ode with worship title is important in terms of setting forth the beloved form. “Beloved” is in the manner that hasn't interference with loved one; even did, suffers greatly. In this couplet, “rigor and suffering” is encountered as the beauty element which suit to the beloved. Adni, one of the Divan poets, mentions:

Unitdiysa n'ola yârüm beni lutf ü vefâsından  
Bihamdî'llâh ki her dem yâd ider cevr ü cefâsından

That the rigor and suffering is blessing since it assists remembering the beloved with the similar expression with Yahya Kemal.

Yahya Kemal also mentions from himself as a person like the divan poets mentions pen names in their first couplets of ode. Especially, he uses the name “Kemal” within almost 30 of his poems in his work called With the Wind of Old Poetry:

Kadehde lâ'lini gâhî görür deriz ki Kemâl  
Gönül o âfete meftûndu Lâle Devri'nde

**Social life:** Another issue that must be considered is the reflection of social life into the poetry of Yahya Kemal. All along, there have been criticisms relating that divan poetry is distant from the social life. However, conducted studies indicated that in fact they are not very distant from life; on the contrary they are placed in the middle of the life itself. Even the small details relating to social life of the era in which divan poets were lived, are easier to find in odes, eulogies and epodes. Yahya Kemal has frequently referred to the issues relating to social life in his poetry that are composed in Our Celestial Sphere rather than the poetry which are written in divan style. His poetry included to the Selimnâme chapter of his With the Wind of Old Poetry book, are the poems that have the characteristic of being a historical records. These poems, in which wars of Ottoman Empire were mentioned, are like small heralds. Bebek which has a very nice spot to view Istanbul and still maintains the validity today, has been mentioned in the book with Bebek Ode title. Likewise, Poems, in which Tulip era is mentioned in terms of naming a significant portion of 18th Century is like a names state of the drinking assembly that is mentioned by divan poets:



Gönül o âfete meftundu Lâle Devri'nde  
Ki verdi şân u şeref yâl ü bâle devrinde (Beyatlı, 1962, 33)

Another issue that has connection with the Classic Turkish Poetry and poetry of Yahya Kemal is material elements. Some of these are beauty, adjectives relating to beauty, appeals, horses, music, soul, azan, voice of azan, rose with blood color, rose, nightingale, tulip and beytül'l- hazen:.

For example, last one of the material elements we have mentioned is used to express the house of Yakub in the tradition of classic poetry:

Dil var mı kahr-ı dehr ile vîrân edilmedik  
Beytül'l-hazen mi kaldı perîşân edilmedik (Beyatlı, 1962, 49)

Beyatlı used “beytül'l-hazen” in here in terms of meaning regret even it has no match with divan poetry in actual meaning, it indicates similarities with classic poetry.

“Divan poetry image” which we frequently see in the relationship with rose and nightingale, it becomes the image of silent nightingale rather than singing nightingale in Yahya kemal.

Gülzâr pür-melâl ise bülbül de lâle ise  
Siz müjde-i bahârı veren bâd olun dedi (Beyatlı, 1962, 41)

Gülzâr mentions rose garden and is in the position of nightingale nest. Nightingale comes here in order to rejoin the rose that it is in love with and groans. It is willing to make its voice heard by the rose. Rose represents nobility and love and is in the position of “Indestructible Sultan”. Conditions that we mention are the explanation of “poetic theme” that is applicable for divan poetry. Heroes, places and voices that are included to ode of Yahya Kemal that he dedicated to Vâlâ Nureddin with title of Ritl-ı Giran, are similar to the divan poetry; however it indicates minor differences. Rose garden becomes full of sorrow and is in miserable condition. Nightingale becomes silent after becoming mute. Neither beloved is majestic nor is the nightingale singing as they are in divan poetry.

**Historical legendary characters and events:** At some point, divan poetry receives its sources from historical legendary characters, locations and events through references.

