

### Literary Criticism of Turkish Literature

Gulshara TASTEMIROVA, Rakhila NARALIYEVA, Aysha BEGALIEVA, Gulkhan TILEUZHANOVA, Gulzhan SAPAYEVA, Meruert IBRAGIMOVA, Balgabay DOSANOV

Chair of Pre-University Training, al-Farabi KazNU, Almaty, Kazakhstan

**Abstract.** *The aim of the article is to analyze, investigate and discuss Turkish literature issues. The importance of this article is to review the opinions and criticisms of writers-satirists all over the world against Turkish writers of satirical works. The analysis was carried out not only following scientific manner, but also in the comparative phase of studies on Oriental and Turkic satirical literature. We studied the contribution of Turkish satire in world literature, its role and place in the Humanities, culture and social relations. It should also be noted that this article contains information on researched role and importance of Turkish satirical works. This article reveals the factors affecting Turkish literature development: cultural (genre/style borrowing) and social (subject matter) factors.*

**Keywords:** Aziz Nesin, Literary criticism, Satirical works, Scientific value, Turkish literature.

### Introduction

People created epic, proverbs, sayings, winged words, legends and fairy tales since ancient times. All these forms of folk art include special kind of literary work.

The literature is changed and developed according to social development, public interest, wishes and intention. Also, it is tightly connected with other areas of social consciousness, people's worldview, human and moral conceptions and understandings, opinions, faith, aesthetic understandings and feelings – all of these are interlinked with each other.

The Turkish literature is founded on truth, realness and justice. It develops best traditions which created from people's dreams and enriched cultural asset. Models of national literatures influence on each other in development of genre forms. Also best traditions and literary achievements became common good. All of these processes form part of the main tendencies of globalization in development of modern literature.

It should also be noted that Turkish literature as a cultural asset of the nation is developed quickly within a short period of time and created all genres specific to literature and art. It opened doors to wealth of literature and art. Thereby dramaturgy, opera, ballet and symphony are developed according to concepts of civilized world.

Development of scientific views and aesthetic judgments sets new objectives for literary critics.<sup>1</sup> Analyzing the cultural background and studying factors for definition of priority directions of development are difficult work.

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, Turkish literature was developing at the time of socio-cultural and political changes. Thus, there have been developed several genres<sup>2</sup> that lost their relevance shortly.

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<sup>1</sup> K. Cayir, *Islamic literature in contemporary Turkey: from epic to novel*, New York, Springer, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> R. Ostle, (ed.), *Modern Literature in the Near and Middle East, 1850-1970*, London, Routledge, 2016.

Basically, there are papers devoted to specific time frames of this period. Thus, there are papers devoted to Tanzimat period – the time of reforms and innovations in Turkish literature. This was the period, when bourgeois culture was introduced by combining European cultural traditions and Turkish folk language. Thus, French literature had an effect on new genres – novella, historical, adventure and social<sup>3</sup> novels.

The period of literary stagnation was followed by the process of raising social self-identity in Turkish literature of the early 1900s, which ended with the Young Turk Revolution of July 1908. Literature became richer with realistic tendencies; various literary genres began to struggle. Democracy supporters advocated for Turkish language simplification and purification from foreign words. This led to the rejection of privies poetic forms and metrics.

In the 1920s, national liberation movement center was being formed in Anatolia. In the newspapers, there were calls for resistance to foreign invaders. The struggle for Anatolia grew into a struggle for Turkey independence. The most active writers have joined the Anatolian Center. Many writers took part in the national liberation war, which was described and considered in literature after the establishment of the Republic of Turkey (1923).

Thus, Turkish literature development within the period of the 19th and the early 20th centuries was studied on a sample basis. This does not allow us to trace literature continuity from its beginning and to the end.

In every nation, writers not only write literary works, they also affect the history of speech craft development. Talented writers write critical works about society development. In our paper, we describe the main stages of Turkish literature development within the period of the 19th and the early 20th centuries.

### **Methods and methodology**

This article is supported by methods that helped to consider Turkish literature development within the specified period. The formal method allowed analyzing the features of artistic forms. The method pf structural analysis allowed identifying the elements of literary work structure and their relationship pattern, as well as building a general model. Comparative-historical method allowed conducting a historical-typological comparison of the specified literary period.

