THE DILEMMA OF EAST AND WEST IN AHMAD HAMDİ TANPINAR’S NOVEL MAHUR BASTA

In Turkish literature, the new novel genre, which was founded on the basis of the Western model during the Tanzimat period, was modernized in the work of Hazlıt Ziya during Sarvati-Fun, and perfected in the work of Ahmet Hamdi Tanpinar. The comparison between the East and the West has always been prominent in his works, whether in poetry or prose. But the main point is that Ahmed Hamdi Tanpinar chose neither the East nor the West. He chose his people, he chose to be his. As for the symbolism of the title of A.H. Tanpınar’s novel, who uses various literary symbols and symbols in his works, first of all, it should be noted that the mahur is on the rast veil, the first of the mughams. The writer’s novel “Mahur Basta” is the first of three works he planned in the form of a trilogy (the other two are the novels “Huzur” and “Outside the Scenes”). This first novel (156 pages) of the writer, which is not too big in terms of volume, is based on the development of a sad love story on the level of classical music patterns. As in many of his works, the author presents classical Turkish music in this novel as an image representing the Eastern culture, makes it speak and sound like a whole organism. In the novel, mahur, which is one of the classical eastern mughams, acts as a symbol of Eastern culture in the East-West conflict in the Tanzimat period, or in Turkish literature, called alaturka-alafıanca. In the Mahur (rast) mugham, the music is from the cymbal to the bam, towards the end; the extraordinary excitement slowly subsides and becomes fragile.

Key words: The east, the west, modernity, novel, time, space, culture.

Introduction. The novel “Makhur Beste” is a work of Akhmet Khamdi Tanpinar (1901–1962), a famous Turkish poet, writer and literary scholar of the last century, who used the components of time and space as one of the artistic conflict-forming in his works. The novel was written and first published as a fragment in a journal (1944), which in itself testifies to great goals pursued by the author. It is no coincidence that the novel, for the first time published as a book in 1975, long after death of the writer was first written and released in the 40s of the past century. In our opinion, these two periods of time are connected. During the time when the events of the novel unfolded, the Ottoman Empire, the decline and fall which were inevitable, faced a serious choice: to get out of position, she turned her face from East to West and began to conduct serious Western-centric reforms called “Tanzimat” in the socio-political, economic, scientific and cultural spheres of the country’s life. During the writing and publication of the novel, the Second World War was raging. However, as the war drew to a close and all countries of the world made their choice, Turkey, which until that time could remain neutral, was forced to go to war against her old ally – Germany – taking alignment with the countries going to victory. In otherwise, the country faced extremely serious problems in terms of international relations.

As for the symbolism of the title of the novel by A. Kh. Tanpinar who used various literary codes in his works and symbols, then, first of all, it should be noted that mahkur is in rast, the first of the mughams. The writer’s novel “Makhur Beste” is the first of three planned works in the form of a trilogy (the other two are novels “Khuzur” and “Behind the scenes”).

The symbolism of mahur mugham is present as a living character in the novel trilogy “Khuzur”, manifests itself at the different stages of the life of the heroes, in their speech, behavior and dialogue. Classical music helps the reader to understand the essence of parallelism between the events in the novel that take place during the period of reign of Sultan Abdulhamid and Sultan Abdulmajid in the second half of the 19th century, and a work pub-
lished in the middle of the 20th century. In both these periods and in the broad sense of the word, Turkey faced dilemma between Eastern and Western values. Throughout the novel the hero immersed in classical music falls into mystical thoughts, allowing the reader to feel the spirit of both cultures. The writer describes the features of both cultures in all their positive and negative sides.

Events and changes in society and human life are moving in time. Time, space, events complement each other. This can be assessed both scientifically and in the ordinary sense. That is, in the exact sciences time which is shown as a unit of measure for the universe has the ability to be measured and is associated with any changes in matter occurring in the universe. In classical physics and quantum mechanics time is shown to be absolute and unchanging. It can also be said that different events occur in the same period of time in life. In other words, events occur at a certain time and at a certain place. It is always important for a person to know about the time and place of events. It is possible to increase the frequency and flow of time by increasing the speed of changes and events.