Historical-legendary characters are included to his lines by writing poetry to such people or by using them in the couplets through references in his poetry. Some of the historical legendary or religious heroes that are referred as in the divan poetry are Ferhad, Aslı, Mecnun, Cem, Sultan Selim, Hallac-ı Mansur, Mesih, Meryem, Nuh, Hâfiz, Hayyam, Mevlana, Şems, Ali Emîrî, Gedik Ahmed Paşa.

We encounter places general as locations in old Turkish poetry.  
With the couplet of Yahya Kemal:  
On altı yaşına dâhil o şûh-ı Sa'dâbâd  
Cihânı verdi idi ihtilâl devrinde (Beyatlı, 1962, 81)



Sa'dâbâd is mentioned, which Nedim has frequently visited and is an important entertainment place for both poets as the place of beauties::

Bir sen ü bir ben ü bir mutrib-ı pâkîze-edâ  
İznin olursa eğer bir de Nedîm-i şeydâ  
Gayrı yârânı bu günlük edüp ey şûh fedâ  
Gidelim serv-i revânım yürü Sa'd-âbâda (Macit, 2012, 245)

Heralds and conquest stories are the types of divan poetry that contain the subjects of heroism. Also Beyatlı versified important wars and companies just like in this type; he has transferred the voices of battlefields into sentences. Some of the wars that are mentioned in his poetry are wars of Yavuz Sultan Selim, Conquest of Istanbul, Malazgird war.

Niçe olmaya can u dille hurrem  
Çü feth eyledi bir şehir-i mu'azzam (Uygur, 2007, 144)

Above mentioned couplet belongs to 15th Century poet Kivâmi and is written after the battle that the Fatih has made following the conquest of Istanbul.

Son savletinle vur ki açılsın bu surlar  
Fecr-i hüçûm içindeki tekbîr aşkına (Beyatlı, 1962, 27)

Kivâmi has mentioned janissaries that are the soldiers of Fatih Sultan Mehmet in his ode with title of "to the Janissary that has conquered Istanbul". Almost everyone, who has conducted studies about Yahya Kemal, has stated his loyalty to the history of Ottoman. This connection is also similar to the divan poetry that maintains its existence from the beginning and till the end of Ottoman State. Heralds or conquest stories that exist in divan poetry have been transformed into the form of "Ode to the Janissary that has conquered Istanbul" in Yahya Kemal.

**Nature:** Nature was reflected to his lines in classic poetry especially as universe, nature and cosmic universe. Meaning of cosmic elements is composed of sun, moon, sky, Milky Way, moonlight. Such elements have significant position in the poetic world of the divan poetry. When summarized briefly, following elements are compared; cypress to the tall beloved; river to the tears that drop for beloved; almond to the eye form of beloved; sea; tear drop; drinking community; to drinking places in spring; producing fruits to generosity; fate to destiny; rosebud to the lips of beloved; rose to beloved; tulip to cheeks of beloved; moon to beloved. It is possible to increase the examples. Any object that may be found in the nature, has received a correspondence in the world of poetry. Our poet Yahya Kemal has also used the examples relating to nature and cosmic universe in proper with the similarities in divan poetry.

Yahya Kemal has reflected unique elements that are the materials of divan poetry and found in the nature such as the rose garden, moon, tulip, drinking, moonlight, water, fate, drinking place, sky, night, holy water, orchard, rosebud, cypress, spring, night, sun etc. He is somewhat renewed the elements of divan poetry within Turkish neoclassicism.

Nature in the poetry of Tulip era in divan poetry is presented as motive within the entertainment centers. Nedim is one of the most successful ones that is able to reflect these entertainment centers to the poetry. It must be the nature of Nedim since the entertainment is one of the moving points in his poetry. It is obvious that Yahya Kemal has taken Nedim as an example. He has given priority to Nedim; and has used the advanced historical and cultural knowledge for his poetry that he called period of Tulip Era. If Tulip Era is mentioned, it is referred as the historical, cultural and literate nature that is garnished with tulips within the green of spring.

