

**CHARITY PROGRAMMES: REPRESENTATIONS OF POVERTY IN  
TURKISH TELEVISION**

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## ABSTRACT

### CHARITY PROGRAMMES: REPRESENTATIONS OF POVERTY IN TURKISH TELEVISION

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This thesis analyses the representation of poverty in the charity programmes broadcast on Turkish television, namely *Deniz Feneri*, *Kimse Yok mu*, *Yarınlar Umut Olsun* and *Yolcu*. It examines the continuities, discontinuities and breaks in the representation of poor with reference to Turkish cinema, novel and media. Critical discourse analysis of the charity programmes indicates that poverty is legitimised and naturalised, being made no reference to social, economic and political context of poverty. The construction of the poor as “objects of aid” given by “philanthropists” is examined and it is argued that the poor become a means of salvation, self-realisation and self-fulfilment of “philanthropist”. It is here claimed that Islam and nationalist-conservative discourse serve the internalisation and tranquillisation of poverty in the programmes. The study also analyses the visual and aural representations of the poor in the programmes. The slow-motion, black and

white photographs, close-up, limited motion, and the music accompanying the pictures are the most fundamental tools of dramatising poverty in the charity programmes; and they address to “conscience” of “philanthropists”. It is also argued that voiceover and subtitling efface the voice of the poor.

**Keywords:** Poverty, the poor, representation, discourse, visual regime, television, Islam.

## ÖZ

### YARDIM PROGRAMLARI: YOKSULLUĞUN TÜRK TELEVİZYONUNDA TEMSİLİ

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Yüksek Lisans, Siyaset Bilimi ve Kamu Yönetimi Bölümü

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Bu tez, *Deniz Feneri*, *Yolcu*, *Kimse Yok mu*, ve *Yarınlar Umut Olsun* adlı Türk televizyonlarında yayımlanan yardım programlarında yoksulluğun temsil edilmesini incelemektedir. Yoksulların temsil sürecindeki süreklilikler, kopuşlar ve kırılmalar, Türk sineması, Türk romanı ve medyası bağlamında incelenmektedir. Yardım programlarının söylem analizi, yoksulluğun toplumsal, ekonomik ve siyasal bağlamından söz edilmeksizin meşrulaştırıldığına ve doğallaştırıldığına işaret etmektedir. Yoksulların, “yardımseverlerin” yaptığı yardımın nesnesi olarak inşa edilmişleri incelenmekte ve yoksulların “yardımseverlerin” kurtuluşunun, kendilerini gerçekleştirmelerinin ve doyumlarının aracı olduğu iddia edilmektedir. Programlarda İslam ve milliyetçi-muhafazakar söylemin yoksulluğun içselleştirilmesinde ve yatıştırılmasında hizmet ettiği ileri sürülmektedir. Bu çalışma, programlarda yoksulların görsel ve işitsel olarak temsil edilmesini de incelemektedir. Yardım programlarında, yoksulluğun dramatikleştirilmesinde en temel araçlar olan ağır çekim, siyah beyaz fotoğraflar, yakın çekim ve sınırlı hareket, görüntülere eşlik eden

müzikle birlikte “yardımseverlerin” “vicdanına” seslenir. Ayrıca, üstses ve altyazının yoksulların sesini kısıtđı iddia edilmektedir.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Yoksulluk, yoksullar, temsil, söylem, görsel rejim, televizyon, İslam.

To my family

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I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

Date: 20/05/2004

Signature:

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	iii
<b>ÖZ</b> .....	v
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	viii
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b> .....	x
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	1
<b>CHAPTER</b>	
<b>1. THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF CULTURAL REPRESENTATIONS OF POVERTY IN TURKEY</b> .....	8
<b>1.1. Representations of Poverty in Turkish Cinema and Literature until the 1980s</b> .....	8
<b>1.1.1. Poverty in Turkish Literature</b> .....	9
<b>1.1.2. The Poor in Turkish Melodramas</b> .....	16
<b>1.2. Cultural Representations of Poverty since the 1980s</b> .....	24
<b>1.2.1. The Poor in Turkish Cinema</b> .....	26
<b>1.2.1.1. The Changing Representations of the “Rural Other” from 1970s to the 1980s</b> .....	28
<b>1.2.2. Poverty in Turkish Literature: The Exclusion of The Poor From Literature</b> .....	34
<b>2. TELEVISION, REPRESENTATION AND POVERTY</b> .....	37
<b>2.1. An Overview of Representation Theory</b> .....	37
<b>2.2. The Stories of Deprivation in Media</b> .....	41
<b>2.3. The Emergence of Charity Programmes in Turkey</b> .....	46
<b>3. CHARITY PROGRAMMES AND THE DOMINANCE OF ISLAMIC DISCOURSE</b> .....	52

<b>3.1.</b>	Islam, The Rich And The Poor .....	52
<b>3.2.</b>	Religious Overtones in the Programmes .....	58
<b>3.2.1.</b>	The Idealized Lives of the Poor: “Anatolia”, “Happiness” and “Belief” .....	64
<b>3.2.2.</b>	“Us”: Construction of National Identity and Solidarity .....	68
<b>4.</b>	<b>REPRESENTATIONS OF THE POOR IN THE VOICEOVER</b> .....	74
<b>4.1.</b>	Critical Discourse Analysis .....	74
<b>4.2.</b>	The Passivated Poor in the Voiceovers .....	77
<b>4.3.</b>	Philanthropists and Producers .....	87
<b>4.4.</b>	Interviews in the Programmes .....	94
<b>5.</b>	<b>VISUAL AND AURAL REPRESENTATIONS OF THE POOR IN THE CHARITY PROGRAMMES</b> .....	104
<b>5.1.</b>	Visual Regime in the Representations of the Poor and the Techniques .....	104
<b>5.1.1.</b>	Slow Motion, Black and White Photographs, Limited Motion and Close-up.....	105
<b>5.1.2.</b>	The Title Sequences of the Charity Programmes ...	109
<b>5.2.</b>	Fragmentation of the Body .....	112
<b>5.3.</b>	Effacing the Voice of the Poor .....	113
<b>5.3.1.</b>	Subtitling the Voice and the Story of the Poor .....	115
	<b>CONCLUSION</b> .....	118
	<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b> .....	122

## INTRODUCTION

This study aims to analyse the representations of poverty in the charity programmes in Turkish television channels. It intends to examine the ideological, political, cultural discourses that shape the narrative structure of the television programmes, namely, *Deniz Feneri*, *Kimse Yok mu*, *Yolcu*, and *Yarınlar Umut Olsun*. The focus will be on the terms in which poverty is represented and the question whether the poverty is legitimised and naturalised.

In Turkey, cultural representations of the poor in literature, cinema and religion demonstrate that poverty has been romanticised. Whereas virtues such as “happiness” and “morality” are ascribed to the poor and conversely, “misery”, “loneliness” and “dishonesty” are attributed to those who are blessed with material abundance. It has been a familiar cultural theme that poverty has its rewards. Although romanticisation of poverty continues in the programmes within a nationalist-conservative discourse, it is possible to talk about a significant shift in the representations of poverty in the media discourse. Representations of the poor have transformed from “the rural other” to the “culturally inferior” and “threatening/*varoşlu* Other” in the 1980s and 1990s respectively. While the poor are stigmatised as the *varoşlular* with their social values and inferior culture, the rich move out of the city, both physically and symbolically. While representations of the poor as honorable and honest people started to decline, the poor as an “object of

fear” has come to the fore, especially in the media discourse. By emphasizing the threats, poverty is associated with tendencies of crime and violence.

In this context, the phenomenon of poverty cannot be reduced into material deprivation. Poverty is also a social and psychological condition. (Bauman, 1998; Bourdieu, 1999; Erdoğan, 2002). It means being “not up to the mark” that results in a fall of self-esteem, feelings of shame or feelings of guilt. As Bourdieu (1999) mentions, using material poverty as the sole measure of all suffering keeps us from seeing positional and ordinary suffering and understanding a whole side of the suffering characteristic of a social order. The programmes that will be examined also underline the feelings of the poor unable to get the chances of whatever passes in society for a “happy life”. In this respect, the representations of poverty in television programmes on the poor become an important issue worthy of analysis. Examining the media representations of the poor can offer us clues about the ideological and cultural transformation in Turkey.

The literature on poverty in Turkey generally deals with *gecekondus*<sup>1</sup>. Early *gecekondus* research problematised the “integration” of the migrant population into urban society by adopting modernisation theory. In the 1970s and early 1980s, *gecekondus* phenomenon was investigated in the context of broader social, economic and historical factors (Erman, 2001). One of the most significant works on poverty is the study of Orhan Türkdoğan who adapts the study of Oscar Lewis called *Yoksulluk Kültürü (Culture of Poverty)*. He examines *gecekondus* dwellers that develop a sub-culture of their own from a reductionist perspective. Sema Erder’s analysis (1995), which is one of the few poverty studies, explains poverty of some groups of

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<sup>1</sup> Shantytowns are called *gecekondus*, which means in literature “built in one night” and the people who live in shantytowns called as *gecekondulular*.

*gecekondu* dwellers in terms of their exclusion from the migrant networks that become more selective in the 1980s. Within this group who are excluded are poor people who have just migrated, unskilled workers, the disabled due to job accidents, widows, elderly etc. In the same study, Erder also investigates *gecekondu* dwellers that improve their economic status through *gecekondus*. Similarly, Işık and Pınarcıoğlu (2001) state that poverty has become a system with the tendency to regard *gecekondu* as a commodity that is inherited by the next generations and they call it “*poverty by turn*” (*nöbetleşe yoksulluk*). They discuss the strategies of the poor about how to deal with poverty that is intermingled with urbanisation and dynamics of migration. The term “poverty by turn” is described as “a cruel struggle for survival of the poor community to have higher standards of living by pushing some of the group down to a worse kind of poverty” (Işık and Pınarcıoğlu, 2001: 176), preventing potential threats of poverty. Sharing similar ideas with Erder, Işık and Pınarcıoğlu express that the chance to get rid of poverty, in other words the system of “poverty by turn” has been being lost and that poverty has a tendency to become permanent for the people who are excluded from the migrant networks. Another study that indicates that the traditional solidarity network among the poor is on the way of decline is “*Yoksulluk Halleri*” edited by Necmi Erdoğan (2002). This research, which tries to grasp the meaning of poverty by studying the stories of the poor, analyses how the urban poor view their own social existence, relations of domination and exploitation, processes of marginalisation and exclusion as well as their relation to the existing political ideologies. This study also attempts to analyse the representations of the poor in the media. Yet, there has been relatively little

research into the representations of the poor. This study aims to contribute to this literature.

Besides the negative stereotyping of migrants in media discourse, it is necessary to acknowledge here that poverty has been an important part of the discussion in the media aftermath of the 2001 crisis. People of the “other Turkey” who were accused by the columnists of occupying and defiling city and its culture occupied the very agenda of the public opinion in the aftermath of the 2001 crisis. Advocating “White Turks”, Serdar Turgut opened to discussion the issue of poverty that he conceptualised with the expression of the “other Turkey” and defended that the situation in the “other Turkey” needed to be improved, criticizing the inter-class income distribution (Bali, 2002: 334 – 337). However, such an attitude does not necessarily mean that an era has come to an end. For instance, Ertuğrul Özkök takes the discussions about inequality as “the footsteps of Neo Populism” and Gülay Göktürk refers to the subject of inequality as “the archaic thought that accepts the capitalist profit as theft” (Mert, 2001). On the other hand, poverty is reduced into merely a technical question. With regard to the new right’s goal of reshaping Turkey’s political future, social services have been impoverished and poverty has become more or less a “private affair”. The appearance of the charity programmes correspond to period of the crisis, in other words, these programmes gain importance in the period of the crisis. The charity programmes that the thesis focuses on such as *Deniz Feneri*, *Kimse Yok mu* and *Yolcu* have Islamic overtones, whereas *Yarınlar Umut Olsun* is presented as a “secular chain of happiness” (Erdoğan, 2002d: 203) and they all aim to help needy people except *Yolcu*. However, charity activities are not limited with these programmes. The contention of this study is that assistance the

poor people creates the reciprocal relationship between the poor and the donor who find satisfaction and fulfilment.

I will examine how and on what basis representations of poverty and the poor change through an overview of Turkish cinema, literature and media. I will focus on whether these programmes place poverty on wider Turkish social, political, economic context or no reference is made to the causes of poverty. In this respect, one of the main questions to be is if and how charity is legitimised as an answer to poverty. Another one is if and how the socio-cultural positions of the poor are legitimised in the Islamic discourse of the programmes and if there is a shift the understanding of charity. I will focus on how poverty, poor and their situations, relationships are constructed in texts. Media texts do not merely “mirror realities”; they construct reality and have a strong influence in the constitution of the dominant representations of events. Media texts constitute versions of reality in which depend on the social positions and interests and objectives of those who produce them. They do so through choices, which are made at various levels in the process of producing texts. What choices are made, what is included, what is excluded, what is made explicit, or left implicit etc. (Champagne, 1999; Fairclough, 1995). In this context, ideological representations of the poor will be delineated with respect to the voiceover where society is divided into two camps, “haves” and “have not”, “us” and “them”, “needy” and “donor” etc. In this context, I will also analyse the ways in which the discourses of the programmes are articulated with the visual regimes.

The method of analysis of this study is a combination of available literature for discussing the background of representations of poverty and textual and interpretative analysis of texts of the programmes. I will analyse seven episodes of

*Yolcu* between April 29, 2003 and June 10, 2003. While I will focus on five episodes (69, 75, 94, 95, 96) for the first period of *Kimse Yok mu* in 2003, I will examine almost all of its episodes in the 2003 season, beginning September 15, 2003. Similarly, I will focus on almost all of its episodes of *Deniz Feneri* from the beginning of August 27, 2003. And finally I will focus on three episodes of *Yarınlar Umut Olsun*, relying also on Erdoğan's remarks. Erdoğan (2002d) explains how poverty is constructed in the television programmes on poverty and how the poor-subaltern see these programmes.

In the first chapter, I will examine cultural representations of the poor with reference to Turkish cinema, literature and media providing a historical background about similarities and differences, continuities and discontinuities between different periods in terms of the representations of the poor.

The second chapter will focus on analysing the relationship between television, representation and poverty with a general perspective. After examining an overview of representation theory, I will focus on the programmes concerning private life and family matters, and also I will pay attention to the newspapers in terms of the representations of poverty. Finally, I will describe the history of charity programmes in Turkey.

In the third chapter, I will firstly focus on representations of poverty and the poor in the Qur'an and hadith. Such a brief look at Islamic view of poverty and the poor will help us conceptualise the programmes in question with respect to religiosity of the programmes. After discussing the religious discourse in the programmes, I will analyse the idealisation of poverty and construction of national identity in the programmes.

The fourth chapter will examine ideological representations of the poor and poverty. I will use transitivity and ergativity as analytical tools of critical discourse analysis, which provide the means for investigating how the poor are portrayed and how their relationships with the world are constructed. In this respect, I will touch upon the passivation of the poor and then I will focus on how the philanthropist becomes Agent of the poor's lives. Having considered the possible problems in the translation of the voiceover texts, it would be convenient to give them in Turkish in the footnote.

In the last chapter of this study, the visual representations of the poor will be studied. In this respect, it will be analysed whether the discourse of the programmes are coherent with its visuality, in other words, whether there is a parallel montage in the discourses, voiceover and visual presentations of the programmes.

**CHAPTER I**  
**THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF CULTURAL REPRESENTATIONS**  
**OF POVERTY IN TURKEY**

In this chapter, the historical background of cultural representations of poverty in Turkey will be analysed with reference to cinema and literature. Before we discuss the representations of poverty in media, the representations of the poor in cinema and literature may give us clues about the shifts in the representations of poverty as well as about ideological transformation in Turkey in general. Furthermore, this chapter can also help us observe similarities and differences, continuities and discontinuities in the history of representations of poverty in Turkey.

**1.1. Representations of Poverty in Turkish Cinema and Literature Until the**  
**1980s**

Here, representations of poverty will be examined by dividing this part into mainly two periods. After analysing the representations of poverty until the 1980s with reference to cinema and literature, I will focus on cultural representations of poverty since the 1980s.

### 1.1.1. Poverty in Turkish Literature

The first Ottoman novels focused on the Westernisation problem, which aimed to criticize upper class circles in İstanbul who had the tendency to Westernisation. The characters of the first novels are the rich and wealthy people of İstanbul. In the early Ottoman literature, the authors symbolized the oppositions between the “good” and the “evil” and also the “poor” and the “rich” so as to emphasize the opposition between the East/the West (Türkeş, 2001). The poor was described as a man of tradition and high virtues, which were stressed. The most important examples of the Ottoman novel are Ahmet Mithat’s *Felatun Bey ile Rakım Efendi*, Rezaizade Ekrem’s *Araba Sevdası*.

Ahmet Mithat presents two types of Westernisation in *Felatun Bey ile Rakım Efendi*. Following Kadioğlu (1996: 181), “the main theme of the novel is the description of the difference between an imitative, cosmetic Westernisation, which is ridiculed as phony, and rather preferred one which is characterised by a relentless effort to hold on to indigenous cultural traits”. Whereas Felatun Bey is portrayed as the example of the former, Rakım Efendi, an orphan, works hard for completing his education and he accomplishes to make synthesis between “Western cultural baggage” and “the views of the Ottoman lower middle classes” (Mardin, 1974: 406). Yet, Felatun Bey who inherits a fortune always tries to imitate the West.

According to Moran (1983), Ahmet Mithat presents European-style fop for the first time. The novel shows the opposition between laziness/diligence and extravagant/thriftiness. As Alver (2002) expresses, the fop is an indirect case for sorting out the problem of Westernisation. The fop “experiences the Westernisation

problem internally”. His devotion to the material aspect of the West is one of the major characteristics of the fop. The fops of pleasure, who imitate the West in terms of clothing and life-styles, are somehow alienated to their own societies.

Another example of the novel that focuses on the problematic of Westernisation is *Araba Sevdası*. Mardin (1974: 407) remarks that this novel is the scene of “the social strains that lurk behind the stereotype of over-Westernised Ottoman”. Bihruz Bey, the counterpart of Felatun Bey, “is a man who became a public official through his father’s connections despite the fact that he was lazy, incompetent, fool for Western materialism” (Kadıoğlu, 1996: 182). According to Moran (1983), Bihruz Bey’s European style, his silly, ignorant, showy, extravagant and ridiculous features resemble Felatun. After falling in love with Periveş Hanım, he becomes another man: “quiet, considerate, sorrowful” (Moran, 1983: 58). However, his love that derives from romantic French literature is also imitative.

As Gürbilek (2003: 606-608) summarizes, Bihruz is “indeed a character lacking an inner world, a hollow man made up of borrowed gestures” and “estranged from traditional Ottoman values, has an unconditional admiration of Western culture and is easily carried away by the consumption regime accompanying modernization... intolerant of the “vulgar” folk culture and looks down on the “inadequate” Turkish language, having an inadequate knowledge of French himself”.

Another example of the fop in the Turkish novel is Meftun, the hero of *Şıpsevdi*, written by Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar. His major concern is to make money and to live a life of luxury. However, the European style in *Şıpsevdi* is not the cause of consumption for the first time, as it turns into the condition to make money (Moran, 1983: 197). In this respect, the European-style fop of the novels written after

the 1920s was not dumb and ridiculous, but was an ambitious, enthusiastic and resolute man who succeeded in every attempt (Alver, 2002:262).

Moreover, some of the novels that discuss the dichotomy of wealth-poverty have taken residential decomposition as an indicator of social and cultural standing. In his novel called *Fatih-Harbiye*, Peyami Safa tells about the life-style of the poor through the image of Fatih, where they live, while he tells about the life of the rich through the image of Harbiye, with which he identifies Western culture. While Fatih, in which there are houses with falling plaster on the walls, crooked cornices, old atlas curtains and mould smell, is “supine, sleepyhead, languid”, Harbiye is always awake. According to a character of the novel called Neriman, the “bruised and importunate” voices of the halva-sellers accompany the supineness of Fatih.

The voices of the halva-sellers are fading away in the back streets. The voices are fatal and inauspicious. They smell death, disease and worse than that they smell some kinds of unidentified and obscure disasters. In these voices Neriman can sense the death of her mother, the old age of her father and a severe and sickly grief that can be felt sharply by the firmest and the most furnished parts of the soul. It is a deep grief that reminds her of the poverty of her environment and all the mourning she has seen and suffered throughout her life. These voices never seem to end. Once one fades away, another follows it on the corner of the street. They follow each other slowly and non-stop like a heavy and sad caravan (Safa, 1999:40).

The rebellion of Neriman stems from the fact that she has to live in this “dilapidated” house “being deprived from everything”. She longs for a more “civilized” life.

As expressed by Moran (1983), the problem of West /East made up the major theme of novels until the 1950s. The contrast between the West and the East becomes clear in the novel in the dualities of rich /poor, idealist /materialist,

traditionalist /Western, hodja /teacher, nationalist /cosmopolitan, Ottoman style meetings/ balls. The main concern of the novelists in these novels was to harmonize “the moral truth” with the West by watching over the Eastern values. In this respect, the novel characters were “types” used in order to make the dualities stated above concrete. The novels, I have discussed above, which focus on West /East dichotomy presents the poverty according to life styles as in the Turkish melodramas. Whereas the people who preserve traditional culture and Islamic morality are presented as poor but morally rich, the people who are rich and represent European way of life are ridiculed.

Village novels were introduced during the early years of the establishment of Republic. In novels such as *Küçük Paşa*, *Ateşten Gömlek*, *Çalığışu*, *Yeşil Gece*, *Vurun Kahpeye* and *Yaban*, which are based upon the dichotomy between the reactionary and the progressivist and the bigot and the intellectual (Moran, 1990: 17), the intellectuals are portrayed as responsible for the ignorance of to be the reason for the peasants. “Going to the people” and to equip them with the Western values was the mission of the intellectuals.

The Village Institutes, which started to give education in the late 1930s, played an important role in making the novels about rural life widespread. The rural was portrayed ideally and optimistically in the best sellers of the period. From this point of view, people are seen naive, natural and virtuous, but at the same time they are ignorant who need to be educated. However, the war conditions and the financial problems during the 1940s gave way to a more realistic approach instead of the romantic rural approach. The roles of writer of the Village Institutes like Mahmut Makal, Talip Apaydın and Fakir Baykurt and writers such as Orhan Kemal, Yaşar

Kemal and Kemal Tahir were significant. In *Bizim Köy*, Mahmut Makal writes about the life conditions in the village, underdevelopment and poverty without exaggeration and dramatization (Moran, 1990: 15). It is the pioneer of the novels written by graduates of Village Institutes. The stereotypes of the narratives emerged with *Bizim Köy* as follows:

The poor and ignorant peasant; the reactionary exploiter (landowner, prayer leader (imam), political leaders); and a saviour (teacher, progressivist kaimakam who is official charged with governing a provincial district or a vigilant and wise peasant) (Moran, 1990: 182).

The writer establishes a set of relationships between these people and the novel becomes a model for how to save the peasant by enlightening and waking him up and how to fight with the forces that are trying to prevent it. Sabahattin Ali, who bases his novel, *Kuyucaklı Yusuf* (1937), upon the dichotomies between urban /nature, artificial man / natural man, degeneration /innocence, lust / love, can be accepted as the forerunner of the rural novels of Orhan Kemal and Yaşar Kemal (Moran, 1990). In these novels, a “saviour” who neutralizes the exploiter that represents darkness accomplishes the transition from famine to abundance.

Fakir Baykurt, who intended to “make people revolutionary”, expressed that writing about the defeat of man instead of his resistance would cause a spiritual breakdown in the society so that emphasizing the resistance and the will to change of the poor and exploited peasants would be fundamental in terms of revolutionary attitude. Peasants can be poor, oppressed, but either a teacher or a peasant affects “society in the direction of revolution”. Their lives become easier without “the landowner, the prayer leader and the head of a village (muhktar). In *Yılanların Öcü*, Baykurt wrote about the struggle of “Kara” Bayram and his mother, Irazca, with the

mukhtar and council of elders, who sold the land in front of their house, to another peasant. Social realism was represented in the cinema as well and Metin Erksan adopted *Yılanların Öcü* as a screenplay.

