

The Genre Paradigm and Modification of Modern Turkish Drama

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Abstract The aim of the paper is to show in the historical perspective the development of the genres of the Turkish drama by analyzing more than fifty Turkish authors' plays, define the influence of European dramatic tradition on the formation of Turkish drama's genders, identify a modification of genres and point out the most popular genders of modern Turkish drama. It is used such research methods as analysis and synthesis, functional, systematic, comparative, historical methods. Analyzing Turkish drama, we stated that it embraces such genres as comedy, tragedy, drama, melodrama, historical drama, historical and biographical drama, children's drama etc. The research revealed that historical and biographical drama are the main genres of the modern Turkish one. The majority of modern Turkish dramas embrace creative and quasi-biographies of famous figures etc. (T. Özakman, R. Özçelik, T. Oflazoğlu, D. Sümer). The genre of biographical drama is also widely represented by works telling the life stories of historical figures who made a strong impact on culture's development (Selim III, Suleiman the Magnificent, Mevlana, Yunus Emre, Roxelana, Mimar Sinan). Such writers as T. Özakman, T. Oflazoğlu and Ö. Yula added new topics and diversified the genre paradigm of drama by means of almost full elimination of traditional genres. While such types of drama as children's drama (Ü. Ayvaz, H. Erkek, Ü. Köksal) keep developing, the topics that are typical for Turkic culture are being rethought.

Key words literature of Turkey; dramaturgy; play; genre specificity

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anthology of modern Turkish drama.

Turkish modern drama until today has not been thoroughly studied either in Turkey itself, or in other countries, from the point of view of the formation and development of genres. Undoubtedly, the basic works are those of such researchers as M. And, H. Nutku, O. Nutku, S. Shener. Thanks to them it is possible to recreate separate elements of the general picture of the formation of the genres of the Turkish modern drama. At the same time, until today there was not enough comprehensive research, in which the texts of plays, especially those written at the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century became the basis of the study. The **aim** of this article is to study the gender paradigm and modification of the Turkish drama, corresponding to modern studies in the field of literary science. The **object** of the study — the works of Turkish playwrights, which were written since the beginning of modern drama until today and which are characterized by different genres. In this article we used such research methods as analysis and synthesis, systematic method, comparative and historical methods, cultural and historical approaches, sociological method, method of associative and conceptual analysis.

Classical Genders of Turkish Drama

The genre paradigm of Turkish dramaturgy has been formed under the influence of several factors, such as a strong tradition of national folk theatre, ideological and aesthetic traditions of literary period, impact of Western drama, social and political atmosphere in the country, a particular author's definition of a literary work's type and genre. All this created conditions for the coexistence and interaction of various genres and their modifications.

Analyzing Turkish modern drama, we stated that it embraces such genres as comedy, tragedy, drama, melodrama, historical drama, historical and biographical drama, children's drama etc. Since comedy was primarily inherent to traditional Turkish folk theatre, all of its types, including *Orta Oyunu*, *Karagöz* and *Meddah*, were based on it. *The Wedding of a Poet* by Shinasi, considered to be the first Turkish comedy written in Western style, emerged in the second half of the 19th century. It was followed by the appearance of a wide range of other comedies, such as *Misafir-i İstiklal*, *A Chatty Hairdresser* and *A Small Bell* by Ali Bey, *Who Knows a Lot Makes Many Mistakes* by Rezaizade Ekrem, *One Can't Hold Two Watermelons under One Arm* by Osman Hamdi Bey, *The First Baby*, *A Stubborn or a Junkman*, *Evhami* and *No More Lie* by M. Şakir, *An Uncovered Head* and *A Dancer* by Hasan Bedreddin Paşa, and *Manastırlı Mehmet Rıfat*, *It is All Your Fault* by Şemsi, *A Fool*

by F. Tevfik, *Between Men* by Fikri Paşazade Lütfi etc. The period since the end of the 19th century until the beginning of the 20th century was characterized by the emergence of comedies aiming to demonstrate Turkish society's ridiculous attempts to switch to European lifestyle that was highly appreciated during that epoch. The action of such plays usually takes place in rich people's villas, their main goal is to become Europeans. Despite the fact that a huge number of these plays is based on mythic motives or Western comedies' plots, their main characters, as well as their behavior, are typical for Turkish community. The works of Hüseyin Suat, İbnürrefik Ahmet Nuri, Suat and Şahabettin, Mehmet Rauf, Ali Ekrem, Saffet Nezihi, Tahsin Nahit, Şahabettin Süleyman, Müfit Ratip, Mizancı Mehmet Murat, Servet Muhtar Alus and others were among the most popular (Sokullu 176). In the contrast to the period of Tanzimat, when family problems and everyday issues tended to be the main subject of comedies, at the beginning of the 20th century dramatists focused on depicting parliament and the representatives of government in a ridiculous way.

