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GELİŞ TARİHİ

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den; Dies gilt gerade für den bekanntesten und begabtesten Autor unter ihnen, Aras Ören (geb. 1939). Andere in Deutschland lebende Schriftsteller, wie Fakir Baykurt oder Mahmut Makal, veröffentlichen zwar noch in der Türkei, doch steht ihr neueres *Œuvre* dort im Schatten ihrer früheren Erfolge. Ein jüngerer Satiriker, Şinasi Dikmen (geb. 1945), hält in seiner durchaus witzigen Prosa den Deutschen auf allzu subtile Weise den Spiegel vor, als daß es für ein Lesepublikum in der Türkei wirklich nachzuvollziehen wäre. Hinzu kommt, daß ein beträchtlicher Teil der in der Bundesrepublik von Türken geschriebenen Literatur lediglich (für die Deutschen) dokumentarischen und kaum künstlerisch-literarischen Wert hat. Nach einer Bestandsaufnahme der bislang in Deutschland entstandenen türkischen Literatur darf wohl die Prognose gewagt werden, daß die Belletristik der Türkei kaum – wie im Falle Nâzım Hikmets geschehen – in nächster Zeit ihre entscheidenden Impulse von außen bekommen wird. Vielmehr hängt ihre Zukunft wesentlich von der inneren Entwicklung des Landes selbst ab.

Theater

Metin And, Ankara

I. Introduction: Theater until 1945 – II. Institutional and Organizational Development – III. Dramatic Literature – IV. Drama Criticism and Theater Studies – V. Documentation on Playhouses and Dramatic Societies

I. Introduction: Theater until 1945

There are four main traditions of theater in Turkey: folk theater, popular theater, court theater, and Western theater. Although highly different in presentation, techniques, and conventions, folk theater and popular theater have approximately the same genres: puppetry¹), storytelling²) (acted out), dramatic dancing, and rudimentary play by male actors. Also, in both traditions all roles are played by male actors. (In a women's assembly the male roles are played by women.) There are, however, clear differences between the traditions. In the folk theater the actors are strictly non-professional, and often a whole village takes part in the performance, both as participants and spectators. The popular theater, on the other hand, employs professional actors, who generally have a secondary occupation that provides the major part of their income. With the advent of Western stage acting, it declined and disappeared at the turn of this century.

Thanks to the isolated life of the villages, the Turkish peasantry has retained its homogeneous and special character. This has led to the preservation of their original, unique forms of peasant dances, puppet shows, and mime shows. During public festivals a type of crude drama sometimes accompanies such spectacles. These *plays* are most likely a legacy of the shamanistic rituals of the Ural-Altai region, the birthplace of the Turkish people (though they may have been part of the folklore of the Phrygian or Hittite civilizations of Anatolia). Though highly symbolic, these plays are now nothing more than entertainments. Because of gradual additions, deletions, innovations, and corruptions throughout the centuries, no standard versions of them exist.

Unlike most Asiatic countries, Turkey had no greatly individualized and distinctive court theater tradition. Until the period of Westernization, court theater simply imitated popular theater. The development of the Turkish Western theater traditions is fairly recent and can be conveniently divided into three periods, which are determined not only by theatrical developments but also by political and con-

¹) See And, M.: Karagöz. Turkish Shadow Theatre with an appendix on the history of Turkish Puppet Theatre. İstanbul 1979, pp. 101–116.

²) Better known as "meddah". See Nutku, Ö.: Meddahlık ve Meddah Hikâyeleri (Storytelling and the stories of the meddah). Ankara 1977.

stitutional changes. The first period, from 1839 to 1908, is subdivided into the *Tanzimat* and *İstibdat* Periods³⁾ – that is, the periods of *reorganization* and *despotism*; the second major period, from 1908 to 1923, is that of the Revolution of 1908⁴⁾; and the third, from 1923 to the present, can be called Republican Period⁵⁾.

II. Institutional and Organizational Development

There are three kinds of theaters in Turkey: the ones which get large contributions from public funds; second, the permanent theaters which are managed privately, which don't get any subsidy and put on new productions at intervals without any help from local or central authorities; and lately, a third kind is the Broadway or West-End fashion-speculator – entrepreneurs offer the commodity stage, light entertainment, and depend on longruns for their profits – but is not yet a dominant pattern in Turkey. The first state-controlled and -supported National Company was founded in 1868 by Güllü Agop, an Armenian who became Moslem; but the most important contribution in this direction has been the foundation of the İstanbul Municipal Theatre which today is still in existence on several stages in İstanbul. The first production was adapted from Emil Fabre's *La maison d'argile*, and the first performance was given on January 20, 1916.

The establishment of the Republic in 1923 and the reforms of 1925–28 quickly brought about new government support for cultural development in Turkey: the Turkish language was reformed and the cultural history of the Turks was rediscovered and reinterpreted.

