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The Role of Music in The Shadow Play “Hacivat and Karagöz”

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Abstract

The shadow play Hacivat and Karagöz has become an important part of the Traditional Turkish Theatre continuing for centuries. The existing shadow play which still preserves its popularity has become a significant entertainment tool for people. According to the local features of the performed characters and the content of the topic, this art type carried out by reflecting on a screen specially designed puppets from behind a lightened curtain and by playing with the voice of the performer has various music types and its instruments, especially Turkish folk music and Turkish classical music. In this study, within the play, the role of the music which is thought to form an important part of the shadow play was researched and the music and instruments used were analysed. The effect and role of the music within the play was particularly tried to be put forward.

Keywords: The Role of Music, The Shadow Play, Hacivat and Karagöz

Introduction

Shadow play is based on the projection of shadows of puppets, which are made up of leather, on a white curtain by light coming from their behind. Karagöz curtain is generally made of cotton batiste and has flowers on the edges. Besides, behind the curtain and on the ground are shelves called destgah on which candles are placed. Puppets are moved by using 60 cm sticks. The action of playing these puppets is called el peşrevi. Some pictures, relevant or irrelevant to the show, are reflected on the curtain before the play, and these are called göstermelik. Karagöz figures are

composed of figurative drawings based on abstraction. The dominating colors are red on Karagöz and green on Hacivat figure. There are no decorations on Karagöz curtain as an indication of the setting. Therefore, the existence of a setting is figured out only by the words of puppets or sometimes by little descriptions symbolizing the setting. Karagöz is always on the right side of the curtain and Hacivat is on the left. If there are other characters to be used in the play, they enter and leave the curtain from the left side where Hacivat stays. In accordance with their appearances, places like tents, mountains, rocky or bare lands and fields are situated on Karagöz's side and houses and places of more luxury are placed on Hacivat's side. Karagöz figures are called puppets. They are generally made of calf, cattle or buffalo leather. Puppets are produced by an old hand journeyman or by Karagözcü, a puppeteer in the play, himself. Karagöz puppeteers are generally a crew of five people. Among Karagöz puppeteers are Hayali or Hayalbaz (meaning image creator), who is the master puppeteer, Çırak, the helper of the master puppeteer, Hayali, Sandıkkar, the assistant of Çırak, Yardak, who sings songs and Dayrezen, who plays tambourine (Tekerek, 2008). Shadow play is a kind of art indigenous to eastern cultures and there is different information relating its origin in various sources. In one source, it is stated that it first appeared in China before Christ, and according to another source, it originated in India and passed to Java in the 4th and 5th centuries and spread from Java to the western world. There is no definite knowledge about when shadow play technique is adopted and performed by the Turkish society. According to one belief, it is transferred to Mongolians by the Chinese, then to Turks, and then, in parallel with the direction of the Turkish military excursions, to the West. There are different rumors about when this technique came into existence in Turkish Folk Culture. The most common of these beliefs is that it took place during the construction of Ulu Cami (the Grand Mosque) during the reign of Sultan Orhan between 1324 and 1362. The laborers who took part in the construction of the mosque gathered around Ironmaster Kambur Bali Çelebi (Karagöz) and bricklayer Halil Hacıvaz (Hacivat), both of whom worked in the construction, in order to listen to their cheerful conversation, causing the construction to slow down. Informed about the situation, Sultan got both of them executed. But, later on, Sultan regretted getting them killed and felt so sorry for them that in order to cheer Sultan up and comfort him, Şeyh Küşteri took off his headwear, called sarık, which is like a curtain, lit a candle behind it to create shadows, took off his çarık, a kind of sandal worn in those days, and animated the figures of Karagöz and Hacivat behind the curtain and repeated their cheerful conversation. From that day on, Karagöz and Hacivat plays started to be performed in different squares. Today, Karagöz curtain is called Şeyh Küşteri square and he is accepted as the father of Karagöz Shadow Play. According to Metin And, shadow play entered Anatolia after Yavuz Sultan Selim, who conquered Egypt in 1517 and got Tumanbay, a Mameluk Sultan, executed on Roda Island on the Nile River, watched an image creator who depicted the execution on a curtain, and brought him to Istanbul wishing his son Kanuni Sultan Süleyman see the performance. Turks took the shadow projection technique behind the curtain from Egypt at the beginning of the 16th century. At first,

since there were some irrelevant scenes to each other in Egyptian plays, the same practice was applied in the first Turkish shadow plays. Moreover, there are not any certain characters in Egyptian shadow plays. Therefore, Hacivat and Karagöz's names are not mentioned a lot with the 16th century. Turkish creativity was added to this new play in time, then, a very colorful and dynamic form was given to it, and after the play took its final form, it spread the areas within the influence area of the Ottoman Empire. This is how shadow play returned back to Egypt, where it originated, in this new form. As a matter of fact, many travelers, while describing the shadow game in Egypt in the 19th century, stated that it was Karagöz shadow game and it was brought to Egypt by Turks and performed mainly in Turkish (And, 1985).