In *Tırpan*, Musdu, the wealthy landowner, wants to marry 13-year-old Dürü, who is the daughter of a poor family. As she does not want to marry him, he gets her family's consent with his money. In the novel, the conflict between Dürü and Musdu transforms into the quarrel between weak-strong and exploiter-exploited. According to Moran (1990: 185), sexual fight is the symbol of being oppressed of the poor by the rich. Dürü resists and the peasants support her resistance. Baykurt puts dialogues in the novel in order to express his revolutionary ideas:

... According to Uluguş, women and poor ones are not involved in fights; they immediately break down or give in. Yet, they must join and fight. Once the poor unite, they will beat the rich and will give an end to oppression. 'They are wealthy and powerful, but are a few! We are poor but more in number.' 'Once the ants unite, they swallow an elephant.'<sup>2</sup>(Moran, 1990: 191-192).

Orhan Kemal writes about migration, bad life conditions of the migrants in cities, *gecekondu* and the system of exploitation in his novels. In *Devlet Kuşu* (1958) and *Gurbet Kuşları* (1962), he writes about the struggle of the poor people, who live in the *gecekondus* and their being oppressed by the rich. In the novel entitled *Bereketli Topraklar Üzerinde*, in a setting of "rural/urban" duality he tells about the injustice that three fellows who come to Çukurova face with in factories, constructions and farms, and about the money games and the tricks that the city-dwellers play upon the peasants (Moran, 1990: 40).

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<sup>2</sup> Onlar varsıl, onlar kuvvatlı emme az! Biz yoksuluz emme çoğuz", "Karıncalar birleşti mi fili yudar" (Moran, 1994: 191-192).

Peasant-city dweller dichotomy is presented with reference to exploitation; poverty is represented as an unavoidable result of exploitation. Thus, poverty present not only as a monetary problem, but also as character's illnesses, sufferings and fears. As stated by Moran (1990), Orhan Kemal does not exalt the oppressed and exploited peasants as honourable and honest people. His characters exist in the novels with their good and bad deeds, with their innocence, cunning and their envies (1994:55-56). Only one of the characters of *Bereketli Topraklar Üzerinde* (Yusuf) wins the fight with the city-dwellers that are identified with demons.

Yusuf forms a strategy that determines the precautions to be taken by the peasant during his fight in the city, as well as the ways to defend and the weak sides of the city-dweller. In the narration of Orhan Kemal the poor/mistreated is not reduced to dualities such as absolute good/absolute bad as it is observed in melodramas or Kemalettin Tuğcu novels that I will discuss in this chapter. The poor/mistreated are not the passive victims of the government or the dominant ideology. On the contrary, they "live in the residence of the other" by strategies like cheating, doing several tricks, cunning and disguise (de Certeau, 1984).

In *Eskici ve Oğulları*, Kemal tells the story of a family that were once junk dealers but now labourers in Çukurova by emphasizing the love, hate and rage between the members of the family. Thus, we witness how financial deprivation affects people's emotions and thoughts. As the lamed junk dealer falls into poverty, he loses his cheer and is portrayed as someone bad-tempered. Moreover, Kemal gives several examples in this novel in order to support his idea that the proletarian people without a social status possess the real human virtues whereas sophisticated people who have achieved in life lack them (Moran, 1990).

The duality between poverty and wealth in the novels had an instrumental function in representing different aspects of the Westernisation problem until the 1980s. In the rural novels, the Kemalist ideology portrays the poor as an object in the dark that is to be enlightened. For bright and sunny days it will be enough if officials such as teachers or governors reveal the revolutionary spirit in them.

### **1.1.2. The Poor in Turkish Melodramas**

*Azize: "They do not know how to laugh by heart  
But to mock people, don't they, Uncle Tonton?"*  
*Tarık: "I need human life, friendship, and love"*

Turkish melodramas produced in the 1960s and 1970s often used poor-rich opposition/polarity through well-established conventions of storytelling, they illustrated the poor and the rich dichotomy with reference to particular behaviours, stereotypes and life styles. Melodramas are marked by "chance happenings, coincidences, missed meetings, sudden conversions, last-minute rescues and revelations, *deus ex machina* endings" (Neale, 1986: 6). Especially in the family melodrama, characters are not psychologically motivated; they are each other's sole referent. Thus, melodramatic hero's problems concern with outside forces and not with their conscience.

Melodramas are marked "grandiose emotional states" (Brooks, 1976: 35). This excessiveness is seen in the relations between protagonists, in their sufferings, self-sacrifices and coincidences. While character's love, suffering, pain, happiness

and hopes are expressed in melodramas, social-cultural conflicts and their solutions are invariably articulated in relation to the individual.

However, characters in melodrama are evidently allegorical. “Melodramatic characterizations performed through a process of personification whereby actors embody ethical forces” (Gledhill, 1991: 210). In this context, ethical forces as good or evil (bad) are personalised; characters are the allegories of the morality. Gesture and movements, thus, serve as the linkages between the moral forces and the personal desires (Gledhill, 1991: 210).

Similarly, Turkish melodramas focus on “heterosexual couples, underlining socio-cultural conflicts on a number of axes: poor versus rich, rural versus urban, lower class versus bourgeois, Eastern versus Western” are very popular (Erdoğan and Göktürk, 2001: 536). While the West/East dichotomy corresponds to evil-good or rich- poor dichotomy, West (that is the centre and upper class) is presented as an “object of desire”. According to Erdoğan (1995: 187), Yeşilçam uses melodrama as a “machine of desire”, which articulates different positions (rural/urban, upper class/lower class and middle class) and the possibilities of transition between these positions. The character that belongs to the high society of Westernised centre is configured with a Western iconography loaded with American cars, indecent clothes, blonde women, crazy parties, alcohol, degenerate relations, social irresponsibility, etc.” On the other hand, the one who has a domestic, lower class origin typical of the periphery and who is generally female is characterized by “simplicity, beauty, honesty, fidelity, etc.” (Erdoğan, 1995: 188).

Narration in the Turkish melodramas can be summarized in two ways. Although narration follows almost the same line in the Turkish melodramas, the

differentiations between films occur in the meetings of protagonists, misrecognition and misunderstanding between them that are presented as the main reasons of the conflicts as well. Firstly, they encounter by chance and fall in love with each other. However, intrigues of either evil man or evil woman separate them. Following this, poor girl who is rebuked and scorned becomes rich (generally she becomes a singer) and acts, dresses like rich people, even, she portrays two personalities at the same time. As Erdoğan (1995: 188-189) points out, one of the most important features of Turkish melodrama is its frequent and various uses of split and multiple identities. Secondly, poor man has to marry a spoilt rich woman, because he aims to help people who need money in order to live, or spoilt rich woman living a life marked with a Western style has to marry a poor man because of “the inheritance, last request of a dying person or duty of gratitude” (Abisel, 1994: 77). While living with him, she understands “meaninglessness” of her life. The rich man/ woman need “the decent, simple and unadulterated” values of the poor. Thus, the rich gets rid of all his negative features and regains power.

In the Turkish melodramas, the poverty of the poor who leads a “needy but happy” life does not cause trouble until he/she falls in love with the rich. In other words, the reason, which brings rich and poor families face to face, is the love that challenge class obstacle between the young boy and the girl. Though the love of the protagonists is stigmatised by famous clichés: “We are from different worlds”, the love between poor girl/ rich man is not impossible. The poor and the rich may unite owing to some coincidences, determination, the power of love and devotion. Thus, it is always possible to improve status.

However, wealth is considered bad, not because of itself but due to the behaviour patterns, and the life styles it has caused to occur (Erdoğan, 2002c: 35). In this respect, the differentiation of “legal and “illegal” wealth is matched with the differentiation of good and bad rich. Furthermore, there is a distinction between the rich who get wealth from hereditary and the rich who come from rural and create wealth by working hard. The person inheriting a fortune is associated with “alcohol, ignorance, shiftlessness, inefficiency, sickness, immorality and irresponsibility” as in the Turkish literature.

The poor are content with their poor and dignified lives. In this respect, degenerative lives deprived of morality are examples of “lesson” for them. This situation is especially related to the “family comedies” which have included melodramatic elements since the 1970s and have emphasized community, solidarity and assistance. In the family comedies that include characters of rich manufacturer /poor worker, the wickedness of the rich and their using several tricks stem from their obstinacy. Once it is understood that the love of the young ones cannot be bought, the factory owner (usually Hulusi Kentmen) helps them to unite. According to Maktav (2001: 167), although the factory owner has lived a modern life, he has not broken off his connection with rural life and has not lost his moral virtues, has made him “a rich and a good man”. On the contrary, the one who has not preserved local cultural values become “a rich and bad man”.

The “saviour” child who brings his/her parents together is the permanent model of the *Ayşecik*, *Ömercik*, *Yumurcak* and *Sezercik* films of the 1960s and 1970s as well. The first “child star” of Turkish film appears in *Ayşecik*, which was directed by Memduh Ün and Atıf Yılmaz in the 1960s, adaptation from the novel of

Kemalettin Tuğcu. In most of these films, the kids who have been left by their fathers in an early age due to a misunderstanding put up with several troubles with their mothers as I mentioned above misunderstanding, misrecognition are presented as the main reasons of conflicts in the Turkish melodramas. However, with the assistance of the poor but kind-hearted people of the neighbourhood, the child succeeds to have his parents come together. All these films, in which wisdom, self-sacrifice and resistance is represented by children, are expressions of the adults who try to love their childishness despite all their bad destinies and familial and social impotence (Gürbilek, 2001:41-42). As Erdoğan (1999:39) states, the poster of the weeping child, which was an important element of the popular iconography in the 1970s, is “a pathos type of fragility, harshness and sentimentalism of the poor orphan”, which is a common theme of our melodramatic story-telling tradition.

The poor and orphan but dignified and honest child is a significant element of the novels of Kemalettin Tuğcu as well. All the novels of Kemalettin Tuğcu tell about children who have always been badly-treated but are dignified, who are worn out but fair and loyal, sad but kind-hearted. These orphans take the responsibility of looking after their families when they are too young and they suffer from the disasters they face with. In Kemalettin Tuğcu’s *Öksüz Murat*, Murat is given to a poor fisherman called Salim Reis by his rich father, who wants to marry another woman after the death of Murat’s mother. After Salim Reis dies, the “brave and honest” Murat is faced with various difficulties. However, Murat gets the reward of his sufferings in the end; he gets fortunate. In his novel called *Ah Bu Çocuklar*, Tuğcu writes about a clever and well-behaved poor child, who lives among spoilt and rich children, and how he shows the right way to them. These novels exalting

“the endurance to pain” and “childhood” not only show us the deprivation and sufferings experienced in an early age and the wickedness that is resisted in the early beginnings of life, but also tells the good news that honour and goodness will stem from pain and evil (Gürbilek, 2001:40-41).

On the other hand, village melodramas narrate the conflict between the landlord and the villager, the land problem, blood feud, draught, immigration and accommodation problems and smuggling. The usurer and cruel landlord exploit the poor villager; even he is raped now and then. However, the person who has struggled with draught, disasters, diseases and hunger has to struggle again with the oppression and the cruelty of the landlord who has been morally degenerated.

Muharrem Gürses mainly directed rural and small-town melodramas. The characters in Gürses’s films are oppressed and hopeless people who “have turned into objects or toys of fate”. Oppression increases to such a state that, the poor-oppressed characters can do anything due to helplessness.

In Turkish melodramas, the poor are portrayed as the owner of moral values (generous, intimate, noble etc.), while the rich are seen as “conceited, merciless, selfish, having a passion for entertainment, cruel looking down on the poor with scorn”, making fun of the poor” etc. Subsequently, as Erdoğan (2002c: 34) comments, virtue has a key role in the construction of the poor and becomes a weapon (weapon of weak) that provides them with strength to fight against material wretchedness and moral suffering. Thus, poor girl gets rid of poverty by her “self-sacrifice, beauty, innocence and honour”, whereas man relieves of poverty by “his attractiveness, courage, boldness and having all values of a man” (Maktav, 2001: 165).

The poor are represented as stereotypical in the melodramas. Village melodramas render the rich/poor dichotomy schematically as bad landlord/good peasant, i.e. exploiter/exploited. The films shot in the 1960s and 1970s portray the dichotomy between the bad landowner and the good peasant, who tried to change the society hand in hand with the government officials (teacher, soldier, engineer, head officials of the cities, etc.) generally based upon the village literature.

There are also melodramas depicted the problems of migrants in the big cities. Migration from rural areas started in the 1950s, had accelerated in the late 1960s and in the 1970s by the growing industrialisation. The changes in Turkish society inevitably have its marks in the Turkish cinema as well.<sup>3</sup> The migrants come to İstanbul, which has “stones and grounds made of gold”, due to the unemployment and the struggle to make their living. Yet, their fights are to endure in the city and to survive cause them to sacrifice their moral virtues or to lose their family relations. For instance, the story of the family from Maraş begins in the Haydarpaşa Station in *Gurbet Kuşları* by Halit Refiğ (1964). The film ends with the resolution of the family, which has come to “İstanbul, with stones and grounds made of gold, to stick to it heart and soul”. Metin Erksan tells the tragedy of three fellows in his *Gecelerin Ötesinde* (1960). These young and poor people without cheer and hope is “a community that are worn out by a system which tries to make a millionaire in every neighbourhood” (Scognamillo, 1973:100). *Bitmeyen Yol* (Duygu Sağıroğlu, 1965)

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<sup>3</sup> According to Altınsay (1996: 74), the melodramas and romantic comedies, which were filmed until the mid 1960s, do not start with “the arrival in town because the characters of the film are either in İstanbul or from İstanbul”. However, after the movement of social realism, the films were narrated from the point of view of the peasant, in other words the stranger, who newly arrived in town. Now the films began in the Haydarpaşa Station, in the Anadolu Bus Terminal or on the Bosphorus Bridge. In these films, which depicted migrant stories, “İstanbul is now a centre of wickedness...It is not a town to live in but a town where one should endure” (Altınsay, 1996:75). In *Düğün* and *Diyet*, parts of the trilogy by Lütfi Ö.Akad, these words of the father to his son were common words in the films of the period: “This town has worn us out, son.”

tells the story of Güllü, who has migrated to the town from the country and is working as a maid, and that of her daughters. *Fatma Bacı* (Halit Refiğ, 1972) tells the story of Fatma, who has come to İstanbul due to a blood feud and working as a caretaker, and that of her children. In this film, the conflict between the poor and the rich is narrated through the relationships that the kids have with the people around. Halime becomes a mistress of a rich man. Ayşe tries to keep up with her “wealthy but spoilt, selfish, degenerated”, in short, friends “who go astray” (even by introducing her mother as their caretaker). However, Refiğ finishes the film with a happy ending. The trilogy of Lütfi Ö.Akad, which are *Gelin* (1973), *Düğün* (1973) and *Diyet*, tell the story of the Anatolian families which try to endure and try to be rich no matter what happens. The kids are occasionally left to die in order to fulfil this goal (*Gelin*), or the teenage girls are married off for money (*Düğün*).

It can be said that misery of poverty started to become visible in socialist realism. In the late of the 1960s, the dichotomy between the exploiter and exploited of the village films is transferred to the cities where *gecekondu* become the new residence of the poor. However, the new poor of the cities are not passive victims of the landlord, they have the ability to resist hardships, for instance, they put up their *gecekondus*. It can be noted that I do not mean taking the poor in passive/revolutionary dichotomy with reference to peasants/migrants. As in the Orhan Kemal’s novels that I have mentioned, they try to create “survival” strategies for facilitating their lives.

It is possible to increase the number of these examples. Yet, it must be expressed that the migration movies are not limited with the ones in the 1960s and 1970s. There are also movies that were made in the 1980s dealing with the subject of

migration. *Bir Avuç Cennet* (1985) by Muammer Özer tells the drama of family that lives on a junk bus while *At* (1985) by Ali Özgentürk depicts the hard life of a father who wants to give an education to his child. *Züğürt Ağa* by Nesli Çölgeçen tells the tragic-comic story of a landlord who has had to migrate to the town. These films narrate the poverty of the poor families, their hard life conditions and their being wasted in the cities as a social problem in the 1980s. After 1980s, becoming rich by coincidences like in the melodramas is no longer possible. They are more realistic that can be selfish and merciless, even can do illegal things. They want to change their class no matter what it costs by even robbing and swindling.

Cultural representations of the poor and rich in cinema and literature demonstrate that virtues such as happiness and morality are ascribed to the poor, while misery, loneliness and dishonesty to those who are rich. It can be said that “poor but happy” and “rich but miserable” stereotypes of Yeşilçam melodramas and literature continue until the 1980s. After the conflict between the rich and the poor transferred to the cities such as in Orhan Kemal’s novels, films that portray migrants, misery of poverty started to be visible.

## **1.2. Cultural Representations of Poverty Since the 1980s**

After 1980, political and economic policies have been implemented within the new right ideological framework. The Turkish new right incorporated into its national-popular agenda several new assets such as anti-statism, privatisation and a liberal and competitive individualism (Tünay, 1993). Turgut Özal as the leader of Motherland Party became effective in implementation of the new right policies,

which aimed to solve the ongoing hegemonic crisis. According to Tünay (1993: 21), Özal tried to form an “organic ideology” which was called “conservative nationalism” articulate the interests of different groups into a compact whole.

Gürbilek mentions about two different political projects and two different cultural strategies since the 1980s. According to Gürbilek (2001: 8-9), restrictive, oppressive and prohibitive policies and more surrounding, more modern cultural strategies coexisted in these years. Kozanoğlu (1995: 31) refers to the everyday life of the 1980s with four defining concepts: “change, consumption, differentiation and resemblance”. The very feature that characterized that new era was the desire to “be rich” as Özal once said, “A rich Muslim is better than a Muslim who is poor” (Bali, 2002: 33). In the 1980s when “entrepreneurship” and “being successful” became dominant values, consumption started to be regarded as a symbol of status. The ideal types of the 1980s were young, urbanized, well-educated businessmen who were believed to make the real western face of Turkey. Such merits as being open to the world, enjoying the pleasures of life, and mastering the tools of the “information society” such as computers and English language, were lauded as the values of the “New Turk” (or Euro Turk) identity (Bora, 1994: 18). Urban youth was represented as the most dynamic consumer of the modern lifestyle. They were named as “White Turks” in the 1990s. The media, especially the columnists, far beyond giving their support to the new values, new images, have a major role in creation and marketing of them (Kozanoğlu, 2001).

Moreover, the 1990s was a period when the inequalities in income distribution in Turkey became more striking. As mentioned above, on the one hand the rich has come to the fore that made use of the benefits of globalism, on the other

hand there has been the “other Turkey”, poor and deprived. The 1990s, in which the neo-liberal ideology took a rise, in which individualism, and the morals of the consumer society came to dominate. Besides, it was also a period when “cultural walls were put up” between the rich and the poor (Işık and Pınarcıoğlu, 2001). In other words, another major development in this period was spatial segregation. As Gürbilek (2001) puts it, in the 1980s, the common locations on which people from different walks of life come together were reduced and the rich and the poor districts were segregated from each other. Many areas of the city were abandoned to the poor. The rich, on the other hand, moved to luxuriary and well-protected “sites” where they would not meet the poor.

In this context, I will focus on the changing representations of the poor in Turkish cinema with reference to comedy and *arabesk* films. The exclusion of the poor from literature will be examined and also changing representations of the “saviour” child will be discussed from the 1970s to the 1990s.

### **1.2.1. The Poor in Turkish Cinema**

The poor but happy heroes of the family comedies of the 1970s turned into caricatured people in the 1980s. Their innocence and honesty have not been appreciated anymore. The films that present the heroes that are ridiculed and could not cope with the wishes of the people around because of their poverty are as follows:

In *Talihli Amele* (1981), Atif Yılmaz tells the story of Mehmet Ali, who works as a worker in a construction (İlyas Salman), in which he goes mad due to his

being a commercial star. The character of *Namuslu* (Ertem Eğilmez, 1985) named Mr. Ali Rıza, the paymaster, (Şener Şen) is despised by his family (even his son) and by his relatives, as he is honourable. Mr. Ali Rıza, who is robbed, begins to be respected once he is believed to organise this robbery. Another film depicting the tragic-comic story of an official is *Çıplak Vatandaş* (1985) by Başar Sabuncu. İbrahim, who has to work in several jobs due to his low income, ends up gone mad and becomes popular once he begins to run naked in the city. In *Dolap Beygiri* (1982), Atıf Yılmaz tells the conflict of Ali (İlyas Salman), who has just graduated from the university, with the people around due to his honesty and honour. The character of *Milyarder* (Kartal Tibet, 1986), Mesut the station chief, is ridiculed for not being the man of the system as it is in the other films. When the fact that he has won the national lottery is heard, Mesut, who is shown great attention, finds the way to escape in tearing the ticket into pieces. *Düştürü Dünya* (Zeki Ökten, 1988) ends after the *gecekondu* of Mehmet the clarinetist, whose only hope is to record a cassette, is collapsed and with the scene that shows Mehmet playing the clarinet all night long.

According to Maktav (2001:184), the lives of the comedy film characters, who are self-sacrificing, obedient, poor but honourable and who devote themselves to their families and responsibilities, can be grouped in three phases: In the first phase, they are poor people struggling in life. Despite their poverty, they carry on working and keeping their hopes alive. In the second phase, the society and the system bring them to a better state due to some coincidences. After the rise in their financial status, the honourable characters find themselves in a dilemma once again.

They either get poor more rapidly or they cannot endure the competitive and snatcher system with their spoiled egos. This is the third phase of their lives.

While the honest, honourable, good and innocent characters of Yeşilçam movies in the 1960s “got rid of” poverty due to these characteristics, these features made the characters ridiculous in the 1980s. The viewer could no longer identify himself with the poor hero. The character versus the whole society (alienated to the society) had a more powerful sense of “exclusion” than before. The honourable and honest poor were now the “passive” heroes who could not be able to cope with the demand of their families. It might be said that there was no way out for him.<sup>4</sup>

#### **1.2.1.1. The Changing Representations of the “Rural Other” from 1970s to the 1980s**

The term “*Arabesk*” was first used for the kind of hybrid music gaining popularity among the groups of people who newly moved to İstanbul, born during the late 1960s and early 1970s (Özbek, 2000; Stokes, 1992). Yet, in time *arabesk* was started to use to highlight the cultural habits and the life styles of groups of people who loved them, meaning more than just being a kind of music or movies. Thus, *arabesk* is essentially concerned with the plight of the alienated and uprooted migrant, the *garib* or *gariban* who is separated from the bedrock of village life without friends and money and completely at the mercy of the unscrupulous” (Stokes, 1992: 149).

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<sup>4</sup> Kemal Sunal, one of the major stars of comedy films, has different qualities from the other comedy stars, especially in terms of the 1970s. Despite his stupid look, there is a striking intellect beneath his physical appearance. “He is poor, powerless and society looks down on, but in the end he defeats powerful enemies who have attempted to abuse his good will” (Erdoğan and Göktürk, 2001: 567).

*Arabesk* is seen in terms of a peripheral reaction to modernisation process and associated with *gecekondu*. However, as Özbek (2000: 110-111) stresses, *arabesk* is not a culture of disharmonization that moved the traditional ambiance to city or turns its back to the urban cult. On the contrary, it is a practice which agrees to a ‘meaning problem’ defined by the urban dynamics; bringing response to it, and bearing on one hand a harmony and on the other hand a resistance by its such response. However, the dominant representation of the *gecekondu* throughout the 1970s was positive (Stokes, 1992: 104). While the oppressed guest workers in the *arabesk* movies used to be named as *kiro* in the 1990s, the people of *arabesk* culture not only the *gecekondulular* but also the rich ones were started to be labelled as *maganda* and *zonta* seen as the major problem of cities, uncertain, actually disintegrating social environment especially in the writings of the columnists that I will discuss next chapter.