The theater became an ideal instrument for presenting this new cultural nationalism and populism. Atatürk recognized the potential of the theater in promoting the ideals of the new state; thus he personally paid close attention to the development of the theater as a whole. In Ankara, Mustafa Kemal's close associates founded an association called *Türk Tiyatrosunu Himayet Cemiyeti* (Association for Sponsoring Turkish Theater). This was a very important first step towards the later establishment of the Conservatory and the National Theater.

The establishment of People's Houses (*Halkevleri*) and People's Rooms proved invaluable for this purpose. By 1950 when CHP fell from power, there were 500 People's Houses and over 4000 People's Rooms. Many actors and playwrights of the present day started their careers as amateurs within the activities of the People's Houses.

Regarding drama as an essential part in the westernization of Turkey, the State assumed full responsibility for the actor's professional career. In 1936, a State Conservatory was established in Ankara for training actors, actresses, opera sing-

³⁾ For a detailed study of this period, see: And, M.: *Tanzimat ve İstibdat Döneminde Türk Tiyatrosu* (Turkish Theatre in Tanzimat and İstibdat Period). Ankara 1972.

⁴⁾ Called *Meşrutiyet* Period; for a detailed study of this period, see: And, M.: *Meşrutiyet Döneminde Türk Tiyatrosu* (Turkish Theatre in Meşrutiyet Period). Ankara 1971.

⁵⁾ Called *Cumhuriyet* Period; for a detailed study of this period, see: And, M.: *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türk Tiyatrosu* (Turkish Theatre in the Republican Period). Ankara 1983.

ers, and ballet dancers. The nucleus of the State Conservatory was the *Musiki Muallim Mektebi* (Music Teacher's School), which was founded in 1924. In 1934, it was decided to transform the *Musiki Muallim Mektebi* into an academy for music and drama, but it was not until 1936 that the drama section actually came into being. In 1935, it was decided to invite an expert to found and organize the State Conservatory and on March 27th of that year a one-month contract was entered into with the famous German composer, Paul Hindemith, authorizing him to establish the State Conservatory and to advise the Turkish government and at the same time, to prepare a detailed report on the organization of musical culture in Turkey. Hindemith's contract was extended twice, and his report stated that the State Conservatory was to have three sections: firstly, to teach music; secondly, to train actors; and thirdly, to train music teachers. He also prepared a draft of a constitution for the State Conservatory. At the opening of the National Assembly in 1936, Atatürk gave the welcome news that a State Conservatory would be established in Ankara. At the same time, the noted Hungarian composer, Béla Bartók, was invited to advise on the establishment of a separate section at the State Conservatory dealing with Turkish folk music. The drama and opera section was established by the German producer, Carl Ebert⁶⁾. During the 1936–37 scholastic year 11 male and 5 female students attended the drama section, and Carl Ebert himself drew up the syllabus for the classes. In 1940, President İsmet İnönü supported a bill introduced in the National Assembly regarding the State Conservatory, which consisted of two sections: music and drama. The theatre section included opera, theater, and ballet, and attached to the State Conservatory was a drama and opera workshop where the students could produce plays.

At the Drama and Opera Workshop, from 1941 to 1947, many classical plays in Greek, Latin, French, English, German, Russian, and Italian were translated into Turkish especially for production in the drama workshop. During the three years after opening of the State Conservatory, Carl Ebert produced some 7 operas and 14 plays, among which were plays written by Turkish playwrights.

When the course at the school is completed, the student is taken on as a member of the State Theatre company, with the title of State Artist commanding a good salary. From student days, therefore, until he reaches artistic maturity the artist is assured by the state of the chance to function as an artist. The State Conservatory has proved a stimulating and educative force in the development of the theatrical life of the country.

From 1947 to 1949, the State Theatre was in a period of transition, waiting for the completion of the *Büyük Tiyatro* (Big Theatre). During this period, however, it continued to give performances in a smaller theater called *Küçük Tiyatro* (Small Theatre). The State Theatre started functioning on October 1, 1949 in two theaters in Ankara. Its repertoire included both opera and drama, and its first General Director was Muhsin Ertuğrul who held this post, appointed by the Ministry of Education, until 1951. Two new theaters were added to the State block or chain. The Adana and İzmir Municipal Theatres joined the State system, and as previously mentioned, the theater in Bursa, Ahmet Vefik Paşa Theatre, was opened as a State-

⁶⁾ Who died in 1980 in California.

run house on September 28, 1957. Today, the State Theatre operates on 12 stages⁷⁾. A general director appointed by the Ministry of Culture runs the State Theatre. An administrative committee composed of six members⁸⁾ has only a consultative function. The decisions to select new plays for performances are entrusted to a seven-member committee of play reading⁹⁾. Funds for the State Theatre are provided by the Government, and it functions as an organization of the Ministry of Culture. Additional funds are obtained from the sale of tickets. Thus, the State Theatre not only offers a measure of security and opportunities for work in the theatrical profession, but it also provides a continuously functioning theater for Turkish audiences. There have been controversies over the advisability of fully subsidizing the State Theatre. It is said that providing actors with a guaranteed salary and pension turns them into civil servants and cripples young actors, killing their ambition and dulling their talent. In the last 25 years the State Theatre has produced a great number of good plays, from Sophocles to Albee and Brecht, and has introduced several new Turkish dramatists. This is a most respectable record; yet recently the State Theatre has not always proved a yardstick of quality in its capacity as a National Theatre. Recently the Ministry of Culture set out to remedy the organization and the system of the State Theatre by a new law.