In the works of some Islamic Sufis, the image curtain is likened to the World, and human beings and other living creatures are likened to temporary images on the curtain. It is told that an invisible creator moves all the creatures in the universe just like the puppeteer behind the curtain moving the images in the play. There are many documents that show how prevalent shadow play is and that it is one of the most important Ottoman entertainment arts. According to the information gathered from local writers', such as EvliyaÇelebi and Naima, works, and journals and travel books of Europeans who had been in Istanbul in that era, these plays, which were performed in cafes in Ramadan and at homes, palaces and residences during special occasions such as marriage, birth and circumcision ceremonies, were among the major entertainments of the Ottoman society. Moreover, it is possible to see in local and foreign sources that shadow plays were among the favorite entertainment of the Ottoman Palace and public meetings in the 19th century. According to these local sources, during Sultan Mahmut II's reign, Karagöz shadow plays were performed in eleven different places at nights during the circumcision ceremonies of his sons. Also, some Karagöz puppeteers were allowed to Mızıka-yı Hümayun during Sultan Abdülaziz and Abdülhamit II's time (Kudret, 1970). Thanks to its flexible structure, Karagöz and Hacivat shadow plays, which were open to improvisation and dealing with current events, became the most important means of satire of its time. Although not yet popular as they were before, Karagöz and Hacivat plays, which have always been popular throughout history, have lost their potency considerably due to the introduction of theatres, cinema and television one after another with the effects of technological developments.

Method

In this study, a descriptive method has been used in order to reveal the role of music in Karagöz and Hacivat Shadow Play. According to Karasar (1982), descriptive method is a research which describes an event or a situation taking place in the past or today as it really is.

Findings

In this part of the study, sources and previous researches on the subject have been examined, discussed by combining them with expert opinions, and interpreted.

Our country has a rich folk theatre culture. Our own music has an important place in Karagöz and Hacivat Shadow Play, which is the most noticeable example of this culture. Karagöz and Hacivat Music was examined as a separate subject for the first time in the book *Karagöz Musikisi (Karagöz Music)*, published by Ministry of Culture Publications, by Etem Ruhi Üngör in 1989. It has never been the subject of research in any books published on the subject. However, music used in Karagöz and Hacivat plays has gained a distinctive identity and created a typical type of humor music. In the book written by Üngör, the study of Karagöz Music in terms of musicology can be regarded as the first attempt on the subject. According to the results obtained from this study, it is observed that Turkish music is used with all of its features and diversity in Karagöz and Hacivat Shadow Play.

With its compositions, Ağır (Heavy) Semaisi, Yürük (Turkish Nomads) Semaisi, Peşrev (Overtures), Saz (Instrument) Semaisi, Köçekler, Folk songs and Songs, Karagöz music includes all forms of Turkish Music, and, hence, becomes an inseparable part of the play. We can add our characteristic styles, unsystematic beats, to the previous group. For instance, in one of the Karagöz plays, Kanlı Kavak (Bloody Poplar), drum is played with 5, 7 and 9 beat style, and in another play, Tahmis (Extension), Arab's playing the drum with 7 beat style and Bebe Ruhi's playing it with 9 beat style can be given as an example to unsystematic beats. Moreover, apart from the folk songs of Anatolia and Rumelia, Arabic and Jewish songs related to the play, tunes indigenous to Greek and Armenian culture, and Western musical forms such as Valse, Polka, and Opera Arias were used when needed. According to Üngör (1989), texts, which gain a different characteristic and depend generally on humor and philosophy, and the compositions, made parallel to these texts, create a special music style. Therefore, this music style can be called Karagöz music. It is observed that the accessible repertoire of Karagöz music is related more to the 19th and 20th century Turkish music. When Karagöz music is studied, it is seen that it is set up on a triple pattern composed of Semai, Gazel (Ode), and Hayal (Imaginary) Songs.

Semai: It is one of the small forms of Turkish Art Music (Say, 1992). It carries three meanings in music. The first of these is that it is the name of a triple time and triple beat music style. There are four songs, called Semai, which are among the songs mentioned in the research of Üngör and among the first songs performed at the beginning of the play and have notes and records. The singer of these first songs in the play is Hacivat. Unlike other imaginary songs, only the introduction and chorus parts of Semais are played and sung (Üngör, 1989).

Gazel: It is a form which is played spontaneously like Taksim (Improvisation) in Turkish Art Music. Lyrics are generally chosen among the poems in the form of Gazel. It doesn't have a style. It is independent and without pattern. Exclamations such as 'ah, of, aman, eyyar etc. (exclamations of mourning in Turkish culture)' which express

sorrow among lyrics (Say, 1992). The music of Gazelhan (gazel singer) gains value with his knowledge and talent. There haven't been any indications of Gazel forms' existence among Hacivat and Karagöz texts. Gazels, which have been performed in a mode up till now, are now being sung like plain texts due to the lack of Karagöz Puppeteers' musical knowledge and Gazel singing skills. Unlike Semai sung by Hacivat, PerdeGazel is performed by Karagöz (Üngör, 1989).