On the other hand, Nurdan Gürbilek (2001) discusses the diversity through the relationship with the city via Orhan Gencebay and İbrahim Tatlıses, the two icons that characterize the 1970s and the 1980s respectively. The common point of Gencebay films of the 1970s and Tatlıses films of the 1980s was seeing İstanbul through the eyes of its new dwellers, that is its new migrants. İstanbul was a place of attraction which “pumped up passions”, incited desire, and which was full of promises that could not come true for the new dwellers of the city, which was identified with the desired woman. However, the terms of the ties with the city/the lover underwent a significant transformation from the 1970s to the 1980s. In Gencebay films and songs this connection based upon “self-sacrifice” and patience”. In this respect what the songs and films of Gencebay offered “the new dwellers of

the city” was endurance and resignation in the religious discourse in order to comprehend why they could not make themselves listened to the city, why they were condemned to destitution, why they would remain to be a fault in that new and strange world (“no slave without a fault”) and why there was a never-ending distance between them and the worldly blessings”. Despite the discourse of Gencebay based on “being defeated”, İbrahim Tatlıses asked for the desires incited by the city/the woman to be satisfied immediately “*Ben de İsterem*” (I want too). Therefore, while the films and songs of Orhan Gencebay emphasized the pleasure one could get from the strain between desire and satisfaction, those of Tatlıses implied a relief due to the desire to express things.

Thus, the motifs such as suffering, pain, sorrow, being despised and excluded, poverty, hopelessness, pessimism and unjust fate were used together in *arabesk* films/songs. In *arabesk* films, society is portrayed as “haves” and “have not” in terms of wealth; corrupt and honest in terms of moral categories. As Stokes (1992) notes, happiness and joy, which were experienced for a while, were only there to increase the dose of pain and suffering. The love for the lover became impossible due to the conflict between the poor and the rich. However, the unfortunate but honorable *arabesk* star would have a reputation, popularity and wealth in return for his impossible love.

On the other hand, the mourning child, who was “the metaphor of social agony”, had “a darker, swarthier outlook of a lad” in the 1980s with the films of child singers such as Little Emrah (Gürbilek, 2001:43). Similar to Yeşilçam films and novels of Tuğcu, the child who was “poor but dignified” and “poor but honest” would succeed; he would get money and fame. “The child of misery is without a

father, a home and a way in the merciless city. Yet, just because of this he is both modest and innocent, both fragile and resistant, both a child and an adolescent” (Gürbilek, 2001:43-44). Man in the *arabesk* films is the one who knows how to share, who cares about friendship, whose basic principles of life are love and respect and who is devoted to the traditions of this land’s man. In this connection, *arabesk* film’s stars and melodrama’s stars resemble each other. They are afraid of losing their human feelings that they sacrifice themselves for friendship and love.

The contradiction between the poor and the rich might be accepted as the contradiction between the traditional and the modern. While the poor but honorable, honest and innocent man represents the virtues of the East, the beautiful rich but spoilt woman symbolizes the West as in the Turkish melodramas and in the first period of the Turkish novel.

As mentioned above, during the process that started in the 1980s and accelerated in the 1990s, Turkey discovered “its own periphery, its own ‘third’ world and ‘natives’ (Gürbilek, 1992:113). During this process the gay, the Kurd, the poor and the destitute has become the concerns of films portraying religious, sexual, ethnical differences in all *Otherness*. Mustafa Altıoklar’s *Ağır Roman* (1997), Zeki Demirkubuz’s *Masumiyet* (1996) and *Üçüncü Sayfa* (1998), Serdar Akar’s *Dar Alanda Kısa Paslaşmalar* were some examples.<sup>5</sup> The poor were no longer the “bearer of virtues”, but he was *gecekondulu*, who was excluded from “the promise” of the new times. However, as Nurdan Gürbilek (2001:137) expresses, once *taşra* are

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<sup>5</sup> Another identifying character of the 1990s Turkish films is that contrary to the tradition of “social realism”, there is an awareness of the fictional aspect of the film and the multilayered structure of reality. Being aware of the film as a fiction is exposed in various ways (nostalgic presentation of the past, the attempt to stylize, use of elements such as game, joke and irony, intertextual references, etc.) (Suner, 2002). Particularly, television and Yeşilçam melodramas form the themes that accompany the main plot in Zeki Demirkubuz films.

considered, we had better think about not only the distant fields, the far away lands, the deserted regions, or the uncivilized man, but also everything that is extinguished instantly by the stronger kind of light coming from the centre, as well as our impossible sides that are attracted by the light and thus that are made to be dull and outdated. Although the films take place in İstanbul, the characters live no more in manor houses, but they live “in claustrophobic interior residences, in poor flats that are designed with the suburban aesthetics, in private or state offices” (Suner, 2002:89).

Mustafa Altıoklar’s *Ağır Roman*, which is based upon the novel of Metin Kaçan, takes place in Kolera Street, where violence and illegal acts rule with dwellers of gypsies, whores, thieves and pickpockets. In *Ağır Roman*, Kolera Street in Tarlabası depicts a “secluded” world with its interior rules and values beyond being a part of the cosmopolitan life. According to Maktav, in the film “extraordinary” characters are sympathised and Kolera Street, which is the place of poverty and destitution, is depicted in a fairy-tale atmosphere. Poverty is turned into an aesthetic state in *Ağır Roman* (2001:187).

In Zeki Demirkubuz films, the poor and deprived characters live in damp and dirty hotel rooms, hotel lobbies and apartments. Loneliness and helplessness are dominant in places full of old beds, armchairs, pale blankets and sheets. *Masumiyet* based on “passion-jealousy-helplessness” tells about the dilemma of Uğur, who makes money by prostitution, with Bekir (Haluk Bilginer) and Yusuf (Güven Kıraç) (Suner, 2002). The character of *Üçüncü Sayfa* is İsa the walk-on, who is helpless, oppressed and beaten enough to earn a sum of 50 dollars. Meryem, the neighbour who meets İsa in this world of violence and self-interest, is portrayed as someone

who makes use of weak people for her own salvation. İsa says that his greatest ambition is to act as a lead actor once in a movie or a TV film; and he gives the following answer to the question about which role he would like to act: “It doesn’t matter. But I would like to act someone who succeeds despite all the pain. Someone who is honourable and good such as İbrahim.” However, he cannot answer the question about whether he will succeed in such a role. He remains silent and lowers his head. Yet, it is not easy any more to improve status as it is in Turkish melodramas. There is no more a place to go for the lonely, poor and helpless people but only a dead lock. The film *Dar Alanda Kısa Paslaşmalar* tells about the dissolution of an amateur football team of the 1982’s Bursa called Esnafspor due to money and professionalism plans. *Sır Çocukları* co-directed by Aydın Sayman and Ümit Cin Güven tells the story of the children who live either on cardboard boxes or baths that is in the middle of the unknown. It depicts them and their relationships with the people around with a more optimistic approach than they are presented in the third page news. It shows that they are loveable despite everything.

However, after the 1990s the child who was identified with innocence and fragility started to represent as “an object of fear” on the contrary of poor but dignified “saviour” children of Yeşilçam melodramas and Tuğcu’s novels that I have mentioned before. In the 1990s, when the image of the child of misery was apparent in the cinema and the novels, it suddenly turned out to be the image that was identified with crime and violence. Gürbilek (2001: 44-47) states two indications for this duality between the image and the real. First of all, “the child of misery” was rendering pain into something loveable by hiding the real causes of modesty and

oppression. Secondly, the image of the child of misery has lost its reality in the modern world, where power rules and poverty is accepted as a massive threat.

In spite of the fact that the comedy movies made after the 1980s were critical films that were against “the mentality to strike it rich” and individualism, the losers in these films were still the poor characters. The poor that was caricatured in these films was the passive and the helpless one of the 1990s who lived in a world full of violence in places like slums or secluded hotels and apartments. In the movies of the period, the poor was depicted as marginal and sometimes was made aesthetical.

### **1.2.2. Poverty in Turkish Literature: The Exclusion of the Poor from Literature**

After the 1980s, when consumption started to be regarded as a symbol of status, literature concerning poverty lost their popularity. However, the novels of Latife Tekin were exceptions in the representation of poverty. Latife Tekin narrates the lives of the poor independent from the fobic, romantic-populist, tehnicist and empiricist phantasms of the discourses. The fragments from the lives of the poor who settle in the hills of rubbish which surroundings city constitute the story in *Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları*. In a setting where everything is temporary, hastily made and unreliable, nicknames, tales, tongue twisters, gossips, jokes and quarrels build a kind of home for the poor (Gürbilek, 1999: 37-38). Tekin names these words as mutterings. According to Tekin, the world is separated in two: “Silent people, who are pure and childish, and eloquent people, who mesmerize others with their words, who look down on everyone” (Gürbilek, 1999:55). Consequently, the poor do not only suffer from financial poverty in “muddy streets”, in “devastated houses”

“surrounded by thin and jerry-built walls”. They are also deprived of language, which is a significant indicator of cultural and symbolic riches. The poor, whose “statements are weak”, experience “living on the edge” and “living in between”. They do not talk individually but mutters collectively. In *Aşk İşaretleri*, Tekin talks about “a cruel game, which is experienced involuntarily, and a language that will not go beyond roguery”. Another novel in which the language turns out to be a means of representation of *gecekondu* is *Ağır Roman* by Metin Kaçan. A language full of slang is used in Kolera Street, where a variety of ethnic, religious and sexual identities live as a community.

During the 1980s, as I have mentioned above, the places that brought the poor and the rich together started to disappear. “Suburbs built far from the city mean that the middle class is moving far from the misery accumulated in the cities, from the threat of the poor and social violence” (Gürbilek, 1992: 61). Ali, the character of a novel by Ahmet Altan called *Dört Mevsim Sonbahar* (1983), is disgusted with the stinking *gecekondu*, which is an indication of the alienation of the little bourgeois intellectual from the rural, poverty and rebellion (Türkeş, 2001:151). The story of Atilla İlhan called *Yengeç Kıskaçı* (1999) takes place in such a decomposed setting, in the bars of Beyoğlu, where the “old revolutionists” hang out, in villa towns, rich places, that is in the world of the strong (Türkeş, 2001:151). The novel of Selçuk Altan called *Yalnızlık Gittiğin Yoldan Gelir* (2001) tells about sophisticated and well-built Sina, who has a waterside residence in the Bosphorus and millions of dollars in the bank. In addition, the best-selling genre of our times, which is the historical fiction, reveals the splendour of wealth that springs up from the splendid palaces (Türkeş, 2001).

Therefore, the poor who lost their presence in cinema were excluded from literature as well. The “sense and ethic of solidarity”, which was a subject of films and novels of the 1960s and 1970s, became insignificant after the 1980s. As stated by Türkeş (2001), wealth with all its material and moral aspects appear in the novels now instead of financial problems and poor lives. Although ideological equation of poverty with virtue continues, the representations of poverty started to change with the contribution of economic and cultural changes since the 1980s. In the media discourse, the poor are associated with inferiority and they are stigmatised as a threat against established order, especially in the media discourse.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **TELEVISION, REPRESENTATION AND POVERTY**

In this chapter, I will first analyse the relationship between television and representation that will enable us to comprehend and discuss the representations of the poor in the television programmes. I will look at the representations of the poor in various TV programmes such as talk shows and entertainment programmes as well as newspapers. Here, I will try to draw a general framework in order to underline the general tendencies of media discourses within this context. Finally, I will focus on the emergence of charity programmes in the television.

#### **2.1. An Overview of Representation Theory**

Mimetic understanding assumes representation as re-presentation or repetition of reality. However, if we accept representation as a repetition of reality, we reduce it to such dualities as true or false, good or bad, accurate or inaccurate, insightful or ordinary. The assumption that media texts are ‘mirror realities’ is also expressed in terms of the TV programmes. This assertion stems from disregarding television as a representation tool. However, when we deal with the notion of representation in the narratives of television, we should take into account that the television itself is a field of representation. Therefore, it would be meaningful to

analyse the map of meanings produced by the representations on TV, rather than discussing whether the representation matches with or reflects the reality.

Representation is seen as a form of discourse within which power relations are inscribed. In other words, representation produces and circulates cultural meanings, values and identities through the use of language. As Craig Owens (1992) explains in the *Representation, Appropriation and Power* in the classical system of representation, the subject of representation is posited absolutely sovereign because of the representative's claim to possess epistemological authority about what is represented. In this respect, a quotation used by Owens from Louis Marin describes how the person represents the world:

We may understand this process as one by which a subject inscribes himself as the centre of the world and transforms himself into his representations. Such a subject has the right to possess things legitimately because he has substituted for things his signs, which represents them adequately- that is in such a way that reality is equivalent to his discourse (1992: 104).

Following this quotation, it can be argued that the subject of the representation is allowed to construct, describe, define and classify what is represented as it claims to have epistemological authority. In the representation process the constitutive position belongs to the subject, not to the object. Representation also poses questions about who is authorized to speak for whom and to whom, and also who is included and who is excluded (Woodward, 1997:15). The claim "to provide a public voice for people" can indicate how the represented namely people are constructed by the representative, e.g. producers. Raymond Williams, as in the quotation from Marin, explains the context how media text constructs "people":

I think that when the newspapers started gaining a wider audience, a lot of people had to learn demotic style and popular idioms. As a result, professionals who shared nothing of the lives that they were reproducing learned to produce an extraordinary idiomatic facsimile of those lives. People learn this sort of trade; it is learned as much in copywriting as in television serials and in certain kinds of tabloid journalism-the ironic thing then often being that the professionals are speaking more like the people than the people. There is even a two-way process in which certain idioms that perform well or that some very popular performer takes up actually passes back into everyday idiom. So we must not make the error of *supposing that what is being represented is that*. Rather, one is saying, the link is, that there is that unsatisfied interest and all sorts of problems about why it's unsatisfied. And it then gets these forms, which offer to speak to it (Williams, 1986: 7-8, emphasis mine).

In popular media narratives, media professionals describe what is represented as in the interests and expectations of people. In various programmes, in the news and series, which claim to respond “the expectations of the society”, the subject (representative) has the authority to describe and define. As Williams (1986) states, in the mass media, neither where the television producers have taken this authority from nor the way of representation of the people who are deprived of expressing themselves in media is problematised.

As Erdoğan (2002a: 15) expresses, to make the poor talk in front of the cameras does not mean to expose the “real” and “authentic” voice of the poor. On the other hand, Champagne (1999) claims, the representation leaves little space for the discourse of the dominated; it is because their voices are particularly difficult to hear. In other words, the represented are culturally deprived, are incapable of expressing themselves in the forms required by the mass media (Champagne, 1999: 50).

In producing meanings, the subject use certain words to define the represented, and tell stories and produce images through the emotions associated with the different, i.e. represented, which also determine one's own subject position. In addition, Hall (1997) argues that the negativism/sublimation correlation between the representative and the represented in popular culture is constituted via stereotyping. He distinguishes *type* and *stereotype*. Whereas a *type* is any simple, memorable, easily grasped and widely recognized characterization in which a few traits are foregrounded and change or "development" is kept to a minimum, *stereotyping* "reduces people to a few, simple, essential characteristics, which are represented as fixed by Nature" (Hall, 1997:257). Therefore, naturalization is a representational strategy designed to fix difference and thus secure it forever. Excluding the different, stereotyping sets up "a frontier between the "normal" and the "deviant", the "normal" and the "pathological", the "acceptable" and "unacceptable, what "belongs" and what does not or is "Other" between "insiders" and "outsiders", us and them" (Hall, 1997).

While differences are reduced to dichotomies, the different is described negatively as "incomplete" and "insufficient". Firstly, the different is either represented with its characteristics such as messy, lazy, ignorant and aggressive; secondly, the ethnical diversities are represented as pure, childish and immature. Thus, the media, following Champagne, "act on the spur of moment and collectively fabricate a social representation that, even when it is rather distant from reality, persists despite subsequent denials or later corrections because, quite often, it merely reinforces spontaneous interpretations and hence *mobilizes prejudices and thereby magnifies them*" (1999: 47).

Therefore, differences are not the essential, innate and legal facts. Yet, they are set up when the dominant interpret what the different mean. Negativism of the different brings forth the affirmation and sublimation of the dominant. However, in the representative connection between the different and the dominant we may not always find an absolute duality such as the one mentioned above. In the representation of the different, we might see shifts, breaks and contradictions that belong to different contexts and periods.

## **2.2. The Stories of Deprivation in Media**

The poverty and deprivation are not represented only by charity programmes since the stories of deprivation have occupied a significant place in media from the late 1990s onwards. Private life family matters, love etc. have become the dominant concern. What is striking is that in the programmes the difference between “the real” and “the image” has blurred. While Bondebjerg (1996) calls these programmes “true-life-story” genres, Kilborn (1994) groups them in the category of “reality programming”. For instance, in the programmes like *Biri Bizi Gözetliyor* and *Biz Evleniyoruz*, show is similar to reality and it is so convincing that reality has to imitate it in order to be itself. These programmes claim that they rely on revelation rather than construction, associating the images with “real life” or “real people”.

Guy Debord (1994) claims that spectacular age reduces the subject to an alienated state in which real vision is replaced by a passive stare. As Debord argues, the spectacle has spread itself to the point where now permeates all reality, images extends itself into the realms of the social relations. After the 1980s, especially after

the 1990s, television has suggested a new form of authenticity. For instance, Ali Kırca made programmes concerning television series, *Çocuklar Duymasın* and *İkinci Bahar*. People who attended the programme discuss family relations and traditional relations respectively in the context of the series. *Siyaset Meydanı*, thus, presented the series as the key leitmotiv of social relations. Moreover, the people started to confess how much they wanted to kill their fathers and poison their husbands, they started to find their missing relatives, to make up with the ones they had been cross for a while, and even to choose the one to marry on television programmes. It is possible to multiply such examples.

There are also television programmes where private life stories are lifted into public. As Nurdan Gürbilek (1992) mentions, the 1980s constituted a watershed in terms of making the “private” something that could be articulated and exposed in public especially through the media, fuelling “private life” industries. However, the most important feature of the programmes is that they possess the features of “reality programming” in which reality and fiction are blurred. In these programmes, people talk about the problems that they have had with their spouses, kids, parents, lovers, mother-in-laws, etc. (For instance *Kadının Sesi*). One of the best-known programmes of this type is *Film Gibi* in which people are reunited with their relatives who has lost contact with their children etc. *Film Gibi* also reconciles offended people. These programmes sometimes serve as programmes of aid as well, sometimes the expenses of a baby’s birth are paid or the children are helped who want to have an education. Although these programmes defend themselves on the grounds that they represent public interests, “‘out of ordinary’ or dramatic or moving ‘malaises’” that attract journalists find worthy to be represented (Champagne, 1999:

46). As Bauman (2000) states, such talk-show programmes stamp the mark of public acceptance on some feelings by using the authority of numbers (“Everyone does this”, “everyone may experience this” and therefore “there is nothing to be ashamed of in accepting and experiencing such a thing”) and thus, they have a legalizing effect. At this point, according to Bauman (2000), they only approve the expression, yet the public aid ends at this stage.

The public – a community composed of other individuals – may applause or boo, may praise or criticize, may provoke or delay, may nudge or find fault, may encourage or discourage. It never promises to study the problem on behalf of the complainant (the public that listens and criticizes is something consisting of individual subjects and thus, it is never a subject on its own) or to take the burden on one’s shoulders, which cannot be achieved by the individual alone (2000:75).

Moreover, as Bauman (2000:80) states, the stories of celebrities or the businessmen who are exposed on media with headlines such as “from streets to being a boss” are represented as examples of success “not because of the public but despite the public”. In this respect, beside what they say in helplessness and tears, all the problems are represented as a consequence of their own faults and negligence. Another “real life” programming centring on the contests like *Popstar* and *Türkstar* enable a suitable setting for “nailing” the people down before the screens. The saddest story is turned into a tragic narrative which causes “the jury of the programme” and “the public jury” to end up in tears and becomes a means of getting more votes for the contestants. In other words, what make the contestant attractive are dramatic life stories. The most characteristic features of this type of programming are dramatisation. “Real stories” of people, “their sufferings, homelessness, struggles, violence that they are exposed to, etc.”, are combined with emotional

outbursts like in melodrama. Television's phenomenal popularity, its sense of immediate and intimate reality has made of us what Raymond Williams (1989: 4) calls a "dramatised society".

Although the poor excluded from the television series that screen urban elites withdrawn to private neighbourhoods, there are also some series that depict the lives of the poor. In the television series like *İkinci Bahar*, *Yeditepe İstanbul* and *Sultan Makamı* struggle of the poor people in a neighbourhood and solidarity between the *mahalleli* are narrated. Yet, in this series, it is not so easy to get rid of poverty that is even matched with tendencies such as crime, violence and etc.

The excluded people of "Other Turkey" also portrayed as a problem in the newspapers relating directly to the city; a complex, uncertain, actually disintegrating social environment, by established city-dwellers who advise them to return their village. As I discussed above, "White Turks" constructs his/her "Other". The "Other" in the articles of columnists such as Serdar Turgut, Mine Kırıkkanat, and Hadi Uluengin are *Black Turks*.

The children living in the streets (*sokak çocukları*) or sniffing glue (*tinerci çocuklar*) are engaged in violence and crime in criminal discourse. In contrast to "saviour" child in the novels of Kemalettin Tuğcu and Yeşilçam melodramas, they are categorized as "deviant" and seen as the metaphors of what goes bad in the city. For instance, "The children on thinner congest the traffic" (Zaman, May 8, 2002), "The Horror of the Children on Thinner", "Murder for Free Cigarettes and Alcohol" (Sabah, May 8,2002), "A 19-year-old young man getting ready for marriage has been murdered with a kick by the children on thinner for a cigarette" (Hürriyet, July 2, 2000). In the news, the children in the streets are continuously represented in a

criminal setting as elements of menace. They are even called as “demonised children” by Ayseli Gürsoy the ex-member of the Parliament (Quoted in Zeynep Atıkkın, *Hürriyet*, December 8, 1998). Accordingly, the children constructed through the image of “threatening Other” are also displayed as “undeserving poor” who do not deserve charity or attention of the “generous” people.

As a result of deepening social inequalities after 1980s, poverty have begun to occupy a significant place in the media. However, in the news, poverty is reduced into economic and technicist terms and used very often in the media. The representations such as “the ones who have an income below this limit are poor” and the ones with this limit are living “on the edge” are matched with the pictures of people who find food from the rubbish bins and with the pictures of “crush” that takes place during the aid deliveries. For instance, in the news of the *Milliyet* dated June 29, 2003 titled “Don’t be ashamed mother”, once the reporters were invited to the food delivery in Diyarbakır, the women getting aid were reported to hide their faces with embarrassment. In one of the photographs, the women were shown sitting in front of a car with their backs turned to the cameras. In other photograph about the same news in page 21, there were women holding the delivery bags and hiding their faces that allowed only their eyes being seen. Below the headline “the aid making people embarrassed”, the photo of the two embarrassed women were placed, instead of criticizing the way in which the aid made, the embarrassment of the women was emphasized.

### 2.3. The Emergence of Charity Programmes in Turkey

After the 1990s, “charity programmes” have appeared on television. The television programmes that assist the poor can be divided into two categories: the programmes that have an intention to share the pain and distress of the poor by helping them and the programmes in which entertainment is on the foreground and in which the donors “refresh their faith” or “relieve their conscience” with the aid that gives a break to the entertainment.

