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Reflection of Alevi Rituals in Anatolia on Language, Literature and Music

Anadolu Alevi Ritüellerinin Dile, Edebiyata ve Müziğe Yansımaları

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Abstract: In this article will deal with a brief oral history of the Alevis. Alevi discourse also includes another poetical form which is called “mâni, koşma and deyiş”. In our research, the belief structure of the Alevi culture and the way of worship are discussed based on the mâni and the koşma. In addition, the syllable structure and meanings of mâni, koşma and deyiş are presented with Turkish and English examples. Mâni, an anonymous folk poem in Turkish folk literature consists of an independent quatrain with the rhyme pattern. This poetical form which is also known in Turkish folk literature since the 13th.century. Number of syllable in each many line varies between 7 and 11. Mâni is used mainly by young men and women in public ceremonies such as marriage and social get together as a means of communication to express their love which is the main theme of the form. But several Alevi ashiks, such as Kaygusuz Abdal and Hatayi (pen name of Shah Ismail), Muhiddin Abdal inserted their pen name in that short poetical form and transformed it into an individual creation. We find in such form written by the Alevi ashiks, the expression of their religious ideology and basic norms, principles and values of the Alevi community. The basic poetical form koşma of the Alevi poetical is called koşma. The koşma may be known by several names, such as deyiş, deme, düvazımam, mersiye, şarkı, ağız, depending on musical tune it is associated with in the local tradition, social context, the geographic area, other performance components. These word structures and formulas reveal the Alevi cultural structure in religious rituals, music and art. In the study, besides mentioning the effect of Alevi rituals and beliefs on the narrator's performance, the reflection of formulaic numbers and folk deyiş on language, literature and idioms specific to Alevi culture has been tried to be mentioned within the limitation of certain examples.

Structured Abstract: The Alevi discourse, in general can be defined as a complex unit which includes several cultural forms and genres which may be categorized from different perspectives. Oral and written may be a criteria, prose and poetry another. The themes and meaning may further be used in that categorization. Some theoretical discussions are due to explain the difficulty of such an approach to taxonomy.

It should be pointed out first that the Alevi culture is created, transmitted, and survived mainly as an oral discourse. The major role in that process is played by the Alevi poetry. My discussion of the the Alevi poetical discourse will briefly deal with an Alevi ritual Cem which functions as an umbrella bringing together, the poetry, ritual dance Semah and recitation of prayers and hymns. The Alevi poetry which is the creation of Bektaşî, urbanite Alevi poets who used the poetical forms of the classical Ottoman literature, or court literature will be excluded from my discussion. These forms includes gazel, kaside, kıt'a, terciibend,

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terkib-i bend, mersiye etc which follow the form, style and the metric system used mainly by the Medresse educated court poets.

The Alevi poetry which is the creation of the Alevi aşık, minstrel, played a major role in transmitting the Alevi moral principles, the social and individual behaviors, the history of the Alevi community, the legendary life stories of the Alevi Babas and Dedes and most importantly, the Alevi religious beliefs and ritual. It is that poetry which nurtures the love, and respect of Ali, his family and his followers. And the hate of the enemy of the Alevis. Much more of than these the Alevi poetical discourse functioned as a means of commemoration and healing which will be discussed later. The Alevi aşık poetry is always sung as a song by the accompaniment of a musical instrument called saz which has different names based on the number of frets and strings.

The place of performance plays not a small role in the poetical structure of the hikâye. The most suitable space for the hikâye performance is the coffee house where people meet, sip coffee or tea, gossip, talk politics or (now) watch television programs. A Turkish expression says “Gönül ne kahve ister ne kahvehane, gönül sohbet ister, kahve bahane” [my heart neither misses the coffee or coffee house, my heart misses friends; the coffee house is just a pretext.] Because of a lack of clubs, libraries and other places for social activity the coffee house has become a social meeting place. The importance of social meeting places in creating, sustaining and transmitting culture has been, for the last three decades an important issue in social science and humanities research. Without the comfort of such a place it would be difficult to enjoy the performance. The performance time is usually Ramadan, after the evening meal when people do not want to go to sleep until the early meal, the sahur. It is the time of entertainment for other folklore performance, such as the shadow play theatre Karagöz, the narration of Meddah story, and musical concerts. Başgöz sees the digression in the poetical organization of the hikâye performance as an important component which links the past and present culture, thus providing security for the audience.

In this context, the physical conditions necessary for the creation of oral tradition products are important. These environmental factors directly affect the performance and cause significant changes in the quality of genre, content and context in literary texts. It has been observed that in the past, when there was little or no mass media and technological development, minstrels gave importance to appropriate physical conditions to provide the necessary motivation while performing their art. In this context, it should be noted that the quality of the audience and the effect of space are of undeniable importance in the performance of oral tradition products. Cem, poetry, dance, semah, prayer and hymns, which are recited or performed as performances in Cem houses, lodges, chat rooms or village coffeehouses, which are the places where Alevi rituals are performed, also show what socio-cultural changes the Alevi-Bektashi culture has been subjected to from past to present. is of importance. It is clear that these religious worships and cultural activities, which were held hundreds of years ago, are not practiced as they used to be due to the influence of changing and transforming cultural norms. However, the written texts and oral contents we have received are important for future generations and today's young people to connect with the past and see how deep-rooted history and literary richness cultural value norms have.

Keywords: Turkish Language, folklore, Alevi rituals, oral tradition, verbal formula

Öz: Bu yazıda Alevilerin kısa bir sözlü tarihi ele alınmıştır. Alevi söylemi ayrıca “mâni, koşma ve deyiş” olarak adlandırılan başka bir şiir biçimini de içermektedir. Araştırmamızda Alevi kültürünün inanç yapısı ve ibadet şekli mâni ve koşma temelinde ele alınmıştır. Ayrıca mâni, koşma ve deyiş kelimelerinin hece yapısı ve anlamları Türkçe ve İngilizce örneklerle sunulmuştur. Türk halk edebiyatında anonim bir halk şiiri olan mâni, kafiye düzenine sahip bağımsız bir dördlükten oluşmaktadır. Bu nazım biçimi Türk halk edebiyatında da 13. yüzyıldan itibaren bilinmektedir. Her bir dizedeki hece sayısı 7'den 11'e kadar değişmektedir. Mâni, özellikle genç erkek ve kadınlar tarafından evlilik ve sosyal toplantılar gibi resmî törenlerde, kültürün ve geleneğin gereği olarak duygular ve beklentilerin ifadesi için kullanılmıştır. Ancak Kaygusuz Abdal ve Hatayi (Şah İsmail'in müstear adı), Muhiddin Abdal gibi birçok Alevi âşık, mahlaslarını bu kısa manzum forma sokarak mahlaslarını bireysel yaratıma dönüştürmüştür. Alevi âşıkların yazdığı bu formda onların dini ideolojilerinin ve Alevi toplumunun temel norm, ilke ve değerlerinin ifadesini bulunmaktadır. Koşma olarak adlandırılan Alevi şiirinin temel şiirsel biçiminde yerel gelenek, sosyal bağlam, coğrafi bölge ve diğer icra unsurları içinde ilişkilendirildiği ezgiye göre koşma, deme, duvazımam, mersiye, şarkı, lehçe gibi isimlerle anılabilmektedir. Bu kelime yapıları ve formüller, dini ritüellerde, müzikte ve sanatta Alevi inancının kültürel