Between 1960 and 1970 private theaters had mushroomed in İstanbul and Ankara, where theatrical activity in Turkey is mostly confined. During those memorable ten years Turkish theater enjoyed a vitality that enabled it to deal with problems of current social and political importance. In İstanbul there were more than 25 private theaters and a dozen in Ankara. Though the government gave no subsidies to these companies, even in the form of tax relief, they succeeded in attracting large audiences and in running at a profit. In 1969, serious social, economic, and political unrest descended upon Turkey. Rural inhabitants were flocking to the big cities in search of work, and student violence was erupting in streets. Severe new codes were enacted that subjected the big cities to martial law. People naturally preferred to spend their evenings at home watching television – then a quite recent innovation in Turkey. Thus, television has usurped the place of *round stage actors*. In the 1970's the condition was nearing a critical stage: not that there was any question of the patient's dying but the fact that most of the private theaters were on the verge of bankruptcy. Increasing proportions of the theater-going public apparently paid more attention to the dramatic developments off-stage than onstage. Another immediate and obvious cause is the destruction of playhouses. Private theater in the past ten years has lost several theaters; they have been demolished, developed, or converted to other purposes such as shops and warehouses. The remaining ones lack equipment and comfort the resources needed to meet contemporary demands both behind and in front of the footlights. Some successful, private theaters now closed their doors, leaving others struggling

⁷⁾ Four in Ankara, two in İstanbul, one in Bursa, one in İzmir, one in Antalya, one in Erzurum, and one in Elâzığ.

⁸⁾ The general director, the chairman of the play-reading committee, chief stage director, chief technical director, music director, and a representative of actors.

⁹⁾ Including the general director, three representatives of the nation's literary life, the chief dramaturge, chief stage director, and an actor.

to survive. Three theaters deserve special mention: *Dostlar Tiyatrosu* (Friend's Theatre) in İstanbul¹⁰), *Ankara Sanat Tiyatrosu* (Ankara Arts Theatre), and *Kent Oyuncuları* (Kent Players) in İstanbul. Thanks to their loyal audiences and staff, they have been able to resist the tide. At long last, the public authorities have accepted the responsibility for keeping the private theaters alive. In 1982, the Ministry of Culture finally appointed a committee¹¹) to investigate the position of the private theaters and the amount of subsidy to be distributed from public funds. In 1982, this amount was 50 million TL and in 1983, 75 million TL. This contribution, compared to the yearly subsidy which the State Theatre received (over one billion TL), is absurdly insufficient; yet it shows a brightening prospect, and as a practical conclusion, in less than two years the number of private theaters has been increased. Also, this modest grant has enabled some theaters to sustain a better artistic level and to present new and original works of distinction. Until quite recently, theaters which had previously been in touch only with a small section of the middle classes have started to bring İstanbul and Ankara successes to provinces, while some other provinces without a theater have been completely deprived of any theatrical life. Recently Turkish State Theatres include these remote communities in their tours¹²).

III. Dramatic Literature

From the point of view of the development of Turkish drama, the Republican period can be subdivided into two main sub-periods: from 1923 to 1960 and from 1960 to the present day. Though rooted in a relatively short tradition, recent Turkish drama has shown considerable promise. The generation that began writing before the Republican period includes Halit Fahri Ozansoy, İbnürrefik Ahmet Nuri (Sekizinci), Reşat Nuri Güntekin, Musahipzade Celâl, Hüseyin Suat Yalçın, Mahmut Yesari, Abdülhak Hâmit Tarhan, Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar, and Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu. Among the playwrights whose work appeared after the declaration of the Republic are Faruk Nafiz Çamlıbel, Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, Vedat Nedim Tör, Nâzım Hikmet (Ran), Cevat Fehmi Başkut, Ahmet Kutsi Tecer, Ahmet Muhip Dranas, Selahattin Batu, Oktay Rifat (Horozcu), Nahit Sırrı Örik, and Ekrem Reşit Rey.

Until 1960, the works seen on the Turkish stage reflected few of the changes which had overtaken the country. Some were poor copies of Western plays, in which an effort was made to assimilate the plays' surface qualities. The pre-1960 dramatists tended toward pseudo-symbolism or psychological realism, in which

¹⁰) Since 1981, no longer exists.