*Yetiş Bacım* and *Deniz Feneri (Lighthouse)* are the first television programmes that aim to help poor people. *Yetiş Bacım* was broadcasted on TGRT and presented by Seda Sayan. In the programme, the stories of the poor were dramatized and *arabesk* songs were often used. *Şehir ve Ramazan* initiated on Kanal 7 on January 21, 1996, but changed its title as *Deniz Feneri* afterwards. As its aim is to “attract attention to poverty and encourage charity”, *Şehir ve Ramazan* started to help the poor with the sponsorships of groceries. However, *Deniz Feneri Aid and Solidarity Association* was founded with the idea of “responsibility of helping each person in need” on July 2, 1998. Programme, presented by Uğur Arslan and İbrahim Uğurlu, declares, “*Deniz Feneri* which aims to help the people in need carries on its work until reaching the last one in need in the world in the context of fairness, neutrality, openness, responsibility, modesty”.

Considering the people *Deniz Feneri* helped, the campaigns that it conducted, its cooperation with the health institutions, we may conclude that it is one of the major “civil society organisations” which gathers and delivers aid for the poor. When

looked at the explanations on the web site<sup>6</sup> of the association, it is seen that the numbers of applications increased as years pass, 53 persons in 1998, 2714 persons in 1999, 13122 persons in 2000, 17096 persons in 2001 and 40793 persons in 2002. On *Deniz Feneri* that was broadcasted on 2 October 2003; Uğur Arslan expressed that there were approximately 100.000 applications for the association. *Deniz Feneri*, which has logistic offices in Ankara, İzmir and İstanbul, has launched significant campaigns since it was founded, especially in villages. Among its projects are “*Social Aid to 2000 Students and Their Families*”, “*The Butterfly Project*” and the schools that it has founded (for example in Kastamonu). The Association carries water to the villages those have shortage of water with “*Water is Civilization*” project. “Besides, the other campaigns that the association conducted are as follows: “*Fellow Families*”, “*Golden Bracelet Project*”, “*81 Provinces 40000 Families Project*”, “*We Go to Those Who are Unable to Come*”, “*Aid to Ethiopia*” and “*Welcome Baby*”. *Deniz Feneri* continues its charity campaigns with an Islamic understanding, which I will focus on next chapter.

In addition, the programme called *Kimse Yok mu (Is There Anybody There)*, which appeared on Samanyolu TV for the first time in September 20, 2001 and was presented by Perihan Savaş, aimed to be a “light for the darkened world of the poor” by helping them during its 96 episodes (until July 28, 2003). The programme brought the debtor and the creditor together with the intention of finding a solution to the debts of the poor through the people who help. With its initial credits, “If the debts have ruined your lives and all your hopes of future have gone, isn’t there anybody...?”, the programme presented the lives of two families every week and

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<sup>6</sup> For further information: [www.denizfeneri.org.tr](http://www.denizfeneri.org.tr)

displayed the situation of the poor in inability, helplessness and passiveness. However, with the new TV season (September 15, 2003), a change in the visual language and setting of the programme can be seen. Furthermore, with the new season, the stress upon a religious discourse has increased. The programme, which intends to “find a remedy” to the problems of the poor living in the cities visited by fulfilling their needs, instead of paying their debts, carries the lives of two families onto the screens each week. Another programme titled *Yolcu (The Traveller)* claims to reflect “the real Anatolia with its residents and the experiences”. *Yolcu*, which presents “the journey of the extraordinary lives to hope”, was broadcasted on Samanyolu TV. It stressed the “extraordinary lives” as the greatest indication of patience and effort and describes the lives of the handicapped people as an example of “lesson”. The main difference of the programme from the others is that it has no intention to help these people.

Furthermore, *Yarınlar Umut Olsun (Bright Futures)* resembles *Deniz Feneri* and *Kimse Yok mu* in terms of giving assistance to people in need and being their “light of hope”. However, the programme that was broadcasted live on ATV every fortnight is different in terms of its visual interpretation, setting and language. The major difference between this programme and the abovementioned ones is that it uses entertainment so as to gather financial assistance for the people in need. Famous figures from the worlds of entertainment, sports, business, media, and art participate in the programme. The activities in question vary as a tennis match with Hülya Avşar, a car ride with Cem Yılmaz, singing with the musicians or dining out with a celebrity. These activities are put into sale by public auction and the person who gives the highest amount deserves to participate in the programme.

*Yarınlar Umut Olsun* that intends to cover the treatment of the sick also tries to support the unemployed people by finding them jobs. The programme is “proud of” helping 259 “poor” family during its 28 episodes. It relies upon the help of the audience participation and aims to raise relatively large amount of money in the short time.

Besides, other than these charity programmes, several examples of assistance activities may also be found in the media. In the evening talk-show programmes, in which celebrities are special guests, entertainment and aid for the poor people is achieved all together. Poor and young people are married off in the programme of Sümer Ezgü on Kanal 7 called *Nazar Değmesin*. They are given various presents (e.g. jewellery) as well as durable goods. Likewise, Mahmut Tuncer, who gave aid and married off poor couples previously on Kanal 7 for the programme called *Eyvan*, now provides the poor with food, coal etc. on TGRT. Again on TGRT, İsmail Türüt gives gift cheques to the engaged, provided by the sponsors of his show. *Çarkıfelek* and *Turnike* are also presented as programmes that intend to entertain and make people earn money. The climactic moments and moments of relief – giving the prize or giving the stage to the guest star – continuously follow one another. For example, in *Çarkıfelek*, the on-line audience refers to the conscience of the presenter with cries of “Mr Mehmet Ali, please”. The on-line audience often talks about their private problems such as their poverty, unemployment and diseases. They announce the presenter as “the greatest”, say that they are “victims” and even try to make “privileged connections” with the presenter by offering their daughters. Providing that the competitor gets the prize, poverty is accompanied by the prayers for the presenter. It can be argued that in such programmes render the poor insignificant and

ridiculous and they pretend as if they find appropriate solutions to the problems of the poor. In addition, *Sabah Sabah Seda Sayan* (Kanal D), a morning programme, is another example of such entertainment programmes providing people in need with aid. In the programme in which both aid for house goods and treatment are given, the women without any kids are assisted as well. The programme emphasizes that having a relation with the “low culture” (living in the *gecekodu*, bad friends, indifferent parents, etc.) causes crimes, in other words, “by giving a name to a malaise (the sickness of the suburbs), the media tell us how we ought to think about it, imposing these interpretations both on those who are not involved, and on the principal interested parties” (Champagne, 1999: 213).

In these programmes, to the extent that poverty is associated with inferior life chances, poverty and deprivation of the people are reduced into personal problems and personal defects. For example, in *Sabah Sabah Seda Sayan*, after the tears fall, the duty of the audience and the presenter come to end, they will turn back to entertainment with the words of the presenter “Okay, I will handle it, now it is the happy end” and they will belly dance before the eyes of the poor. Moreover, the poor (generally woman) has to prove what he/ she has said is true as well as his/ her “sincerity” in order to get aid. She/he always tries to express her/ his helplessness and destitution when the presenter (Seda Sayan) occasionally asks, “Did you ask me when you got married?” and “Did you ask me when you had children?” It is not hard to guess how degrading and dishonourable it is to bear this.

While charity programmes, claiming to share the pain of the poor, dramatise poverty, in the entertainment programmes, as Fairclough (1995) mentions (in terms of the Oprah Winfrey show), there are often tensions between the serious social and

emotional aspects of the issues and experiences dealt with and the search for entertainment. Ordinary people have part in these programmes for their entertainment value.

There are several representations of poverty that portray it in a frame of passivism and hopelessness whereas some identify it in a criminal context with rebellion, violence and crime. On the other hand, once the television programmes that deal with poverty are considered, it is seen that poverty, pain and sorrow can be reduced to an individual context. Although it is expressed in the programmes with the emphasis on “social solidarity” that the problems are shared, as Bauman (2000) says poverty, pain and worries do not turn into public affairs only because they are exposed to the public. The important point concerning these programmes is that the people who suffer make poverty worth spectacle. What kind of social, political and cultural needs cause this situation might be the concern of another research.

Finally, it can be argued that the increase in the number of both charity programmes and entertainment programmes, which provide the poor with aid, can be accepted as one of the indicators of dissolving of solidarity network. In this respect, most people participating in the programmes state they do not receive any help from relatives and families who constitute “network of security” for the poor. As the studies on poverty (Erdoğan, 2002; Erder, 1996; Işık and Pınarcıoğlu, 2001) point out, the traditional solidarity network which “keeps the poor together, makes them stronger and enables the sources to be redelivered according to several internal rules” has lost its significance (Bora, 2002: 67).

**CHAPTER III**  
**CHARITY PROGRAMMES AND THE DOMINANCE OF ISLAMIC**  
**DISCOURSE**

In this chapter, I aim to concentrate on the Islamic discourse of poverty and charity dominant in the programmes. After a brief discussion of the presentation of the poor in Islam, I will focus on the role of religious discourse in the representations of poverty in the programmes and I will argue that they serve internalisation and tranquillisation of poverty. In other words, religion serves as a proper and suitable language for the programmes. I will also discuss idealisation of the poor and construction of national identity in the programmes.

**3.1. Islam, The Rich and The Poor**

Qur'an often makes reference to poverty and the poor. In turn, charity is explicitly clarified as dealing with the poor: the Islamic understanding of charity provides the basic framework for how the relation between the poor and the donor should be constructed. Acts of charity requires taking from those who have wealth and give it away to those who do not. Qur'an lays the greatest of emphasis on supporting the poor. In the Islamic terminology, poverty is not a term that has strict borders and it can only be defined after wealth is thoroughly described. The state of

poverty and the poor are the “objects of the aid” given by the rich: “Alms are for the destitute and the poor for those who have responsibility for administering them, for those whose hearts [are to be] reconciled, for slaves, for debtors, and for [fighting for] the sake of God, and for the traveller: an injunction from God, and God is knowing and just” (*Tawba*, 60). Qur’an specifies certain groups of people who are worthier of charity and assistance. Thus, the funds must be spent on those specified in Qur’an namely, the poor, and the destitute, the wayfarer, the bankrupt, the needy, the converts, captives “in the cause of God. Whereas the poor are presented as “objects of the aid”, the one who helps the poor are seen superior. For instance, the Prophet said, “The upper hand is better than the lower hand”, i.e. the upper hand is the one that gives, and the lower hand is the one that takes.

In this verse of the Qur’an “the poor” and “the destitute”, i.e. *fuqara* and *masakin*, form the status of poverty; continually, there are discussions about which one is more in need or which of them will be appreciated in the poverty status. As Çiğdem (2002: 141) points out, when considered thematically, we may say that poverty in Islam does not have an institutional quality; we may even claim that poverty is “individualised” in every way. Therefore, poverty, even when it does not seem so personal, is never institutional but is “situational”. “Charity shall go to the poor who are suffering in the cause of God, and cannot emigrate. The unaware may think that they are rich, due to their dignity. But you can recognize them by certain signs; they never beg from the people persistently. Whatever charity you give, God is aware thereof” (*Baqara*: 273). At 2: 271, 273 (*Baqara*), the *fuqara* are meritorious, “shamefaced” poor who out of modesty do not reveal their condition, and thus deserve charitable expenditure. And when the pilgrims make their sacrifice, they are

enjoined to “eat of it and feed the poor distressed”(Hajj, 28). Sometimes this situational state becomes clear with a more moral promise (Çiğdem, 2002: 141): “If you fear poverty God will enrich you through His bounty if He will” (Tawba, 28).

Spending money for the poor is regarded as expenditure for the cause of God. Qur’an continuously explains that actual giver is God. Since the giver is God, the duty of the servants of God is to spend what is given to them in His cause. According to Islam, in fact, all people need God and the wealthy one is only God. The ones who mistreat the poor and who do not help them are considered in relation with the disbelief and shirk (the idea of God’s having a partner): “Serve God, and do not ascribe partners to Him. And show kindness to your parents and to your close kindred, and orphans, and the needy and to the neighbour who is of kin, and the neighbour who is out of kin, and the fellow traveller and the wayfarer and (*the bondsmen*) whom your right hands possess. Surely God does not love the arrogant, the boastful” (Nisa, 36). The poor also appear in calls for generosity, piety and other virtues. “Have you observed him who denies the Religion? Such is he who repulses the orphan, and who does not urge others to feed the poor. Woe to the worshippers” (Maun, 1,2,3,4).

Charity<sup>7</sup> implicates the meanings of “giving” and “receiving”. Singer points out that charity implies “the presence of need, poverty or destitution, whether

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<sup>7</sup> There are two forms of charity in Islam, obligatory and voluntary, called *zakat* and *sadaqa* respectively. Zakat is one of the major five duties required by God from all the Muslims. The others are declaration of faith, Salat (contact prayers), fasting at the month of Ramadan and pilgrimage to Mecca. On the other hand, sadaqa is a very wide term and is used in the Qur’an to cover all kinds of charity. Its scope is so vast that even the poor who can have nothing tangible to give can offer sadaqa in the shape of a smile or a glass of water to a thirsty person, or they may even just utter a kindly word. Good conduct is frequently termed sadaqa in the hadith. Planting something from which a person, bird or animal later eats also counts as sadaqa. In this extended sense, acts of loving kindness, even greeting another with a cheerful face, is regarded as sadaqa. In short, every good deal is accepted as sadaqa.

material, emotional or spiritual in nature.” When charity addresses poverty, it is motivated by the giver’s perception of both the need and deservedness of the recipient. The definitions of need and deservedness, however, are far from universal, and they may or may not be related to material poverty or indigence. Rather, these key concepts are shaped by the worldview of the givers.

Helping the poor is necessary for the achievement of the salvation of the rich. “Devil threatens you with poverty and commands you towards immortality. But, God promises you His forgiveness and His bounty. God is All-Embracing, All-Knowing” (*Baqara, 268*). As Weber (1965) explains, the rendering of assistance naturally developed far beyond the giving of alms, and so the sick, widows and orphans were again and again described as possessing particular religious value. Thus, poverty is seen as a test for the poor, God uses it to test the endurance of the poor. Similarly, wealth is a test for the rich. God will question them on the Day of Judgment about the source of their wealth and how they spend it.

In Islamic mysticism, poverty is not merely lack of wealth, but lack of desire for wealth: the empty heart as well as the empty hand. “*Faqirs*” who represent the side of Islamic mysticism renounce all worldly things for the sake of pleasing God. As Islamic mysticism considers that possessing goods means to be owned by them, *Faqirs* breaks all of the relations with the material world in resignation (*tevekkül*) and forbearance (*sabr*). In this context, according to the idea of Sufism, poverty and deprivation are appearance; the essence of Sufism is wealth and free will (Schimmel, 1982: 113). However, as Çiğdem (2002) expressed, there are various approaches in the literature regarding the *tasavvuf* that idealises poverty. Accordingly, he points out

that there have been significant transitions pertaining to religious culture works and religious world perception between Islamic orthodoxy and Islamic mysticism.

In the Islamic tradition, charity should not be made public as stated by the verse and the hadith of the Prophet Muhammed. At the verse of Baqara: “If you make acts of charity (sadaqa) openly, it is well, but if you conceal them and give them to the poor, it is better you” (*Baqara: 271*). Moreover, the Prophet says: “Your left hand does not know what your right hand has spent.” The secrecy of charity serves to protect the recipient’s dignity and save him/her from feeling shameful or humiliated.

The poor are sometimes presented as a source of “fear” in the Qur’an. Damnation is in store for whoever does not believe in God “and does not urge feeding the poor” (*Haqqa, 69:34*). In this world, where everything is "temporary", the actual possessor of what the rich owns is God and the stories of people, who were once rich and ended up poor, tells us both wealth and poverty are "means of test". While the pain suffered by the poor is offered as a means of eternal salvation, it is the role of the wealthy to help and have a share in their salvation. The poor is a “favour by God” given to the rich and also charity is important for those who seek “God’s countenance”, and those are the ones who will be “successful”. Caring for the poor and feeding them provide the donor with expiating a sin. On the contrary, the rich who do not obey rules and help the poor as servants of God will be punished in the “Day of Judgment”. Moreover, giving purifies wealth. “Take alms (sadaqa) from their possessions so as to cleanse and purify them with (the alms), and pray on their behalf” (*Tawba, 9:103*).

The poor, who are the objects of assistance, become means of salvation for the rich as it was stated before in the prophet's traditions. "Charity sends away the trouble, it extends life." "Charity makes God's wrath fade away". "The *riba* that you give, so that it may increase in the wealth of the people, does not increase with God. But the *zakat* that you give out of a desire for the countenance of God; those are the ones whose (wealth) is doubled" (*Rum*, 39).

When considered in terms of the poor, it is expressed that "every minute that passes is apt to a test" and poverty, provided that one is patient, will be the key to eternal happiness. Poverty that is offered as "an opportunity" should be used efficiently. For instance, Bediüzzaman Said Nursi (1999: 41) states that the illnesses will open up doors for the most valuable goodness. He adds they will not only cause the person to acquire a merit (An illness of one minute is equal to a worship of one hour), but also they are means of praying as well. Moreover, Nursi looks at poverty from a different point as he regards poverty as something that is going to make people feel good:

You cannot get suspicious because there are people who have better health than you do. Maybe you are obliged to appreciate yours observing the desperate sick ones whose health is worse. If you have a broken hand, look at the ones whose hands were amputated. If you have only one eye, look at the blind ones who have lost both. And so thank God. Yes, nobody has the right to be suspicious of God by just observing the ones who are more blessed. And thus, everybody is obliged to consider the ones who are higher in the rank of grievance, so that they can thank to God (1999: 45-46).

Besides this, Nursi exalts pain and oppression by stating, "a disaster victim, a worker or a poor man who is in trouble will understand 'the taste and value of life' better than the wealthy".

Nursi (1999) also states that another supporting emotional investment in the recreation, internalisation and tranquillisation of poverty is the words of God, which tells that He has given illness “to his most beloved servant”. Thus, while poverty, which is produced by social, political and economic relations, is being interpreted in accordance with personal merits, it is also possible to observe the appearing of “fear of punishment” during the internalisation process of poverty. So, the poor is portrayed as “the object of mortality consciousness” (Bora and Onaran, 2003: 259). As Çiğdem (2002) expresses God forms the skeleton of the whole religiosity of destitute.

### **3.2. Religious Overtones in the Programmes**

The programmes that are examined in this thesis have an Islamic discourse except *Yarınlara Umut Olsun*. The programmes regard religion as the most important source in alleviation and tranquillisation of poverty. Moreover outworldly conceptions are also presented as making people think towards illnesses, sufferings, hopelessness etc. The presenter (especially in *Kimse Yok mu*) often uses quotations from Qur’an and the hadith that is important for legitimising their activities. They often refer to God (all seer and all hearer) as above all the existence. For instance: “May God be our friend and helper”, “Whatever happens is a product of him” etc. While helping the poor and the deprived produce on religious grounds as “the obligation of one’s own religion”, it is rarely expressed that assistance to the needy people is important in terms of “humanness”.

In the programme, *Kimse Yok mu*, people are told that “they may experience the same things” and, therefore, they are advised to obey the commands of God and to take the necessary precautions by helping the poor that is portrayed as the source of fear as I discussed above. For example, Bülent, who was once an alcoholic, is said to “have wasted away his life”, now “pays for his bad behaviours” as he is bound to a wheel chair for 2.5 years. To the question of the presenter (İkbal Gürpınar) about whether he feels regret for his bad behaviours, he responds, “Yes I am” (September 15, 2003). What İkbal Gürpınar has said to Rabia, who helps a fellow-family in Çarşamba, expresses that devotion to God, patience and giving assistance to the poor will be rewarded: “She has come, having left her 6-month-old baby still at the breast, and there will absolutely be a reward for it. God is the Sublime; we sincerely believe this” (October 20, 2003). As mentioned above, the poor are seen as the “beneficiary”. “Attaining a place in Paradise after death”, “is being a desire to draw closer to God” etc. Thus, while the poor turns into "means" of having a share in "the world and the next world", the poor become the object of a specific purpose. Charity is made in the hope that the donor will receive a greater gift in return. “We believe that the aid that is given with “good will” will return 1 to 10” (İkbal Gürpınar, *Kimse Yok mu*, February 11, 2004).

Moreover, since God is before all things and the creator of everything, it is also stated by the ones who help that the real giver is Him. According to Arslan (2003: 80), the aid given to the poor is intrinsic to the Islamic description of earnings. Harun, who donates 100 pairs of shoes to the Deniz Feneri Association, says that “God, the Majesty, gives us and we give it to them. They don’t belong to me. They are His” (November 5, 2003). The keeper of a supermarket in Bursa, who says that

he enjoys helping, states, “What people eat and consume, what they wear and wear away and what they save to help others belong to them”. With these words he expresses that there is a return for all this assistance (*Kimse Yok mu*, October 20, 2003). As Singer points out, charity can be seen as a reflection of the donor’s wishes, inspired by spiritual, social, economic or political motives, possibly including self-interest and ambition which is also determinant in helping the poor. In the programmes, the poor who are working and are doing something about their families are seen as worthy of assistance. The profit made by effort is sacred and diligence is sublimated. Thus, it will be easy to compare the poor who is after “honest earning” with the people who “claim” not to be able to find a job and also to blame them with laziness and unwillingness.

According to the programmes we have watched “Obeying the creator sincerely” is also considered as gratitude and patience. The significance of resignation and patience is frequently emphasised by the presenters. In spite of the fact that helplessness and desperation is clearly seen in their expressions and behaviours, patience and gratitude will turn them back as a “reward”. In the new series of the programme *Kimse Yok mu*, like its previous series, people are advised that nothing is under guarantee in this world and everyone should appreciate their health, wealth and youth. With this respect an emphasis is made on the fact that everything is temporary in this world. “Even though you have achieved a lot, no matter how powerful you are; you might be hard up one day. That is, nothing is under guarantee in this world. Even the beauty....” (İkbal Gürpınar, October 20, 2003). As a matter of fact, there is a fear that God, the all possessor, might cause a

complete destruction by several disasters and this fear strengthens this state of temporariness:

“One morning you may wake up having lost everything, like during the earthquake, like the situation of the families that we welcome here. You may open your eyes without any possession in a minute, after a second or after a day.”(Perihan Savaş) In addition, the programme gives an explicit message that helping the poor people is a measure to be taken by the rich for future, which may also end up with poverty in one day. It underlines that all rich people should help the poor in order to secure their future and not to be left alone without anybody helping them if they become poor in the future. The underlying message here is “One should first give so as to take later.”

On the other hand, the statement “There is a goodness in everything which we cannot see” declares that every trouble, poverty and illness has an absolute “benefit”, in other words, a “reward”, and that submission to “one’s faith” will bring “eternal happiness” as in the words of Bediüzzaman Said Nursi. Therefore, in the terminology of religious suffering, themes such as love and fear, submission and revolt, hope and oppressive pessimism are the dualities that act together. They also refer to some people’s words for legitimising the lives of the poor. For instance; İkbal Gürpınar quotes Voltaire’s words: “... what comes as a disaster is a reward, maybe a punishment or a precaution. I may not understand this with this simple mind of human.” And she adds after the explanation: “What we take as evil are in fact goodness to us. Perhaps the distress of three days in this world will open up the heaven doors in the eternal life. We cannot know this” (*Kimse Yok mu*, February 4, 2004). Similarly, in *Yolcu*, the pains and sufferings of disabled people are used to

underline the idea that “every punishment may not be a punishment but a reward” in its nature since it “provides people with the opportunity to conceive the real meanings of life.”

As I discuss above, Islam prohibits publicity, but the programmes help the poor openly, even transform helping the poor into a kind of show. Thus, the poor cannot escape from being the object of the programmes transforming poverty into a show. As Erdoğan (2002d: 202-203) states, the transition from the donors who do not declare themselves, to the donors whose names can be seen as subtitles on the screens and to people who combine help and “activities that cannot be achieved by money in life” points out the change in “moral responsibility”. In *Yarınlar Umut Olsun*, the names of the donors are given as subtitles on the screens. In *Deniz Feneri* and *Kimse Yok mu* only the names of the people who want to announce themselves are exposed. Arslan states that according to the Islam helping the poor must not be publicized as a show-off; in other words, charity must be done without turning into hypocrisy. Contrary to the abovementioned criteria, Arslan also expresses that the help provided through TV programmes makes the poor objects based on trading and manifesting the poor’s emotions. Muslims charge the charitable ways demanded by Islam with an approach that is in favour of commercial organisation and capitalism. In this case, the more open and transparent the above mentioned relationship gets, that is, “the more it changes into a show, the more guaranteed the profit and entertainment rate is, and thus, naturally, the number of (that type of) TV programmes has risen, as well” (Arslan, 2003: 90).