Imaginary Songs: Unlike Semai and Gazel, they present a variety. Generally, they are composed of songs and folk songs. Although they make up most of the plays, half of them have disappeared today. Though repeated in some plays, imaginary songs vary by plays. The repeated ones have been special imaginary songs of Karagöz characters. According to the research conducted by Üngör, the most repeated song among imaginary songs is 'Nice sevmeyeyim dostlar biracayıp dilivar (she has such a good tone, how can't I fall in love with her?)' composed by Seyyit Nuh, a 17th century composer and in Şehnazmode. Moreover, according to the same research, among the repertoire of 211 songs, 61 songs by Hacivat, the leading singer, 55 by Çelebi, 43 by Zenne, and 26 by Karagöz. In addition, when Karagöz music is studied in terms of mode, the most used songs and their modes are, from the most to the least, 21 songs in Hicazmode, 13 songs in Uşşakmode, 12 songs in Rastmode, 10 songs in Hüseyinmode, 10 songs in Nihavendmode. Apart from these, examples of Muhayyer kürdi and other modes of Turkish music were used in plays.

The instruments used in Karagöz Shadow Play can be divided into two categories as 'instruments on the curtain' and 'instruments behind the curtain'. Instruments on the curtain are the instrument used in Classical Turkish music such as bağlama (an instrument with three double strings), Karadeniz Kemençesi (a three string instrument like violin indigenous to the Black Sea region of Turkey), drum, clarion, kabak (a three string instrument like bağlama, but held vertically when played), clarinet and tambourine (<http://turkgoelge.sitemynet.com>). Also, cymbal, tong with cymbals and nakkare (a small kettle drum used in mehter music) are used as curtain instruments. The most important instrument used behind the curtain is tambourine. The use of tambourine is a tradition for Hacivat and Karagöz Puppeteers. There aren't any plays in which tambourine isn't used. Because it has an important role especially in the fights of Hacivat and Karagöz, in expressing the jokes, and in the entries and exits of characters, tambourine is seen as an inseparable part of the play.

Besides, in order to contribute to the research, an interview has been carried out with Hayali Nevzat Çiftçi, who still performs shadow plays in Bursa, who produces Hacivat and Karagöz puppets, and who is also a master of shadow play figures and puppets, regarding Karagöz music. In the interview, Çiftçi's opinions about Karagöz music have been the main topic. He has stated that Karagöz music is a contentful and a special kind of music with its own characteristics, and that a Hacivat and Karagöz play cannot be thought of without music, and that music plays a crucial role in the play. His remarks have been found quite important for the research.

Conclusion and Discussion

As a result of this research, it is found out that the number of written sources is very limited and the performers of this play do it voluntarily and there are very few of them. According to the information, gathered from a couple of sources that could be reached and, and the information and documents taken from Hacivat and Karagöz Museum in Bursa, music occupies an important place in Hacivat and Karagöz Shadow Play and is an indispensable part of plays. The plays also give place to many kinds of music, mainly Turkish music. It is found out that music types, especially, which reflect the features of characters and are related to the theme of the plays are used. It is observed that all the instruments used in front of and behind the curtain are the instruments used in Turkish Folk Music and Turkish Art Music and there aren't any instruments, but tambourine in today's plays, and even the music is played by CD players and computers today. Even though the number of puppeteers and audience decreased significantly, shadow plays have reached the present day by the efforts of volunteers. Technological advancements shouldn't be regarded as the reason for decrease in the popularity of Karagöz plays which run the risk of extinction and are among the most important pieces of Traditional Turkish Theatre. The westernization attempts starting from the 17th century showed their effects in the 20th century, the tradition of improvisation, the most important feature of traditional Turkish theatre, was given up, written texts as in the western theatre replaced it. Karagöz plays, dependent on written texts, couldn't keep up with the age and the cultural developments in human life as no more plays were written, presentation of the same plays repeatedly wasn't able to attract the attention of the public. Karagöz plays can be as prestigious and common as it used to be only if the tradition of improvisation is used once again. Otherwise, Karagöz plays, which are performed by a handful of puppeteers, will end up with extinction in the pages of history books in the next decades. The most important responsibility for the preservation and presence of Hacivat and Karagöz, an important cultural value of our country's culture, is on the Ministry of Culture and institutions of art education. The establishment of Departments of Traditional Turkish Theatre within the Conservatories and Faculties of Fine Arts will make these plays contemporary and increase the number of specialists in the field. In addition, the number of people who think that people who are keen on these plays should be supported by the state will increase. Especially, the increase in the number of museums like Karagöz House supported by the metropolitan municipality of Bursa, the continuous performances in these places and opening courses for interested individuals will carry this form of art to future generations and stop its disappearance.

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