Comedies of the Republican period (1923–1960) are very different from those of previous centuries. These comedies include some features of Western vaudevilles, boulevard dramas, and theatre of the absurd and epic drama, combined with the elements of Turkish folk drama. Such authors as R. N. Güntekin, Osman Cemal Kaygısız and Cemal Nadir Güler, who kept observing and developing the traditions of pre-republican drama (1908–1923), launched the comedy of the Republican period. The description of old traditions in a ridiculous way became the main topic of that time's plays (Sokullu 197). Musahipzade (1868–1959) was one of the most prominent comedians of that period. Using the elements of traditional folk and European drama, he criticized the Ottoman regime and created a sort of synthesis of the West and the East (*Kadi Aynarosa*, *The Magnificent Ağa* and *A Turban has Fallen Down*). During the Republican period, other dramatists used his plays as an example to follow (Sokullu 202). Nazım Hikmet, Vedat Nedim Tör, H. Rahmi Gürpınar, Cevat Fehmi Başkut and Refik Erduran pursued the traditions established by Musahipzade.

Due to the change of political situation in the country at the beginning of the 1960's (when the first military coup took place), the topics of comedies went through some transformations. Using an opportunity to dwell on politics and state system openly, the dramatists of the second half of the 20th century, who focused on depiction of rural and social issues, tended to estimate historical events critically. Revealing the essence of events that happened in the past, authors began mythologizing them in order to create an antithesis to modern times regarded to as an era of degradation. Aiming to form a critical esteem of events that took place in

the country, such dramatists as Muhasipzade Celal, Haldun Taner, Turgut Özakman and Turhan Selçuk devoted their works to these issues (Sokullu 215).

Specific rural lifestyle, usually associated with conservative customs and traditions of the past, and innovations of urban inhabitants, considered to be in opposition to old habits, got a new dimension in Turkish drama since both of these images started to be used in order to ridicule something or describe severe social problems of rural inhabitants for the first time. It became a completely new phenomenon in Turkish comedy. Ridiculing the illiteracy and backwardness of rural inhabitants, Cahit Atay, Necati Cumalı, Sermet Çağan, Başar Sabuncu and Aziz Nesin raised many concerns, crucial for villagers, such as lack of modernization and support, humiliation, bribery and unwillingness of authorities to contribute to the development of countryside (Sokullu 218).

During the period between the second half of the 20th century and the first half of the 21st century, comedy became one of the most popular genres among spectators. Such comedies as *Wooden Sandals* and *The Liver of Mother-in-Law* by Necati Cumalı, *The Helicopter* by Tuncer Cücenoglu, *The Last Exit in Front of the Bridge* by Zeynep Kaçar, such tragicomedies as *Russian Doll* and *The Visitor* by Tuncer Cücenoglu, *This Important Day* by Zeynep Kaçar, *There is No Truth in Age and Mind* by Şule Gürbüz etc. gained wide popularity.

Despite the fact that the first plays written in the genre of tragedy reflected national poetic traditions, they did not become successful (*Sezgüzeşt-i Perviz* in 1866 and «*Alter Ego*» in 1866 by Ali Haydar Bey). Spectators appreciated this genre with the beginning of the period of Romanticism that enabled depiction of exaggerated passions and melodramatic scenes. Nowadays there are still many examples of it in Turkish dramaturgy (*Sell Me the Prohibited Thing* and *The Shovel* by Volkan Taha Şener, *The Tragedy of Xanthos* by Savaş Aykılıç, *Medina* by Zeynep Kaçar, *Antonius, Kleopatra* by Orhan Güner etc.).

Turkish dramatists borrowed the genre of melodrama from the French literature during the period of Tanzimat (1876–1922). This genre was the most appropriate one to meet aesthetic demands of the society. Thus, within the period between the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century the number of melodramas presented to Turkish audience significantly exceeded the quantity of comedies and tragedies referred to as classical genres (Güçbilmez 14). Namık Kemal is considered to be one of the most prominent experts of melodrama in Turkish literature. For instance, his play *Gülnehal* reveals such features of melodrama as extremely high intrigue, bright actions and dramatic affairs. The author divided the characters of his play into two opposite groups expressing “good” and “bad” ones.

Thus, we may understand what their personalities are from the first lines of this literary work. The majority of Namık Kemal's plays consists of melodramas. It was the author's way to reveal his inner protest against traditional folk drama (Güçbilmez 25). Such writers as Rezaizade Ekrem (*Afife Anjelik*), Ahmet Mithat Efendi (*The Language of Law*), Hasan Bedrettin and Mehmet Rifat (*Bloody Revange, The Slaves, The Poor One, Ahmet Yetim or Neticei Sadakat*), Hüsamettin (Şükrü the Traitor), Mehmet bin Mustafa (*Sadness*), Yakub Kadri (*A Meeting With Sadness*), Yağcızade Nuri (*A Woman Who Cheats*), Ahmet Fahri Mustafa (*A Lesson From Life of Fate*) etc. also created many plays in this genre (Nutku 362).

The authors that appeared on literary arena in the 1950's tended to continue the traditions established by this generation's representatives. Thus, the most peculiar features of such plays of Cevat Fehmi Başkut (1905–1971) as *A Man From Picture, An American in Harput* and *A Break*, are their acute intrigue and high emotionality, sharp opposition of good and evil, as well as moral and didactic problems raised. Focusing mostly on the representatives of middle class, C. F. Başkut criticized that time's society in most of his works. Time and space of all his plays are both limited with Istanbul of the 50's and 60's of the 20th century. As the author was born in this megalopolis, he used real people as a prototype to create the images of his characters. Realistic situations, represented in his plays, attract reader's or spectator's attention encouraging them to thinking. The plot of C. F. Başkut's plays always develops around the relationships of family members that reflect the state of Turkish society. His characters and main heroes are always men: they are shown as decent, smart, honest and hardworking people. Women who are their wives, on the contrary, are demonstrated as individuals whose only purpose is to get more money, profit and satisfaction. Thus, women are considered to be anti-heroes. All of his melodramas predictably do not end happily. Thus, his character who suffers from poverty gets a harsh life lesson and loses the fight between good and evil.