yapısını ortaya koymaktadır. Yapılan araştırmada Alevi ritüel ve inançlarının anlatıcı performansı üzerindeki etkisine değinilmesinin yanında, formülistik sayılarla halk deyişlerinin Alevi kültürü özelinde dil, edebiyat ve deyişlere yansımalarına belli örnekler sınırlılığında değinilmeye çalışılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Türk Dili, folklor, Alevi ritüelleri, sözlü gelenek, sözlü formül

Introduction

1. Historical Background:

Today, the discussion of "What is Alevi?" continues in very complex ways. I will try to present a general definition of Alevi belief within the restrictions of this paper. "The word 'Alevi', which literally means 'belonging to Ali' in Arabic, has been used to express the love, devotion and respect for Ali in Islamic history and Sufi literature" (Fığlalı, 1990, p. 7). However, we can say that Anatolian Alevis are different from people who love Ali in other countries: Anatolian Alevis have never held state power, nor had the status of a state religion. In addition, being an Alevi is today considered the same as being a Bektashi. The Bektashi order is believed to have been founded by Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli (1990, p. 7). We can say that Alevi-Bektashi belief is an Islamic sect which was practiced by nomadic and semi-nomadic Turkish communities of Central Asia after they encountered Islam. Some cultural and religious elements -like shamanism- which they had in Central Asia, were combined with Islamic motifs within Alevi-Bektashi belief and rituals. Wise men and dervishes of Horasan (like Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli) pioneered the introduction of the earlier beliefs and rituals into Anatolia. We should recognize that, in the process of the Turkish people's adoption of Islam, mysticism has played a very important role. According to Figali, Sufi masters and dervishes taught Islam to the Turkish people in a gentle and a broad way (1990, p. 85).

Alevism, which is evaluated within "Heterodox Islam" or "folk Islam", has a syncretic structure. In the historical process, Alevism has been shaped by the beliefs of Kurds, Zazas, Arabs and different ethnic groups living in Anatolia, as well as nomadic or rural Turkmens, the Sufi thought in heterodox sects such as Kalenderism, Haydariism and Bektashiism, and especially the twelve-imam Iranian Shiism since the 16th century effect can be mentioned. The heterodox understanding of Islam, which began to enter and spread in Anatolia through the Sufi dervishes of Khorasan from the thirteenth century and had an impact on the formation of Alevism, bears the traces of mystical cultures with ancient Buddhist, Zoroastrian, Manichean, Jewish and Christian traditions in the geography where it spread.

It is seen that the term Alevi was not used in Anatolia until the 19th century, and the term Kızılbaş was used instead (Massicard, 2007, p. 30). If we expand this concept a little more; Alevism has historically experienced three separate de facto periods. The first of these is the part that can be defined as its formation and development process, which is generally called the Formation Period (11th century - 15th century). This process is a period that highlights both the birth and historicization of Alevism. The second is the Safavid (Kızılbaş) Period (16th century-19th century). In this period, the tensions experienced during the formation process ended and Alevism took on the identity of a religious community and a mass with heterodox and syncretic characteristics tried to isolate itself from the general society with its beliefs and rituals. The last one is the Modern Alevism Period (the process that has continued since the mid-20th century), which reflects the new positions of Alevis in the face of modernity (Subaşı, 2010, 79; Yıldırım, 2012, 137 as cited in Ceylan, 2015, p. 212). According to Aktaş, immigrants who moved from traditional and agricultural communities to modern and rational organizations in the urban industry and service sectors, on the one hand, tried to maintain old religious relations and identities, and on the other hand, to establish and transform new relations and social identities (2004, p. 3). To summarize from Ateş; Today, the most important issue that arises with urbanization for Alevis seems to be the Cemevi problem. There was no need for a special place to perform worship in the villages. Because

places of worship were not a problem in the villages. Urbanization has made this essential place important for Alevi to carry out their cultural and religious activities. Cem Houses have taken on the symbol of Alevi identity and Alevism rather than a place of worship in cities (2011, p. 362).

Karin Vorhoff's opinions are important to us. According to that: The awakened interest in Alevism that began in the nineties was paralleled by an unexpected revival of traditional Alevi culture. Alevi religious practices and social institutions were remembered and resumed. Insofar as they were hardly intact by the end of the eighties, an intensive communication among the members of the "to-be-revived-community" was necessary. This was not realized by the traditional Alevi institutions and religious elite but by a new, western-educated elite via modern media and secular forms of organization; associations, foundations, concerts, staging of the traditional rites, public conferences and, last but not least, the huge mass of publications on Alevism already mentioned. Essentially, these new writings try to figure out what Alevism is all about. Far from presenting an objective picture of the Alevi past and present and of the teachings, practices and exponents of Alevism-as all the texts claim-this literature is sustained by quite subjective attitudes and intentions. In this case these books, magazines, and pamphlets can be taken as the expression of the still continuing process of instilling new life into Alevi culture and community (1998, pp. 233-234).

Up until now the Alevi-Bektashi people have maintained their beliefs, thoughts, policy, philosophy, traditions and practices through some cultural instruments (*muhabbet*) which they perform in or out of *cem* rituals (worship gatherings), such as folk poems, folk songs (*nefes*, *deyiş*, *duvazimam* and so on) and folk dances (*semah*). *Cem* rituals have social, educational, cultural and political dimensions as well as their inherent religious dimension. *Cem* rituals, folk poems and dances change from one region to another. Despite the differences between them, it is believed that their "essence" is same. We can say that the saying "there is one path but a thousand ways" is the major notion in their cosmology. In addition, we can say that many elements of Alevi-Bektashi rituals, beliefs and customs existed before Islam and are still carried on.