The biographical method allowed analyzing the writers, in particular – certain qualities and writing style formation and development.

This article is focused on the most outstanding representatives of Turkish literature of that period, including such famous writers as Kemal, Zy Pasha, Dulatuli.

### **Data, Analysis, and Results**

Criticism is closely connected with literary processes, people's cultural and social life. In short, we can say that it develops together with life and takes part in social and political life of nation. All of this increases relation of criticism with life and

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<sup>3</sup>R. Ostle (ed.), *Modern Literature in the Near and Middle East, 1850-1970*, London, Routledge, 2016.

strengthens its importance. Critical views and opinions are directly connected with the level of development of social consciousness and social sciences. In its turn literary criticism contributes to prospering of social views and opinions too.

The literature is a mirror of epoch where it was created and developed. The main aim of the speech craft is not only describing the truth of life, its power in transmission of truth to the future generation.

The literature based on conscience, intellect and sense or the speech craft describes destiny of the people always perform their own historical functions.

It is well-known that in creativity of some Turkish poets there are notions such as “civilization, justice, human rights, equality”, in addition poets like Namyk Kemal and Zya Pasha often raised a point on themes of motherland and freedom. When the Kazakh people had the same situation in the political arena, the Kazakh versification had some changes in content. From this perspective it is easily noticable that Shinasi’s works in the Turkish literature and Mirzhakyp Dulatuli and Akhmet Baitursynov’s works had some similarities. We can see that Mirzhakyp’s “Oyan Khazakh”, Akhmet’s “Masa”, Shinasi’s “Elkhanshita” are in harmony by their content and interest. The second generation of novators glorified the world of feeling and was pleased by poetry lovers.<sup>4</sup>

One of reason of this harmony must be the fact that Shangerei akyn who was close to estheticians had the similar destiny with Abdulla Khamit. We can say that there was hardly any change in the Turkish literature which had no unity in the content. Only themes and ideas of stories and novels in the classical Turkish literature had changed, but selection of word remains unchanged because it was written by using prose’s unit of measure. And the kicker is that the ancient phrases and words are used not only by Turkish and Kazakh poets, it is common for all Turkic nations.

The literature accepted by new generation of poets and their follower as the art.

By analyzing works of new poets we see that at first time they cultivated Roman poetry after Parnassianizm. Pro-Western orientation of these poets influenced on poetry of Servert-i Fununs (the name of the new group of generation poets). This impact wasn't good because this type of poetry was foreign to Turkish people. So it is not widely distributed among the population.

After it on the literary arena came new group of poets which in their poetry glorifies nationalism, native language and own religion.

At first we must make a point of their view on poetry. «Rhyme and word created for feeling, but if need to choose between them rhyme for me will be closely».<sup>5</sup>

A form of verse was used by Abay in his poems differs from others with its philosophic meaning and civil importance. In the early 20th century it makes a great step forward in the development of Kazakh poetry. But in Turkish literature in spite of the fact that number of writers who wrote poems by using Gafuz verse and Syllabic verse (for centuries it uses only in folksy songs) increased; the fine pieces of poetry in

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<sup>4</sup> E. Ozdemir, *Literature information*, Istanbul, Zlatoust Publishing House, 1990.

<sup>5</sup> A. Kabakli, *Turkish literature*, Ankara, Zlatoust Publishing House, 1994.

above mentioned field were beginning to appear more than quarter century after. It would be wrong to compare poems of both nations only from side of external factors such as content theme and idea. So we must analyze these similarities in poetry by means of historical approach.