From the standpoint of the psychology of perception, time is invariable, it is impossible to turn it back. With the development of the era, with the passage of time changes in society are not perceived by people unequivocally. Innovations occurring in time and its intervals, closely connected with space and events, cannot soon turn around monotonous ideas frozen in the human mind. Any innovation that happens in life takes a certain amount of time before it will be perceived by consciousness. Time itself plays an important role in human life through such concepts as the past, present and future. Throughout life, a person’s thoughts are occupied with the memory of the past, sense of the present, hopes and dreams of the future, the fact that they want to see.

The clock itself is space, its movement is time, and its setting is a person. Time and space coexist with man.

Civil changes, world wars, material, spiritual, cultural and economic changes that took place in each period of history, manifested differently in each member of society. What has been said can only be understood by a person whose consciousness is open to innovation and who finds it hard to ignore. To clarify this idea the following grouping can be mentioned: first of all, this is the type of person, who cannot accept innovation in the only sense, who prefers the previous one, who accepts the changes and completely rejects the old, and who, even if he accepts modernity, tries to transform it by synthesis with the previous worldview. World events that left a mark on history and changed it, as in many areas of culture, existed in literature reflecting the change, innovation or inertia, backwardness in social development.

It is known that the writer draws material for writing a work from real life and facts. A. Kh. Tanpinar is one of the writers who can vividly convey to the reader a diverse human psychology based on life events with which he once encountered in life; he wrote his works in various literary genres: poetry, short stories and novels. In his works, the writer brought to the fore each social group of society, their mindset, the language they speak, their culture, especially their music. How we have already mentioned above, the writer reflected the confrontation between East and West in his work with extremely realistic artistic strokes, through showing the everyday of his heroes. Although his works are associated with the analysis of numerous human destinies, there are common motives that unite them. Every novel contains facts related to the issue of confrontation between East and West, the period of reign of Sultan Abdulhamid, Tanzimat period, mashrutiye (constitutional monarchy), culture and music. Formula of confrontation between East and West is vividly outlined by talented pen of the writer.

Regarding the problem of East and West, the writer notes that he inclined neither to the East nor to the West. It is clear that after the signing of the Decree on the Tanzimate of 1839 in Turkey the Western model with the idea of Europeanization in all areas was taken as a basis. If we talk about culture, then, of course, one should also mention literary and artistic thinking. Starting from this period, in the literary environment of Turkey, Western-oriented writers began to form. During this period the new genre of the novel appeared. Akhmet Khamdi Tampinar carefully studied and described this period. He emphasized that “it is necessary for us to follow the European style of life in certain directions” [3, p. 211].

From the biography of the writer and sources written about him we learn that one of the main factors that influenced the formation of his creativity was an outstanding artist Yahya Kamal Bayatly, teacher of A.Kh. Tampinar. His prose works which brought great fame to literature, but which began with poetry, with the symbolist thinking, is “Makhur Beste”, “Institute of Watchmaking”, “The Peace or peace of mind”, “Off the stage”, novels “Woman from the Moon” and memoirs- essays “Five Cities”. These works deal with people from societies that are in the position of literary conservatism and Westernism, political problems that arose and were experienced in Ottoman period,
the conflict of time with the events with which people encountered in life. The question of time was at the head of all writers’ works in the philosophical and physical sense. The artist, who “reflects his inner metaphysical tendencies and aesthetic worries mainly in his poetry, uses prose to convey reader social problems. The author’s novels are created on the basis of the rich life stories and are selected on a specific occasion of problems taking place in society. As he explores the ways in which attempts to change the culture lead people to a dead end, the conclusions drawn here are from the standpoint of a person and society, they are reliable and accurate. For example, the novel “Institute of Watchmaking” skillfully conveys to the reader the state of society in the process of change, starting from a particular individual and ending with the crowd [5].