¹¹) The composition of the committee is as follows: Under-Secretary of the Ministry, the General Director of the State Theatre, a representative of private theatres, a representative of playwrights' association, a representative of the Universities' theatre departments, and a representative of the Ministry of Finance.

¹²) During 1979-80 season the State Theatre, headed by its General Director, Ergin Orbey, performed in 67 provinces and 75 small towns with 7 productions.

characters worked out their fate in an almost societyless vacuum. Highly popular were the traditional lightweight comedies that amused the audience without ruffling its composure: plays focusing on unusual or off-beat characters and hammering on the theme that money is the root of all evil, plays on the inevitability of fate, plays involving dreams and psychoanalytic themes, plays on the eternal triangle and on the vicissitudes of married life, plays contrasting big-city and provincial life, plays in verse which failed to be poetic, and sentimental plays on themes of love, altruism, and self-sacrifice. Dramatists most often provided only a sketchy treatment of these themes.

After the army overthrew the government in 1960 and promulgated a new constitution the following year, the theater turned to a more outspoken treatment of contemporary problems. Though theater was excluded from pre-censorship, a long list of moral and political taboos remained in effect. Nevertheless, the new values imposed by the 1961 Constitution lie behind every problem play of the period. Turkish dramatists were working toward some moment of release from constrictions, both self- and externally imposed. Not only did new dramatists emerge but many playwrights writing before 1960 suddenly seemed to find new energy and new forms of expression.

A new generation of aspiring playwrights began to appear in 1960, and a changing society provided them with ever-new material. Noteworthy in this group are Haldun Taner, Orhan Asena, Turgut Özakman, Cahit Atay, Refik Erduran, Çetin Altan, Necati Cumalı, Güngör Dilmen, Nâzım Kurşunlu, Aziz Nesin, Turan Oflazoğlu, Orhan Kemal, Yaşar Kemal, Hidayet Sayın, Yıldırım Keskin, Melih Cevdet Anday, Başar Sabuncu, Aydın Arıt, Vasıf Öngören, and Oktay Arayıcı. Among the women dramatists of this period are Adalet Ağaoğlu, Bilgesu Erenus, Ülker Köksal, and Nezihe Araz. In most cases these playwrights had previously established reputations as poets, novelists, or journalists. Though many of them are skilled craftsmen, they too have often failed to lift Turkish dramatic literature to a new and higher plane.

For convenience, the considerable dramatic output of the Republican period can best be broken down by main focus and theme.

Contemporary man's sense of isolation, alienation, and loss of identity are dealt with e.g. Başar Sabuncu's *Şerefiye* (Doing the Honours, 1968) and *Çark* (The Wheel, 1970) and Bilgesu Erenus's *Nereye Payidar?* (Where to, Payidar?, 1976) and *Ortak* (The Partner, 1976). Generational conflicts are the theme of Nezihe Araz's *Öyle Bir Nevcivan* (He is such a Young Fellow, 1979) and Turgut Özakman's *Kanaviçe* (The Cross-Stitch Canvas, 1960) and *Pembe Evin Kaderi* (The Fate of the Pink House, 1951). Sexual mores and problems are the focus of Oktay Rifat's *Zabit Fatma'nın Kuzusu* (Officer Fatma's little lamb; 1965), Aydın Arıt's *Aya Bir Yolcu* (A Passenger to the moon; 1967), Turgut Özakman's *Paramparça* (Ragged and Tattered; 1963) and Aziz Nesin's *Hadi Öldürsene Canikom* (Go on, Kill, Buddy; 1970).

Plays about individuals caught in the cultural conflict between traditional values and modern Westernized ideas and manners e.g. Refik Erduran's *Cengiz Han'ın Bisikleti* (Genghis Khan's Bicycle; 1959), and Haldun Taner's *Dışardakiler* (Those Outside; 1957). Artists, actors, poets, and scientists at odds with their mil-

ieu and failing to come to terms with it are the subjects of plays e.g. Haldun Taner's *Ve Değirmen Dönerdi* (And the Mill was turning; 1958) and Refik Erduran's *Karayar Köprüsü* (Great-Chasm Bridge; 1959) and *Uçurtmanın Zinciri* (Kite on a Chain; 1965).

Peasants flooding into the big cities and being forced to live in slums are the topic of plays e.g. Ülker Köksal's *Yollar Tükendi* (All Roads come to an End; 1973), Bilgesu Erenus' *El Kapısı* (Slaving for Foreigners; 1972), and Orhan Kemal's *Kardeş Payı* (Share and Share Alike; 1970).

Many plays involve lower-middle-class or working-class families in the grip of financial difficulties and show the family as a microcosm of world problems as it fights against disintegration. Among such works are Turgut Özakman's *Ocak* (The Hearth; 1962), Orhan Kemal's *Eskici Dükkânı* (Cobbler's Shop; 1969), and Adalet Ağaoğlu's *Çatıdaki Çatlak* (The Crack in the Structure; 1965).