Until the late XIX century Turkish literature and criticism focused on oriental mind-set. Also at that time Turkish relations with Europe developed; it had a considerable influence on Turkish art and literature. As a result, these relations introduce a new concept in literature and speech craft. But the educated and intellectual Turkish people knew that it leads to problems in the field of literature; from one side Turkish literature with its own specific and from second side foreign literature trends which develops in Turkey. Both of them have own specific themes and ideology. Also the young people who studied in French and English higher education institutions which propagated political interests of own countries make a point of European literature. In generally the rising generation of that time for continuing their studies at the European universities used government support. That way, they had the opportunity to see the literary process in Europe. It was the reason for creation of groups of old and new generations of writers named «Muallim Naci-Mahmut Ekrem talasy». A half-century later new generation of writers oriented on European literature created new literary group «Servet-i Funun». In 1896 young poets and writers under the guidance of Mahmut Ekrem wrote their opinions directed against of old conservative writers in journal Servet-i Funun. If until that time in poetry were many elements of Romanism after influence of works of Servet-i Fununs it's filled with elements of Symbolism, Parnassianizm and Naturalism (especially in prose). «Some people characterized Naturalism as art which described only shameful and abominable sides of nature and human character». Maybe it was reason for Turkish literati to be far from judging own native writers as Naturalist. But through it all naturalism developed together with Romanism in the field of literature.

Founders of new view in poetry Orhan Veli Kanık<sup>6</sup> and his friends were known as «birinci yani» (first new). They offered to drastically change poem's concept and protested against formalism. They thought that poem's main aim is to be a poem. There were opinions that rhyme, rhythm, meter didn't make measurable contribution. Other opinions say that in new poems there is no way to traditional poetry elements. So, at first representatives of this group and their works are criticized by other writers. But in recent years they take place among the best works of Turkish literature. This work pieces had a great influence on farther generations. It can be proved by finding poems which written without using meter and rhyming in works of writers who protected against this group.

But in the history of the Turkish literature you can find poets who protected against formulations of Birinci yani. One of them Necip Fazil Kısakurek.<sup>7</sup> «It is the truth that without protecting against using meter you cannot became a writer, but it is doesn't mean that you can give up on meter. Meter is the carcass of content, it is key

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<sup>6</sup> O. V. Kanık, *Collected Poems*, Istanbul, Zlatoust Publishing House, 1975.

<sup>7</sup> N. F. Kısakurek, *Poetic*, Istanbul, Zlatoust Publishing House, 1992.

of poem, always it is looking for own external form. Real poet creates poems by obeying to constant forms and meter where each string and each word renews old form. If the aim of free verse is eradication of external meaning and cleaning internal content it is similar to explanation of concept about time without space. Liberty of internal meaning is limited by increasing of conformity to external form; real poet always finds way to harmonize correlation between form and meaning and doesn't break this balance».<sup>8</sup>

At that moment the group «ekinci yani» (second new) was founded by some poets whose works is based on surrealist idea. These poets called their own works as «without meaning», «abstract poems», and «secret poems». They deny meaning in poems and draw particular attention to syllable system. Poets of ekinci yani protected against all ideas of Birinci yani, so their works was focused on formalism and metrizm. In 1950s socialist realism had influenced on Turkish literature. Still this time literati have difficulties in determination of this field's representatives. «We can say that Turkish literature doesn't have field of socialist realism».<sup>9</sup>

In Turkish prose which belongs to early republican era you can find elements of critical realism. But it is difficult to say who was representative of this field. There are no researches directed on their determination.

It is necessary to dwell on short history of literary groups and movements. We know that European literary movements influenced on them. It's obviously true that oriental traditions also had a great influence on the most of writers who wanted to be innovator. Especially, you can see it by analyzing works of Turkish writers which closely connected with Turkism and Symbolism. This connection is determined by using aruz and syllabic meters, constant and unstable symbols which are the distinctive features of the traditional literature.

In the early 20th century writers of the group «Bes hejaji» (the common name of five poets and their followers who wrote their poems by using syllabic meters) with aim to keep nature of Turkism wrote their poems in Turkish of the greatest purity by using syllabic meters. They wanted to closely connect Turkish poetry with folksy songs. But from side of artistic conception it didn't make new contribution in the literature.

Newly formed Turkish Republic implemented different experiences with measures directed on growth of the economy in country. This fact can be easily proved by planned economy which was implemented in 1934-1938 s. All of these measures also impacted on the field of literature. Two movements which were mentioned above it are only some examples of this impact.

It shows that poets and writers often break from the directed line. We see that elements of European literary movements are used by Turkish writers only as artistic device. Also it should be mentioned that most of the movements was only on the experience level.

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<sup>8</sup>S. K. Karaalioglu, *Encyclopedic literary dictionary*, Istanbul, Zlatoust Publishing House, 1978.