2. Language, Literature, music and Cem Rituals in Alevi Culture

The religious ritual of the Alevi-Bektashi community is the *cem*. As the socio-religious leaders in the community, the *dedes* conduct the *cem* rituals. In general, a *dede* should have the following qualities: be descendant of the prophet Muhammed; act as an educator and moral guide for the community; be knowledgeable and exemplary in his character and manners. *Cem* ritual includes such activities as prayers (including *gülbanks*); *muhabbet* (gatherings and cordial conversations about any aspect -philosophical, political, social, cultural, religious, and so on- of life and the cosmos). In addition, there is the fulfillment of the "12 services": the distribution of *lokma* (blessed food); *semah* (the religious music and dance performed by women and men together); religious poems and songs, such as *deyiş/nefes*, *duvazimam*; eating and drinking together. A *zakir* is the person who sings *deyiş* or *duvazimam* accompanied by his instrument, the *saz*, at the proper time during the *cem*. If the *dede* can play the *saz* and sing he can take over some of the tasks of the *zakir*. Another task of the *zakir* is to provide rhythm to the other members while they participate in singing some songs, poems and prayers as a chorus at the critical stages of the *cem* ritual. As a genre, the *gülbanks* is told "in ceremonial as well as ordinary settings; in religious as well as secular contexts" (McDowell, 1985, pp. 19-21); in *cem* rituals, Alevi gatherings and *muhabbets* (in *cem* rituals or outside them), based on certain formulas. *Gülbanks* are either created spontaneously or recited.

According to Ayhan Erol, "claiming that the style, repertoire, or a single piece of this repertoire of a musical genre belongs to any community requires a strong relationship between that community and the music said to belong to them" (Erol, 2009, p. 132). Alevi-Bektashi music has preserved its artistic value significantly in the transition from Anatolian oral tradition to music, with its aesthetic harmony and strong literary structure. Alevi *deyiş*'s, *gülbanks*, folk songs have

left a strong impact on the society they represent with their content and musical symphony. Alevi music has gained its own religious and cultural tradition with its musical rituals and "muhabbet" such as İkrar Cemi, Görgü Cemi, Abdal Musa Cemi, Pir Sultan Abdal Cemi, and has established a strong bond with the society with its socio-cultural value norms.

According to Zelyut, "Cem" literally means unity, togetherness. In Alevism, the cem ritual led by the dedes, who are believed to be descended from the prophet, is of great importance. "The cem ceremony, which is one of the foundations of the Alevi path, is generally religious in nature, but it includes both the worship function of people, their spiritual and social and individual questioning" (2009, p. 281).

They are ceremonies where virtues such as good morals, respect, love, sense of right and justice are acquired, the unity of belief is blessed and felt, and the efforts to reach God are purified from faults. Therefore, the services performed during the whole ritual are carried out within these feelings and thoughts, and they find expression both in words, in instruments and in movement. In the Cem ritual, events that are important in the Alevi belief, such as the teachings of Alevism, Karbala and the Assembly of the Forties, are explained. Thus, Cems are rituals in which the function of preserving and transmitting the Alevi cultural memory through remembrance is fulfilled. The cultural codings created through this belief system fulfill the function of transferring the information received from the previous generation to the new generation in the cem ritual, by turning samah and chanting deysis, nefes, düvaz imam, accompanied by music. Cem is "a school" and when a person can transfer what he has learned here to his life, he is considered to have fulfilled his religious duties. Man has the power to reach maturity to establish his own whole within a certain structure. Cem plays an important role in helping to mature (Kaplan, 2020, p. 122).

In Cem rituals, 12 "hizmet" duties symbolized by 12 imams are performed. Duvaz imam, mersiye, deysis and tawhids, gulbanks (prayers) covering the teachings of Alevi traditions and rituals are recited; The semahs are returning. In the cems, the events that the Prophet Muhammad went through when he returned from Miraç, by visiting the Council of "kırklar" are reenacted.

Fuad Köprülü explained the role of the minstrels in Alevi musical identity and the effect of dervish lodges on the minstrels as follows: The literary and mystical culture imparted by the dervish lodges and especially the lodges belonging to heterodox sects such as Bektashism are the same in various social circles: The instruction for Kızılbaş, which is widely spread in the villages and among the nomads, is also very different from this. It is not. In general, there is a Bektashi influence on the minstrels, no matter what neighborhood they grow up in" (1962, pp. 28-29).

According to Sevilay Çınar; based on the elements of belief in which the devotion to the Ahl al-Bayt is committed, The source of music is that of minstrels and poets (Pir Sultan Abdal, Nesimi, Fuzulî, Şah Hatayi, Deliver Abdal, Kul Himmet, Viranî, Yemini) created with expression skills, the Alevi and Bektashi music he enriched; in the conduct of worship, love In short, as in every culture where oral transmission is at the forefront, It is an important tool in the expression and survival of the values of the society in which it exists. This music, which is among the important examples of the unity of faith and music, Representatives of the data are also from the duty holder in Cem, where twelve services are carried out. The owner of this role is Zâkir, who is also known by different names from region to region (aşık, minstrel), father, cem aşık, hak aşık, güvende, sazende, sazandar, sazıcı etc.) are defined. Zâkir, who stood out with his musical skills, was Cem's most important leader after Dede seen as a person. These representatives, who accompanied Cem with their instruments and words, sometimes. As they are the service representatives of the environment in which they live, in some regions, the society in almost every stage of his life (at the stage of asking a girl-engagement, at the beginning of the funeral) they appear. In daily life, various names such as minstrel, saz poet, poet. In the context of these

representatives, who are also encountered with their qualities and qualities, Alevi-Bektashi literature and the relationship between minstrel literature is also noteworthy (2020, pp. 188-189).

“Artun stated that the attitude of Bektashi literature is similar to minstrel literature in many aspects; The tradition of minstrel poetry, which is an extension of pre-Islamic Turkish literature, broke away from the national essence in the new geography and connected to the Islamic essence, was accepted and developed mostly among the members of the Bektashi sect, and spread by being nourished by the world view of the Bektashi sect" (2005, p. 35); It enables us to understand that the minstrels representing the Alevi and Bektashi beliefs nourish this literary and musical tradition, as well as being nourished by minstrel style poetry structures. Duygulu states that "Ashiks of Alevi origin have made a great contribution to this literature and defines the musical style that we can call Ashik music as a type of music that takes its roots from anonymous folk music" (1997, p. 15); While it emphasizes the relationship of Alevi and Bektashi music with minstrel music and literature, it also provides reference that it is in contact with anonymous folk music (Artun, 2005, p. 35 and Duygulu, 1997, p. 15 as cited in Çınar, 2020, p. 189). In this environment where music is a form of worship, representatives with a deep-rooted literary and musical tradition also have a strong repertoire. Although the repertoire of the minstrels who grew up in this belief environment is based on the minstrel style poetry-music tradition; The minstrels in question also master the ritual repertoire elements such as Deyiş, Nefes, Dûvaz İmam, Miraçlama, Mersiyye, which they acquired from the cultural environment in which they grew up, and which keep their musical memories alive. In addition to the determining elements of Alevi and Bektashi music such as representatives and repertoire elements, another important element is the instrument. The instrument of this music, which is shaped in line with the beliefs of the community in which it exists, also takes shape in this context. (Çınar, 2020, p. 189). For example; “tying the strings in three rows and drilling three holes in the chest of the instrument and the upper part of the vessel expresses the trinity of Allah, Muhammad and Ali. The presence of twelve strings in three rows on the instrument indicates that these strings are connected to the name of the Twelve Imams” (Şenel, 2009, p. 76, cited in Çınar, 2020, p. 190).