**Country:** Although he is from Skopje, Istanbul, which is gained national identity for Yahya Kemal is like a homeland for the poet. (Şengül, 2001, p.16). There is a great admiration for Istanbul in divan poetry with the rewarding effect, which is rather than being the science and knowledge center. Leading poets of Classic poetry such as Fuzûlî and Nâbî are only two of the memorial characters that mention their longing for the Gates of happiness. Yahya Kemal also admires Istanbul like these poets. He frequently mentioned Istanbul in his odes; he responded to a question “What is beautiful with Ankara?” by saying as “Returning to Istanbul” in the period, when he was a congressman. Istanbul is the capital of Ottoman, in which beauties, ethereal places, cultural elements are located. Loyalty of Yahya Kemal to the Ottoman History has caused this love to be increased.

Ayverdi expresses his love for the country as follows: “Yahya Kemal, who has supported his mental knowledge as he was away from his country for years, has returned to his country without losing any of the national spiritual heritages that he has taken with him. He also obtained the chance to grow the seeds of values that he accumulated in his soul. (1983, 219)

## 2. Innovations in the Poetry of Yahya Kemal

### *Periods of New Turkish Poetry*

Yahya Kemal has performed the old-new synthesis in Turkish poetry and has produced a poem which is national in all aspects. According to Taşpınar, Our current poetry has begun with Yahya Kemal. Here, new characteristics of the Yahya Kemal poetry shall be explained. However, before referring to Yahya Kemal, we believe it is beneficial to consider the changes that are found in our poetry as from the Reform era that is deemed as the beginning of innovation of our literature.

Interpretations that are performed when the Turkish intellectuals have learned French as of Reform era (1860-1896) have caused western literature to affect Turkish Literature. Performed interpretations and old poetry losing its significance have caused new understanding of literature to be emerged. Therefore, there have been changes in the wording and language. New style of expression with “Poetical Interpretation” that Şinasi has translated from Lamartine, has caused major types of French literature and French poets to have effect on this period. Namık Kemal and Şinasi, who have written their first poems in old style, begin writing new style poems by separating from old poetry. With the reform poets, foundations of new literature and a new poetry was made. Purpose of the poets in this period is to compose a modern Turkish Literature instead of Divan Literature. Şinasi, Namık Kemal and Ziya Paşa have defended using the daily language in literature and purifying the language however this idea has not been materialized in practice, Muallim Naci has continued the tradition by writing old style poems.

When the wealth of sciences era (1896-1901) arrived, poetry has gained distance from characteristics such as purifying and social benefits in Reform era and become an individual state. More importance was given to the western literature and French imagination in the poetry became more effective. Parnassianism and symbolism movements made understanding of the poetry difficult and non-national literature was emerged. Publicly remote and artificial language that is used by the wealth of sciences era poets made understanding of Turkish poetry harder. However, politics of the era has also made effect. Autocracy of Abdülhamit has not allowed poetry to include social subjects and caused poets to be withdrawn. New language and new poetry that is lead by Şinasi in order to purify the language have been removed from the language with Namık Kemal, Ziya Paşa, Abdülhak Hâmid ve Recaizâde Mahmut Ekrem. When the art for art's sake era (1901-1908) arrived, while the characteristics of wealth of sciences era are maintained, poetry has gained distance from the daily language and confined expression was emerged. In this era, aruz and free increased prosody were used in the poetry. Symbolism and Ahmet Haşım, who was the most important poet of this era has also effected on the poetry.