Since the 1960s, there have been plays highlighting and revealing the role, the problems, and the social position of modern Turkish women. Among the best are Adalet Ağaoğlu's *Evcilik Oyunu* (Playing House; 1964), Ülker Köksal's *Sacide* (1972), *Besleme* (Child Servant; 1975), and *Adem'in Kaburga Kemliği* (Adam's Rib; 1979); and Orhan Asena's *Fadik Kız* (A girl called Fadik; 1966). Some plays in this vein focus on an elderly heroine who is ready to use hard and forceful methods to preserve her family or her land in an instinctive battle against illegal restraints. Noteworthy among them are Turan Oflazoğlu's *Keziban* (1965), Necati Cumalı's *Nahınlar* (The Wooden Clogs; 1962), Hidayet Sayın's *Pembe Kadın* (The Woman named Rosy; 1964), Nezihe Araz's *Bozkır Güzellemesi* (A Ballad in Praise of the Steppes; 1974), and Orhan Kemal's *Kardeş Payı* (Share and Share Alike; 1970).

Some plays can best be described as village or peasant plays; offering authentic pictures of village life in out-of-the-way places. They deal with such problems as corrupt landlords and local administrators, marriage customs, zealous intolerance, superstitions, and family feuds. Among these plays are Cahit Atay's *Pusuda* (The Ambush; 1961), a dramatization of Yaşar Kemal's novel *Yer Demir Gök Bakır* (Iron Earth, Copper Sky), and Necati Cumalı's *Susuz Yaz* (Summer Drought; 1967).

Some playwrights take their inspiration from mythology, folk legends, local history, and the history of previous civilizations. Such plays were originally vehicles for promoting glorified notions about the natural past, usually in semi-sentimental, uplifting tones calculated to flatter audiences, but during the past two decades or so, several dramatists have attempted to demystify the past by returning to valid historical sources. Some of these plays are about national figures of the past: Orhan Asena's *Simavnalı Şeyh Bedrettin* (Sheik Bedrettin of Simavna; 1970); some are on the early history of Turkey or on Ottoman history: Güngör Dilmen's *Bağdat Hatun* (Lady Baghdad; 1974), Orhan Asena's *Hürrem Sultan* (1959), Turan Oflazoğlu's *Deli İbrahim* (İbrahim the Mad; 1967) and *Murat IV* (1970); and some are about recent Turkish history or about the War of Independence: Güngör Dilmen's *İttihat ve Terakki* (Union and Progress; 1968). Many of these plays find in legend and mythology conspicuous lessons for modern times: Ahmet Tecer's *Koroğlu* (1949); Orhan Asena's *Tanrılar ve İnsanlar* (Gods and Men; 1954); and

Güngör Dilmen's *Midas'ın Kulakları* (The Ears of Midas; 1960), *Midas'ın Altınları* (The Gold of Midas; 1969), *Midas'ın Kördüğümü* (The Gordion Knot; 1976), *Akat'ın Yayı* (Aqhat's Divine Bow; 1967), *Kurban* (The Sacrifice; 1967), *Ak Tanrılar* (White Gods; 1963), and *Deli Dumrul* (Dumrul the Mad; 1979).

Plotless plays, presenting glimpses of assorted characters and their everyday lives, are often introduced by a narrator and depend largely on their atmospheric quality. Often, they contrast an *inner* and an *outer* world. The best of these are Ahmet Kutsi Tecer's *Köşebaşı* (The Neighborhood; 1947), Haldun Taner's *Fazilet Ec-zahanesi* (Virtue Pharmacy; 1960), Oktay Rifat's *Bir Takım İnsanlar* (A Group of People; 1960), and Orhan Kemal's *72. Koğuş* (Cell Block No. 72; 1967).

Many plays highlight political and social revolutionary ideals, the conflict between capital and labor, business ethics and the fight against fascism. In this category are Aydın Arıt's *Uçmayan Kuşlar Tutulur* (The Birds That Don't Fly Get Caught; 1973); Başar Sabuncu's *İşgal* (Occupancy; 1977); Orhan Asena's play about Chile, *Bir Bakana Ağıt* (A Dirge for the President; 1978) and *Şili'de Av* (Hunt in Chile); and Vasıf Öngören's *Asiye Nasıl Kurtulur?* (How to Save Asiye? 1970), *Alamanya Defteri* (The Notebook of Germany; 1971), and *Zengin Mutfağı* (Kitchen of the Wealthy; 1977).

Idealists whose zeal alienates them from contemporary Turkish reality are dealt with in Turgut Özakman's *Güneşte On Kişi* (Ten People Working on the Sun Newspaper; 1954), Oktay Arayıcı's *Nafîle Dünya* (The World in Vain; 1971), and a dramatization of Orhan Kemal's novel *Murtaza*.