The programmes refer to God with the expressions such as “May God be pleased with you”, “Thank goodness”, “May he be entrusted to God”, “God willing”.

It can be concluded that the references to God which is a power “above all” and “the reason of all” and all the religious patterns and expressions are considered as a “ready-made solution” to the social, economic and political problems of the poor (Çiğdem, 2002).

On the other hand, *Yarınlar Umut Olsun* is presented as a “secular chain of happiness” (Erdoğan, 2002d). The programme put great emphasis on the activities of participants who have raise money for “good causes”. Thus, public solidarity turns into a reciprocity system where one’s hope of salvation and one’s search for excitement and adventure coincide in an activity undertaken by a media figure (Erdoğan, 2002d: 203). As the presenter says, the program “both entertains and assists people in need” at the same time. The programme which intends to bring the poor and the rich together for a “sublime intention” shows scenes of people who cannot afford medical operations and, yet the celebrity people in the same combination. For the programme, raising the money needed means that something may be done about poverty as *Yarınlar Umut Olsun* sees charity as the correct answer of poverty. The show in which “melancholy, cheer, excitement and miracles are experienced together” accompanied by the rhythmic song of the artist, ends with the images of the poor leaving the studio in an ambulance.

As a result, while the real victims on the programmes named *Yolcu* and *Kimse Yok mu* are depicted as people who “can not attain happiness despite possessing everything” the poor on the other hand are exalted as people who can be happy despite having nothing. That is because; they are a people who believe in the existence of “a Supreme Being beyond loneliness”, “an infinity beyond infinity”; God-thanking; enduring; rich in heart. Thus, socio-economic processes and

formations that cause poverty are neglected. Meanwhile, although it also uses the Islamic discourse, *Deniz Feneri* does not sublimate the state of poverty as much as *Yolcu* and *Kimse Yok mu* do. The programme named *Yarınlar Umut Olsun* present life stories of the poor as a consequence of their own fault and negligence, without underlining the Islamic discourse about charity.

### **3.2.1. The Idealized Lives of the Poor: “Anatolia”, “Happiness”, and “Belief”**

The programmes, especially *Kimse Yok mu* and *Yolcu* idealize Anatolia and people who live in Anatolia in national-conservative discourse. In *Kimse Yok mu*, we might notice a change in the visual language and setting of the programme and also in its emphasis on religion since the beginning of the new broadcast season. The programme that intends to “find a remedy” by fulfilling the “necessities” of the poor who live in the cities visited, instead of paying their debts, carries the lives of two families into the screens each week. In the first period when the programme aims to “reduce the debts of the debtors” presents poverty more realistic with putting emphasize on charity that can only decrease their debt, but it cannot be a permanent solution. However in the new broadcast season, the programme calls their activities as “development initiative”.

İkbal Gürpınar, now the presenter of the programme, expresses that there are too many “wounded hearts” in Turkey and that they spot a fellow-family to help the poor ones and thus, they intend to “revive the relationships between the neighbours so that our customs and traditions will come to life” (September 15, 2003). The programme claims that the fellow-family represents all the virtues that the Turkish

people have in their veins such as “courage, help, solidarity, love and fellowship”. The fellow-families, who are the “fatherly” protectors of the poor, express that they wish to bring back the fellowship of “*Ensar-Muhacir*” of the Age of Prosperity (*Asr-ı Saadet*) times<sup>8</sup> (December 17, 2003, January 21, 2004).

The programme that intends to share the troubles and to find a remedy for the poor people in Anatolia, who are happy, self-sacrificing, hopeful, talented, patient, thankful and, in other words, who do not complain about their lives, represents the poor in nationalist- conservative discourse. There is also romantic idealisation in terms of Anatolia and its people. Among its examples are:

*“We are on the roads, we are going to the most charming place, Anatolia, and towards the hearts of the Anatolian people, surrounding us all with their warmth” (Kimse Yok mu, September 29, 2003).<sup>9</sup>*

*“The Anatolian person that heats oven with the warmth of his heart. The most friendly Anatolian people, who bake bread with their own hands, who make their families happy, who enrich their fortune... Not only your land is fertile, but also the people who reside on you are sincere, friendly and frank like you” (Kimse Yok mu, September 29, 2003).<sup>10</sup>*

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<sup>8</sup> This project that is carried out during Hz.Muhammed’s immigration from Mecca to Medina between the Muslims of Mecca /Muhacir and the Muslims of Medina /Ensar, who helped the former in various ways, is called “Muâhât/Voluntary Moral Fellowship”. With this project, while each Muslim of Medina embraced a Muslim of Mecca as a brother, they gave them “material and moral” support (Ertürk, 2003).

<sup>9</sup> Düşük bir kez daha yollara, meskenlerin en güzeli olan, bizi sıcaklığıyla çepeçevre kuşatan Anadolu insanının yüreğine doğru gidiyoruz (*Kimse Yok mu*, September 29, 2003).

<sup>10</sup> Tandırı yüreklerinin sıcaklığıyla ısıtan Anadolu insanı. Ekmeği kendi elleriyle pişiren, aile boyu mutlulukları yaşatan, mutlulukları yeşerten sınımsız Anadolu insanı. Hem toprağın bereketli, hem üzerinde barınan insanlar senin gibi candan, senin gibi sıcak ve senin gibi içten (*Kimse Yok mu*, September 29, 2003).

*“I know women of my country, whose hearts are as wide as the Mediterranean and whose breaths are as hot as Africa. The people of Anatolia, all women and men, are so self-sacrificing and loyal. They are lively, a little timid and shy but always friendly” (Kimse Yok mu, September 21, 2003).<sup>11</sup>*

For *Kimse Yok mu*, there is “only one product” that is produced by the self-sacrificing and the loyal Anatolian man: Happiness. In this respect, Anatolia is associated with the thankful, patient and believing Anatolian people by giving religious references that I will discuss later. Besides, the idealisation of Anatolia as “a country where the hope never ends” contains praises to its nature, its land and its fruit and vegetables in the fields. For instance:

*“The eyebrows of Anatolia are black, as black as an olive. Abundance and fertility is on the one hand, the pleasure of walking among the olive trees, which are as tall as us, is on the other. The Anatolian pastures with its sheep and goats...” (Kimse Yok mu, October 6, 2003).<sup>12</sup>*

*“The people in Kırıkkale has helped the family and given it more and more necessities of the family, because there is life in here. This is Anatolia. There are traces of the Anatolian people’s hearts in these lands” (Kimse Yok mu, September 29, 2003).<sup>13</sup>*

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<sup>11</sup> Kadınlar bilirim ülkeme ait, yürekleri Akdeniz gibi geniş, soluğu Afrika gibi sıcak. Anadolu insanı kadınıyla erkeğiyle gerçekten de çok fedakar, vefakar. Hayat dolu biraz, biraz ürkek, biraz çekingen ama her zaman sevgi dolu (*Kimse Yok mu*, September 21, 2003).

<sup>12</sup> Anadolu’nun kaşu kara, gözü kara tıpkı zeytin gibi. Bolluk, bereket bir yanda, boyu boyumuza uygun zeytin ağaçlarının arasında dolaşmanın verdiği keyif diğer tarafta. Bir yanda koyunlu keçili Anadolu meraları... (*Kimse Yok mu*, October 6, 2003).

<sup>13</sup> Kırıkkale’de adeta herkes ailenin ne ihtiyacı varsa, gönlünden, yüreğinden koparla yetinmeyerek, daha fazla hep daha fazla. Çünkü burda hayat var. Burası Anadolu. Anadolu insanının yürek izleri var bu topraklarda. (*Kimse Yok mu*, September 29, 2003).

*“Our hearts are constantly wriggling like the angry waves of the Black Sea. We have taken loaded new hopes with ourselves for a family again we are going with. There is the burden of making a family happy on our backs unbearable lightness of undertaking such a task in our hearts” (Kimse Yok mu, September 21, 2003).*<sup>14</sup>

As seen in the quotations, the Anatolian, who bears the main characteristics of the Anatolian and the Turkish nation, is romanticized. The “self-sacrifice, loyalty, warmth, timidity and shyness” of the Anatolian is made aesthetical as an untouched national jewel. Once the religious motives, trust and firmness of the Anatolian nation is added to these characteristics, Anatolia, in a populist context, meets “organic community”. Moreover, in relation to these quotations it might be stated that Anatolia finds psychological power in Islam and physical power in the productivity of the Anatolian land.

However, on the programme named *Deniz Feneri* poor people are depicted as forgotten, left to solitude beyond being idealized. For instance, Hayrettin, a Korean veteran, tries to live in a room with his wife, Beyhan. He is unable to afford even his rent with the salary he gets every three months, and he says he tries to live on his neighbours’ aid and “things” thrown out by the supermarkets.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Karadeniz’in hırçın dalgaları gibi kıpır kıpır yüreklerimiz. Yine bir ailemiz için umut yüklendik gidiyoruz. Sırtımızda mutlu edebilmenin yükü, yüreklerimizde inancımızla bu işe koyulmanın dayanılmaz hafifliği var. (*Kimse Yok mu*, September 21, 2003).

<sup>15</sup> Their story is expressed in the voiceover as follows: “The rent costs 40 million (Turkish Liras). They cannot afford it. They have a salary every three months, which is not enough to live. If they find some bread, they cannot find anything to add to it. If they find some coal, they cannot find a stove. One of these two elderly people fought on the Korea Mountains for the country’s sake and the other is a mother who has brought up her children, has strived and struggled. They are shivering under an old blanket like wounded birds. They pick garbage and eat it” (40 milyon kira var. Ödeyemiyorlar. Üç ayda bir maaş var, yetiremiyorlar. Ekmek bulsalar katık, kömür bulsalar soba bulamıyorlar ve bu iki ihtiyar biri Kore dağlarında memleket menfaatidir diye vuruşmuş, diğeri evlat büyütmiş, çalışmış,

Paradoxically, *Kimse Yok mu* aims to help the Anatolian poor on the one hand but depicts Anatolia in prosperity on the other. The poor who are satisfied with little things; hardworking, and having as their only possession the richness in heart are people who teach “life’s lessons” (October 13, 2003) and, according to the expression of the speaker, provide the means for “rehabilitation” (September 21, 2003). When the self-sacrificing native people and the power of faith are added up to all these features, fairy-tale-like characters are created without making any references to the hardships of poverty. In this context, concepts like solidarity, self-sacrificing, satisfaction with little things have been transformed to means to ensure the sake of the society.

### **3.2.2. “Us”: Construction of National Identity and Solidarity**

Nations are to be understood as mental structures, as ‘imagined political communities’ (Anderson, 1991). They are represented in the minds and memories of the subjects as sovereign and limited political units. Furthermore, national identities are discursive constructions. Although, members of nations do not know “fellow-citizens”, they are convinced that they belong to a unique national community constructed with remembrance and memory.

The programmes also articulate nationalist discourse. Islam has an important role in construction of national consciousness. Peculiar to Turkish-Islamic synthesis, Islam is seen as groundwork of solidarity and “organic” national unity. In the programmes, especially *Kimse Yok mu* and *Yolcu*, the religion is seen as the most

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çabalamış bir anne. Bir eski battaniyenin altında yaralı kuşlar gibi titriyorlar. Çöp toplayıp çöp yiyorlar.) (*Deniz Feneri*, September 25, 2003).

important essence and principle of Turkish nationalism. As Tanıl Bora (2003: 449) argues, Islamism “assumes religious identity to be the differentiating element, the backbone of the nation and of ‘being national’ (*millilik*) after the 1980s” (2003: 449).

As we are going to see in the texts below, the pronoun “we” and “you” refer to a common “national body”. “We” in connection with the “we-Turkish” serve as a basis for appealing directly or indirectly to national solidarity and union.

*“Never mind if we are a few people, in fact, on our path, we are accompanied with a crowd. Behind us is the whole Turkey” (Kimse Yok mu, September 29, 2003).<sup>16</sup>*

*“Our intention is to bring happiness to people not for one single day, but for every day starting from now on. In fact what we do is nothing. Provided that you have the wealthiest of the world is in your country, there will be no mistreated families nor any other thing” (Kimse Yok mu, September 21, 2003).<sup>17</sup>*

As seen in the quotations above, national identity also provides an opportunity to create an imaginary sense of existing together, which eases the feeling of loneliness and hopelessness as well. As Bora expresses, “Nationalism covers the concept of holiness and the need for spirituality with a modern excessiveness. The authority for this excessiveness is nation. The nation is an ideal of ‘us’, a way of self-love and a “collective self-exaltation” (Bora, 1999:98). While nationalism establishes the nation as a “natural unit”, the family becomes a central metaphor for the nation

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<sup>16</sup> Bakmayın öyle birkaç kişi olduğumuza, aslında kalabalık gidiyoruz. Arkamızda bütün Türkiye var (*Kimse Yok mu*, September 29, 2003).

<sup>17</sup> Amacımız sadece birgün değil, bugünden başlamak üzere hergün ama hergün mutlu kılabilme insanları. Aslında bizim yaptığımız da hiçbir şey yok hani. Dünyanın en varlıklı insanları sizin ülkenizde olduktan sonra ne mağdur tek bir aile kalır ne de başka birşey (*Kimse Yok mu*, September 21, 2003).

that is “a domain of disinterested love and solidarity”. The programmes also bless the family as the main source of love and solidarity, the benevolence of the family members towards each other are emphasised. For example, Mustafa and Gülten, who have two kids suffering from epilepsy, try to live on a daily wage of 6 million. Tuğba, who has to drop out of school due to financial problems, looks after her siblings. These situations are presented as examples of clamping together within the family (*Kimse Yok mu*).

While poverty is idealized as an example of "endurance and resignation without revolt", religion has significant role in the foundation of national unity that articulate with “the great, self-sacrificing Turkish nation” and "exalted family values". In his article called "Psychopathology of The Holy Synthesis", where he discusses the "repressed subject" in the Turkish-Islamic Synthesis, Açikel (1996) expresses that "the thing which forms the ideology of the oppressed is not constructed by means of religious thought, on the contrary, religious thought is constructed ontologically and symbolically by the ideology of oppressed (1996: 170). In this case, the sufferings of the prophet and the hard conditions of the poor are matched in the thematic context of "oppression, helplessness, destitution", etc. Especially, the poor who are identified with the characteristics of the prophets are exalted in the programmes, *Kimse Yok mu* and *Yolcu*. For instance:

*“A door of patience and fortitude is being opened in front of us. The patience of Mr. Mustafa has been tested like the Prophet Eyup... His life has been riddled*

*with resignation and forbearance without any protest” (Kimse Yok mu, February 11, 2004).*<sup>18</sup>

On the other hand, the presenter of *Yolcu* says to Yalçın Kervan, who is trying to make a living as a shepherd: “You have a very good job. All the prophets were shepherds once”(May 13, 2003). By this way, the lives of the people that are presented on the programme and that of Prophet Noah, who was mocked and who worked ignoring the mockeries in order to overcome the troubles, are identified in terms of a fate unity (June 10, 2003).

As Bora (1999) suggests, Islam and national ideology is presented in a substantial integrity like the complementary relationship between “ material–meaning, body–soul, soul–conscious”. Therefore, the religion is regarded as a force protecting the substance of the nation. People are passive in a code system of nationalist-conservative discourse; however, the “virtuous, self-sacrificing” people are not aware of the substance that they have. It can be stated that in its imagination of the poor, this discourse uses a number of oppositions also used by the tradition of popular culture in Turkey. In the programmes, the poor seems to be "in deprivation", "in trouble", "imperfect" and “powerless” and are represented as if they have invisible "strength", "beauty" and “happiness”. One of the themes used by the tradition of popular culture in Turkey from folk tales to Yeşilçam melodramas is the scheme based on the opposition between interior/exterior and invisible/visible, which can be interpreted as the translation of the opposition between *zahiri/batini* (external/inner) in the Islamic mysticism into the language of the popular. There is an unveiled beauty behind the ugly, thin, unkind, ignorant or dumb vision of the poor

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<sup>18</sup> Önümüzde bir metanet ve sabır kapısı aralanıyor. Mustafa Bey Eyüp peygamber gibi sabırla sınanmış, imtihan edilmiş. İsyansız bir tahammül ve tevekkülle doldurmuş hayatını (Kimse Yok mu, February 11, 2004).

(Erdoğan, 2000). In this context, the programmes define the poor according to the duality the duality between essence/appearance and soul/body, asserting that resignation is the most significant value that the poor has. As Erdoğan (2000) states, the more the body gets rich, the more the soul becomes poor.

On the other hand, as Bora and Erdoğan (2003) say “people” are already present and available. On the other hand, it is still waiting for embodiment. The embodiment of the people, “giving them hope”, “and making them happy” becomes the mission of the populist elite and the TV programmers, which is a significant characteristic of conservative populism. It is completed with the idealization of the people as a “pure, naive and childish” character. Especially, the addressing of İkbâl Gürpınar, the presenter of *Kimse Yok mu*, to the poor people as “my dear, honey or my love” is considerable in this respect.

The people and the fellow-families who help and claim that they help with an ideology of affection and assistance, which continues on a religious sensitivity, emphasises the “benevolence” of the Turkish people in a nationalist-conservative discourse. The word of Muzaffer Uçar, who joins the programme by phone and says that he wants to help, is an example of this: “I try to say this. Thanks to God, Turkish people are benevolent. We undertake to give all kinds of assistance and support. Therefore, they don’t need to worry...The Muslim Turkish people will back them at any moment. Provided that we may reach and see them” (January 20, 2003). In *Yarınlar Umut Olsun*, the presenter like the one in the *Kimse Yok mu* stresses greatness of the Turkish nation. Moreover, during the programme the audience is reminded of the fact that the aid given by people will be used for such good purposes.

These programmes tend to describe “true richness” as “being grateful to God for one's present state” (*Yolcu*, May 27, 2003). In other words, it might be argued that the resignation and forbearance sublimated by the religious belief are represented as the values helping the poor internalise the state of poverty. Thus, the rich/ poor dichotomy is reduced to “revolt/ forbearance”, “struggle/ renunciation” dichotomy that the one who live in poverty is idealized if she/he live in gratitude. The programmes especially *Yolcu* and *Kimse Yok mu* present “the journey of hope of the extraordinary lives” as the greatest indication of patience and effort. They describe the lives of the handicapped and poor people, as an example of “lesson”. What help the poor survive are their patience, hopes, confidence and love: “*Despite everything, they don't give up thanking and the love in their heart doesn't grow less. It is this feeling that keeps them strong and alive despite all this suffering*” (*Kimse Yok mu*, January 20, 2003).<sup>19</sup>

As a result, while the real victims on the programmes named *Yolcu* and *Kimse Yok mu* are depicted as people who “can not attain happiness despite possessing everything” the poor on the other hand are exalted as people who can be happy despite having nothing. That is because; they are a people who believe in the existence of “a Supreme Being beyond loneliness”, “an infinity beyond infinity”; God-thanking; enduring; rich in heart. Thus, the burden of looking into the processes and formations that cause poverty is avoided. In *Deniz Feneri*, the pains and sufferings of the poor are not exalted but dramatized. Meanwhile, *Yarınlara Umut Olsun* present dramatic life stories as a consequence of their own fault and negligence.

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<sup>19</sup> Her şeye rağmen dillerinden şükür, gönüllerinden sevgi eksilmiyor. Onları bütün bu çileye rağmen her dem taze, her dem diri tutan da bu oluyor (*Kimse Yok mu*, January 20, 2003).

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **REPRESENTATIONS OF THE POOR IN THE VOICEOVER**

This chapter will deal with the discursive construction of the poor through an analysis of voiceover. Firstly, I will touch upon passivation of the poor with respect to Van Leeuwen's analysis. Then, I will discuss how the philanthropists become Agent of the poor's lives in terms of transitive analysis, i.e. Hallidayan Systemic Functional Grammar.

#### **4.1. CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS**

Halliday's systemic functional grammar as a basic framework of critical discourse analysis stresses multifunctionality of language. Halliday sees language as "network of interlocking options" that is used in constructing meaning in the communication. As the selection of options constitutes meaning, it also refers to choosing that entails exclusion and inclusion. In this sense, language as a system of meaning has ideational, interpersonal and textual metafunction embodied in the grammatical forms (Halliday, 1985). Language is not neutral reflecting the world, in contrast, language produces encodes, constructs beliefs, values and points of view.

In the systemic-functional view of language, as clause functions as the representation of meaning, language provides users' "mental picture of

reality” and different accounts of experience “around them and inside them”. In this regard, representation constructs variety of “goings-on: of doing, happening, feeling, being” in the media discourse (Halliday, 1985: 101).

According to Halliday, transitivity and ergativity are concerned with “different types of process that are recognized in the language, and structures by which they are expressed” (1985:101). That is to say, transitivity and ergativity, which refer to ideational function of the grammar of the clause, concern with representational structure in terms of “processes”, “participants” and “circumstances”. However, the concept of “processes”, “participants” and “circumstances” being represented differ in respect of functions. In this connection, transitivity analysis contributes to understanding what social, cultural, ideological, political or theoretical factors determine how a process is signified in a particular type of discourse or in a particular text (Fairclough, 1992: 179-180). Thus, in terms of this thesis, transitivity and ergativity analysis provides the means for investigating how the poor are portrayed and how their relationship with the world constructed.

Halliday divides processes three general categories: *material processes* (“processes of doing”), *mental processes* (“processes of sensing”) and lastly *relational processes* (“processes of being”). In addition to these processes, Halliday discusses three other processes: *behavioural* that is intermediate between material and mental processes; *verbal* (“processes of saying”) that is called as “symbolic processes”; and *existential processes* that are associated with material and relational processes (1985: 102-131). Moreover, each process gives different names to the participants that are systematically associated. For instance, mental processes call

participants as *Senser* or *Phenomena*, while material one call them as *Actor* or *Goal*. In addition, participants are called as *Sayer* or *Target* by verbal processes.

Ergativity looks at the clause in terms of the caution. Halliday distinguishes processes brought about “from within” or “from outside”, while the participant is “the one through which the process is actualised” called as *Medium*, the one “functioning as an external cause” referred as the *Agent*. Similarly, Halliday discusses the other participant functions, such as *Beneficiary*. However, Halliday clarifies distinction between processes, “the transitive” and “the ergative”.

The transitive is a linear interpretation; and since only function that can be defined by extension in this way is that of the Goal, systems, which are predominantly transitive in character, tend to emphasize the distinction between participants. (i.e. direct participants, Actor and Goal only) and circumstances (all other functions). But the ergative is a nuclear rather than a linear interpretation and if this component is to the fore, there may be a whole cluster of participant- like functions in the clause: not only Agent but also Beneficiary and Range (1985: 149).

Hodge and Kress, on the other hand, use transactive and non-transactive process terms. Roughly, transactive processes combine with *Agents* and *Affected* participant, while non-transactive clause presents the participant as *active* (Actors) (the youth ran) or merely *Involved* (passive) (the youth fell) (1993: 8). Another distinction made by Hodge and Kress are about action, “*actional models*” and “*relational models*”. In their models, action pass on from an *Actor* as *Affected*, or action restricted to one entity, in contrast with transitivity, in which *Affected* is referred indirectly. Although, the theoretical framework of Hodge and Kress is inspired from Halliday’s framework, their passive non-transactive process is important for the thesis.