For example, in Pir Sultan's deyiş's given below, Hz. Muhammad's name is often mentioned with praise and respect. Hz. Muhammad's name is frequently mentioned in the deyiş's, and it is emphasized that his life and teachings have an important role in the expression of Islamic values and moral principles (Kaya, 2023, p. 449):

“Mürşidim Muhammed buldum yolumu	“My mentor, Muhammad, I found my way
Rehberim Ali'dir verdim elimi	My guide is Ali, I gave my hand
Tığbend ile bağladılar belimi	They tied my waist with crochet
Erenler sırrına erdim bu gece"	I learned the secret of the saints tonight”

(Aslanoğlu, 1997, p. 94, 6. poet/2. verse).

“Muhammed dinidir bizim dinimiz	“The religion of Muhammad is our religion
Tarikat altında geçer yolumuz	Our path passes under the sect
Cebrail Emin'dir hem rehberimiz	Our guide is Cebrail Emin.
Biz müminiz mürşidimiz Ali'dir”	We are believers, our guide is Ali.”(Aslanoğlu,

1997, p. 161, 82. poet/4. verse).

The Turks who conquered Anatolia beginning in the 11th century were tribal communities whose basic literature was heroic epic. When they settled in Anatolia this literature did not survive in the new sedentary culture. It was replaced by two main literary movements: Classical Ottoman and Turkish Folk literature. The former emerged due to the impact of the *madrasa*, the educational institutions of Islam, and it followed mainly Persian and Arabic literary traditions. On the other

hand, Folk Literature emerged in *Batinî Tekkes*, heterodox lodges, the army, and peasant communities. *Tekkes* were the social and religious meeting places of the Alevi-Bektashi people and the literature developed in *tekkes* beginning in the 14th century includes Alevi-Bektashi literature¹. Although this literature includes some prose in manuscript form about the heroic struggles of İmams, especially İmam (Hz.) Ali, it is basically represented by a short form of poetry consisting of 5-7 stanzas with a syllable structure of 7 and 12 lines each. Alevi poems (except for some *duvazimams* and *mersiyes* with more than 12 quadrants) usually consist of at least 3 and at most 12 quadrants. The emergence of Alevi poets goes back to the 13th century and most Alevi poets call themselves folk poets, *halk aşığı* (i.e., poets of the folk).

According to Boratav, the number, the themes and the stylistic features of the Turkish folk song are so great that it is almost impossible to discuss them in detail in a limited paper. Boratav established the following categories of folk songs:

- a. Lyrical songs (soldiers' songs, jail songs, lullabies and laments);
- b. Song of satires and humor;
- c. Narrative songs (historical songs, local banditry songs, legendary songs, ballads.)
- d. Labor songs.
- e. Song of rituals (songs connected with the rituals of seasonal change, such as the new year, harvest and the marriage ceremony);
- f. Dance songs (1969, p. 163).

In his introduction to a new book entitled *Türkü* (folk song), Başgöz (2008, pp. 2-6) explained some basic issues of the Turkish folk song which conflict with the main trends in folklore studies in Turkey. Başgöz's emphasis is mainly on the historical background and the dissemination of folk songs among several ethnic communities, such as Armenians, Kurds, Arabs etc. He suggests that a folk song has neither ethnic nor geographic boundaries. The same folk song is performed among all of these groups with the same tune but with a different linguistic structure. A folk dance song called *dasni çort* in Armenian (meaning 14) is called "on dört" (meaning 14 again) in Turkish. And peoples of Eastern Anatolia like dancing with this song very much.

I would like to add a few remarks on the theme of folk songs: Since the hikâye has taken over its function, love ballads are not common in Turkish oral literature. However, some religious ballads narrating the campaigns of Ali, and the tragic death of Hüseyin, the son of Ali, who were both killed in Kerbela, are still sung in the Alevi community.

The lament is a part of the burial custom which exhibits the pattern of the right of passage formulized by Van Gennep. The symbolic structure of the burial ceremony, that is separation, transition and incorporation, can be observed in the burial custom. And the lament expresses the problems and difficulties of the survivors will have in life without the deceased.

The rhythms of the melodies of the labor songs correlate with the bodily movements of the working people in the harvest, or in the preparing of food for the winter, such as the grinding grain on a hand mill.

According to Başgöz, folk songs' themes cover all the social and individual activities of peoples in the private and social life. Even a complaint about jaundice can be found in a folk song: "I caught jaundice for the trouble of your love" (2008, p. 124). One of the themes of a lullaby is a complaint by a mother about male-dominated society.

¹ See Başgöz's book *Karac'ođlan*, 1999.

It can be said that there is almost no poem exists in Alevi-Bektashi literature which does not contain musical elements and call for the use of musical instruments. Music is an inseparable part of Alevi-Bektashi culture; it relies on the coexistence of the instrumental-vocal element and the saz-poem. We may say that Alevi daily life, being interwoven with music, is displayed in their ritual music as well. The people who are called ashik sing their own or others' poems with instruments in their hands, and have developed various musical genres through their taste which they have acquired from local cultures. These genres have various names according to their thematic structure, musical (melodic) character and the coexistence of dance and music (Duygulu, 1997, p. 12). Some poems are stabilized on particular melodies through singing them with a certain mystical character, but there are different poems which are sung with the same melody and same poems which are sung with different melodies.

3. Folk song

The *deyiş* was briefly mentioned above. Details will be given under this heading. *Deyiş* is a generic name for the poems which describe mystical beliefs and the principles of order in Alevi-Bektashi literature and music. *Deyiş* is also called *nefes*, but this is a controversial issue (1997, p. 12). The most important characteristics of Alevi poetry are the inclusion of mysticism, mystical experience and spiritual inebriation, whose origins go back to 13th century Bektashi, dervish literature (Özmen, 2000, pp. 19-31). Another characteristic of it is the role of İmam Ali (the fourth caliph, the cousin and son-in law of Hz. Muhammed) in the realm of holy knowledge. In addition, this poetry has a connection with Shiite Islam ² (2000, p. 26).