When we compare Yahya Kemal with the previous poets, we can see the features of his poetry better. Namık Kemal, Şinasi ve Ziya Paşa have defended to purify the poetry language and have written poetry with social theme. According to Yahya Kemal, poetry should not be written for politics and diplomacy and should be deemed a free standing art. Even though he used Turkish words in his poetry, he has not objected to poetic theme and language of former literature. Most significant deficiency of the Reform era poets is that while they are trying to implement western poetry, they have made this without understanding. According to Cahit Tanyol, whether Şinasi or Ziya Paşa were not aware of the western poetry esthetics. (1985, 31). Yahya Kemal has become aware of the Principles of French poetry onsite in the years he spent in Paris. When he returned, he has not become part of any cult. He used the characteristics of western poetry by melting them into his poetry. Recaizade Mahmut Ekrem has thought on the poetry and written the work called "Literature Practice" that defines the principles of poetry. However, Mahmut Ekrem, who was not the best poet was not able to give his own examples. Although Yahya Kemal has implemented the principles, which he adopts in the poetry, into his own poetry, one of the most important poets of the era Abdülhâk Hâmid has thought that the form, idea and subject of the poetry are more important than the language. (Tanyol, 1985, 32).

According to Tanpınar, Hâmid is the man who had breakthrough in the language. He has broken the grounds of grammar and ended prosody. (2007, 73). Yahya Kemal has not removed the old period like Hâmid; he used old and new in the poetry as synthesis. He has not become the defender of old poetry as Muallim Naci, whom he mentioned as the poet that gives most pleasure in his writing called "My thirty years in poetry". He has adapted the elements of old poetry into new poetry. Yahya Kemal mentions that Tefik Fikret, who has affected his poetry, could not dominate French poetry. However, he also mentions that he removed his attention from east through Tefik Fikret and he also left the nature of him after his days in Paris. (Beyatlı, 1986, 106). After Yahya Kemal has taken control of French poetry and French language, he understood the deficiencies in Reform and wealth of sciences era.

When we examine the period beginning from Reform era to Fecr-i Âtiye, there were some innovations in terms of language, wording, prosody and theme in the poetry.

Closing daily language to the literature led by Şinasi, was adopted as an idea however not frequently implemented to the poetry. Our poets, who try to establish free standing poetry and to leave the characteristics of divan poetry, have applied Turkish poetry to the Western poetry however they lack knowledge about on which grounds western poetry based, therefore they were not able to reach the language they have aimed for. (Tanyol, 1985, 31). While Rezaizade Mahmut Ekrem clarifying the innovations that are made at Reform and Wealth of Sciences era, how poetry should be "Literature Practice" and its principles, he says that there are three types of poetry that are ruled by idea, feelings and imagination and the best poetry is the total of these. According to Cahit Tanyol, it is not sufficient for actual poetry to have these three features. Yahya Kemal has shows us what the actual poetry is. (1985, 33-34) Yahya Kemal has read the poetry of aforementioned poets and has been affected by them however they has no pure and national poetry, which he wanted to materialize in the poetry.

### Yahya Kemal and New Poetry

Yahya Kemal is synthesis between east and west for our poetry. Turkish words were used in his poetry with aruz also old and new were combined in his poetry. He has formed a language and poetry understanding that is typical. In this chapter, wealth of sciences effect on Yahya Kemal, his years in Paris and composing his own poetry after his return and principles of his poetry shall be told.

Yahya Kemal has written his first poem when he was thirteen and impression of wealth of science poets can be found in this poem. Muallim Naci, Mahmut Ekrem and Abdülhak Hâmid are among the poets that he read. In the years when Yahya Kemal began with the poetry, he says he was closer to Muallim Naci. (Banarlı, 1960, 72-74) Yahya Kemal's sympathy in the poetry understanding of Muallim Naci indicates his interest in the divan poetry. After he read the work of Tevfik Fikret called "Rubâb-I Şikeste", he was very impressed and is charmed by a new poetry. Yahya Kemal mentions that Tevfik Fikret and Cenâb Şehabeddin have become more European without knowing French with their poetry. (Banarlı, 1960, 77) First effect for Yahya Kemal to issue new poetry is the impression of divan literature with Muallim Naci and impression of Western poetry that is accompanied by Tevfik Fikret. What Yahya Kemal is willing to make in the poetry is neither maintaining the divan literature nor adopting the western poetry. He is willing to compose a new poetry and a new voice.