The main content

The ideas characteristic of A.Kh. Tanpinar’s prose. The above ideas, characteristic of the writer’s prose creativity as a whole, are fully reflected in the novel “Makhur Beste”, in question. The novel consists of seven chapters divided into titles: “Thoughts between Two Dreams”, “Father and Son”, “Two Brothers-in-Law”, “Years of Behchet Bey’s Marriage”, “Strange Revolutionary”, “Between Relatives”, “Old booth”. It was first published in parts in 1944 in the collection “Ülkü” and completed under the title “Letter to Behchet Bey about “Makhur Beste”. The work is dedicated to Ayyubi Abubekir Agha, the author of the composition “Makhur Mugham”. There is an assumption that the writer created the novel under the influence of this composition.

One of the main characters of the novel is Behchet Bey around whom events rotate. However, the writer did not focus on the problems that he wanted to highlight in the novel in connection with Behcet Bey and simply decided to state his position regarding his family, the main way of his relationship with his father, and the people he met in his life. The novel begins with presentation of thoughts between two dreams. Behcet Bey dreaming of his late wife Atiya and then Javida moving to the kiosk, waking up, reflects on what he saw. One of things that scares Behchet is Javida’s desire to clean things in the house and replace them with new ones. The young divorced woman is a relative of Behcet Bey. The writer declares his conservative views in the first part of the work.

Although Behcet Bey is worried about Javida’s lonely life, he does not approve her idea of renewing the things in the house. He is attached to these things. His past is connected with this house, the soul of his family is in these things, their renewal does not please Behchet Bey at all. Being much attached to his things he perceived the wardrobe and mirrors in his bedroom as enthralled. He bought the mirrors in an antique store. He thinks about how many people were reflected in these mirrors before him, what secrets they kept in themselves until today. At the same time, his favorite things sometimes scare him. According to Behchet Bey, these lovely objects, mirrors which greet everyone with a smile in the clear hours of the day sometimes withdraw into themselves and immobilize a person plunging him into a strange silence; they are a symbol of time immersed in silence.

In A.K. Tanpinar’s work, sometimes things are so integrated with their owner that they carry the features of each other. For example, when Hairi Irdal compares things with their owners in the work “Institute of Watchmaking,” he feels that by wearing the old clothes given to him by his boss he starts to think and talk like him. In many beliefs, even in philosophical thought, there is an idea that things are really connected with people. Things start over time to integrate the owner’s energy; the thing he wears into a certain time, a person gives it to someone who means sending his own energy. The image of Hairi Irdal created by Tanpinar is also can be adapted to this idea, in the case when he wears a uniform of his boss and thinks like him.

For Behchet Bey, all life was divided into two parts. These are the people attached to their own lives, clinging to life, and those who were alien to him, alienated from him. That’s why he imagines items in his room in the form of animated beings. Psychological studies show that people who are attached to their belongings usually are not perceived unambiguously by society and their loved ones. Behchet Bey’s childhood was different from the childhood of his peers. His father, Molla Ismail, was always dissatisfied with his son and practically did not care for him as a parent. His pastime consisted of solitude, bookbinding and clock repair in the basement of the house. He was not in the habit of playing at children’s games as his peers did, he did not even fall in love in his youth, he did not look at the girls even out of the corner of his eye. These features were the pride of his mothers and nancy Molla Ismail accused his wife and the nanny of such behavior of his son. He hoped and dreamed that his son Behchet someday would become like him, but these hopes completely collapsed after one home incident. He somehow remembered his son and realized that Behchet did not appear at home all day, although before he had always tried to flatter his father. In the middle of a summer day, after the event he faced
going up to the attic of the house, he got angry with his child and completely lost hope of seeing him as a different person. There Behchet Bey disregarding the daytime heat, accompanied by the unbearable smell of glue was busy bookbinding.