Having become a dramatic genre tending to escape from the repertoire of theatres after the 1960's, melodrama kept appearing on the stages of travelling theatres of Anatolia from time to time (And *Cumhuriyet* 300). Despite a complicated political situation that kept having a strong impact on culture and literature for long sixty years, the structure and content of Turkish melodramas did not undergo drastic changes.

Turkish drama originated from folk theatre and rituals, and sacred performances in particular (for instance, *Death and Rebirth* and *The Kidnap of a Girl*). Thus, *Death and Rebirth* depicts war that always leads to death and suffering. Being in sorrow, the characters of this play keep crying and praying when some

magic or miracle makes the deceased revive and start celebrating life (And *Oyun* 188). First Western-style dramas appeared in Turkish dramaturgy in the second half of the 19th century. Being familiar with the works of Schiller, Byron, Manzoni and Hugo, Namık Kemal created romantic plays (*Motherland or Silistra*, *Akif Bey*, *Black Tragedy*) that became a great contribution to the development of Turkish drama. Such authors as Ebüzziya Tevfik, Mehmet Rıfat, Mehmet Saadettin, Ahmet Mithat Efendi, Abdülhak Hamit and others also worked over romantic drama (Nutku 360). At the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century drama was represented by such plays as *The Avalanche* by Tuncer Cücenoglu, *Mine*, *Dry Summer*, *An Order to Murder* and *Dangerous Dove* by Necati Cumalı, *Sacide*, *The Ways are Over* and *Light in the Darkness* by Ülker Köksal, *Crying in the Shadow of Stars* by Volkan Taha Şeker, *Feather*, *Sword*, *Heart* by Savaş Aykılıç, *Wedding Notes / Jail Notes* by Mine Ergen, *The Doorstep* by Hasan Erken etc.

Having compared dramatic works of this period with the plays of the previous one, we stated that modern authors tended to conduct a psychological analysis of their characters on the background of social and political issues, while in the middle of the 20th century dramatists used to depict family relationships and daily life problems in their plays. The fact that Turkish writers used to consider these topics was determined by a new postmodern era that encouraged modern Turkish dramatists to search for innovative ways of scenic expression and language.

Historical and Biographical Drama

Plays that mostly focus on life and art of rulers, famous poets, architectures, scientists and doctors, who contributed to the world's history, represent Turkish dramaturgy of the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century. Such prominent representatives of Turkic world as I. Süleyman (known as Suleiman the Magnificent in the West), Osman, III. Selim, Rumi, Yunus Emre, Orhan Veli, İbn-i Sina, Mimar Sinan and Hürrem Sultan are among them. Those authors who worked over their dramas during that period particularly mentioned such personalities as Tenzing Norgay, a mountaineer usually referred to as Sherpa Tenzing, and a Soviet cosmonaut Vladimir Komarov. Dealing with biographical material, that time's dramatists observed two ways: some of them intended to create historical or historical and biographical drama that would reflect historical events and background in the most accurate way; others aimed to construct a sort of quasi-historical texts where they mythologized biographies and made their characters ideal. Turkish dramatists began using the facts from historical past of the Ottoman Empire in their works only after the period of Tanzimat (the second half of the 19th

century). Thus, such scientific researches upon the history of the Ottoman Empire as *Hikmet-i Tarih* (1863) by Ahmet Vefik Paşa, *Endülüs Tarihi* (1863) by Ziya Paşa and *Devr-i İstila* (1867) by Namık Kemal emerged (Buttanrı 1768).

Researchers consider *Hadji Bektash or the Creation of the Janissaries* (1761) by Thomas Chabert to be the first Turkish historical drama. This drama tells the events of the 13th century, when formation of the Ottoman Empire was in progress. Consequently, the roots of historical drama are traced back to the end of the 18th century, but not to the 60's of the 20th century as O. Oganova stated (Oganova 68).

The Romantic period encouraged such Turkish authors as Namık Kemal, Ahmet Mithat Efendi, Şemseddin Sami, Hasan Bedreddin, Mehmet Rıfat, Abdülhak Hamit, Muallim Naci and others to write upon historical issues. In his introduction to the translation of Emir Nevruz's play, Namık Kemal complained about the lack of works dedicated to historical affairs. He was the first writer who examined the biographies of Sultan Mehmet the Conquer and Sultan Selim I known as Selim the Resolute, whose stories of life were previously researched by other authors (Kemal 4). *The Story of İbrahim*, İbrahim from Gülşeni (1844) by Hayrullah Efendi transfers the reader to the epoch of Suleiman the Magnificent, telling the story of the Vizier İbrahim Paşa and Şeyh Gülşeni who was the founder of the Order of Gülşeni. Having become a challenge to Western Orientalism in the context of comprehension of the Ottoman Empire's historical past, such dramatic poems as "Fatih" (1879) and "Selim" (1883) written by Abdülhak Hamit, served as a source of inspiration for the next generations of Turkish writers interested in development of historical plots in literary works. According to Sadık Tural, "Having examined the historical documents, a writer has to point out the main thesis he will use in his work in order to revive history" (Türkeş 427).