*"Yarab ne müsavâtı ne hürriyeti ver  
Hatta ne o yoldan gelecek şöhreti ver  
Hep neşve veren aşkı terennüm dilerim  
Yarab bana bir ses yaratan kudreti ver"*

Last line of this quadrant indicates the purpose of Yahya Kemal. Yahya Kemal materialized this purpose after his escape to Paris in 1903 and learnt the ideas and languages of French poets over there.

Yahya Kemal has followed the French poetry closely in nine years that he was in Paris and has found an opportunity to examine. Besides, he has tried to learn our old poetry and literature in details with western literature. He has advanced his Arabic and Persian by educating in the Eastern Languages Academy. He has

mentioned “Destiny has given me an opportunity to learn Turkish poetry and its classics in France” in his memories. (Banarlı, 1960, 99) While he is in Paris, he sees that symbolism, which has effect on Turkish poetry, is worn off and has weaker effect and he also says that the Mallerme which is the second stage of symbolism has created a resurrection in the poetry with words “a line becomes a body when the words adjacently come together”. (Banarlı, 1960, 93) He has adopted the perspective of Mallerme and said “lines are my sensibility”.

Yahya Kemal admired the Latin and Greek literature which are owned by European civilization and he became enthusiastic to form such body in Turkish. He wanted to make breakthrough with New-Greek movement. Yahya Kemal, who was charmed by such excitement was impressed by this concept of pure-naked poetry even it has not formed new cult.

Another element that affects the poetry of Yahya Kemal is the music, other words rhythm. According to old understanding, if the poet tells the subject, idea, dream and feeling with smooth and flowing expression, that means the poet has completed its lines. However, according to new viewpoint, smooth language, all principles of rhetoric and fluent, will not be sufficient for telling a poem. Poetry must contain rhythm. This idea of Mallerme reminds Yahya Kemal the wording beauty of divan poetry and he thinks without music, poetry will be incomplete. (Banarlı, 1960, 97-98) Music that has affected Yahya Kemal is the Turkish music and this music takes him to our old poetry. Wealth of science people were impressed by music as well however they gave their attention to the western music. Sources and poetry of Yahya Kemal poetry also contain the complete national elements. He has taken the discipline of western but he is a national poet in terms of his poetic and literature identity. According to Tanpınar, Europe has great impression on Yahya Kemal. His poetry reading style, criticism and reasoning all of them are France, even Paris originated. However he expressed us in terms of issues and excitement. He has written his poems with the attention of European. (2007, 20)

Another characteristic that Yahya Kemal gained in Paris is the concept of history. Albert Sorel and Camille Julian have affected him accordingly. “French nation was created by French soil in thousand year” words of Camille Julian establishes a relationship between nation, history and geography. (Kaplan 2006, 236). This perception has impressed art point of view of Yahya Kemal. In his poems, history is included without containing any ideology and policy.

After Yahya Kemal has returned from Paris in 1911, his real poetry adventure has begun. Yahya Kemal, who knows French poetry and divan poetry very well and synthesized them, has given attention for his poetry to become national while he composes them. Doğan Naci Aksan has divided the poetry of Yahya Kemal into two titles. First, in the way of previous era, second is as his era requires. His odes and rubais that are different in terms of soul and imagination integrity but close to old literature are poetry of him in first chapter. However actual poetry of Yahya Kemal are the pure poetry that are included to second chapter. Purity of telling these poetry, rhythm that his lines have are the elements of poetry that are individual to yahya Kemal. (Aksan, 2000, 71)