How the poor are represented, active or passive. However active and passive roles do not correspond to active syntax. *Activation* occurs when social actors are represented as the active, dynamic forces in an activity, *passivation* when they are represented as ‘undergoing’ the activity or as being ‘at the receiving of it’ (Van Leeuwen, 1996). In this analysis, the actors are regarded as being activated when they are depicted in ergative terms as *Agent*, *Actor* or *Causer*, whereas they are regarded as being passivated when they are represented as *Affected*, *Victim*, *Circumstance* and *Involved*. Therefore, I will touch upon the passivation of the poor firstly. And then, I will discuss how the philanthropists become Agent of the poor’s lives in terms of transitive analysis, i.e. Hallidayan Systemic Functional Grammar.

#### 4.2. THE PASSIVATED POOR IN THE VOICEOVERS

The poor are often represented by mental, existential and relational processes in passive roles. In mental process clauses, participant takes role of *Senser* and *Phenomenon*. Whereas *Senser* is the conscious being that is feeling, thinking or seeing, the *Phenomenon* is that sensed, felted, thought or seen. Although, the poor are portrayed as *Senser* and *Agent* in the mental and material processes, they are passivated as *Affected* and *Victim*. Negative events are depicted as *Agent* as the causes of poverty, while the poor are *Affected* rather than effective Instigators. They only exist as passive objects of negative events. For instance:

“*The debts, deprivation and hopelessness have plunged him into a deadlock*”  
(*Kimse Yok mu*, July 14, 2003).<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Borçlar, yokluk ve çaresizlik onu büyük bir çıkmazın içine sürüklemişti (*Kimse Yok mu*, July 14, 2003).

“ *As time passes, his life has become unbearable, because of ever-growing debts*” (Kimse Yok mu, July 14, 2003).<sup>21</sup>

“*His life, which has been riddled with many sufferings, becomes more complicated by new ones*” (Kimse Yok mu, March 3, 2003).<sup>22</sup>

“*Yet, illnesses and deprivation have dragged Yanık family into an utterly different life*” (Kimse Yok mu, July 14, 2003).<sup>23</sup>

Regarding transactive clauses, thus, debt, illnesses etc. are understood as active *Causer*, the poor are presented As *Affected* or *Involved*. In other words, in so far as the clauses define negative events as active *Causer*, the poor are passivated and also social, political and economic problems backgrounded. The examples indicating debts, deprivation, illnesses backgrounds economic, social, political problems that represent such problems and disasters as a matter of fate, happenings beyond human control.

Significantly, the poor are not described in material processes (processes of doing). The poor do not figure as a participant in the clauses. “Debts, deprivation hopelessness, illness” are all situations affecting or involving the poor. However, they are all *nominalizations*: According to Hodge and Kress (1993), when a process is nominalized, some or all of its participants are omitted. That is why the poor do not figure explicitly in “debts”, “deprivation” etc. As in this case, nominalizations make it very abstract and distant from concrete events and situations (Hodge&Kress,

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<sup>21</sup> Her gün artan borçları daha bir çekilmez hale getiriyordu hayatını (Kimse Yok mu, July 14, 2003).

<sup>22</sup> Binbir çileyle doldurduğu ömrü, yeni çileler yumağıyla karmaşık hale gelir (Kimse Yok mu, March 3, 2003).

<sup>23</sup> Ancak hastalıklar ve yokluklar bambaşka bir hayata sürüklemişti Yanık ailesini (Kimse Yok mu, July 14, 2003).

1993). This supports directly to the representation of them as *Affected*, in other words being object of processes.

As Fairclough (1995) declares, in the text, something may be informationally backgrounded or informationally foregrounded. Presenting them as *Affected* of the clause foregrounds their passivity, nominalization backgrounds the active role of the poor. Moreover, nominalization and a passive clause with a *deleted Actor*, in some cases mystify agency and responsibility (Fairclough, 1995). It can be said that in the voiceover, the poor are foregrounded in the mental processes as *Senser*. Halliday (1985) differentiates three mental processes: perception (seeing, hearing etc.), affection (liking, fearing etc.) and cognition (thinking, knowing, understanding etc.). The poor are portrayed in the mental process, this is the one that senses, feels, thinks or perceives the weight of poverty.

In the voiceover, the deprivation and poverty are described as trouble, hopelessness, despair, sorrow, pain, absence, pennilessness, suffering, illness, loneliness, ambiguity, unemployment, wound, injury, destitution, being without relations, darkness, anxiety, worry, grief” and “being forgotten”. Let’s take some examples:

*“He suffers from the pain of giving his children nothing but sorrow although he would like to provide them with the best” (Kimse Yok mu, July 21, 2003).<sup>24</sup>*

*“They want to overcome all the difficulties that have been wearing them out and they don’t want their kids either to be homesick or to long for their parents” (Kimse Yok mu, July 21, 2003).<sup>25</sup>*

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<sup>24</sup> Çocuklarına herşeyin en güzelini vermek isterken, onlara hüzünden başka birşey verememenin acısı kalmış (*Kimse Yok mu*, July 21, 2003).

*“They have objectives about their future and they perfectly understand that they should not neglect their schools in order to achieve these objectives” (Yolcu, May 6, 2003).<sup>26</sup>*

The desperation and oppression accompanying the poverty in the abovementioned quotations, in Sennett’s words (1993: 170) the class society, deprives people of the sense of honour and dignity in eyes of both themselves and other people. Furthermore, voiceovers are sometimes given as a “real person’s” words. This creates the illusion that a persona is exactly like you and me, through the device of first personal pronoun “I” which dramatises the sensing and supposedly gives veracity to it, creates sameness between people. Let’s look at some examples:

*“...I feel more pain day by day, I feel more depressed with every breath I take. I stare at the darkness of life” (Kimse Yok mu, July 28, 2003).<sup>27</sup>*

*“What was dropping into my palms were like the tears which were trying to ease the pain of life. As if my heart swallowed by my cries was surrounded by the grief which hurts me more whenever I try to struggle, resisting both to the darkness coming from my heart and to the hopelessness surrounding my memory” (Kimse Yok mu, July 21, 2003).<sup>28</sup>*

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<sup>25</sup> (Kendilerini yıpratmaya çalışan tüm zorlukları aşıp, yavrularına yuva özlemi, anne baba hasreti yaşatmak istemiyorlar.) (Kimse Yok mu, July 21, 2003).

<sup>26</sup> Hedefleri vardır geleceklere dair ve bunun için okullarını ihmal etmemeleri gerektiğini çok iyi anlamışlar (Yolcu, May 6, 2003).

<sup>27</sup> ...Her geçen gün biraz daha içim acıyor, yüreğim sıkışıyor her nefes alışımında. Çaresiz bakıyorum hayatın karanlığına (Kimse Yok mu, July 28, 2003).

<sup>28</sup> Avuçlarıma dökülen hayatın acısını dindirmeye çalışan gözyaşlarıydı sanki. Yüreğimden kopup gelen karanlıklara inat, belleğimi saran ümitsizliğe inat, her çırpınışımda daha da canımı yakan acılarla örülüydü sanki feryatlarımın yutkunduğu yüreğim (Kimse Yok mu, July 21, 2003).

*“Has my heart been buried in darkness or am I not the one on those mirrors?” (Kimse Yok mu, July 21, 2003).<sup>29</sup>*

Darkness impinges on consciousness of the poor, while states of pain, helplessness, distress, destitution and oppression are presented as reflections of poverty. On the other hand, Van Leeuwen (1996) suggest that action or reaction can be represented as an event, as something just “happens”, without the involvement of human Actor. For instance, a material process indicates involuntary action, like “lose”:

*“One of their sons went insane when his friend dies beside him in the army” (Kimse Yok mu, January 20, 2003).<sup>30</sup>*

Moreover, some processes have an inherently passive sense, for instance; undergo, experience, and suffer, even though they are active grammatically:

*“The lives of Mrs. Serpil and Mr. Hasan have been riddled with distress and deprivation. Mr. Hasan and his family have had painful experiences in İstanbul, where they came because Mr. Hasan found a job in a cleansing company” (Kimse Yok mu, July 21, 2003).<sup>31</sup>*

*“The pain was hurting his heart more as time passes. It was the pain of longing for his children, which he feels in every evening. It was like the last sentence*

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<sup>29</sup> Yüreğim mi karanlıklara gömüldü, yoksa ben değil miyim o aynalardaki (Kimse Yok mu, July 21, 2003).

<sup>30</sup> Bir oğulları askerde yanında arkadaşının şehit olmasından dolayı akli dengesini yitirir (Kimse Yok mu, January 20, 2003).

<sup>31</sup> Serpil hanım ve Hasan bey hayatlarını sıkıntılarla ve yokluklarla doldurmuşlar. Bir temizlik şirketinde iş bulması üzerine geldiği İstanbul’da acı tecrübelerle imtihan bulmuş Hasan bey ve ailesi (Kimse Yok mu, July 21, 2003).

*of an unfinished thing, which was caught between his lips” (Kimse Yok mu, July 14, 2003).*<sup>32</sup>

*“Day by day, Mr. Hilmi has felt more upset because he has failed to provide his kids with a better life” (Kimse Yok mu, July 14, 2003).*<sup>33</sup>

*“To him, his son whom he left in a dormitory is like a bleeding wound which hurts him more with every breath he takes” (Kimse Yok mu, March 3, 2003).*<sup>34</sup>

In these citations, as Erdoğan (2002c: 45) states, the poor is not only subjected to dangers such as famine, sicknesses or freezing but also to a symbolic violence as threat posed to their honour, self-dignity and self-confidence. In terms of relational processes, the son who is left at an orphanage is explained as a bleeding cut. As the only wealth of the families is presented as children in the programmes, the poor feels oppressed seeing his children. As the poor passive, the most painful thing to them is not being able to provide their children with a good future and not nourishing them properly, not being able to give what they want give rise to feeling guilty, oppressed, these words refer to injury concerns inability doing poorly rather than doing wrong. Furthermore, such forms, “not”, “none”, “no”, “nothing (ness)” expresses the negativity in the lives of the poor:

*“Dragging the ambiguity of future behind him, he is left all alone in deprivation” (Kimse Yok mu, March 3, 2003).*<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> İnceden bir sızıydı sanki yüreğini her geçen gün biraz daha yaralayan. Evlat yarasıydı, hasret acısıydı varlığını her akşam daha fazla hissettiren. Bitmemiş bir şeyin son cümlesiydi sanki dudağına takılıp kalan (*Kimse Yok mu*, July 14, 2003).

<sup>33</sup> Hilmi bey evlatlarına iyi bir hayat verememenin ezikliğini her geçen gün daha fazla hissediyordu (*Kimse Yok mu*, July 14, 2003).

<sup>34</sup> Yurda bıraktığı oğluydu kanayan bir yaradır adeta her nefes alışında içini acıtan bir yara (*Kimse Yok mu*, March 3, 2003).

*“Now that they are homeless and unemployed, struggling for their lives on the streets” (Kimse Yok mu, March 3, 2003).<sup>36</sup>*

*“With all their destitution, helplessness and solitude, the Kızıldağ family is looking for something to hold on, a wall to lean against” (Kimse Yok mu, July 28, 2003).<sup>37</sup>*

*“They have been unable to find either any support or a solution” (Kimse Yok mu, July 28, 2003).<sup>38</sup>*

*“Another family, alone and without any support, is struggling not to be buried by deprivation” (Kimse Yok mu, July 28, 2003).<sup>39</sup>*

Thus, the poor figure as “Patients”, i.e. as participants in States (Fairclough, 1995). The quotations illustrate that deprivation, destitution and helplessness without anyone who cares for them deepen their isolation and loneliness. Generally, in the voiceover, passive constructions and agents deletions are preferred. Thus, the quotations do not specify Actor who or what is responsible for their loneliness, helplessness, solitude etc. There are also partial negatives like darkness and light, which carry a negative sense. The dichotomy, such as darkness and light, nothing and everything identify or reclassify them:

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<sup>35</sup> Yoklukların içinde kalır yapayalnız, peşinde geleceğin belirsizliğini de sürükleyerek (*Kimse Yok mu*, March 3, 2003).

<sup>36</sup> Onlar şimdi evsiz, barksız, işsiz sokakta yaşam mücadelesi veriyor (*Kimse Yok mu*, March 3, 2003).

<sup>37</sup> Kızıldağ ailesi dayanacak bir dal arıyor, yaslanacak bir duvar arıyor kimsesizliklerine, çaresizliklerine ve yalnızlıklarına (*Kimse Yok mu*, July 28, 2003).

<sup>38</sup> Ne bir destek bulabilmişler, ne de bir çıkar yol (*Kimse Yok mu*, July 28, 2003).

<sup>39</sup> Bir aile daha yoklukların içinde derinlere gömülmemek için uğraşüyor, yalnız ve desteksiz (*Kimse Yok mu*, July 28, 2003).

*“How near was the darkness, how far was the light” (Kimse Yok mu, March 3, 2003)?<sup>40</sup>*

As poverty is being narrated, the poor’s exhausted, worn out and pale body is occasionally referred to. The pains and deprivations that are suffered are figured in the wrinkled face of the poor, in his/her twisted waist and his/her white hair. Especially the hair that has turned grey and tears are figured as metaphors of poverty.

*“His tears express his past sorrows and future anxieties. Maybe these looks are the cries of the pain and hopelessness which their hearts suffer from” (Kimse Yok mu, July 28, 2003).<sup>41</sup>*

*“Suffering from an enormous pain, he was trying to bury the sorrows with his tears” (Kimse Yok mu, July 28, 2003).<sup>42</sup>*

*“In every single hair of the mother which has gone gray hangs a great many sorrows” (Deniz Feneri, September 10, 2003).<sup>43</sup>*

In these texts, hair and tear represent “outward sign” of sufferings of the poor and is used for arousing emotions on the part of the audience. Time, place and other circumstances of their occurrence are also represented in the clauses. Narrative also specifies the circumstances of time in which the poor are not “effective” Agent. They are suppressed.

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<sup>40</sup> Karanlık ne kadar yakındaydı, aydınlık ne kadar uzaktaydı (*Kimse Yok mu*, March 3, 2003).

<sup>41</sup> Gözyaşları anlatıyor geçmiş kederlerini ve gelecek kaygılarını. Yüreklere düşmüş acının ve çaresizliğin haykırışı belki de bu bakışlar (*Kimse Yok mu*, July 28, 2003).

<sup>42</sup> Kocaman bir acının ortasında hüznü gömmeye çalışıyordu gözyaşlarıyla (*Kimse Yok mu*, July 28, 2003).

<sup>43</sup> Ananın ağır her tel saçına binlerce dert, binlerce tasa asılıdır (*Deniz Feneri*, September 10, 2003).

*“Thursday's arrival after Wednesday being eight years old, getting a school report and living with famine for years is too bad to experience” (Deniz Feneri, September 10, 2003).<sup>44</sup>*

*“In their suffering lives, days have passed like months and months have passed like years” (Kimse Yok mu, July 28, 2003).<sup>45</sup>*

What is striking about these quotations is that Agent is deleted, as years become focus of the poor's lives. The emphasis given for the lives of the poor full of struggle is intensified by the stress put on the slow pace of time and visually by slow motion shots. Being physically, socially or culturally away from the dynamic city life, they have a fight for life in the dead-end streets of destitution. Another common type of passivation draws the ‘possessive-circumstantial’ element into the clause nucleus, which used to represent the disastrous events that have befallen the poor who are not responsible, for instance:

*“The quake in the life of the Özcan family started about five years ago...Mr. Hasan's father died of brain cancer all of a sudden. Soon, after his death, his mother died in an accident” (Kimse Yok mu, January 20, 2003).<sup>46</sup>*

Although the clauses are not passive, the Agent (Hasan) reduced in participant status does not take effective action. Thus, Hasan is not responsible for these events at all. The self-sacrificing poor cannot be blamed for the things he/ she has experienced, since he/ she has already been aware of how sublime it is to work.

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<sup>44</sup> Çarşambayı Perşembeye bağlamak, yedi yaştan sekiz yaşa geçmek, karneyi alıp yıllar boyu aç karınla yatmak zor geçer zor (Deniz Feneri, September 10, 2003).

<sup>45</sup> Günleri aylar gibi, ayları yıllar gibi geçmiş çileli ömürleriyle (Kimse Yok mu, July 28, 2003).

<sup>46</sup> Yaklaşık beş yıl önce başlar hayatlarındaki deprem Özcan ailesinin...Hasan beyin babası ani bir şekilde vefat eder beyin kanserinden çok fazla geçmez. Annesini de bir kazayla kaybeder (Kimse Yok mu, January 20, 2003).

What the programme intends to do is to offer their “benevolent” hand to the poor who is equipped with moral-humanist virtues, yet who is being tested by an “examination”. Although giving birth to so many children or not being vaccinated in the early ages are represented as indicators of ignorance, the descriptions like “ignorance” are either reflected upon fate or expressed as an “examination” by God (*Kimse Yok mu*).

*“It is not easy; a part of his/her heart goes away every day and wasted away in front of his/her eyes” (Kimse Yok mu, January 20, 2003).<sup>47</sup>*

*“As their silent mouths say nothing, their childish looks are waiting for help” (Kimse Yok mu, July 28, 2003).<sup>48</sup>*

In the quotation above, while the *Agents* are deleted, the poor are attributed passivity and silence. As the voiceover states, the poverty embodies in the body and language. The subaltern who is deprived of developing his/her own discourse cannot speak. His/her inability to speak indicates that he/she is not given to opportunity to speak of and he/she is silenced and marginalised. (Erdoğan, 2002)

*“There are lives which are surrounded by pains. Every sorrow that has been felt penetrates into your soul so much till it loses its effect. There are faces which struggle to survive. And there comes a moment, which adds up to all the sorrows. The person who is trying to survive with forbearance cries for help with the pain of his fall: “Is There Anybody” (Kimse Yok mu, January 20, 2003).<sup>49</sup>*

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<sup>47</sup> Kolay değil, yüreğinin bir yanı eksiliyor ve her geçen gün gözlerinin önünde eriyor (*Kimse Yok mu*, January 20, 2003).

<sup>48</sup> Suskun dilleri bir şey demezken çocuk bakışları yardım bekliyor (*Kimse Yok mu*, July 28, 2003).

<sup>49</sup> Hayatlar vardır acılarla örülü dört yanı ve ruhuna o kadar siner ki yaşanan her acı artık etkisini kaybeder. Ayakta durabilme mücadelesi veren yüzler ve öyle bir an gelir çatar ki tüm yaşanan acılara tuz biber olur. Tevekkülle ayakta durmaya çalışan insan düşmenin ateşiyle hemhal *Kimse Yok mu* (*Kimse Yok mu*, January 20, 2003).

In particular, the quotation above generalizes the situations that affect or involve the poor. There is only a cause, ‘pain’ (mental process) is made focal in the context of the ‘fall’ which presents the participant as *Affected*, in other words as *Victim*. Furthermore, the inverted clauses augment the dramatization of experiences of the poor.

It should be stressed that the poor are represented as *Affected* when they are passivated with reference to the situations affecting or involving the poor. As it is seen in all examples, the poor are not presented as Actors who are doing something. Generally, they are portrayed passive, Affected by the actions of the others, as participants in states, in the processes of nominalization. While the debts, illnesses are foregrounded, socio-economic reasons of poverty is backgrounded. Unsurprisingly, portraying them as Affected support the representation of philanthropists as Actors of the poor.

#### **4.3. PHILANTHROPISTS AND PRODUCERS**

In *Kimse Yok mu* and *Deniz Feneri*, philanthropists and producers are positioned as subject. During the new TV season (September 15, 2003), it has been noticed that the programme producers of *Kimse Yok mu* and the donors especially fellow-families, are depicted as trying to breakdown the “unhappiness”, “hopefulness”, and “darkness” in the lives of the poor as active *Agents*. Thus, through transitive structure in the active voice, which explicitly displays “*We*” (the programme producers, fellow-families and the donor) have been doing a direct effect

on them. Briefly, philanthropists are generally positioned as *Agent* in processes of doing (material processes). For instance:

*“Our hearts are constantly wriggling like the angry waves of the Black Sea. We have taken loaded new hopes with ourselves for a family again we are going with. There is the burden of making a family happy on our backs unbearable lightness of undertaking such a task in our hearts” (Kimse Yok mu, September 21, 2003).*<sup>50</sup>

*“Altogether we are deleting them from the map of suffer” (Kimse Yok mu, December 31, 2003).*<sup>51</sup>

*“In our motherland whose single piece is a different kind of art, we are going to embroider the heart of our family with buckrams” (Kimse Yok mu, December 24, 2003).*<sup>52</sup>

*“Right now, we are in such a heavenly place. We are going to reflect the beauty of this landscape upon our mistreated family” (Kimse Yok mu, December 10, 2003).*<sup>53</sup>

As seen from quoted clauses, the poor are positioned as Goal/Target, whereas philanthropists become the subjects (Actor) who made the poor happy, the poor are portrayed as objects whose hearts will turn into light from darkness. On the other hand, the poor appear as figures of “forbearance and solidarity”:

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<sup>50</sup> Karadeniz’in hırçın dalgaları gibi kıpır kıpır yüreklerimiz. Yine bir ailemiz için umut yüklendik gidiyoruz. Sırtımızda mutlu edebilmenin yükü, yüreklerimizde inancımızla bu işe koyulmanın dayanılmaz hafifliği var (*Kimse Yok mu*, September 21, 2003).

<sup>51</sup> Onları mağduriyet haritasından çıkarıyoruz hep birlikte (*Kimse Yok mu*, December 31, 2003).

<sup>52</sup> Her parçası ayrı bir sanat olan bu vatan toprağında ailemizin yüreğini nakış nakış işleyeceğiz telalarla (*Kimse Yok mu*, December 24, 2003).

<sup>53</sup> Biz şu anda cennet gibi bir yerdeyiz. Bu manzaranın güzelliğini mağdur ailemize yansıtacağız. (*Kimse Yok mu*, December 10, 2003).

“They are showing true example of patience and solidarity to everyone”  
(*Kimse Yok mu*, December 10, 2003).<sup>54</sup>

“We have seen the real patience and solidarity in the sufferers” (*Kimse Yok mu*, December 17, 2003).<sup>55</sup>

Thus, philanthropist people are the *Beneficiary*, “one to whom or for whom the process is said to take place” (Halliday: 1985:132). With the verb “show” as a causative mental process (make see), the poor are addressed as *object*, though the poor regularly functions as subject in the clause. Therefore, the poor are represented as relatively passive *Beneficiaries* of philanthropist. There are also causatives that have passive meanings (Halliday, 1985: 263-266). For instance:

“The sorrows have built four walls around, they don’t let them go and solutions are surrounded by problems.”

Thus, sorrows are foregrounded and Agent who lives the sorrows is deleted. The poor also serve as a lesson to the viewer in the words of the presenter:

“Another story of lesson is waiting for you” (*Kimse Yok mu*, January 10,2003).<sup>56</sup>

The overwhelming uses of clauses in which the poor do not have the ability to perform a material act, but is only made to it are also realized in *Deniz Feneri*. For instance:

“A mother. Two daughters. Winter is coming. Winter is coming to all houses. Now we are going to hug the stones and bricks. Now we are going to hug hope and

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<sup>54</sup> Sabır neymiş, dayanışma neymiş herkese gösteriyorlar (*Kimse Yok mu*, December 10, 2003).

<sup>55</sup> Sabrı, dayanışmayı asıl dert sahiplerinden gördük. (*Kimse Yok mu*, December 17, 2003).

<sup>56</sup> Yine bir ibret öyküsü sizi bekliyor. (*Kimse Yok mu*, January 10, 2003).