Abdülhak Hamit who resorted to the genre of historical drama in 1874, kept working over it until 1935 despite the fact that it started to lose its popularity at that period (Karaburgu 34). It is necessary to admit that not all of historical dramas of the 19th century may pretend for a high literary level. It is remarkable that the authors of some of these dramatic works intended to interpret not just the past of the Ottoman Empire but also the history of Western countries (for instance, *Happiness and Unhappiness* (1873) by Ahmet Necip, *The Adventure of Love* (1873) by Abdülhak Hamit, *Gave and Seydi Yahya* (1875) by Şemseddin Sami) (Karaburgu 32). This tendency reflected their attempts to comprehend the phenomenon of the world's history in an artistic way.

Namık Kemal is considered to be the first outstanding Turkish historical dramatist of the 19th century. During the reign of Abdülhamit II (1876–1909) the-

re was no historical drama written. These years are characterized by a generally disrespectful attitude towards classical literature and national history. Activities of the literary club known as “Servet-i Fünun” (1895–1901) reflected this tendency in the most vivid way. Focusing on European literary patterns, its representatives considered their own literature’s works to be archaic and old-fashioned, consequently they were keen to meet European standards as precisely as possible.

1908–1909 became a turning point in Turkish history, since they triggered such changes in political and cultural life of the country as the overthrow of Sultan Abdülhamid II and a new ruler Mehmet V’s interest towards art and literature. The modernization of Turkish literature was accompanied by a so-called “renewal” of classical literature and frequent appeal to the state’s historical past. Fiction mostly considered historical events that preceded the establishment of the Republic of Turkey. These events were expressed by means of opposition of “bad past associated with crisis” and “bright present / future” (Buttanrı 1770). Turkish researcher Necat Birinci commented on this trend in this way: “Depiction of historical issues in various artistic genres and rethinking of both victories and defeats at the state level strengthens people’s spirit and helps them overcome all the difficulties that go along with crisis” (Birinci 297). However, not all of the authors managed not to be unprejudiced, describing different affairs. Thus, in such plays as *Steal, Repentance and Betrayal* (1910) by Ahmet Bahri, *The Tragedy of One Star* (1911) by Moralizade Vassaf, *The Larceny of One Detective* (1911) by Yusuf Niyazi and *The Skillful Hundred or the Army of Freedom* (1912) by Kamil Bey represent the events of historical past under a strong influence of ideological propaganda that disfigures them. The figures of sultans are mostly quite negative, as it is in «*The Skillful Hundred or the Army of Freedom*», where Sultan Abdülhamit is depicted as a person who gets satisfaction torturing people: “*He yawns and naps, his head falls on papers and he drops asleep. Suddenly he says loudly: Revenge! Revenge! (the sultan is laughing)*” (Kırcı 62).

Despite the fact that Sultan Abdülhamit was known as a religious person with a high dignity, Kamil Bey described him in the opposite way: “*Abdülhamit (opening a bottle of champagne): Oh, the hounds of Sharia! (He makes a sip of champagne). Where I am and where Sharia is!... If they knew I had never performed my Salah and usually read magazines and sometimes drink champagne, rakı or beer instead of making prayer; they would already make me answer for it!...*” (Kırcı 62). Thus, the author expressed the sultan grotesquely.

According to İlber Ortaylı’s research, since the establishment of the Republic of Turkey, historical drama (the works of such writers as Faruk Nafiz Çamlıbel,

Yaşar Nabi Nayır and Behçet Kemal Çağlar in particular) mostly focuses on pre-Islamic period of the history of Turkic nations (Ortaylı 230). That period is also characterized by a gradual emergence of dramas upon the Turkish War of Independence and the stages of formation of the Republic of Turkey: *The Blue Lightning* by Akı Gündüz, *The Unquenchable Fire* by Nahid S. Orık, *A Little Grain* by Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, *The Dastan of Decade* by Halit Fahri Ozansoy and *A New Day Starts* by Peyami Safa (Ortaylı 230). Critically analyzing the artistic value of historical drama, İlber Ortaylı defines it as crude and superficial: “Reading these dramas gives a feeling like they were written in a hurry, without getting involved in the most crucial issues of, for instance, pre-Islamic period of the Turkic nations’ life. For this reason, this kind of dramatic works does not contribute so much to the development of both modern Turkish dramaturgy and literature in general” (Ortaylı 230).

Among historical dramatists of the 20th century İlber Ortaylı distinguished Muşahipzade Celal Bey (1868–1959) (Ortaylı 231) who is the author of such dramas as *The Köprülü Family* (1912) and *The Epoch of Tulips* (1914). The characters of both works are the prototypes of such historical figures as the Grand Vizier Köprülü Mehmed Paşa, his son Fazıl Ahmet Paşa, Mihriban, who was a concubine in Saidabad etc. These dramatic works describe the Ottoman period of the 17th century (*The Köprülü Family*) and the Epoch of Tulips (18th century).