Of a more general nature, are those symbolic dramas concerned with such themes as man's place in the universe, analyses of a social organization, and a criticism of contemporary mores. To this category belong Turgut Özakman's *Tufan* (The Flood; 1957), Refik Erduran's *Aman Avcı* (Please, Hunter; 1962), Güngör Dilmen's *Canlı Maymun Lokantası* (Restaurant of the Live Monkey; 1964), and Haldun Taner's *Gözlerimi Kaparım Vazifemi Yaparım* (I Shut My Eyes and Do My Work; 1964).

In recent years, Turkish dramatists and theater groups have been experimenting with new forms and unconventional structures. Western culture is now seen not as an ideal model but as a contrasting tradition. Playwrights have also become aware that "modern" theatrical trends in Europe have their counterparts in Turkish traditional theater, and this has facilitated their absorption into contemporary Turkish theater. For example, the tradition of *Karagöz*, or shadow theater, has been supplied with new scripts designed for performance by live actors. Dramatists such as Aziz Nesin, Orhan Asena, and Turgut Özakman have been particularly active in theater of this type. Mention should also be made of Sadık Şendil's *Kanlı Nigâr* (The Bloody Nigâr; 1963) and *Yedi Kocalı Hürmüz* (Hürmüz and Her Seven Husbands; 1963), Refik Erduran's *Ayı Masalı* (Bear Fable), and Oktay Rifat's *Oyun İçinde Oyun* (Play within a Play; 1949). The contribution of traditional Turkish theater far transcends mere borrowing or superficial treatment. It stems from the very essence of traditional theater; a sense of anti-illusionistic rapport between the actors and the audience, an open or flexible form, the attempt to give the impression of improvisation and total theater in performance, and the use of music, dance, and songs as adjuncts to drama.

Turkish traditional theater, which is not plotted in the Aristotelian sense, uses instead a loose, episodic structure in which disconnected and fragmentary scenes are woven together in a manner that does not require the compulsive attention of the audience. Turkish traditional and contemporary theater are both attracted to "open form". Though Bertolt Brecht's epic style has influenced Turkish dramatists (for example, Vasif Öngören), some playwrights have arrived at a so-called Brechtian style from their own all-but-forgotten heritage. The best examples of this are Haldun Taner's *Sersem Kocanın Karısı* (Shrewd Wife of a Dumb Husband; 1969) and *Ayışığında Şamata* (Hubbub in Moonlight; 1978); Turgut Özakman's *Sarıpınar 1914* (Sarıpınar in the Year 1914; 1968); *Fehim Paşa Konağı* (Fehim Pasha's Mansion; 1979) and *Resimli Osmanlı Tarihi* (An Illustrated Ottoman History; 1982); and Oktay Arayıcı's *Nafîle Dünya* (The World in Vain; 1971), *Bir Ölümün Toplumsal Anatomisi* (The Social Anatomy of a Dead Man; 1978) and *Rumuz Goncagül* (Codename is Rosebud; 1981). Another instance of this loose structure is the performance in a single-program series of acts or playlets stressing an overall theme but otherwise unconnected. Examples are Cahit Atay's *Karaların Memetleri* (Three Memets from the Village Karalar; 1963) and *Gültepe Oyunları* (Three Playlets from the Gültepe District; 1968), Aydın Arıt's *Beşgen* (The Pentagon; 1976), and İsmet Küntay's *Evler ... Evler...* (Houses ... Houses ...; 1973).

The increasing use of abstraction and nonsequitur in contemporary theater is very much at home with Turkish traditional theater, in which dialogues are often strung together with lack of meaning or logical order: no one seems to hear or understand anyone else. The dialogue has no bearing on the dramatic progress, and dramatic conflict is achieved by an eager but unsuccessful effort at communication that leads to frustration or mounting exasperation. In recent years, some Turkish dramatists have written plays resembling Western Europe's theater of the absurd. Among these works are Aydın Arıt's *Bal Sineği* (Honey Fly; 1965) and *Uçmayan Kuşlar Tutulur* (The Birds That Don't Fly Get Caught; 1973), Melih Cevdet Anday's *Müfettişler* (The Inspectors; 1972), and Adalet Ağaoğlu's *Kozalar* (Cocoon's; 1969).

One of the most striking characteristics of Turkish traditional theater is long, sustained dialogue between two main characters: a battle of wits and non-communication that could seemingly be prolonged indefinitely. The selfishness of both protagonists and their inability to see the other's point of view provoke an atmosphere of gathering tension. Representative examples of these two-character plays are Oktay Rifat's *Yağmur Sıkıntısı* (Depression Before Rain; 1970), Melih Cevdet Anday's *Mikadonun Çöpleri* (The Mikado Game; 1967), Aziz Nesin's *Tut Elimden Rovni* (Hold My Hand-Rovni; 1968), and Adalet Ağaoğlu's *Tombala* (Bingo; 1969).