Here the writer shows the type of person who is outside of society, different from others in their way of thinking and occupation. Although bookbinding is not unusual, for Molla Ismail it was something unacceptable. Behchet Bey differed from his father in his education, a deep mind, as well as reticence, and his father did not perceive it. A.Kh. Tanpinar analyzed the problem of fathers and children which has always been the object of attention in the literature. Compatibility and mutual understanding in parent-child relationships is not always manifested in life. While fathers wish to see (in their dreams) in their sons what they practically cannot do, sons cannot be satisfied with this, that is, with the fact that the father surpasses them in something. Type of child formed in the mind of the parent in most cases does not correspond to this further. But even if Behchet Bey wanted to and would have tried to match it, he would not have succeeded, because the writer typified Behchet Bey with the indicated features. Behchet himself was aware of his dissimilarity with others which he felt in himself, but he was always friendly to people. He was so attached to the objects of his environment that he did not even know how to behave on the evening of the day he married Atiya khanum: he wanted to go out and run to the clock he had made himself. The clock stood at the center of his world. At night, in the silence of his house, the sound of the clock which he listened to reminded him of melodic orchestral music. Here the same applies to Javida’s diamond watch. That watch spent ten years on Javida’s hand. During that time the watch witnessed all her memories and the difficulties she faced in life.

The character of Ismail Molla is revealed in the section of the work “Father and son”. Ismail Molla was appointed Gazi of Mecca and removed from Istanbul, because he incurred the wrath of the Ottoman Sultan Abdulhamid. It is known that Ghazi is the name given to the head (judge) of the courts dealing with matters related to marriage, divorce and inheritance during the Tanzimat period in Ottoman Empire. The author characterizes Ismail Molla in the work in the following way: “The truth is that Ismail Molla Bey, with his repressive nature, broad and above all critical mind, is one of those who uses the people around him as subject to him and without realizing it, because he believed that there slavish submission is the most natural state of the soul. From the day he married, he found all his happiness in life in obeying fate and taming his desires and passions. His daughter Rukhsar khanim all her life humiliated her husband comparing him with her father. And his son, who from the start was born miserable and unhappy, made himself nothing before this beautiful, correct, knowledgeable father whom he considered a demigod from an early age” [10, p. 28].

At the same time, the writer clearly defined in several sentences characteristics of his hero. He had to describe and reveal relationship of family members with Molla Ismail Bey. Molla Ismail Bey lost his wife during the six years he spent in Mecca. In his correspondence with his son during this period, he actually concluded that his son was not as stupid as he thought, and that his labor skills are sufficiently developed. Loss of his wife deeply shocked him. During his stay in Mecca, Ismail Molla, who corresponded with his son, changed his mind about him and became more interested in him. His opinion of Behchet is also interesting: “He is not stupid at all, he is just average in his development. He has a strong memory, small but deep thinking” [10, p. 33].

Behchet Bey solved the case in one day the result of which Molla-bey had been waiting for two years. One year after he was appointed a member of Council of State his father also returned to his former position in Fatwakhan. Upon receiving this news, which seemed to him like a miracle, Molla Bey was very surprised. One of the amazing news which he received after returning from Mecca was Behchet’s marriage to Atiya khanum, daughter of Ata Molla Bey.

Events experienced in life, relationship between people are a constant source of literary study. The problem of the father-son relationship is considered mainly in two aspects in the research literature. In antique literature the father is usually formed as an exemplary type of person for a child. The notion of being knight, bold and like his father begins from the time when the son starts to realize himself and his family ties. Over time, relationship between parent and child begin to change. In another variant of relationship between father and son, the oppressor is the type of father who does not perceive the child as a person, but wants to see a son formed by him in his own mind. What has been said in the literature is nothing other than the artistic expression of always existing human relationships taken from life. It is also known from psychology that the child initially sees the parent as a prototype of his personal development. When sons eventually become the head of the family, like the father was in the family in which they grew
up, they continue their life in this section, without even realizing it. Relations between father and son are a common theme in world literature.