Poetry of Yahya Kemal reflects the feelings and ideas of our nation. Besides, he also refers to the humane feelings. While Yahya Kemal sets forth a new poetry that

is individual for himself, he also formed his own Turkish as well. He has written his poetry with Turkish words. According to Yahya Kemal, Turkish is the element that binds us together and maintains us as a nation. Therefore, he has showed sensitivity about using Turkish words. Arabic, Persian and French words he has used are the ones that are settled into living Turkish. While using these words, he considered the meaning that Turkish nation has attached to such word. He expressed the feelings such as love, heroism and sorrow with the meaning that is given by Turkish nation. He also gave importance for poetry to have rhythm from first line to the last one.

The book of Yahya Kemal, in which his new poetry that reflects the poetic characteristics he developed is "Our Celestial Sphere". Yahya Kemal has collected his poems that he has written in new style in separate book. Tanpınar explains reason of this as he is defined by the action of current language of Yahya Kemal. When we consider the poetry that is included to Our Celestial Sphere, we will try to evaluate the principles of Yahya Kemal poetry as four titles in terms of language-wording, prosody-rhyme, verse style and content.

**Language and Wording:** Yahya Kemal has mentioned with the following words that is willing to form a new language: How hard it was to remove the Rubab-I Şikeste and Cenâpkari lines, what an unreachable objective to say a line in new kind". (Aksan, 2000, 73) When he achieved this purpose, this made him one of the most important poets of Republic era. Most significant characteristic of Yahya Kemal language is that it is national and not denies old ones. He has included old words and sayings in his poetry however they do not seem incompatible as he used such words in their meanings in Turkish. According to yahya Kemal, words that belong to the nation are now Turkish and compose the richness of Turkish.

Most important element of Yahya Kemal wording is the music that we have mentioned above. In his poetry, lines have harmony in them and Yahya Kemal had to keep the poetry writing period very long in order to enable this harmony in poem. This event indicates his perfectionism.

Bin yıldan uzun bir gecenin bestesidir bu./ Bin yıl sürecek zannedilen kar sesidir bu./ Bir kuytu manastırda duâlar gibi gamlı,/ Yüzlerce ağızdan koro halinde devamlı,/ Bir erganun âhengi yayılmakta derinden.../ Duydumsa da zevk almadım İslâv kederinden./ Zihnim bu şehirden, bu devirden çok uzakta,/ Tanbûri Cemil Bey çalıyor eski plakta.

(From the Snow Music)

Kandilli'de, eski bahçelerde, /Akşam kapanınca perde perde,/ Bir hatıra zevki var kederde.

(From the Evening Music)

As it can be seen in these poems, In the poetry of Yahya Kemal, lines complete each other with harmony. Poetry has a flow just like a composition. This flow and musicality shows itself in all of his poems. Most important part of the yahya Kemal Poetry is the purity and smooth in the telling. When we examined the poets before Yahya Kemal, there is no western poetry elements like wealth of science poetry or uninspired feeling in the poetry of poets that defend the Turkish. There is explicit and simple telling with Turkish words in his poetry.



**Prosody and Rhyme:** He has only written “Arrow” poem that is one of the eighty poems that are included to Our Celestial Sphere with syllabic meter. Reason of writing his poetry with aruz is that he is willing to use the music more efficiently. He also defends that it is wrong to be linked with the rules such as writing with syllabi or aruz in the poetry. If the poetry is well told with syllabic or aruz, then that must be used. Also Mehmet Akif has written his poetry with aruz and has showed that Turkish is a language that is suitable to aruz. Also Yahya Kemal has adapted Turkish words to aruz and achieved the most suitable expression form. In his poetry, beautiful and ugly concepts are important not old and new. Poet has preferred the one which will make the poetry beautiful. .