*humanity. We are going to build the house altogether which will warm the old bones of Mrs. Safiye up and which will take his two children under protection. Come on and help” (Deniz Feneri, October 2, 2003).<sup>57</sup>*

*“Fatma has a baby. A baby with blond hair. She is sending the baby to sleep. Fatma is kissing and caressing it. Yet, the baby has got only a head. It is a half-baby. As half as every dream that Fatma cannot make true. Now we are going to be the house in their field. We are going to be their cure. A remedy to their troubles. We have come for Fatma. We are going to make her laugh” (Deniz Feneri, October 9, 2003).<sup>58</sup>*

*“The lustre in the eyes of little Muhammed has faded. How much trouble is Muhammed suffering from in his weak body. Muhammed cannot eat. His father is trying to find remedy to Muhammed by carrying garbage. Muhammed, Muhammed, we are here Muhammed (Deniz Feneri, October 9, 2003).<sup>59</sup>*

Everyday of Ramadan, *Deniz Feneri* begins by the same discursive practice in which the programme also function as *Agent*:

*“With the light behind and our shadows in front of us, we have tried to build bridges with both the sufferers and the ones who want to share the suffering. We*

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<sup>57</sup> Bir ana. İki Kız. Kış geliyor. Evlere kış geliyor. Şimdi taşı, tuğlayı kucaklayacağız. Şimdi umudu ve insanlığı kucaklayacağız. Safiye hanımın yaşlı kemiklerini ısıtacak, iki yavrusuna kol kanat olacak evi birlikte yapacağız. Haydi omuz verin (*Deniz Feneri*, October 2, 2003).

<sup>58</sup> Fatma'nın bir bebeği var. Sarı saçlı bir bebek. Bebeği uyutuyor. Fatma öpüyor, okşuyor. Ama sadece başı var bebeğin. Fatma'nın veremediği her hayal kadar yarım bir bebek. Şimdi arsalarına ev olacağız. Yaralarına ilaç olacağız. Dertlerine derman olacağız. Fatma'ya geldik. Onu güldüreceğiz (*Deniz Feneri*, October 9, 2003).

<sup>59</sup> Küçük Muhammed'in gözlerinde nur sönmüş. Kaç derdi çekiyor Muhammed kaç dirhemlik canında. Yemek yiyemiyor Muhammed. Babası çöp sırtlayarak şifa taşımak peşinde. Muhammed, Muhammed, biz burdayız Muhammed (*Deniz Feneri*, October 9, 2003).

*have moved on the dead-ends destitution where poverty resides” (November 16, 2003).*<sup>60</sup>

In these sentences, *inclusive-we* refers to the viewer as well as the programme producers, as opposed to *exclusive-we* that refers to the programme producers, but does not include viewer. The programmes, especially *Kimse Yok mu*, sometimes speak on behalf of its audiences, Turkey and Turkish citizens. In other words, Turkey and citizens could both replace “we”: the programme’s way of showing its identification with the Turkey is to treat them as equivalent to its composited “we”. Furthermore, the programme producers use the pronoun “you” where there are many actual addressee whose identity is unknown to the producer:

*“... Öznur’s medicine that costs a fortune is going to be ordered from abroad. Öznur and her house are going to be re-illuminated. Don’t wait; hurry up. Wouldn’t it worth for a young girl who walks, laughs and speaks like a nightingale” (Deniz Feneri, September 17, 2003).*<sup>61</sup>

*“...Come on Turkey, here is another opportunity for you. Come on it’s your turn” (Kimse Yok mu, October 13, 2003).*<sup>62</sup>

Contrary to *Kimse Yok mu* and *Deniz Feneri*, *Yolcu* narrates the poor as *Agent* suitable for the discourse of the programme. Material actions are generally related to the poor. For instance:

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<sup>60</sup> İşimizi ardımıza, gölgelerimizi önümüze alarak köprüler kurmaya çalıştık sıkıntıyı çekenler ve sıkıntıya ortak olmak isteyenlerle beraber. Yokluğun yuva kurduğu kentin yoksulluk çıkmazı sokaklarında yola düştük (November 16, 2003).

<sup>61</sup> ...Öznur’un ateş pahası ilaçları ta yurtdışından alınıp getirilecek ve Öznur ve Öznur’un evi tekrar aydınlanacak. Beklemeyin, acele edin. Yürüyen, gülen ve bülbüller gibi konuşan gencecik bir insan için değmez mi? (*Deniz Feneri*, September 17, 2003).

<sup>62</sup> ...İşte Türkiye bir fırsat daha burada doğuyor sizin için. Hadi hadi sıra sizde (*Kimse Yok mu*, October 13, 2003).

*“Necmettin Demir leaves home early and making his way to the busy and lively city. He is trying to fulfill the needs of his family with the money he earns in return for the service he is giving to people behind the simit counter by acting in a real and advanced life without paying attention to his paralysis” (Yolcu, May 6, 2003).<sup>63</sup>*

The programme follows the sequencing of topics determined both by the dialogical nature of the interview (Question-answer pairs). Narration often starts with the story of the poor with past perfect tense.

*“Her name is Kudret Toru. She was born in 1930, in a village called Kemal in Erzincan as one of the seven brothers. When she was only ten, she moved to İstanbul with her family and she has been engaged in breeding animal for ten years. She has been trying to make a living in Kartal, selling milk. Here is the story of the extraordinary life of Kudret Toru” (Yolcu, April 29, 2003).<sup>64</sup>*

Although *Yolcu* is peculiar in it’s positioning of the poor as doing material act, in the opening of the programmes, Kemal Ayyıldız explains the meaning of the programme as follows:

*“The journey to hope is restarting. There is still hope in the Anatolian people; they still have dreams and ambitions. They are people like you and me.’ However, they cannot realise their dreams most of the time. They need hope in order*

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<sup>63</sup> Necmettin Demir artık sabahın erken saatlerinde evinden çıkıp şehrin yaşayan, canlı dokusuna kavuşuyor. Açtığı simit tezgahında felçli oluşuna aldırış etmeksizin ciddi, yüksek bir yaşamda kendisi de bir rol bürünüp insanlara sunduğu hizmet karşılığında kazandığı ailesinin ihtiyaçlarını karşılamaya çalışmakta (Yolcu, May 6, 2003).

<sup>64</sup> Adı Kudret Toru. 1930 yılında Erzincan’ın Kemal köyünde yedi kardeşten biri olarak dünyaya gelmiş. Henüz on yaşındayken ailesiyle birlikte İstanbul’a taşınmış ve elli yıldan beri hayvan yetiştiriciliği yapmakta. İstanbul’un Kartal ilçesinde süt satarak geçimini sağlamaya çalışmakta. İşte Kudret Toru’nun sıradışı hayatının ibretli hikayesi (Yolcu, April 29, 2003).

*to make their dreams come true. A ray of light. Let's give it to them. The Traveller begins" (May 6, 2003).*<sup>65</sup>

*"In their journey to hope let us help them. What do you say? You are the traveller. The Traveller begins" (May 13, 2003).*<sup>66</sup>

As it is suggested above, the people in these quotations are waiting for embodiment of the producers, thus, they defines themselves as subjects who give "hope" and "help" to the poor. *Deniz Feneri* promises to marry off 21 "pure, innocent and beautiful Anatolian boys and girls", who are engaged but cannot get married due to financial incapacity. He says the doors of heaven will be opened to those who help marry off 7 couples (September 17, 2003). Thus, the poor are transformed into the object that opens the doors of heaven.

Voiceover texts are written from the point of view of those who have power to "fill the sun inside the family" and "become the light of hope" etc. The feelings and thoughts of the poor are not expressed in the voiceover texts. In the representations of *us* and *them*, the poor are defined in relation to the aims and values of the philanthropists and programme producers. The poor only provoke reactions that have effect on producers as a scene rather than reactions attributed to them. The poor are affective, emotional, cognitive objects of producers. As it is also seen in this citation, the poor is the object of charity and beneficence (*hayır-hasenat*). The "generous" programme makers and the benevolent audience that will "support" them, "take them under protection", "warm their old bones up", "heal" them, be

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<sup>65</sup> Ümide yolculuk yine başlıyor. Evet Anadolu insanında ümit var, hayal var, istek var. onlar da sizin gibi, bizim gibi insanlar. Ama onlara ulaşamıyorlar, çoğu zaman. Ulaşmaları için umut gerekiyor. Küçük bir umut. Hadi verelim. Ne dersiniz. Yolcu başlıyor (May 6, 2003).

<sup>66</sup> İnsanların ümide yolculuğunda onlara bir omuz da biz verelim. Ne dersiniz. Yolcu sizsiniz. Yolcu başlıyor. (May 13, 2003).

“their remedy” and will be “a shelter in their lands”. Thus, the poor become a means of self-realisation and fulfilment of the donor. Moreover, repeating the words in the narrative complex of the programme is a means of dramatising the events. Dramatisation is supported through film, music and sound effect, and through the voice of the reporter as well.

#### 4.4. INTERVIEWS IN THE PROGRAMMES

In interviews<sup>67</sup>, the presenters are engaged in different activities within the programmes, i.e. “exposition”, “interviewing” and “the managerial role” (Fairclough, 1995). The presenters control the topic through their questions. When they decide the poor response their questions enough according to their purposes, they introduce new topics. Questions generally are not open questions, giving the poor opportunity to express themselves openly. Some of them are “yes-no” questions, which require a “yes” or “no” answer aiming to confirm or disconfirm the situation.

In *Yolcu*, the presenter (Kemal Ayyıldız) shows empathy with the poor (interviewee) by completing or capping their explanations. Moreover, with his smiling face or with his explanation sometimes legitimises their explanations:

*K.A.: Naturally, everybody has different opportunities in life to survive. And yours are just limited with these. However, this cannot be a reason not to improve ourselves, not to follow the changes in the world, or not to struggle to get the better*

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<sup>67</sup> Kress and Van Leeuwen apply the concepts of *Given* and *New* to the media texts. Whereas the elements placed on the left are presented as *Given*, the elements placed on the right as *New*. In media interviews, thus, the interviewer places on the left of the interviewee. (From the viewer’s point of view) Hence, the interviewers who ask questions on behalf of the viewers are presented as familiar, as the interviewee presents *New* information- and are situated on the right (1999: 186-192). This state of position is also valid for the programmes, *Yolcu* and *Kimse Yok mu*.

*circumstances. Although you have many difficulties, what have you been doing, how have you been trying and what have you achieved now?*

*Necmettin Demir: I have got two children.*

*K.A.: Let God protect and mercy on them.*

*N.D.: I would like to do my best for my children's future and I think I am doing so. I am trying hard to provide them with enough food and also to afford the things they ask for. Yet, sometimes it really gets harder to meet all their needs.*

*K.A.: Now, feeding them is nourishment of body now, what do you do for nourishment of the soul?*

*N.D.: I am trying to give them enough affection and care as well as respect...*

*K.A.: Care and affection at their maximum level.*

*N.D.: Yes, that's right.*

*K.A.: Incredibly wonderful and touchy (Yolcu, May 6, 2003)<sup>68</sup>*

As seen in the interview above, the presenter not only asks questions, but also comments and evaluates as well as controlling the length of the answer. The presenter sometimes clarifies for them what he might be stating, before elaborating their statement. It can be said that he may be adjusting his discourse to them. The response "yes, that's right" here counts as agreement with the presenter's comment

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<sup>68</sup> K.A.: Tabi, herkesin imkanı farklı. Senin imkanın da bu. Ama bu bizim geri kalmamız, hayattaki çabamızdan, gelişmemizden geri kalmamız için sebep değil. Sen buna rağmen neler yapıyorsun, nasıl çabalıyorsun, neleri başarıyorsun şu anda.

Necmettin Demir: Şu anda iki çocuğum var.

K.A.: Allah bağışlasın.

N.D.: Çocuklarımın geleceği için elimden geleni yapmak istiyorum ve yapıyorum da. Karnını aç bırakmamaya çalışıyorum. Ne isterlerse yapmaya çalışıyorum. Ama yapamadığım oluyor.

K.A.: Şimdi karınlarını aç bırakmama tenin beslenmesi, ruhların beslenmesi için ne yapıyorsun?

N.D.: Elimden geldiği kadar sevgi gösteriyorum. Saygı...

K.A.: Maksimum şefkat

N.D.: Evet

K.A.: Çok güzel, harika. (Yolcu, May 6, 2003)

rather than answer to the question. The managerial work of the presenter as the interviewer is particularly clear (Fairclough, 1995). Thus, the poor are subordinated to the presenters, and they have to adapt discourse of the presenters who have the right to ask questions and even give orders.

*K.A.: Do you ever miss city life?*

*Yalçın: I sometimes go there to wander around. My sisters live in the city, so I go to visit them sometimes. Well, yes, my boss lets me go. He often tells me to wander go around the city. And I do so.*

*K.A.: Well, but how do you feel about when you are here first, and then the city?*

*Y.K.: I don't know. I see no differences, in fact. You see merely the oxygen here is the best, and also nature is beautiful, greenness, I don't know.*

*K.A.: To tell the truth, everything here is so gorgeous.*

*Y.K.: Everywhere is beautiful here; I mean the water here is good for you. If you eat egg here, it is good for you.*

*K.A.: And the people are so kind-hearted and humanist.*

*Y.K.: Well, yes, I am glad to be here. And I am also content with my job and my country, I am happy with everything (Yolcu, May 13, 2003).<sup>69</sup>*

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<sup>69</sup> K.A.: Hiç özlüyor musun peki şehri?

Yalçın: Arasına gezmeye gidiyorum. Ablamlar var orda. Onları görmeye gidiyorum bazen. Öyle, yani izin veriyo patron, git gez diyo. Gidiyorum, dolaşıyorum.

K.A.: Peki ne hissediyosun şehirle bura arasında?

Y.: Ne biliyim. Değişiklik görmüyorum. Buranın tek oksijeni güzel. Doğası güzel. Yeşillik. Ne bilim.

K.A.: Buranın aslına bakarsan herşeyi güzel.

Y.: Her tarafı güzel yani su içsen su yarar adama. Yumurta yesen yumurtası yarar. Ne bilim ben.

K.A.: İnsanlığı da güzel, kalbi de güzel.

Y.: Güzel yani memnunum, işimden de, vatanımdan da hepsinden memnunum yani. (Yolcu, May 13, 2003)

As mentioned above, the presenter may be adjusting his discourse to the poor. For instance, as also seen in the example above, Yalçın Kervan, who says that the beautiful thing about the place he lives is “merely the oxygen”, adds into these beauties the water and the egg after the guidance of Kemal Ayyıldız. However, this answer is also insufficient for the presenter. The interview has fulfilled its objective as the conversation has started with talking about the beauty of merely the oxygen and ended with Yalçın expressing his pleasure for the beauty of his job and country and thus, the topic can be changed. In *Yolcu*, the presenter prevents the poor from saying certain things, for examples, difficulties encountered in their lives.

The answers are sometimes implied within the questions themselves by which the presenters foreclose the contribution of the poor in ongoing interactions. In this context, open questions can be useful for encouraging the poor. The presenter tries to retrieve answers by questions. By repeating the answer of the interviewee and commenting on it, the presenter confirms the correctness of the answers. He shows his acceptance of truth or adequacy of those answers with “very beautiful” and “wonderful”. Reasons, causes, consequences function as explanations for events or opinions about the lives of the interviewees. In the discourse of the programme, negative events also feature “positive” opinions. This sometimes conceals underlying conditions in which they live. However, these positive opinions derive from interview situation.

The presenters demand clarification by repetition. Repetition during the interview serves as both expressive device to enhance their effectiveness and dramatization that leads to expression of evaluations and emotions.

*Ramazan: You have no electricity here, don't you?*

*Woman: No. I have only a hand-torch. I had a gas tube, but I couldn't replace it with a new one.*

*Ramazan: You have only a hand-torch, you say.*

*Woman: Yes, I am trying to survive with it, or I lit a fire.*

*Ramazan: And you have no water, either?*

*Woman: Yes, but I am trying to suffice it more or less... (Deniz Feneri, September 3, 2003)<sup>70</sup>*

Another example is the interview with the 75-year-old Hatice, who has been living alone and left by her four daughters.

*Presenter: Do you live alone?*

*Hatice Teyze: Yes, I do live alone.*

*Presenter: Don't you have any children or relatives?*

*Hatice Teyze: I have four daughters. They just threw me out into the streets. God shall leave them alone too. God shall do so.*

*Presenter: Did your daughters throw you out into the streets?*

*Hatice Teyze: Yes, my child, they threw me out into the streets. But, I can't do anything to change this. My home also burned down. I couldn't save even a single thing. That's okay. God is almighty.*

*Presenter: Is your husband alive?*

*Hatice Teyze: He's dead my child. He is dead my child.*

*Presenter: How long have you been living alone?*

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<sup>70</sup>Ramazan: Elektrik yok burda değil mi?

Kadın: Yok benim bi tek el elekriğim var. tüpüm vardı. Tüpü değiştiremedim.

R.A.: Bir tek el elektriğin var.

K.:Evet, onunla yetişiyorum. Ateş yakıyorum

R.A.: Su da yok.

K.: Suyu iyi kötü idare ediyorum...(Deniz Feneri, September 3, 2003)

*Hatice Teyze: For 26 years, I have been living alone.*

*Presenter: You have been living alone for 26 years! Have your daughters never looked after you?*

*Hatice Teyze: No, ever.*

*Presenter: Haven't you ever stayed with them?*

*Hatice Teyze: I lived with my older daughter for a month some time ago. God is almighty, my child. God is almighty. I will never forgive them, my child. I will never forgive them.*

*Presenter: How did you manage to bring them up all? It must have been hard and troublesome. Was it actually?*

*Hatice Teyze: What difficulties, I brought them up, my child, what difficulties. That's okay. But God is almighty, and I have left them to the mercy of God, my child (Deniz Feneri, September 3, 2003).<sup>71</sup>*

The rhetorical function of the repetition move is to underline the proposition or statement in order to be communicatively more effective. Stressing the

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<sup>71</sup> Muhabir: Tek başına mısın?

Hatice Teyze: Tek başınayım.

M.: Kimsen yok mu?

H.: 4 tane kızım var. Attılar beni sokağa onlar. Allah da onları atacak amma yavrum. Allah da onları atacak.

M.: Kızların seni sokağa, kapıya mı attı?

H.: Attılar yavrum beni sokağa attılar. Olsun ne yapım, benim evim yandı çatır çatır, bir eşya kurtaramadım Allah büyüktür.

M.: Eşin hayatta mı?

H.: Öldü yavrum. Öldü yavrum.

M.: Kaç senedir tek başına yaşıyorsun?

H.: 26 senedir tek başıma yaşıyom.

M.: 26 senedir tek başına yaşıyorsun. Kızların hiç sahip çıkmadılar mı?

H.: Çıkmadılar hiç.

M.: Hiç kalmadın mı onların yanında?

H.: Bi ara bir ay büyük kızımın yanında kaldım. Allah büyüktür be yavrum. Allah büyüktür. Sütümü helal etmiycem onlara yavrum. Onlara sütümü helal etmiycem yavrum.

M.: Nasıl büyüttün onları sıkıntıyla mı büyüttün?

H.: Ne sıkıntılarla büyüttüm yavrum onları, ne sıkıntılarla. Olsun yavrum be Allah büyüktür. Yavrum herşeyi Allah'a bıraktım ben. Hepsini Allah'a bıraktım yavrum. (Deniz Feneri, September 3, 2003)

loneliness and abandonedness of the elderly woman by repeated questions, the interviewer enhances their effectiveness and dramatises the loneliness of the woman. At the same time, in *Deniz Feneri*, especially “Ramazan Abi”, use repetition as a rhetorical strategy for retrieving the poor’s emotions:

*R.A.: You play with your friends, don’t you?*

*Recep: No.*

*Recep’s mother: He does not play with them.*

*R.A.: Don’t they let him join them?*

*His mother: No, they don’t. They run away from him.*

*R.A.: Well, you mean they don’t let him participate in the games?*

*His mother: They don’t let him join them?*

*R.A.: (To Recep) Why don’t they let you play with them, son?*

*Recep: Well, they are afraid of me, they exclude me.*

*His mother: (Weeping) They just push him away, I mean, they don’t want him around. They find him disgusting while eating.*

*R.A.: What can we do for you?*

*His mother: I want him to be operated on as soon as possible, because it is possible to cure him.*

*R.A.: He is your son, isn’t he?*

*His mother: Yes.*

*R.A.: This hurts, doesn’t it?*

*His mother: It really does hurt (Deniz Feneri, October 2, 2003).<sup>72</sup>*

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<sup>72</sup> R.A.: Arkadaşlarıyla oynuyosun değil mi?  
Recep: İı.  
Annesi: Oynamıyor.  
R.A.: Almıyorlar mı?

“This hurts, doesn’t it?” He attempts to define the feelings of people by manipulating them with his questions. It would imply that he knew how she felt better than she did. Likewise, when *Deniz Feneri* arrived Tepeköy, a village of Kütahya Simav, on August 27, 2003, a girl called Raziye tells that she wants to be literate. Raziye burst into tears as soon as “Ramazan Abi” asks her if her father could afford to buy a notebook and pens for her. Her father does not seem to understand what has made her daughter cry so that “Ramazan Abi” feels the necessity to explain him why: “Do you know What she is worried about? She is worried that her father couldn’t afford it. She is worried that her father even affords to buy a notebook, a pen and a school bag. No matter the governor of the city and the district gave them to her it makes no sense” (*Deniz Feneri*, August 27, 2003).

On the other hand, as Todorov suggests, a person makes a conversation with another only if he sees the other as an equivalent subject (Quated in Dallmayr, 1996: 7). The monologue-like expressions will be like commands unless he accepts the other as a subject. For instance, Uğur Arslan, in his dialogue with the poor, ends each of his sentences with an “Okay?” like an order, indicating that he, as a matter of fact, fails to establish a true dialogue but a monologue instead. In other words, the presenter delivers a monologue, but simulates a dialogue.

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Annesi: Almıyolar, hep kaçıyolar bundan.

R.A.: Aralarına almıyolar mı?

Annesi: Almıyolar.

R.A.: Neden almıyolar oğlum?

Recep: İşte korkuyolar, dışlıyolar.

Annesi: (Ağlayarak) Kovuyolar, yani istemiyolar, yemek yerken tiksiniyolarmış.

R.A.: Ne yapalım kızım senin için?

Annesi: Yani en kısa zamanda ameliyat etsin yani imkanı var.

R.A.: Evlat değil mi?

Annesi: Evet.

R.A.: Bu acıtıyor değil mi?

Annesi: Acıtmaz mı?(*Deniz Feneri*, October 2, 2003)

We can claim that the TV programmes especially *Kimse Yok mu* and *Yolcu* do not allow people to make complaints about the services of the municipalities for the poor through editing and the questions asked. As seen above in the quotations, the priorities of stories specified as negative experiences, sufferings, illnesses, disasters, etc. The staffs of the TV programme, *Deniz Feneri*, talks to a woman who tries to live in a house full of rats and bugs around with her daughter and tell her that they should have the municipality disinfect the house. Once the woman hears this and says that she had applied twice and that they hadn't come "Ramazan Abi" interrupts her and says "they will sister, they will" (*Şehir ve Ramazan*, October 30, 2003).<sup>73</sup> The people who do not accept their conditions with resignation and the ones who are not contented with their lives are not allowed to express their problems in these programmes. For example, when a woman suffering from health and economic problems asks the presenter for what she should feel gratitude, the presenter angrily responds, "There is always worse than our current situation." In addition, the voiceover says that this woman cannot grasp the meaning of life. (*Kimse Yok mu*, February 24, 2004,). However, what is interesting when the poverty programmes are considered is that the helpers prefer helping the people who live in the next neighbourhood or even their relatives by means of television. Television is accepted as a "magical key" that opens all the doors. For instance, Şükriye Hanım lives in Kütahya with her daughter and her disabled grandchild. They have applied for the private education centre in Kütahya for the disabled child to get an education. Yet, the centre has refused it with the reason of not being able to afford the price. However, the director of the centre promises the presenter before the cameras to

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<sup>73</sup> Besides, the same woman cannot get psychological treatment due to the fact that her green card has expired.

increase the quota for the presenter's wish and accept Esin to study at the centre (*Kimse Yok mu*, January 10, 2004). We might also consider the same situation for the municipalities that promise to give various aids or not to let the poor pay the water bill debts.