For example, Kafka’s “Letter to a Father” presents the character of a despotic father. Father-son relationship between Franz Kafka and his father Hermann Kafka was not a relationship on the level of love and care. Herman Kafka as typical head of the family dreamed that his son would continue and expand his business, but these desires were not realized by his son. This led to further aggravation of the already damaged relationship between father and son. Kafka in his letters tried to tell his father what he could not tell him in face. From these letters we learn that he does not agree with the life that father planned for him, he does not want to do business, like him, he does not want to be like the man his father dreamed of, and besides, he does not want to start his own family. Since Kafka could not talk openly with father, he resorted to correspondence, but even this communication could not overcome his feelings of timidity and hostility towards his father. He sees himself as a weak, timid, powerless person before a domineering father. His the father, in turn, thought that his son did not understand anything. Because of these ideas of his father Kafka lost self-confidence; it always seemed to him that he would remain indecisive and incompetent for the rest of his life.

The characteristic of Behchet bey. Behchet Bey as a character created by Tanpinar was also aware of his shortcomings at the beginning of his relationship with his father. Ismail always avoided Molla Bey and was content only to say hello every day to him to show his respect and reverence. Psychology generated by these relationships and the pressure of his father had a negative impact on his personal life. He never lived a normal married life with his wife Atiya. Although the padishah forced her to marry, she later accepted Behchet Bey as a husband and tried to get closer to him. Attempts to get closer to Behchet bey, to show respect for his interests and to communicate, unfortunately, did not give Atiya khanum desired results. Vice versa, Behchet Bey felt crushed by this relationship and tried to establish maximally alien relationship with his wife.

The excitement and anxiety of Behchet Bey do not escape her eyes. Atiya once more makes sure she can never leave him. The fact that Atiya khanum is beautiful and smart, and Behchat was far from handsome and shorter than his wife, exacerbated the complexes of imperfection in his mind. For these reasons, he estranged from Atiya khanum throughout the rest of his life. He really loved his wife and did not want to leave her. Atiya khanum also did not accept her sister’s idea “to go away and build a life that suits you.” When Ismail Molla Bey spoke about Makhur beste, Behchet bey was very worried about not touching this topic in the presence of Atiya khanum.”Makhur Beste” was a work of yuzbashi (military position, centurion) Talat-bey, Lutfulla-bey’s father, younger brother-in-law of Atia. Talat Bey wrote this work after wife left him. After one supper, Atiya’s feeling of pity for her husband even more increased. The excitement and anxiety of Behchet Bey do not escape her eyes. Atiya was finally convinced that she could never leave Behchhat Bey.

Atiya was the youngest and favorite daughter of Ata Molla Bey. Ata Molla Bey and Ismail Molla Bey had known each other since childhood, but their relationship was not founded on strong friendships. Ata Molla Bey is a character who seeks good for himself in everything and does not do good without his own benefit. He lived on the inheritance of his father, he did not have his serious occupation. Despite this, he always showed himself as a man of great honor and glory. He always arranged magnificent parties in his house and invited government officials. There were even cases when he organized these meetings and got into debt at the same time. In the work, the writer describes Ata Molla as a selfish and arrogant person. From his youth he was always annoyed by the reasonable actions of Molla Ismail. Molla Ismail who knew his character very well never paid attention to what he said among people. Ata Molla, on the other hand, was indignant at the fact that Ismail Molla did not react to his words, and wondered when this person will have an independent opinion in exchange for his point of view. One day Molla Bey was very angry at what Molla Ata said about him. Finally, he compared Molla Ismail, whom Hunkar spoke of as a friend, with Kara Molla Abdulaziz. Since Abdulaziz was a dangerous person in the political sense, Molla Ismail and Ata Molla were also suspected and were constantly persecuted.