Yahya Kemal has given great importance to rhyme in his poems. Reason of this is to achieve rhyme in the poetry. According to him, rhyme is the most important element of the poetry. Also ending rhyme is frequently used in Turkish since verbs are placed at the end. Generally he has used “aa bb cc dd ee ff” rhyme order in his poetry.. \

**Verse Style:** Yahya Kemal has written many of his poetry in the Our Celestial Sphere book in couplets. This indicates one of the style similarities between his poetry and divan poetry. There are also poetry that are written with free style (Karnaval ve Dönüş, İstanbul Ufukta’ydi, Ufuklar, Gece) and trinity (Mevsimler, Akşam Musikisi, Maltepe, İstanbul’un O Yerleri, Viranbâğ, Ric’at, Altör Şehrinde) quadrant (Bir Tepeden, Bir Başka Tepeden, O Rüzgar, Mihriyâr, Rindlerin Hayatı, Rindlerin Ölümü, Bir Dosta Mısralar, Mehlika Sultan, Telâki, Geçmiş Yaz, Güftesiz Beste, Özleyen, Madrid’de Kahvehane) pendant (Gezinti, Bir Yıldız Aktı, Erenköyü’nde Bahar, Eski Mektup, Sicilya Kızları). What is important for Yahya Kemal is telling his poetry beautiful and this beauty to cover whole of his poetry.

**Content:** Our Celestial Sphere is divided into three chapters within itself. First chapter that has the same name with poetry book, Thinking of Road and Ultimate Union. When we examine the poetry in these chapters, we may see that the poetry of yahya Kemal refers both humane feelings and national feelings. There are Sufism, religion, history, social life themes in the poetry of Yahya kemal which are also the themes of old literature. These characteristics are mentioned while telling the relationship of yahya Kemal with old literature especially in the first chapter. However, Yahya Kemal has included the themes of old literature in his poetry with his own style. Therefore, even they are old in terms of themes but new in terms of telling. When we consider the themes of his poetry in Our Celestial Sphere, we may see the following titles.

- Sufism and Religion
- Love-Beloved
- . History( Legends, historical people)
- . Homeland and İstanbul

**Sufism and Religion:** Although there are words relating to religion in the poetry of Yahya Kemal, it would not be right to deem as devotee such as Classic poetry. Yahya Kemal is a poet with western interests. In his poetry, religion becomes important as a national element. While he is telling a Ramadan his poetry called “At the Street in Atik Vali” he says “you stuck at Silent Street without fasting and joy” He sees people and returns while everybody breaks their fasting in Ramadan. However “Leaving



them always troubles me; / if such feelings of me left, praise the Lord” In his lines we can understand that he values spiritualism. Religious feelings and spiritualism for Yahya Kemal are important because these are the elements that belong to us.

**Love-Beloved:** Love element has important place in the poetry of Yahya Kemal. In his poetry, love or beloved are not told according to certain patterns. It separates from divan literature in this subject as well. He tells love and beloved according to his imagination. When we examine the poetry of Yahya kemal, nationalities of beauties are determined. This becomes an innovation that we encounter. In his poetry called “Carnival and Return” he mentions from the beauties of western by his lines “İslâv güzelleri/ Germen güzelleri,/ Hepsinden ince Anglo- Sakson güzelleri” In the poetry of Yahya Kemal, in which he mentions of love and beloved, we may also see the love for Istanbul and love for homeland. In his poetry called “From a peak” he tells the admiration to the beloved with lines “Baktım: Konuşurken daha bir kerre güzeldin,/ İstanbul’u duydum daha bir kerre sesinde” also love for homeland, as Istanbul seen beyond the humane love.