Changes in social life of Turkey in the 1970’s had an impact on historical drama that tended to describe modern life on the background of events of the past. Literary critics of that period demonstrated ambiguous attitude towards the increasing frequency of historical drama. Some literary scientists (İlber Ortaylı, Müzeyyen Buttanrı, Niyazi Akı, Hüseyin Doğramacıoğlu) thought that sustainable development of historical drama was a quite positive phenomenon that could help a new generation understand the history of the state in a better way (Doğramacıoğlu 404; Ortaylı 231; Buttanrı 1767). Others, Mehmet Samsakçı in particular, defined it as a sign of stagnation. The researcher emphasized the authors’ tendency to express their characters, inspired by historical figures of the Ottoman Empire, in an unusual way. Therefore, the reader could see just a sort of “transformer disfeatured through the prism of Western culture” instead of their real “faces” and personalities (Samsakçı 5). In our opinion, Turkish authors’ will to advert to their national roots is a positive phenomenon. On the other hand, their intension to find out the elements of «modernity» in historical figures by means of Westernization does not always contribute to correct apprehension and understanding of history.

Turan Oflazoğlu (born in 1931) is one of the few modern Turkish dramatists

who mostly worked over historical drama telling the stories of sultans of the Ottoman Empire. Analysing T. Oflazoğlu's dramas, we noticed the chronology of events described in his works: the rule of Padishah Fatih (1451–1481); the reign of Selim I (Yavuz) (1512–1520), Suleiman the Magnificent (1520–1566), Osman II (1618–1622), Murat IV (1623–1640) and Selim III (1789–1807). T. Oflazoğlu is the author of such dramas as *Mad Ibrahim* (1967), *Murat IV* (1971), *Young Osman* (1980), *The Byzantine Empire is Ruined: Fatih* (1981), *Selim III. Sword and Ney* (1983), *Cem Sultan* (1986), *Kanuni Suleiman* (1977), *Yavuz Selim* (1998). Such dramas as *The Byzantine Empire is Ruined: Fatih*, *Yavuz Selim*» and *Suleiman Kanuni* reflect the epoch of the Ottoman Empire's prosperity, glorifying the personalities of sultans who played an important role in Turkey and in the whole world. Despite the fact that such dramas as *Young Osman*, *Murat IV* and *Mad Ibrahim* depict the period of stagnation, their author claims that it was a stage of preparation for changes and reforms. The decline of the Ottoman Empire became the main topic of *Selim III. Sword and Ney*.

Such Turkish dramatists as T. Özakman, R. Özçelik and H. Altınar also presented their own interpretations of historical discourse and recreated the dialogic ties between the Ottoman culture and modernity. These dramatists used historical and biographical narratives in their works. Their attempt to reveal social problems of one epoch through the prism of contemporaneity, emphasizing their national specifics is one of the main features of their works.

Analyzing the biographical modus of modern Turkish dramas, we cannot skip such dramas of M. Baydur as *Vladimir Komarov* (1990) that tells a life-story of famous Soviet cosmonaut Vladimir Komarov, and *Tenzing* (1993), dedicated to a Sherpa mountaineer Tenzing Norgay. Intending to depict some disputable moments of his characters' lives, the author sometimes resorted to quasi-biographical facts. The dramatist created new images, based on real historical figures that reflect a peculiar cultural type with his or her own codes and standards. In this way, he aimed to present a generalized type of person expressing a certain culture.

Thus, historical and biographical dramas are among the most popular genres of modern Turkish drama. Enriching traditionalism with innovations, the authors use a valuable factual material, introduce heroes with different characters and combine the lines of their works' plots. Most of them tend to focus on artistic comprehension of the problems their characters have to cope with. It is necessary to admit that the most prominent representatives of both national and world's history and culture inspired these characters.

Poetic Drama

Such researchers as B. Beckerman, P. Bruin, N. Özdemir, R. A. Sevengil, S. Şener and A. U. Tunçel stated that the genre of poetic drama gained popularity in Turkish literature during the period of Tanzimat going along with modern drama. Despite that the roots of poetic drama can be traced back to traditional Turkish folk theatres of *Karagöz* and *Orta Oyunu*. The authors of first Turkish poetic dramas used to develop a range of well-known Oriental stories like *Leyla and Mecnun*, *Hüsrev and Şirin*, *Arzu and Kanber*, *Tahir and Zühre*, *Aslı and Kerem*. Working over dramatized lyrics and epics encouraged many poets to switch to poetic drama. Therefore, as a Ukrainian researcher N. Kostenko in particular claims, a poem is the most suitable form of verbal art that serves to express and transform emotional meanings in the best way (Kostenko 20). The appearance of poetic drama urged Turkish writers to search for a way to balance metric and genre and adapt them to the poetic traditions of Turkish literature, since poetry was expected to be not just an example of qualitative play but also a highly dramatic work. Such plays as *Sergüzeşti Perviz* (1866), *Alter Ego* (1866) and *A Play in Dreams* (1876) by Ali Haydar are considered to be among first Turkish poetic dramas (tragedies). Namık Kemal (1840–1888) became one of the first dramatists who strived for updating the canons of poetic drama. He decided to use both *arud* and *hece* that refers to syllabic verse. Despite the fact that in this way he aimed to make drama's reception easier, these measures, on the contrary, made it more complicated. In order to keep renewing Turkish drama, he called to be back to rhymed lines and simplify it stylistically clearing from excessive allegories and symbols. Unfortunately, the level of that time's Turkish language development was not favorable to non-radif¹ rhyme searches (Tunçel 59).