Gölpınarlı argues that one of the characteristics of Alevi-Bektashi *nefes* [*deyiş*] is to intertwine their own beliefs into their works and to reflect the legends of the people they consider to be spiritual. One of these groups of poems is the "duvazdeh İmam" (*Duvazimam*), which praise the 12 İmams, The Prophet, and his daughter, Fatma. According to Gölpınarlı, an Alevi *cem* ritual is opened by singing three *duvazdeh*. Some of the praises are only for Ali; the *Mersiyes*, or laments, are usually for Hz. (İmam) Hüseyin and other Kербela martyrs; very few of them are about an event, wise people or the martyrdom of wise people. One beautiful sample among them is the following poem which was sung by the daughter of Pir Sultan Abdal:

Dün gece seyrimde coştuydu dağlar gushing	Last night in my dream, the mountains were
Seyrim ağlar ağlar Pir Sultan diyu	My dream wail, wail for Pir Sultan
Gündüz hayalimde gece düşümde	Day and night (Pir Sultan or you) in my dream

² Encyclopedia of Islam (1960). Here is the list of the twelve İmams who are called the Twelvers:

1. İmam Ali, the Forth caliph (d.662)
2. Hasan bin Ali (669)
3. Hüseyin bin Ali (died in the Karbala desert 680)
4. Zeynel Abidin (719)
5. Muhammad el- Bakır (733)
6. Cafer es-Sadık (675)
7. Musa el- Kazım (799)
8. Ali er- Rıza (819)
9. Muhammad Taki (835)
10. Naki (aliyyül Naki) (868)
11. Hasan el- Askeri (874)
12. Muhammed Mehdi (868)

Düş de ağlar ağlar Pir Sultan diyu
1959, p. 363).

My dream wail, wail for Pir Sultan (Gölpınarlı,

Pir Sultan mentioned "Ali" alone 174 times in 63 *deyiş*'s. Pir Sultan some in his *deyiş*'s, he refers to Ali as "Shah-i Mardan" and "Lion of God". These numbers, these expressions are also included. Pir Sultan's praise of Ali may be linked to his Alevi-Bektashi faith, which has become an influential religious and cultural figure in Anatolia. His justice, honesty, courage and love are among the features emphasized by Pir Sultan in his *deyiş*'s. Moreover, in Pir Sultan's *deyiş*'s, his love for Ali is expressed not only as a religious love but also as a social love (Kaya, 2023, pp. 449-450). Example:

"Ali'dir cümle dillerde söylenen,

"Ali is the sentence spoken in tongues,

Kispetini krallardan bürünen,

Dressed in his kispet of kings,

Cebrail'e nur içinde görünen,

Appearing in light to Gabriel,

Allah bir Muhammet Ali'dir Ali"

"Allah is a Muhammad Ali (Ali)."

(Aslanoğlu, 1997, p. 107, 20. poet/2. verse).

Markoff suggests that Alevi poetry is an echo of nomadic life and supports humanitarian and egalitarian values. But it has a didactic tone and issues a reproachful challenge against fate in an unjust and inadequate mortal world (Markoff, 2002b, p. 796). According to her, that these feelings are protesting a collapsed social order can be seen in the dervishes' adoption of non-orthodox religious practices, despite their strong devotion to the Bektashi order. Markoff argues that this is the response of Alevi people who are accused of adopting the political tendencies of a leftist order which should be questioned (Markoff, 2005, pp. 29-37). Markoff claims that this shows how Alevis, as the marginalized "significant other" in Turkey, are labeled as non-conformist, subversive and even revolutionary elements. For her, there may be two socio-historical reasons for this: first is their devotion to İmam Ali and the 12 İmams, and their spiritual connections with 15th century Persian Safavid Emperor Shah İsmail; and the second is their connection to 1970's Marxist tendencies which, in turn, have connections to Kurdish nationalism (Bruinessen, 1996, pp. 37-41).

Markoff emphasizes that, in any case, Alevi-Bektashi poetry continues to include a refusal to accept many levels of Turkish society. This poetry manifests the "Alevis view of unity, tolerance, and understanding and to be open to other beliefs" (2002b, p. 796).

In brief, we can say that almost all the researchers who have studied Alevi belief agree that one of the major characteristics of Alevi poetry -not only *duvazimam*, but also most of the poetry- is commemoration. The regulatory, celebratory and healing functions (McDowell, 2000, pp. 29-31) of commemoration for Alevi people are seen by all researchers. I believe that not only Alevi poetry, but the whole of the Alevi discourse (including prose narratives) can also be read as a commemorative discourse. We may think that commemorative elements provide the prose narrative with a "poetic characteristic." I will try to demonstrate this in the following pages by looking at some verbal performances.

When Alevi-Bektashi belief began to spread in Anatolia, the folk language, the vernacular language, was Turkish, although the official state language and the language of Islam was Ottoman Turkish, which was laden with Arabic and Persian vocabularies and grammatical rules, so much so that it would not be understood by the uneducated people. Alevis adopted Turkish as their language for worship. Sometimes they use Arabic in *cem* rituals, but right after that a Turkish *gülbank* is sung or an explanation is made. However, McDowell's (1985, pp. 29-39) remarks, which he made for the Kamsá ritual language, are also valid here. In the Alevi ritual language there are a large number of historical borrowings from Arabic and Persian, although these are completely

assimilated into Anatolian Alevi phonology and syntax. As McDowell shows, these borrowings are employed to create a “religious” and “liturgical aura.” For example:

Nouns:

<u>Arabic</u>	<u>Turkish</u>
<i>sema</i>	<i>semah</i> (dance)
<i>rahber</i>	<i>rehber</i> (guide)
<i>hayr</i>	<i>hayır</i> (good deed or gift for charity)
<i>hidmet</i>	<i>hizmet</i> (service)

Verbs:

(by adding auxiliary verbs to these nouns many verbs can be created)

semah dönmek (to dance)

rehber olmak (to be guide)

hayır etmek (to help, to give with goodwill)

hizmet etmek (to serve) (1985, pp. 31- 35).