A fair number of monodramas have found their basic inspiration in the dramatic monologue of the traditional *meddah*, or storyteller. Chief among these are Erol Toy's *Meddah* (The Storyteller; 1971), Aziz Nesin's *Çıçu* (1961), and Nezihe Meriç's *Sular Aydınlanıyordu* (The Waters were Illuminated; 1969).

Turkish traditional theater was strongly inclined toward total theater in which story, dance, music, and singing were integral. Although much has been lost through the centuries, this tradition enables contemporary Turkish audiences to

delight in musical plays, revues, and operettas patterned after Western models. Prior to the Republican period, musical plays sometimes enjoyed successful runs. In the Republican period, prior to 1960, a native theatrical form known as *operet* (a kind of operetta) became popular. Most of these were examples of vaudeville into which dances and songs were incorporated.

After 1960, musicals began to attract even wider attention, with such works as Haldun Taner's *Keşanlı Ali Destanı* (The Ballad of Ali of Keshan; 1964) with music by Yalçın Tura, and *Zilli Zarife* (Zarife with Bells; 1966) with music by Mehmet Akan, and Refik Erduran's *Direklerarası* (Djamilah; 1965) with music by Arif Erkin. Another application of this approach is the improvisational topical revue known as cabaret theater. The most notable cabaret group is Haldun Taner's company, the *Devekuşu Kabare Tiyatrosu* (Ostrich Cabaret Theatre), whose performances satirize all aspects of contemporary Turkish life.

IV. Drama Criticism and Theater Studies

Almost no critic is able to earn a living by their pen only as critics of drama. Drama criticism is almost a pastime, a hobby, or a part-time pursuit for writers, with some exceptions, especially in the case of Radio, TV, and cinema critics. On the other hand, State controlled radio and TV do not allow criticisms on the air. Some critics are asked to serve on certain official or unofficial advisory committees or to decide on some problems concerning performing arts, or for award or prize giving panels. Until the 1970's, the press showed a great interest in the theater. Some leading newspapers devoted an entire page every week to theater reviews and theatrical news. Ever since dailies, hardly carrying any columns on drama, there are two national newspapers with a large circulation that have affiliated literary and art magazines. One is *Hürriyet*, which publishes a monthly literary magazine called *Gösteri* and the other, *Milliyet* publishes a biweekly art magazine called *Sanat Dergisi*. Both periodicals devote large space to theatrical reviews. There have been quite a number of Turkish drama critics in the past as well as in the present time¹³). Some playwrights or actors also tried drama criticism for dailies¹⁴). Besides a *snap-judgment* in the daily papers, there are critics for weekly, biweekly, and monthly magazines who have time to digest their impressions before setting them down on paper and presenting the results of analytical studies¹⁵). It also often happens that critics publish selections of their work in book form, which gives a picture of continuity of processes making up the theater¹⁶). Some

¹³) Refik Ahmet Sevengil, İ. Necmettin Dilmen, Selâmi İzzet Sedes, Selim Nüzhet Gerçek, Ekrem Reşit Rey, Ref'i Cevat Ulunay, Nurullah Ataç, Lütfi Ay, Burhan Arpad, Tunç Yalman, Hayati Asilyazıcı, Ergun Sav, Ayperi Akalan, Adnan Benk, Metin And, Osman N. Karaca, Zahir Güvemli, Çetin A. Özkırım, Günay Akarsu, Özdemir Nutku, Selma Tükel, Tahir Özçelik, Dikmen Gürün-Uçaner, etc.

¹⁴) Among them Sabahattin Kudret Aksal, Yıldırım Keskin, Suat Taşer.

¹⁵) Such as Atilla Sav, Ayşegül Yüksel, Zeynep Oral.

¹⁶) Collections of reviews in book form have been published by, among others, Özdemir Nutku, Burhan Arpad, Ergun Sav, Selâmi İzzet Sedes, Suat Taşer, Ali Oraloğlu.