Abdülhak Hamid Tarhan continued studying and deepening the concept introduced by N. Kemal. Considering such metre as *hece* to be the most appropriate form of writing poetic dramas, he applied various methods of combining syllables, performed experiments upon their number and tried different ways of using stress and rhyme. His play *Liberte* is a *féerie*, the action of which takes place in an imaginary country with fairy characters. Despite its fabled structure, this drama had a political basis since one of its characters, referred to as Liberal, and resembled Mithat Paşa (1822–1884) who was a statesman of the Ottoman Empire known for his pro-

1 “Radif” is a rule in Persian, Turkic and Urdu poetry which states that, in the form of poetry known as a Ghazal, the second line of all the couplets (bayts or Shers) must end with the same word/s. This repeating of common words is the “Radif” of the Ghazal.

Western views.

The authors of Turkish poetic drama tended to use mythic and theatrical elements in order to create a “different world” and interrupt the daily routine. In the 20’s and 30’s of the 20th century such poetic dramas of Faruk Nafiz as *The Assault* (1932) and *A Hero* (1933) became popular. Both of them are mostly dedicated to the events that took place during the Turkish War of Independence. In the 1940–1960’s the development of Turkish poetic drama faced a slowdown.

Turan Oflazoğlu was one of the first authors who dared to write poetic dramas after a long break. Such of his works as *Keziban*, *Cem Sultan*, *Kösem Sultan* and *Young Osman* are based on historical events and their characters are inspired by historical figures. Having presented his drama *Kurban* in 1967, Güngör Dilmen manifested his protest against violence against women. Avoiding the overuse of poetic constructions, the author observed an ancient tradition of combining verse and prose and endowed only some of his characters with a “poetic talent.” In order to make the reception of poetic constructions easier to his readers, the author placed the rhymed lines between his characters’ words paying the reader or spectator’s attention to another subject. *Kurban* was followed by the emergence of two-act drama *Bağdat Hatun* (1981), where Güngör Dilmen used similar techniques: he significantly shortened the phrases of his characters and rhymed them sometimes.

Nowadays Turkish dramatists resort to poetic drama rarely. A few examples of it may be illustrated by Turan Oflazoğlu’s two-act musical play *Beauty and Love* (1991) considered to be a sequel of Şeyh Galip’s mesnevi, and *Istanbul is White, Vodka is Colorful* (1998) and *Shams, Do Not Forget!* (2006) by Özen Yula. Despite the fact that «Istanbul is White, Vodka is Colorful» is dedicated to modern concerns, Ö. Yula decided to make this play poetic in order to refresh the history of Turkish classical literature and prove that classical verse forms could be combined with modern ones. Obviously, Ö. Yula’s style differs from the style of those poets who were the representatives of Divan literature: being cleared from excessive allegories, borrowed words and hyperboles, the language of his play is close to a contemporary one that makes his drama’s reception easier. His poetic drama demonstrates that poetry is able to intensify dramatic effect significantly instead of reducing it.

The revival of poetic drama enriched and widened the genre horizons of modern Turkish dramaturgy. In spite of the fact that modern Turkish poetic drama keeps being at the edge of margins, a few examples of it clearly express modern dramatists’ position. They decided to refuse from the idea of combining poetry and prose since it makes the recipient concentrate on particular work’s structure rather than on its contents. Thus, the dramatists usually prefer to arrange their texts in a

way that does not require any complexity.

Monodrama

The genre of monodrama in Turkish literature displayed a rapid development after the 1980's (Uludere). The Meddahs' performance of one actor may be defined as a precursor of Turkish monodrama. After the 1930's, when these performances turned to a sketch show, Turkish monodramatists began following Western patterns. The first monodrama, performed on one of the stages of Ankara in 1965, was a scenic remake of N. Gogol's *Diary of a Madman*. Afterwards a range of monodramas based on poetic works of Turkish classical poets appeared. Murathan Mungan's monodrama *Bizarre Orhan Veli* was performed in 1981. *I am Anatolia* by Güngör Dilmen gained fame not only among Turkish viewers but also among foreign audience (Uludere). Having arisen a great interest among spectators and reviewers, G. Dilmen's play still keeps its popularity. This play was translated into different languages, such as English, German, French and Italian. It was performed on Turkish stages and abroad (in America, England, France and Germany, in particular).

Turgut Özakman's monodrama *I Am Mimar Sinan* is a bright example of drastic changes in traditional structure of monodrama that used to be divided into acts. Aesthetic and cultural codes, hidden in monodramas of G. Dilmen, M. Mungan and T. Özakman, reveal the accumulation of factual material important from the point of view of Turkish society's awareness of its national identity. They also reflect Turkish dramatists' intension to find out new stylistic and genre techniques and perform experiments upon their texts. Modern Turkish monodrama makes traditional drama's structure more narrative, actively encourages its reader or spectator to participate into a character's speech, creates conditions for the author's attendance at performance and represents the inner conflict as a crisis of identity.