Another point which McDowell emphasizes is that “in some cases these loans acquire a special meaning in the context of Kamsá ritual language” (1985, p. 28). For example, *hayır etmek* means “to give with goodwill,” “to help for god's sake,” “to make someone happy,” while *hizmet etmek* means “to realize the worship and tasks” which are realized in the *cem* ritual of Kırklar, the *Kırklar Cemi*, or 40 holy persons who created *cem* ritual during the creation of the universe, according to the Alevi cosmology. The poems, folk songs, prayers, conversations, and most of the political, didactical or ordinary conversations which are performed in or out of *cem* rituals refer to certain people and events. Some of them can be understood by an “outsider,” but most of them can be understood only by people who have a certain knowledge and experience particularly about this discourse using a figurative language. These words or phrases, some of which are Turkish, some Arabic or Persian, are employed during the performance for various reasons, such as to be aesthetically more effective to the audience, to place the narrative in a historical and “real” context, to recall the Alevi past, to show devotion to Alevi beliefs, principles and saints. For example, the phrase *Ehl-i Beyt* means “Hz. Muhammed, his daughter, his cousin and son-in-law Ali and the descendants of Ali. To love *Ehl-i Beyt* and, according to some interpretations, believe in them is one of the major principles of Alevi, as well as Islamic, belief (Ozkirimli, 1993, pp. 96-97). Some phrases are used so much that they can be seen as formulas in oral performance. Some samples, meanings of which I learned from Hacı Y. Akgül (a folk poet)³ and Selçuk Sevin⁴ (a *Dede*), are as follows:

Üçler: (Turkish), The Three Ones - God, The Prophet Muhammed and Ali.

Beşler: (Turkish), The Five Ones - Muhammed, Ali, Muhammed's daughter and Ali's wife Fatma, Ali's sons İmam Hasan and İmam Hüseyin.

Yediler: (Turkish) The Seven Ones - In addition to the above five they are Muhammed's wife Hatice and Selman-ı Farisi, who was considered a relative by Muhammed. According to another interpretation The Seven Ones are the seven earths and the seven heavens, and the seven good characteristics.

³ Hacı Y. Akgül, Bingöl, Compilation Date: 2009.

⁴ Pir Selçuk SEVİN, Bingöl/Sütlüce, Compilation Date: 2009

Eren: (Turkish) One who becomes one with God through self denial; a mystic; a dervish; one who has reached the “truth.”

Hak: (Arabic) One of God’s name, referring specifically to God's power of justice.

Hak erenler: (Arabic-Turkish) God's appearance on earth as a human being.

İnsan-ı Kâmil: (Arabic) a human being who has become spiritually wise, mature, and an experienced person. One who has reached the “truth.”

Şehid- i Kerbela: (Arabic) Ali's descendants who were killed tragically in Kerbela; the Martyrs of Kerbela.

On Dört Masum-u Pak: *On dört* (Turkish)- fourteen; *masum* (Arabic) - innocent- *u* (Persian connective); *Pak* -pure; fourteen innocent, pure children, who were killed before their adolescence.

On yedi Kemberbest: *On yedi* (Turkish) - seventeen; *Kemberbest* (Persian) - people who are always ready to help Hz. Ali.

Hü: (Arabic): Referring to God, meaning "He."

In Alevi *deyiş*, narration is generally plain, but with the help of some supplementary phrases narration is made effective and expressive. Supplementary words or phrases are added to the beginning of the stanza, within the verses, or to the end of the stanzas. These may be meaningful words themselves -“my beloved one,” “beloved Ali,” “fellow Ali”- or they may not be semantically meaningful in themselves such as *ey*, *ey! hele, hele!* Some of these "nuance" words are: *dost dost; hey pir; aman aman sevdiğim; tabibim; sultanım; can can; medet Ali; ya Şah; Hü! Hü!; hudey, hudey; Şah, Şah* (1997, p. 38). We can see that these words or phrases are employed in sung poetry and also in prose narratives, such as more conversational narratives and prayers (*gülbank*). Every Alevi meeting, not only the *cem* ritual, but also the marriage ceremony, burial, the departure of a person from the native village, setting off for a long journey, leaving the native village for military service and the other activities of daily life such as getting up, going to bed, sitting around a meal table, all precede with a special *gülbank*, a prayer designed for that occasion. We can see it in the following *gülbank* examples:

In order to understand all these commemorative and/or poetic features which we have mentioned, let us look at some examples of *gülbank*. The first one was performed by the folk poet-dede Dertli Divanî, in a *cem* Ritual in 2002:

4. An Example of the Alevi Ritual

Dede: *Allah Eyvallah mı erenler?*

[Do you agree with God, wise people?]

Dinleyici: *Eyvallah!*

[Agree!]

Dede: *Şimdi gönül birliğimize hep birlikte diyelim Allah, Allah!*

[Now all together, through the unity of our souls, let us say God, God!]

Dinleyici: *Allah Allah!*

[God, God!]

Dede: *Allah, Allah, Allah, Allah, Allah, Allah!*

[God, God, God, God, God, God!]

Dede: *Üçler'in, Beşler'in, Yediler'in, Kırklar'in, On iki İmamlar'ın, On dört Masum Pak'in, On iki Kemberbest'in hüsnü himmet ve hidayeti üzerimizde hazır ve nazır ola;*

[May the help and the protection of The Three Ones, The Five Ones, The Seven Ones, The Forty Ones, The Twelve İmams, The Fourteen Innocent Ones, The Twelve Young Ones, upon us]

Dede: *Gelmiş, erişmiş, göz gönül katmış ola*

[Let them come, reach and contribute by their eyes, by their souls]

Dede: *Hak erenler cem-i cümlemize birlik, dirlik, düzen ihsan eyleye*

[Let God's beloved wise people bestow unity, peace and order to our gathering]

Dede: *Dil bizden, nefes şah-i şehid-i Kerbela'dan ola*

[Language is ours; breath comes from the holy martyrs of Kerbela]

Dede: *Gerçek erenlerin demine Hü! mümine, ya Ali*

[Hü! (hail /Allah/Ali) to the true wise people, let God be with the faithful]

The underlined words and phrases call upon and evoke Alevi Saints. If we look at the content of the whole prayer, we can say that few informative and more commemorative discourses are used together.

Dertli Divani expressed his belief as a characteristic feature in his duaz-i imams. He dealt with the love of the Ahl al-Bayt and the twelve imams, which he based on (Erdem, 2020, p. 356). When the works of Âşık Dertli Divani are examined in terms of language, different views are encountered. In addition to the poems in which a plain language can be called a colloquial language, Sufi terms are used. There are also poems in which the words of Arabic and Persian origin are concentrated (Erdem, 2010, p. 218).