The character of Ata Molla is distinguished by another peculiar feature. He always played chess with the candidates for the grooms who wooed his daughters, that is, one of the important conditions for him is that suitors can play chess. The padishah ordered to extradite Atiya, the most beloved of his daughters, for Behchet Bey, so he had to agree to it. However, Ata Molla liked that the cost of the wedding was taken over by the state.

Atiya married involuntarily, even under duress, but after marriage, she quickly gets used to her home and new family. True, her attempts to get
closer to Mr. Behchet are futile, but she continues
to love him as a native. The closed life of Atiya
does not escape the eyes of Molla Ismail: like a
father, he tries to spend more time with her and
lead long conversations.

At that time, women were not allowed to talk
about politics. However, Atiya many times partici-
pated in the meeting between Ismail Molla and Sabri
Khodja, his old friend, and always listened with inter-
est to their conversations about the current political
situation.

In each chapter of the work, the writer compares
East and West in dialogue of the characters. Undoubt-
edly, the hot dialogue of Sabri Khodja and Molla
Ismail about the political, economic, cultural situation
and reforms of that time serve to reveal the questions
addressed to the reader by the heroes of the writer’s
novel. In particular, Molla Beyin says: “I am not affil-
iated with the East, I am not connected with the old, I
am connected with the life of the country. I don’t know
whether it is Mohammedanism or Turkism” – this
opinion coincides with the writer’s views on Turkism.
Addressing Sabri Khodja he declares that he agrees
with the idea that his country is lagging behind the
West. He also notes that his native homeland cannot
keep up with the times. Molla Ismail also states that
he is not attached to either the East or the West, he is
attached to his homeland and homeland’s today.

Conclusion. In conclusion, we note that the novel
by A.Kh. Tanpinar “Makhur Beste” describes three
scientists of the epoch – Ismail Molla, Ata Molla and
Sabri Khodja who survived the period of reforms that
destroyed modernity, historicity and traditional iden-
tities that flipped the levels of the social status. All
three heroes are characters with different thoughts
about Ottoman Empire during and after the Tanzi-
mat reforms. These characters perceive and analyze
the transition to a period of modernization and pro-
Western politics quite differently in the work. Tan-
pinar describes the Ottoman intellectuals in his work
as people in crisis as well as their country. Focusing on
the positive and negative sides and shortcomings of all
three heroes he conveys to the reader not only the need
for modernization in the second half of the 19th cen-
tury but also the importance of the fact that one should
not forget one’s roots. Researchers of the writer’s life
and creation note that the prototype of the character of
Molla Ismail in the novel is the great scientist-historian
of that time Akhmet Jovdet-pasha. One can see the ide-
alism of Karachalibzade Abdulaziz Efendi and Khalet
Efendi in Ata Molla, the idealism of Ali Suavi and the
new Ottomans in Sabri Khodja.

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Turkish)
махур заснований на мелодії раст, першого ступеня мугама. Роман письменника «Махур Бесте» – перший із трьох запланованих ним творів у вигляді трилогії (два інших – це романи «Хулур» (Постаті перед обличчям) та «За кадром»). Цей перший роман (156 сторінок) письменника, не надто великий за обсягом, заснований на розвитку сумної історії кохання через оповідання на рівні класичних музичних творів. Як і у багатьох своїх творах, у цьому романі автор представляє класичну турецьку музику як образ, що репрезентує східну культуру, змушуючи її звучати як єдиний організм. У романі махур, що є одним із класичних східних мугамів, постає як символ східної культури у конфлікті Схід-Захід у період Танзимату, або в тюркській літературі під назвою алатурка-алафранга (alaturka-alafranqa). У мугамі Махур музика йде від великої до малої терції, до кінця незвичайне хвилювання потихеньку спадає і стає слабким.

Ключові слова: турецька література, Ахмет Хамді Танпінар, роман, протистояння Схід-Захід, сучасність.