<sup>9</sup>E. Ozdemir, *Roads in Dunia Edptanda Dunmlernemler*, Ankara, Zlatoust Publishing House, 1997.

One of its views after long polemic translated in Turkish language and after it published.

Beside this old variation of concept about classical Turkish Literature is also used for determination of written literature. That way, term «Classical» had widely spread usage area. So, it isn't completely formed as terminology. In the dictionaries classicism called as «Concept of literature dates from the 1660 year».

You can find such other definition of this term: «it is the movement based on Greek-Latin literature which was developed in 17th century in Europe and France. Its main aim is obtaining the integrity of a language».

Said Fakih as other prosaics of new generation is a realist. His real love to characters created by him allowed to form own style and direction in the field of literature. So, he rose for one step higher than other writers who was doubtful of created characters in their piece of works.

The examples given above shows that until now there are no directed researches which will be fully analyzed who was the representative of social realism. It should be appreciated that government had persecuted followers of this direction. So, we must understand why it was difficult to determinate who the followers of this direction were.

## Discussion

The poor development of history of literature and literary criticism in Turkey connects with different obstacles being on the way of research and the analysis of literary works.<sup>10</sup> The first models of works about history of literature and the literary critic had translated from foreign languages, and in recent years, these works give only the general assessment the literary critic.<sup>11</sup> Despite development of dramatic art searches of national style are still ineffectual. Some writers do not give the correct assessment to the concept "National Theatre". There are many wrong opinions that through the description of the people life in a certain district art will become national. It should be noted that writers from the point of view of a subject, characters, language and style don't meet requirements of the Turkish audience, and their works are written for other environment. Though such critical opinions meet very seldom, they show that such processes are characteristic of Turkish literature. The weak criticism of literature exerts negative impact on development of fiction. Therefore, modern Turkish literature finds new roads of development, and the most important obstacle – the policy and official concepts interfere with mutual harmony of the West and the East.

Modern literary critics cannot agree on one single point of view on what exactly had an effect of Turkish literature development within the period of the 19th and early 20th centuries. Generally, there are three viewpoints:

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<sup>10</sup> K. Cayir, *Islamic literature in contemporary Turkey: from epic to novel*, New York, Springer, 2016.

<sup>11</sup> B. Sagaster, C. Dufft, *New Tendencies in Turkish Literature and Some Aspects of Orhan Pamuk's Works*.

- European culture<sup>12</sup> had the major effect. This concept supporters speak about the Western literature being a source of new Turkish genres, as the majority of writers have studied at European universities and, consequently, were inspired by European cultural traditions;

- Oriental (Arabic and Farsi) culture<sup>13</sup> had the major effect. This concept supporters emphasize that the literary Turkish language consists of 20% of Farsi and Arabic languages.

- Independent development.<sup>14</sup> Turkish literature development was either not influenced or such an effect was not significant.

In our opinion, these three concepts will allow tracing the Turkish literature development if they are combined.

### Conclusion

Literature of many people influenced on the Turkish literature, in particular, Arab, Persian and others. In general, this influence was characterized by a philosophical outlook. At the same time, a large number of words were borrowed from the Persian language. However, the Western European literature influenced more on creation of other genres in the Turkish literature, especially dramas and satires. While in the Turkish literature genres of the drama and satire just created, in the European countries these genres already developed throughout several centuries. It does not mean that in the Turkish literature there was no theater. In this regard, it is necessary to distinguish theatrical and dramaturgic traditions.

In addition, really, by studying cultural history, it becomes clear that the theater of each people has appeared not suddenly, incidentally. Theatrical traditions of the Turkish people disappear roots deeply; they are closely connects with concepts about the natural phenomena. Today we can see the remains of these concepts on the dramatized calendar holidays of many Turkic people.

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<sup>12</sup> R. Ostle (ed.), *Modern Literature in the Near and Middle East, 1850-1970*, London, Routledge, 2016.

<sup>13</sup> A. J. Arberry, *Classical persian literature*, London, Routledge, 2006.

<sup>14</sup> M. Yeğen, "Turkish nationhood: civic and ancestral and cultural," in *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, XXIII (2017), no. 3, p. 318-339.