Formulaistic Structure in Alevi Deyiş's

Another sample from the widely-known *gülbanks* is from the opening *gülbank* in a *cem* ritual (Çağlayan, 2002, pp. 29-44):

The *dede* speaks: [Rhyming words are in **bold**; / caesura; // Semantic symmetry; /// Stylistic symmetry]

Bis mi **Şah** (3 syllables) /Al lah **Al lah** (4 syllables) 3+4= 7 syl.

[In the name of the ruler, and God, God.] (i.e., this is an "invocation")

Ak şam lar (3) **hayr o la**, (3) / ha yır lar (3) **feth o la**, (3). 3+3+3+3= 12

[May our evenings be prosperous and good deeds enduring.]

Tüm şer ler (3)/ def o la. (3). 3+3=6.// Mey dan (3) a bad o la. (4) 3+4=7

[May all evils stay away, may our place be prosperous.]

Hiz met ler (3)/ **ka bul o la**. (4) // 3+4=7 Mu rad lar //(3) **ha sıl o la**. //(4). 3+4= 7

Mün kir mü na fik (5) / **mat o la**. (3) // 5+3=8

(No traditional pattern of syllables, but the rhyming is preserved in the last part of the sentence. The basic form of Turkish folk poetry consists of poetical lines of 7 or 12 syllables)

[May our services be accepted by God, and our wishes fulfilled. May the non-believers and hypocrites be destroyed.]

Hak, Mu ham med, Ali / yar dım cı mız **o la**. (*No syllabic pattern*)

[May God, the Prophet and Ali assist us.]

Dem ler **da im o la**, / (6) / cemler **ka im o la**, (6). 6+6=12

[May our ritual drink be enduring and our cem strong.]

I ba det ler (4)/ **mak bul o la**. (4) 4+4=8 / Fa kir fu ka ra (5)/ **ma mur o la**. (4). 5+4=9. (*No poetic pattern*)

[May our prayers reach to the presence of God; may poor people be prosperous]

Üç ler Beş ler (4) ye di ler (3). 4+3=7 On İki İmamlar canlarımıza doğrusunu/ hayırlısını vere. (*No syllabic pattern*)

[May the Three ones, the Five Ones, the Seven ones, the “invisible saints,” the Twelve İmams, lead us to the right pace.]

E ren ler (3)// ev li ya lar (4). 3+4=7. Dertlerimize Derman ola, cümle insanlığa Doğruluk Dürüstlük ve sağlık ihsan eyleye. (*No pattern. Alliteration by the repetition of the letter D.*)

[May those who reached the Divine truth and the saints heal our trouble, and endow us and all humanity with honesty, good health and righteousness.]

Dil **biz den** (3) ne fes Hün kar (4) **Pir den** ola.(4). 3+4+4=11

[Tongue is ours, but the breath belongs to the Pir, the religious leader]

Nur-ı Nebi, **Kerem-i Ali**. Pirimiz Hünkârımız Hacı **Bektaş Veli** ve gerçek erenler demine devranına Hü diyelim hüüü! (*No syllabic pattern.*)

[For the divine light of the Prophet, the generosity of Ali, our supreme leader Hacı **Bektaş Veli**, we all together call Allah, and Allah.]

Alevi benefited from not only the sacred content and information in their holy book, the Qur'an, but also their oral and written poems, which convey and teach their religious doctrines. It is the Alevi oral and written poetry which transmits and teaches the doctrine. Thus, Alevi rituals, beliefs, norms and values, the name of the imams, the name of the Alevi's enemies (though rarely), are learned by new generations through poetry. In short, the Alevi culture is transmitted and preserved by the poetry. Every *duvaz* sung in *cem* ritual reminds the Alevi congregation, again and again, of the names, and sometimes the tragic lives, of the İmams. Whenever such a name is mentioned in a *düvaz*, a *gülbank*, or a *muhabbet* almost all members of the congregations place their hand on their heart and then kiss the index finger as a sign of utmost respect. These features show us that *duvazimam* can be a typical commemorative discourse.

In order to understand the commemorative discourse in Alevi genres let us look at a *duvazimam* (sung-poem):

Hak Muhammed Ali geldi dilime	God, Muhammed and Ali came to my tongue
Mürvet günahıma kalma ya Ali	O Ali! forgive my sins. (formulaic repetition)
Kulli günahımı aldım elime	All my sins are here, evident
Mürvet günahıma kalma ya Ali	O Ali! Forgive my sins
Hatice Fatıma mihr-i muhabbet of affection	Hatice Fatıma [the wives of the prophet] are source
Yine senden olur kuluna rahmet	You are the one who give blessing

İmam Hasan, İmam Hüseyin mürüvvet Mürvet günahıma kalma ya Ali!	İmam Hasan, İmam Hüseyin are generous O Ali! Forgive my sins
İmam Zeynelabidin'e erelim İmamların divanına duralım Doksan bin erlere niyaz olalım Mürvet günahıma kalma ya Ali	Let us reach İmam Zeynelabidin Let us prostrate ourselves before the İmams Let us pray for ninety thousand saints O Ali! Forgive my sins
İmam Cafer'dir didemin nuru İmam Bakır imamların süruru Dilerim çektirmez ah ile zarı Mürvet günahıma kalma ya Ali	İmam Cafer is the light of my eyes İmam Bakır is the joy of all imams I hope he doesn't let us suffer O Ali! Forgive my sins
Musa Kazım'dan İmamı Rıza Umarım inayet edesin bize Günahım çok benim diyeyim size Mürvet günahıma kalma ya Ali	İmam Rıza after Musa Kazım Hopefully, he will help us I will tell you that I sinned a lot O Ali! Forgive my sins
İmam Taki İmam Naki'dir virdim Anlara sığındım dayandım durdum Hasan ül Asker'e yüzümü sürdüm Mürvet günahıma kalma ya Ali	İmam Taki, İmam Naki are always in my mind I found a shelter in their personality. I pressed my face to Hasan Asker's O Ali! Forgive my sins
Pir Sultan'ım tamam oldu sözümüz Muhammed Mehdi'ye var niyazımız İmam)	I am Pir Sultan that is all that I say Our salutation is for Muhammed Mehdi (the hidden İmam)
On iki imama bağlı özümüz Mürvet günahıma kalma ya Ali.	We are obedient followers of The Twelve İmams O Ali forgives my sins (2002, pp. 29-45).

5. A Compilation Example

Finally, in order to examine some poetic features in a conversational narrative I select the transcription and translation of a verbal performance (*muhabbet*) which I recorded in August 2009, as a representative sample of the genre. The main protagonist of the performance is the speech master, A. Rıza Aydın⁵, who grew up in an Alevi family in the Emlek region of Sivas. The Emlek region is the place where most of the folk poets of Turkey originated and most of the folk songs in

⁵ A. Rıza AYDIN, Sivas/Emlek, Compilation Date: 2009.