Epic Drama

The appearance of epic drama in Turkish dramaturgy in the 1960's was triggered by translations and staging of Berthold Brecht's works. Such dramas of this author as *Baal* and *Drums in the Night* became the first plays to be performed in Turkey (Doğan 413). The emergence of a new type of drama caused a real cultural boom. In terms of that times' difficult political situation (that encountered the first military coup), writers got an opportunity to express their critical attitude towards state politics and politicians openly. Both playwrights and readers / spectators took those changes positively, since the innovations that drama experienced in its structure

and expressive means reminded them an open traditional Turkish drama. Haldun Taner (1915–1986) became the most outstanding representative of epic theatre. He was a person who managed to combine epic elements with traditions of folk theatre making it a significant feature of Turkish epic drama. Enriching this trend with didacticism inherent to the literature of Tanzimat, H. Taner created such original plays as *A Poem about Ali from Keshan, I will Close my Eyes and Do my Work*, *A Cunning Wife of a Rogue* and *The Shadow of a Donkey* (İpşiroğlu 80).

Such Turkish playwrights as Vasıf Öngören (*The Way Asiye Will Survive, A Notebook of Germany*), Sermet Çağan (*The Factory of Legs and Arms*), Oktay Arayıcı (*Useless World*), İsmet Küntay (*Since the First Rescue*) and Turhan Selçuk (*Abdülcanbaz*) played a significant role in the development of Turkish epic drama (Doğan 414). Such dramas as *Dangerous Pigeon* by Necati Cumalı, *Kiss Hacıvat's Hand* by Ünver Oral, *Bloody Nigâr* by Sadık Şengil, *Sarıpınar 1914* by Turgut Özakman etc. also caused a great interest. Despite the fact that these plays were undoubtedly inspired by *Karagöz* and *Orta Oyunu*, all of them have a distinctive author's style (Oganova 94).

In the 1970's–1980's Oktay Arayıcı appeared in dramatic arena. Such of his works as *The World of Traveller Ramazan Bey* (1970), *Social Anatomy of One Dead* (1976) and *Goncagül's Pen Name* (1981) accumulate the best experience of traditional Turkish theatre. *Goncagül's Pen Name* embodies such features of epic theatre as introduction before each act, songs that include comments upon action, frequent use of narratives and the effect of “isolation” (Prushkovska 158).

The works of Bilgesu Erenus (*The Doors* (1973), *A Partner* (1976), *A Game for Two* (1978), Muzaffer İzgü and Zeki Göker (*The Black Order* (1974), *We Are to be Born with Death Again* (1975) made a great contribution to the development of epic drama. In spite of decrease of popularity that epic drama experienced even before the events that occurred in September 1980, such authors as Hidayet Sayın (*Dry Leaves in the Park* (1994), *Game Over* (1994), *Time to Live* (1998), *The Scream of Silence* (1999) and *Wandering Hopes* (2000), and Murathan Mungan (*The Curse of Deers* (1992) kept working over it. *The Curse of Deers* by M. Mungan is the author's version of ancient legends, which embraces the motives that Turks know since the epoch of Seljuqs. The author considers this work to be his masterpiece that accumulates all his experience and knowledge: “If somebody decided to read my works I would strongly recommend him or her to start from this play” (Üstün 8). M. Mungan's drama is based on narration rather than on action. Moreover, this narrative differs from real life's imitation very much. Its plot consists of chronologically connected episodes. The author's comments make his text closer

to an epic one.

Turkish epic drama appeals to its reader's mind and encourages him or her to comprehend a changing world. It has a complicated structure, it is socially oriented and reflects social, moral, ethical and worldview related (ideological) contradictions.

Children's Drama

Despite the fact that the roots of Turkish children's drama may be traced back to the second half of the 19th century, the most active period of its development dates back to the 1940's, when state theatres and theatres for children started to be founded. Before their appearance, traditional folk drama was universal, since there was no division into theatre for children and the same one for adults. As well as adults, children also liked watching plays inspired by *Karagöz* and *Orta Oyunu*, they were impressed by the dolls used during performances, marvelous shades and comic characters. First examples of children's drama were published within 1888–1921 in such art magazines as *Guide for Children*, *Student's Copybook*, *New Generation*, *Teacher's Magazine* and *Kindergarten*. İsmail Hakkı Baltacıoğlu was one of the first playwrights who emphasized the importance and necessity of children's dramaturgy (Kırgel).

In 1935, Istanbul City Theatre created an atelier for writing and staging children's drama. Having opened this atelier, its administration faced the main problem concerning lack of children's plays in its repertoire. *A Lesson of Dramaturgy for Children* is a musical play written by Kemal Küçük on Muhsin Ertuğrul's request. It is considered to be the first Turkish drama for children written in order to draw children's attention to dramatic art. Later, when the idea of publishing a magazine upon children's drama appeared, children got an opportunity to attend children's performances for free in case of buying this periodical. Confirmation of agreement upon building state and children's theatres in the city of Izmir became the second step on the way to creation of children's theatre. *Golden Quill Pen* by Mümtaz Uygun and *Black Palace* by Ziya Başkan were the first plays staged in Izmir (Nutku 357). The emergence of children's plays in the State Theatre's repertoire became a great contribution to the development of children's dramaturgy. Children's drama *Gold Bracelet* by Mümtaz Zeki Taşkın was performed in the State Theatre of Turkey on January 31, 1948.