Consequently, the poor are not seen as the subjects of their lives in the discourse of the programmes, except *Yolcu*. They are passive objects for waiting aid of the generous donor. This discourse is supported by visual regimes of the programmes that I will discuss in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **Visual and Aural Representations of the Poor In the Charity Programmes**

No component of a television text is transmitted without first being “signified within aural/ visual forms of television discourse” (Hall, 1980:129). Visual codes of television (e.g. music, camera, lighting, editing, set design, the frames etc.) determine the representation in contrast to the radio, the narrative etc. In this chapter, I will focus on visual and aural representations of the poor in the programmes and discuss the articulation of the discourses of the programmes with the visual regimes.

#### **5.1. Visual Regime in the Representations of the Poor and the Techniques**

Here, the focus will be upon the techniques, slow motion, black and white photographs, close-up and limited motion that mark the representations of the poor in the charity programmes. I will also analyse the title sequences of the programmes that are crucial to pay attention. As Ellis (1982) mentions, the title sequence has all the features of a programme, since it is repeated every time the programmes format is used and usually provides a generalised, gestural conception of the programme it advertises.

### **5.1.1.Slow Motion, Black and White Photographs, Limited Motion and Close-up**

The most significant characteristic of the programmes that represent the poor in terms of visual language is “the slow motion of poverty” (Erdoğan, 2002d). The slow motion shot which turns into one of the most fundamental tools in dramatising the emotional incidents, addresses to “conscience” and “pity” through the music that accompanies the pictures. Having presented the interviews with the poor with normal shots, *Deniz Feneri* presents the scenes about the poor and their residences in slow motion. The slow motion shots together with the music and the voiceover emphasize the emotional incidents more dramatically. As Erdoğan (2002d: 204) states, the slow motion is the visual metaphor of “carrying the burden of the world” on one’s shoulders. Moreover, slow motion also serves as stretching time and space revealing the unseen for a new perception of the viewer. Arousing the feelings of conscience and mercy and picturing “the other side of the real life” comes to such extreme points that the creeping of Cemalettin, who is deprived of his two legs and one arm, in order to walk is given in slow motion (*Deniz Feneri*, September 3, 2003). On the other hand, seventeen-year-old Recep, whose face has been burnt because of candlelight, is exposed on the screens although he does not want to be seen. Despite the announcement of the presenter saying “He is hiding his face from everyone, even from us. You may not see it, either”, the “unremovable” marks on Recep’s face are exposed for the audience in order to activate the “conscience” of the “benevolent” people (*Deniz Feneri*, October 2, 2003). The sincerity of the presenter in asking Engin and Nuray on the same programme whether they would mind being seen on the screens is also a subject to be considered. When it is thought about these two

examples, some ethical questions raised. One of the questions to be asked about these two examples is that how can the audience believe sincerity of the programme? And how can the right of the poor be safeguarded?

The children who are a fundamental component of the visuality of poverty take part in the title sequence of *Kimse Yok mu*. The close shots of children are shown with the words “the tears are dried and the pains are relieved”, “to the light the hearts that need”. And the lighted candle represents the “fire” that will be lighted for the poor. The technique of close-up is used for catching an emotion. The camera invades the intimacy of the poor that would otherwise be missed the feeling of the scene, tear, sad faces etc. It can be argued that the close-ups of the face of the poor create identification for the audience as if they feel the same kind of feeling that the poor feel. Contrary to the other programmes, in the first series of *Kimse Yok mu*, there are two residences namely the studio and the residences of the poor. The colourful setting of the studio with bright lights, armchairs and coffee tables of glass are in absolute contrast with the devastated squatter’s houses of the poor without any infrastructure. Correspondingly, in *Yarınlar Umut Olsun*, poor people are like the “guests” from “Other Turkey” when they are seen in a studio with designer chairs, electronically donation counters, bright lights and plastic colourful decoration (Erdoğan, 2002d: 203). We may claim that the programme *Deniz Feneri* is more realistic as it is presented sometimes in a village, in a square or even under a bridge.

The static presence of the poor and their sad facial expressions are consistent with the discourse of the programmes. The hopelessness, passiveness and dullness of the poor are backed up by the shots. In the shots that are taken in their residence, the motions of the poor are so limited, usually in sitting position.

In the first period of *Kimse Yok mu*, images of sad poor people sitting or standing before their home and not looking at the camera with downcast eyes dominate the screen. On the other hand, the poor are shown at performing their job or household duties in *Yolcu* and in the first period of *Kimse Yok mu*. *Yolcu* uses exterior shots very often and presents the walks of the disabled on roads and streets by very long sequences, disturbing the audience.

*Yarımlar Umut Olsun* also uses filmed segments and interviews in their houses, workplaces or schools. For instance, while the voiceover tells about a sick child who cannot play with his mates, the child is seen looking out of the window, watching the kids play in slow motion. In addition to this, there were dramatic components that centred on whether or not 95 billion Turkish liras target would be reached. Repeating the amount of money that is raised and how much money left to reach the target amount is a part of the dramatisation. Sad and slow songs of the singers, which enhance the sentimentality, accompany the close shots of the poor families and the audience in the studio.

The presenters (in *Kimse Yok mu* and *Deniz Feneri*) stress the lack of space in family dwellings. In the programme, *Deniz Feneri*, in which the night shots are of significance, one can see the children who have to share the same room, even the same mattress. The dilapidated residences of the poor with smoking stoves, cracked walls and oilcloths on the windows are full of filthy or broken furniture. Therefore, there is nothing we may call privacy in the house of the poor. Every part of the poor's house, the bedroom, even what is inside the fridge is before our eyes to watch.

In the programme, *Kimse Yok mu*, in which the photographs are shown together with music and a voiceover, the poor also serve as photographic images.

The photographs, changing from black and white to colour, are the infinite colonisation of emotional moments. As Geraghty (1991) clarifies, photograph records private emotions, catches and exposes moments whose significance might otherwise be lost and search out that which the participants might wish to conceal. In other words, photograph fixes the meaning of a particular image. On the other hand, the photographs, which are thematically the constituent elements of the voiceover, depict the poor as sad, mournful, embracing the presenter and smiling with pain. The voiceover makes the photograph's meaning more stable by underlining the some aspects of the photograph according to the content of the voiceover.

Moreover, *Kimse Yok mu* and *Deniz Feneri* serve for the touristic representation of the regions as well. While *Kimse Yok mu* refers to the famous people and works of the place they have gone to, *Deniz Feneri* introduces the folk dances and specialities of the place. On the other hand, *Kimse Yok mu* tries to give the “hardworking” and “benevolent” side of the Anatolian people with the road stories. However, the programme that accepts the idea that the culture of poverty is something that can be “discovered” or “exposed” by road stories makes it romantic with the photographic images.

The advertisements of the companies have an important role on the visual regime of the programmes (*Kimse Yok mu* and *Deniz Feneri*). In *Deniz Feneri* close shots, as well as the parcels that say The Association of Deniz Feneri on them advertise the companies that give aid. On the other hand, it may be said that *Kimse Yok mu* serves as programme of advertising as well. The aids that will be handed to the poor are collected from the tradesmen in towns. After advertising the company

with the closer shot of the camera, the camera moves inside. Moreover, the presenter who reads the names one by one advertises the companies that give aid.

Camera height also plays important means of expression in visual regime. A high angle makes the subject look small and insignificant. In other words, the audience of the presenter has power over the poor seen from a high angle. The story of Selami, who has been trying to make a living by selling socks in front of a mosque despite his paralysed legs, ends with shots taken in a high and a far angle as he is behind the iron railing. These shots depict the loneliness and hopelessness of Selami despite his “determination” and “faith” (*Yolcu*, June 3, 2003). The shots taken behind the iron railings, a window or a door, which is a visual regime also used in *Deniz Feneri*, symbolise the “imprisoned”, “cornered” and “hopeless” state of the poor.

### **5.1.2. The Title Sequences of the Charity Programmes**

The programme, *Deniz Feneri*, begins with the image of a quiet sea and a far lighthouse with lights on at a night of dark blue colours as its name suggests. On the images the titles of production and management: Uğur Arslan, Ramazan İbrahim Uğurlu and *Deniz Feneri* are written in turn.

In the programme, which aims at being “a remedy to their pains” as the lighthouse leads the way to the ships at night, the shots are usually taken at nights. The title sequence in which “Ramazan Abi” and Uğur Arslan have the leading roles in the slow motion sequence is showed several times every week. While “Ramazan Abi” is walking past the lighthouse and disappearing, the images of waves and the ambulance of *Deniz Feneri* at the back accompany the image of Uğur Arslan, who

walks with a jumper on his shoulders like an actor of a drama until the end of the title sequence. Moreover, these words are seen on the screen: “When the dark shadow of hopelessness falls before your eyes, set off the road! Be determined! Be patient! And carry on with helping until death comes to you!” In the programme, *Şehir ve Ramazan*, which is broadcasted every day during the Ramadan, “Ramazan Abi” and Uğur Arslan are shown before a lighted fire at night and this text is read by a voiceover:

It is now time to get up and go  
To give hand to the empty hand reaching out for you  
Be the sun for the cold  
The roof for the homeless  
Company for the one who suffers from loneliness  
The torch lights the torch  
The sun lights the sun  
It is your inactivity that extends darkness, you not moving  
Move and go  
Go to the one waiting for you  
To the painful one, to the hungry and homeless  
To the poor  
Take the bag of mercy  
Hold the stick of humanity  
Go, they are waiting for you, go!<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> “Şimdi kalkıp gitmeli/ Bomboş uzanan ele el vermeli/ Soğukta kalana güneş/ Açıkta kalana çatı/ Yalnız kalana yoldaş olmalı/ Fener fenerden tutuşur/ Güneş güneşten/ Karanlığı yayan senin çakılıp kalmandır, kalkıp gitmemen/ Kalk ve git/ Seni bekleyene git/ Elem çekene, aç ve açık kalana, yolsuz

In this respect while poverty is referred as “darkness”, the poor is described as the one who is “homeless in cold, hungry and alone” and who “suffers from pain”.

The title sequence of *Kimse Yok mu* should also be visually dwelled on. The images of the people who run up and down with a fast music are cloudy. Once the music stops and the image are clear, the presenter of the programme appears in the crowd next to a family. After the same sequence is repeated several times, as the presenter with a child on his lap is looking into the camera, with a rather general shot the words *Kimse Yok mu* are formed from those cloudy images of the people. In this respect, the thing that “offers a hand for help” and supports the poor in this fast pace of life is *Kimse Yok mu*, in other words it is the presenter of the programme, İkbal Gürpınar. At this point, it may be concluded that what Erdoğan says (2002d: 203) about Metin Akpınar, the presenter of the programme *Yarınlar Umut Olsun*, is valid for all the TV presenters. The presenters who are “almost angels of help” appear as spectacular “Simulations of Hızır”, peculiar to the modern times of the society.

*Yolcu*, which aims at “giving hope” to the poor and “making them happy”, uses the navigator as its logo in accordance with its motto. In the title sequence, the close shots of the people who were once seen in the programme accompany the image of a rolling navigator. In the closing title sequence, the names of the people who work in the production of the programme are seen on the image of the rolling navigator.

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yoksul kalana git/ Sirtına merhametin heybesini vur/ Eline hamiyet esasını al/ Git, seni bekliyorlar git.”

## **5.2. Fragmentation of the Body**

In the programmes, the shots directed to their faces are striking. In the scenes, the poor lower their eyes, which emphasises that they are hopeless, passive and dull. Even when camera is parallel to them it is noticed that their eyes are lowered. This situation, as Erdoğan (2002d) suggests, provides us with a visual language that causes the affection and philanthropy of the audience to be activated. In the emotional segments of narration in which the poor explain “sufferings, illnesses, hardness” in their lives, the camera’s gaze is focused on them. In particular, the camera moves in for bigger close-ups of the poor who are revealing their feelings and crying. Especially, desperate- looking, crying children are presented as the faces of poverty. Similarly, in images of sad or crying faces, the poor are waiting for the support. The poor are needy and hope can only be restored through the aid of the programmes and the viewer.

The poor, who is generally portrayed in sitting or standing, look at the camera with downcast eyes. They do not establish eye contact with the presenter as well, lowering their eyes or looking into their hands. Erdoğan (2002c) claims that social relationships have gradually developed an ocularcentric characteristic in the narratives of the poor-subaltern. This ends up in a situation in which the rich either refuses to see or looks with a negative and despising attitude and in which the children who work in the streets does not want to be seen and are embarrassed once seen. In the televisual representation of the poor, this situation is apparent when the poor cannot look in the eye of the presenter once she/he speaks or when she/he usually lowers her/his eyes.

According to Erdoğan (2002d: 205), the interpretation of the televisual representation of poverty is pornographic. The object of both porno films and the shows about the poor is the body and they both “expose” what is called private. The poor on the screens are like the women on the pornos. “One always desires the penis while the other desires bread or pills; one is phallogentric while the other is gastronomical or pathological. One is there to arouse your libido, yet the other activates your conscience”. In pornography, slow motion and close shots are used like the ones during the representation of poverty. While pornography focuses on sexual organs, the other emphasises a lame foot and pale or sad eyes. In this respect, the emotions of the audience are evoked for making aid.

### **5.3. Effacing the Voice of the Poor**

In the programmes, it is suggested that the voiceover and subtitling the story of the poor efface the voice of the poor. The meaning of the poor’s activities and lives are interpreted in the voiceover and in the subtitles for the audience. However, as it is discussed above, the presenter’s questions and the discourse of the programmes do not make possible the talking of the poor. Silence indicates not just being able to talk, but also they are effectively muted in the silencing. The voice of the poor is separated from the image especially by voiceover. The voiceover thus serves the important unrecognised function of explaining visual images that are meant to capture such unambiguous profilmic events, in the discourse of the programmes, the voiceover “reveals what really happens.”

In the programmes, a number of technical features are used for verisimilitude. In *Deniz Feneri*, the narrative begins with the arrival of the presenters in the neighbourhood in which the poor live. After establishing shot, the shots in the residences of the poor continue (usually a squatter's house, sometimes a shed, even a toilet). The most important feature of the programme is that it does not use microphone. The voices of the poor people effaced are transmitted to the viewers via the microphone attached to the presenter's collar. Occasionally, the voices of the poor are given as subtitles on the screens. Furthermore, the programme presenters act as if the camera is not there. The programme, thus, "produces 'actuality' that it gets the world to (seemingly) speak for itself, just as the documentary camera does" (Shapiro, 1997: 93). Similarly, the programmes also claim that they reflect the poor's lives. Kress and Van Leeuwen (1999: 383) call these kinds of image as an "offer" which "offers" the represented participants to the viewer as "items of information, objects of contemplation, impersonally as though they are specimens in a display case". The viewer's role is that of an "invisible onlooker" in whom the viewer must have the illusion that the represented do not know they are being looked at and in which the represented must pretend that they are not being watched. Moreover, the camera turns around the residence describing the place and the life conditions according to the content of the conversation. As mentioned above, while the camera, guided by the presenter, is turning around the poor, it functions as a voyeur. In the programmes in which the effects and the cuts are reduced in order to provide the sense of reality, the rolling camera has a significant role. Kilborn (1994), who discusses the strategies behind the representation of the reality shows, claims that the technical features such as "picture wobble, problems with framing,

temporary loss of focus, poor sound quality” (tell-tale “handheld” signs) will be observed as the “determiner” of the authenticity in the reality shows. On the other hand, Geuens (1993) explains principal characteristics of the “moving camera” as such: “...the ability to evoke point of view, present time and directorial signature- have in common is their capacity to arouse viewers”. On the other hand, during the live broadcasting in *Deniz Feneri*, the presenter looks directly at the viewer’s eyes, thus, he establishes contact with the viewer, which is also vital for taking help from them.

### **5.3.1. Subtitling the Voice and the Story of the Poor**

*Deniz Feneri* and *Kimse Yok mu* use subtitles on the screen. It may be claimed that these subtitles predetermine how the visual encoding will be interpreted. For instance: “His father has sold her to an old man for 50 million”(Deniz Feneri, February 25, 2004). “An old body that has not been washed for 7 years” (*Deniz Feneri*, February 18, 2004). “His relatives did not support him” (*Kimse Yok mu*, July 28, 2003). “Little Ümit: He could not be operated” (*Kimse Yok mu*, July 28, 2003) Furthermore, subtitles are the most powerful tool used to attract the viewer.

During the representation of the shots, which have been taken beforehand about the poor, one of the striking features is that the presenter in *Deniz Feneri* interferes and relates the story before and after the aid. With parallel editing, both the regulations in the new houses where the poor will be moved to and the scenes of the kids and the poor while bathing and eating are given (For instance, January 7 2004, the story of The Dabak Family). Narrating the story, “the solution” for the problems

of the poor is “delayed” as if it were a part of a scenario. The Dabak Family, whose house has been destroyed by the flood, was taken to another house. However, they were unaware of the fact that the house would be theirs. “Delay” turns into a means of violence for the poor, though the audience is aware of the situation. In the programme, *Kimse Yok mu*, squeezing the poor families that are assisted into a room in the name of a “surprise” is a part of turning poverty into a show. The tears upon seeing the new furniture and clothes, their confused and helpless looks are things that the poor, with feelings played like toys, has to bear in order to get aid. For instance, Hüseyin and Güleser, one of whose kids died of cancer, and who have been trying to cure the other kid for 12 years, feel faint once they see their son, Kürşat, in his new clothes. Güleser, who frequently faints, feels faint again and the father is understood to have a heart problem. In this situation, the presenter “whose heart is burning like a fire in order to help” says these words: “Let it be, let them cry. The happiness has come at last”(Kimse Yok mu, 29 September 2003).

We may claim that in the programmes (*Yolcu* and *Kimse Yok mu*) that represent poverty as something that enriches the human souls, the stories of the poor are contradictory to the facial expressions that serve very specific functions in either complementing verbal messages or substituting for them. This situation, as mentioned before, stems from the fact that the presenter directs the conversations made with the poor. In the interviews, not a single question is asked about the anxieties and the things they call problems. There is not an indication of the economic, cultural, social problems and symbolic violence that the poor is exposed to. For instance, a striking example is that once the problem of unemployment is under concern, the words stop and the music begins. For instance, the paralysed

Necmettin says that he fell for life after marriage. However, the music starts after these words of Necmettin about his not being able to find a job: “I don’t know whether I felt responsible after I got married. I think I started working because of this marriage. I could not find a job for 4 years. Therefore, I worked as a simit seller” (*Yolcu*, May 6, 2003).

While hopelessness, passiveness and dullness of the poor are backed up by the visual regime of the programmes, the poor who are represented as passive objects that are “waiting for the aid” are also articulated with slow motion, slow music, limited motion that all evoke emotions of the audience.

## CONCLUSION

In this study, I have analysed the representations of the poor in the charity programmes in Turkey with respect to the roles ascribed to them and how poverty is represented ideologically, socially and politically.

I have briefly examined historical background of cultural representations of poverty and the poor. We can talk about continuity and significant breaks in the representations of the poor. Although romanticisation of the poor as owner of moral values continue in terms of the programmes, linking poverty with criminality has come to the fore in media discourse where point of view towards the poor changes from sympathetic to the negative and improving status has become impossible without losing moral values as seen in cinema, literature and media. The ideology of Özal period that valued wealth and individual ambition became effective in portraying the poor in negative terms. “Poor but happy” and “poor but honest” stereotypes only become functional in rescuing them from categorization of “undeserving” poor and are made them worthy for assistance as well.

In this context, we can argue that the programmes implicitly refer to two distinguished categories of the poor as “deserving” and “undeserving”. On the one hand, passive poor are idealised as being live in “resignation” and “forbearance” that deserve the affection and philanthropy of the donor, on the other hand, the children living in the streets (*sokak çocukları*) or sniffing glue (*tinerci çocuklar*) and prostitutes are excluded from philanthropist’s attention. As Bauman (1998: 85)

mentions, “it is those who are not up to the norm”, it is the actions of the excluded marked for exclusion-wrong actions that brings the plight of exclusion upon them”.

The programmes serve the internalisation and tranquillisation of poverty in Islamic discourse. While temporariness of the world is often emphasised, poverty is presented as the key to eternal salvation if the poor become relatively content and wait patiently to be rewarded in the afterlife for their moral assets. On the other hand, the poor are also objects through which the donor finds satisfaction. Philanthropy is represented as “a vehicle of personal salvation” as Bauman (1998: 87) clarifies in terms of Christianity, the poor are therefore God’s “gift” to everybody else: “an occasion to practice self-sacrifice, to live a virtuous life to repent sins and to earn heavenly bliss”. In other words, you need to give first, in order to be given later. Thus, the needy are constructed through images of producers and the donor.

As opposed to the traditional culture of Islam that prohibits publicity, the programmes help to poor openly. The names of the donors are given as subtitles on the screens and the programmes also serve as programmes of advertising that would be sponsoring the programmes as well. As a result, Muslims transform helping the poor and caring for them into a kind of show in which they identify poverty in front of the poor, and even squeezing the poor families into a room in the name of a “surprise”. Conversely, *Yarınlar Umut Olsun* that emphasizes entertainment and assistance the needy people renders the poor “insignificant” in the “light” of famous people and in a studio with designer chairs, electronically donation counters, bright lights and plastic colourful decoration.

The poor are also constructed as passive object in the language of the programmes. The poor are passivated when they are represented as *Affected* or

*Victim*. The negative situations, for instance, debt, illnesses etc., which are all situations affecting or involving the poor, are represented as active Causer. Moreover, the poor are characterised as helpless, the audience repeatedly remind of incapacibilities of the poor for taking care of families. They are hopeless without the helping of the programmes. The hopelessness, passiveness and dullness of the poor are backed up by shots. Significantly, the poor are not described in material processes (processes of doing). Thus, the poor are passivated, at the same time, social, political and economic problems are backgrounded. Whereas the poor are positioned as object philanthropists are characterised as subjects who make the poor happy. Therefore, the philanthropists are presented as the *Beneficiary* “one to whom or for whom the process said to take place” (Halliday, 1985: 132). In *Kimse Yok mu*, the poor are always asked to smile after the aid is made which proves the philanthropist’s success and self-realisation.

The poverty centres on the image of the children, which is one of the dramatic components of the programmes. Visual regimes of the programmes are also indicative in creating dramatisation. The slow motion, the visual metaphor of “carrying the burden of the world” on one’s shoulders, shots together with the slow mournful music and voiceover emphasise the emotional incidents more dramatically. The poor are also characterised in the black and white photographs that re infinite colonisation of emotional moments. Moreover, the voiceover given in the first personal pronoun “I” and poor’s letters read in *Deniz Feneri* also dramatise events which have important role in evoking pity and philanthropy in the audience. ‘Benevolence ‘ of the philanthropist is also aroused through the repetition of “greatness” of Turkish people in nationalist discourse.

The reasons of poverty in the programmes are portrayed as circular, while many effects are presented as causes, and many causes are seen as effects. In other words, hunger, illness, unemployment, lack of money and debt are presented as both causes and effects of poverty. In this respect, while poverty is not placed on social, cultural, political and economic context, the causes of poverty are de-historicized. In other words, they do not make reference historical and structural causes of poverty. The programmes present charity as the correct answer to poverty. They claim that they create permanent change in the lives of the needy people and reduce poverty into personal dramas.

The themes that is underlined especially in *Yolcu* and *Kimse Yok mu* are that “coming to a mutual understanding with the people”, “learning from the people” who are poor but live in resignation and forbearance without revolt. They show the exaltedness of forbearance and resignation in temporary world. In other words, the poor are able to become happy despite having nothing contrary to the rich people. The poor, thus, are romanticised and idealised.

Although these programmes reduce poverty in a very individualised perspective with no general context, they give voice to people normally not heard in the media. What is disturbing is the transformation of social, political and economic problems into dramatic life stories that are represented as a consequence of their own faults and negligence.

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