Turkey are produced. According to Rıza, his family has the right to be a *dede* due to some socio-historical qualifications. But they have been unable to maintain this tradition, because the group of people who demand some services from them and whom they address have, for some reason, gotten smaller or disappeared altogether. However, Rıza's family is still considered an important Alevi family. Within the family the tradition of singing folk songs and telling folk stories still continues. I can say that Rıza is one of the most effective figures in the maintenance, production and distribution of his verbal tradition and he is really a good rhetorician and story-teller although he always says his mother is the "real" story-teller.

In our *muhabbet* (gathering and cordial conversation), during the performance there were three spectators (including Professor İ. Başgöz, the psychiatrist Taner Tosun and myself). Taner organized this meeting for informative reasons. In the beginning, Rıza and Taner thought that the purpose of this conversation was going to be an exchange of information. After a while, however, I felt that all participants were enjoying being present at the performance and our conversation lasted for 12 hours with no break; we fulfilled our needs for such things as eating, drinking coffee or tea during conversation. Rıza's verbal artistry was a very effective part of this enjoyment. Sometimes - especially when Rıza was telling the story of losing his hand- we were touched with intensive emotions. And sometimes we laughed, even when he was telling the story of İmam Hüseyin's tragic murder, because through some allusions and witticisms (using his mother's rustic *deyiş*) he showed us that these are incredibly "unreal" events, yet his mother believed them. His mother deeply believed in these things. What I felt is that Rıza also believes in these stories, but there were some differences between his mother's beliefs and his own. To me, Rıza didn't want to be seen by his audience as naïve and unrealistic. As for the audience, I can say that participants in this conversation were a little bit different from his own local community, he based his rhetoric on some messages which are open to the literal and figurative comments of his audience.

Rıza's verbal folklore performance shows us what McDowell (1985, pp. 44- 49) calls "folkloric semiosis." As a performer, Rıza didn't depend on a script and told the story relying on his memory and on improvisation when communicating with his audience. Sometimes he changed his emotional mood, his intonation, the order of words and the topics according to our -particularly Başgöz's- responses. Paying attention to our faces, gestures, expressions, and verbal responses he continued his performance. Whenever he felt that one of us was confused about what he said, he made a greater effort to explain it. Whenever he felt that one of us was losing her/his enthusiasm he tried to make us excited through the use of various tools of the verbal arts: intonation shifts, changing topics, digressions; and he used more poetic effects on us in this particular context.

Sometimes while he was telling the story he used "leftist jargon" and focused on a leftist interpretation of Alevi history. For example, at a very critical moment he said that "Pir Sultan and İmam Hüseyin are unquestionable because even when they got into big trouble, they did not betray, they did not give up." In order to support this opinion and to express it more effectively he immediately appealed to poetic language: he recited a stanza from Pir Sultan. He switched to a poem in accordance with his conversational role within the flow of discourse.

During the *muhabbet* Rıza many times identified himself with the hero of the story, Pir Sultan Abdal. At one point in the conversation Rıza told a story from the period when he was a "leftist": While he was in prison a law had been passed according to which, if Rıza would repentant of his actions, his penalty would be greatly reduced; but Rıza didn't accept this, as he put it, "he didn't betray." He told his family "Pir Sultan didn't betray, nor do I. Would you love Pir Sultan so much if he had betrayed?" After this his family never tried to force Rıza. His emphasis on these things can be interpreted as a combination of local Alevi views and values, and leftist values. However, on all occasions Rıza showed that he shares the beliefs and values of his Alevi community and relied on a rhetorical style which is accessible for Alevis.

Conclusion

During the narrator performance he referred to various historical personalities and events. At one point in addition to little poetic effects, he continued to tell his story by reciting a stanza of a poem. In this stanza he referred to a historical personality, "Çelebi." Thinking that this personality was familiar to his audience, he only said, "This is that Çelebi." I think that Rıza showed his competence in this conversation by his connecting prose and poetic narratives. I can say that the performance was completely based on commemorative discourse, yet, at the same time, this discourse was intertwined with informative discourse.

Telling the stories of his ancestors and Alevi saints, Rıza showed us how historical consciousness is constructed and reconstructed. Connecting the commemorative and the informative discourses in a complementary relationship, Rıza created a way to represent his perspectives about his own life, the Alevi community and its cosmos, and the relationship between the past and the present; the relationship between ancestors' lives and ethos and the present/current social practices of the Alevi community. In these senses, I can say that this performance allowed us to see Alevi discourses from the "inside" at least a little bit.

Interpreting these muhabbet performance and gülbank performance I can say that we can see many poetic functions of the language in the conversation. As McDowell shows, in a complementary way, prose and poetic narrative are dedicated to the telling of a story in a complex performance event (McDowell, 1985, p. 403). While two other genres, mersiye and duvazimam, which are in the form of a poem, are performed in cem ritual, it is possible to see interplay of poetic and prose expression. This interaction is necessary for maintaining the performance with success. Thus it does not seem possible to understand a communicative event by focusing only on text that is, by separating prose from poetic expression. In both poetry and prose Alevi narrations commemorative discourse plays a crucial role. Though the severity of commemorative features changes from one performance to another, we can see them in the performances of almost all genres. Even some words, phrases and groups of words which have commemorative characteristics function as oral formulae. Moreover, it is possible to see the coexistence of commemorative and informative narration in any Alevi performance. Just as commemorative discourse almost completely predominant in duvazimam and mersiye, in the conversational genres sometimes informative discourse becomes dominant.

"Koşma", "Mâni" and "Deyiş" are accepted as the expression of the action and cultural memory of this belief with certain formula structures in traditional rituals connected to the Alevi belief. Types such as running and mani, which are maintained through conversation in poetry, art, literature and cem rituals, are written in poetic patterns such as 4+3 or 4+4+3 in Turkish folk literature; Consisting of at least three, at most eight stanzas, usually the first, second and fourth lines of the first stanza, the first, second and fourth lines of the first stanza have been a source for the expression of feelings, thoughts and feelings in the verbal and written formulas of the Alevi tradition, with verbal and written formulas of rhyming, except for the first stanza has survived through the ages.

The mâni form, which has been used by important Alevi lovers since the 13th century, has been updated in the light of periodic conditions over time and has undergone changes in content and form. This change, including the socio-cultural and political variables of the period, came to life with the oral and written sources embodied in religious rituals and actions such as mâni, koşma, deyiş, deme, duvaz-ı imam and lived from the past to the present. These valuable traditional cultural forms have reached our age as a rich cultural heritage.

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