The works of Ülker Köksal, Hasan Erkek, Ülkü Ayvaz, Bilgesu Erenus etc., represent the second half of the 20th century. In her play *Tomorrow Depends on Mind* (1973) Ülker Köksal tried to prove that happiness, joy and truth could be obtained only by means of mind. Within 1975–1985 Ülker Köksal created five plays

that were successfully staged in Bursa, Ordu, Izmir and Istanbul (*The Planet of Peace*, *A Palace Made of Glass*, *The Guards of the Forest*, *Our Favorite Shack* and *The Order of One Rose*). During 1994–1996, the author prepared two collections, each consisting of 31 short dramas, for publication (Köksal). Ü. Köksal wrote her playwrights on different subjects. For instance, *A Palace Made of Glass* and *The Order of One Rose* are dedicated to so-called “adult” issues (unlimited power of politicians and fight against injustice). At the same time, the author did not forget to take into consideration the specificity of children’s reception. The writer named one of her children’s dramas *The Planet of Peace* to appeal to the audience claiming that if people manage to live in peace and harmony, the Earth will become a planet of peace. Ülker Köksal’s short plays are quite didactic: her works are widely used in kindergartens and primary schools to teach children colors, figures and numbers and to tell them about such outstanding representatives of Turkish nation as Mimar Sinan, Koca Seyit Onbaşı and others (Maden 223). The majority of Ülker Köksal’s plays deals with universal concerns, family problems, youth issues etc. She gets inspired by everyday life stories and has a clear idea about what her characters will be like. While the majority of dramatists mentioned in our research try themselves in other genres (prose, poetry), Hasan Erkek is one of a few artists who devoted his life to both drama and science. Being an author of radio plays, H. Erkek wrote two theatrical plays for children *Let the Peace Be* (1995) and *The Ring of Love* (2004). These plays made him famous not only in Turkey but also abroad. Due to them, he was honored with numerous awards. The plays mentioned above were translated into ten European languages and staged in theatres of Croatia, Kosovo, Georgia, Tunisia, Algeria and Cyprus. Since his works are written upon universal issues, they consider such crucial themes as peace in the whole world and comfort of children, supposed to be the future of any state.

Ülkü Ayvaz granted nine dramas to Turkish children: *A Wonderful Amusement Park* (1982), *Hurrah, Rainbow* (1986), *The Chamomile* (1989), *The Knights of Iron Washtub* (1996), *A Blue Star* (2002), *My Dwelling* (2000), *A Girl with Golden Eyes and Silver Hair* (2004) etc. In 1989, Turkish Radio and Television Corporation “TRT” awarded Ülkü Ayvaz as the best children’s playwright for his drama *The Chamomile*. In this work, the author demonstrated children’s intentions to help a chamomile, that managed to make its way through a crack in the asphalt, survive. The writer illustrated this in quite a dramatic way. Due to its deep morality and philosophy revealed through the image of flower ready to overcome any obstacles in order to survive and understand the value of life, this play is still widely performed in Turkey.

Thus, modern Turkish children's drama is mostly addressed to students of primary and secondary school. Such dramatic works have dynamic plot with plenty of events. Authors reveal their characters' nature with the help of dialogues between them and their deeds rather than by means of depiction of their characteristics. Each work has vivid didactic and moral elements usually not being expressed directly but more with the development of its plot. Dramas that appeal to students of high school usually consider such global issues as human nature and the sense of life making psychological peculiarities of the personages deeper. Didacticism of Turkish children's drama is called to contribute to Turkish youth's spirituality, morality and aesthetic preferences' formation.

Conclusion

As a result of the study, we came to the following conclusions: at the beginning of its development under the active influence of European literary traditions the Turkish drama was represented by the main genres (comedy, tragedy, drama). In the development process, the genre paradigm of the Turkish drama gradually expanded (the emergence of epic, historical, biographical, children's dramas) there is a modification of some genres, as, for example, monodramas.

This research enabled us to distinguish the chief genres and types of Turkish modern drama. As a result, we may conclude that historical and biographical dramas are the main genres of the Turkish drama. The majority of modern Turkish dramas embrace creative and quasi-biographies of famous figures etc. (T. Özakman, R. Özçelik, T. Oflazoğlu, D. Sümer). The genre of biographical drama is also widely represented by works telling the life stories of historical figures who made a strong impact on culture's development (Selim III, Suleiman the Magnificent, Mevlana, Yunus Emre, Roxelana, Mimar Sinan). Those Turkish dramatists who started to write more actively at the end of the 1990's (O. Asena, M. Baydur, T. Cücenoglu) tended to follow the aesthetic values of postmodernism. Such writers as T. Özakman, T. Oflazoğlu and Ö. Yula added new topics and diversified the genre paradigm of drama by means of almost full elimination of traditional genres. While such types of drama as children's drama (Ü. Ayvaz, H. Erkek, Ü. Köksal) keep developing, the topics that are typical for Turkic culture are being rethought.

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