critics are the members of the International Association of Theatre Critics¹⁷). There are also periodicals devoted to theatrical arts, and nearly every theater company publishes regularly a magazine program which contains articles and news on theatrical matters; the best are the State Theatre review and İstanbul Municipal Theatre review, dealing with the propagation of theatrical culture. Most of the publishing companies, as well as the State Publishing Office, publish large quantities of plays in book form. Prizes, awards of encouragement, and acknowledgment are given either by the State or by individuals or societies or theatrical periodicals. The State gives the title of State Artist under a new, special bylaw to those who have an established record of distinguished contribution. This is given on recommendation of a committee of experts¹⁸). Another field of criticism is that of theater as a material object and an autonomous phenomenon by academic research rather than as an immediate subject and trying to distinguish the universal theater from the timebound or actual theater, dealing with the constant, permanent, stable features of the theater. In the drama departments of the Turkish universities, the system of theater and the method of analysis are a teaching goal. The complexity of the theater phenomenon and the various intellectual implications as to the history, the structure, the concept, and the insight of theater require this center to be of an academic quality. The first of these departments established in Ankara University in 1964, has both undergraduate and post-graduate level¹⁹). The history and dramatic literature courses emphasize the vast body of material wherewith the student may enrich his life and illuminate his activities. On the other hand, drama curriculum contains a certain number of performance courses, where the drama department benefits from the collaboration of the stage's best practitioners. It is apparent then, that a properly-balanced drama curriculum must have a judicious arrangement of content and performance courses. In its various forms it is increased by the activities of students in the production of plays²⁰). Each year the Department produced at least two original plays, written by a student or prepared collectively by the whole group. In 1976, another Drama Department was established in İzmir, attached to the Fine Arts Faculty of the September 9th University (formerly to the Aegean University), where much emphasis is given to the courses in acting, theater crafts, stage design and construction, and costume design²¹).

¹⁷) Melâhat Özgü, Lütfi Ay, Sevda Şener, Özdemir Nutku, Metin And, Zeynep Oral.

¹⁸) So far the theatrical recipients were the former general director of the State Theatre, Cüneyt Gökçer and one of the leading actresses of Turkey, Yıldız Kenter.

¹⁹) Prior to this, at the same faculty there has been a Theatre Institute, and the first professor to teach at this Institute was the American producer and theatre manager, Professor Kenneth Macgowan.

²⁰) Last two years the productions of the Department are produced at the İstanbul International Arts Festival, and well received by the press.

²¹) Presently the chairman of the Ankara Drama Department is Professor Metin And, and the chairman of the İzmir Drama Department is Professor Özdemir Nutku.

V. Documentation on Playhouses and Dramatic Societies

Ever since the 19th century theaters in Turkey perpetuate in their architecture. The class divisions of a dead era, they fossilize one form of staging behind the picture frame in its least flexible and efficient channel. The most important of these is in İstanbul Atatürk Cultural Center. The construction of it began on May 29, 1946. Since the municipality of İstanbul was unable to go on with the project for financial reasons, the Ministry of Finance took over. The building, at first intended only as an opera house, acquired the properties of a large Cultural Center comprised of different sections and a multi-purpose auditorium. The building was finally inaugurated on April 12, 1969 as the İstanbul Cultural Palace. On November 27, 1970, a fire damaged the entire stage and large sections of the auditorium. At the beginning of 1977, after seven years work, it was once more ready for use. The Atatürk Cultural Center comprises four auditoria: (1) The Grand Hall can hold 1.317 spectators. Its forestage, which enables the large auditorium to be used for different purposes, has a special arrangement: the width of the proscenium opening can vary from 12 to 17.20 meters. (2) The Concert Hall contains 530 seats and if necessary 200 standing places; an orchestra can be accommodated on the 110 sq. meter podium. (3) The Intimate Theatre is a very simply decorated unit reserved for performances of a special kind and provides seats for an audience of 300. There is a continuity between the stage, audience, and foyer areas. (4) The Children's Cinema holds an audience of 294. In this unit puppet, shadow theater, and cinema performances can be produced; in addition there is an art gallery that covers a total area of one thousand sq. meters. The State Theatre in Ankara operates in six playhouses. The most important are the Big Theatre, the best equipped theatre, where opera, theatrical, and ballet performances are given to an audience of 745; the Little Theatre having 605 seats; the Third Theatre, which was built in 1930, having 590 seats. The other three theaters are smaller. Presently İstanbul Municipal Theatre operates in four playhouses, scattered in various parts of İstanbul, and a large open-air theater, in the Ancient Roman theater style, with a seating capacity of four thousand. In addition to these there are several other theaters scattered in various cities. Recently there is a tendency to convert unusual spaces to full-scale theaters or to use non-theater buildings. Two striking examples of this practice are the use of the fortress on the European shore of the Bosphorus, built by Mehmet the Conqueror in 15th century, and the use of the Castle of Seven Towers, which is a curious structure, partly Byzantine and partly Turkish; its seating capacity is 2600, and the width of its stage is 34 meters, enabling large productions.

One should also mention drama festivals held in various parts of Turkey. The most important of all these is the International Arts Festival, inaugurated in 1973, held in İstanbul every year between June and July. It comprises all performing arts, both native and foreign, sponsored both by private and public funds.

There are few associations concerned with theater. The most important is the Turkish Centre of International Theatre Institute (ITI), founded in 1954. It has a very modest budget. So far it has published few yearly plays in English and publi-

shed some Turkish plays in German, French, and English and given a few scholarships to some young talents to study abroad. It is a desire to have a better organized and more systematic exchange with the outside theatrical world. The other association is the Turkish Playwrights' Association, founded in 1966, which looks after the legitimate rights of its members, trying to activate and promote the development of new dramatic writing.

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