History, legends, historical characters: History has an important place in the poetry of Yahya Kemal. As he mentioned in his poetry called “Dream Composition” lines of “Gönlüm İsterdi ki mâzîni dirilten san’at,/ Sana tarihini her lâhza hayâl ettirsin” he tells the importance of history and purpose of his art. History understanding for Yahya kemal is related with geography. He has not visited to Middle Asia as Ziya Gökalp and he has started our history with battle of malazgirt. According to him, history that develops on a geography is important. In the poetry of Yahya Kemal, history has not been included scientifically. He has presented his ideas in form of literature poetry. (Kaplan, 2012, 189) He mentions battles and conquer and legends that tells the conquer in his poetry such as “Attacker, Mohaç Song, Uskudar that witnessed the conquer of Istanbul, Arrow”. In the poetry of Yahya Kemal, conquer event has very important place but name of Fatih Sultan Mehmet is not referred. However, names of Yavuz Sultan Selim and Yıldırım Beyazid Han are referred. Janissaries and attackers are mentioned together with conquers.

Homeland and Istanbul: Yahya Kemal says “Cihan Vatandan ibarettir, itikadımca” in his poetry called “Road Thinking”. This line summarizes his value of homeland. For Yahya Kemal, who has deeply connected with anything national and establish his poetry on such foundation, concept of homeland has very important place. Homeland is the place that our pas, ancients have live and our architecture, music and our history that includes all. Homeland is very important for Yahya Kemal in this aspect. Homeland that he tells, describes is Istanbul. Istanbul is the manifestation of homeland for him. Istanbul has the characteristic that includes each element from any place of the country. When we examine this concept in Our Celestial Sphere, we may see the excess of poetry with Istanbul subject and as Yahya Kemal describes the homeland, he describes actually Istanbul.

We may see that many elements such as counties, strait, social life and architecture of Istanbul have become the theme in his poetry. He emphasizes the unique beauty of Istanbul by saying “Benzetmek olmasın sana dünyada bir yeri;/ Eylül sonunda böyledir İsviçre gölleri” in his poetry called “Phraseology in the Mist1. He has told the love for Istanbul in the poetry called “lines for Bedri”. “Gelmek’çün ikinci bir hayâta,/ Bir gün dönüş olsa âhiretten:/ Her ruh açılıp da kainâta,/ Keyfince semâda bulsa mesken;/ Talih bana dönse nazikâne;/ Bir yıldızı verse malikâne;/

Bigâne kalır o iltifâta, / İstanbul'a dönmek isterim ben”There are poems that are written for the counties of Istanbul such as İstanbul’un Fenerbahçe, Maltepe, Moda, Erenköy, Çamlıca, Kanlıca, Boğaz, Yakacık, İstinye and Üsküdar within Our Celestial Sphere. Uskudar is the most important county among them “city that has witnessed conquer”. He narrates Uskudar in the poetry called “Uskudar that has witnessed conquer of Istanbul, Dream City, at the street of Atik-Valde, Friendly lights of Uskudar”.

### **Conclusion**

-Purpose of the Yahya Kemal poetry is to transform Turkish hearing into Turkish telling.

-Yahya Kemal considered completely national elements in his poetry. In his poetries, Turkish words, Turkish music, Turkish architecture were narrated in deep harmony.

-Yahya Kemal has not ignored the old poetry tradition, on the contrary, he uses this as a synthesis in his poetry.

-Line sensitivity is important in the poetry.

-Foreign words are used with their meaning in Turkish. Foreign words that are contained in the language asset of Turkish were not ignored.

-Although poetry of Yahya Kemal includes the themes of old poetry, they are new in terms of telling and expression.

-Foundations of Yahya Kemal poetry are nation, homeland, religion and love. These foundations are established together with music, harmony and rhythm.

-He used the ode, masnavi, song, musammat etc. verse styles of old poetry.

-Prosody is important in his poetry. He believes the poetry must be written with prosody.

-He has used the materials of old poetry by filtering through distiller of new poetry.

-Poetic themes of old poetry are used not like word plays but like comparisons.

-He has carefully picked the words among the lines.

-All of his poetry is written with aruz except one.

-Using the materials of old poetry is because of his link to the old culture and history he owned.

-His knowledge over Turkish history is very rich.

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