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CULTURAL STEREOTYPES OF BEHAVIOUR IN TURKISH CINEMA (ON THE EXAMPLE OF HISTORICAL SERIALS)

Abstract. The article examines some cultural stereotypes of behaviour that determine the pathos of the most famous historical series created by Turkish filmmakers in the XXI century. The stereotypes of the behaviour of the main characters of the series «You Are My Homeland», «The Magnificent Century», and «The Empire of Kösem» are analyzed. It is alleged that there is a certain continuity in the mentality of the society of the Ottoman Empire and the modern Republic of Türkiye, the 100th anniversary of which is celebrated this year. That succession is expressed, first of all, in such a cultural stereotype as fidelity and devotion. This ethical standard forms the red thread of the plot of these series, the primary theme of which is the power struggle. The antipode of a faithful person is the image of the traitor, whose behaviour pattern leads him to inevitable punishment and imminent death. The dramaturgy of the historical series is built on the tension that emerges between the poles of loyalty and betrayal.

Key words: historical series, cultural stereotype, loyalty, betrayal, power.

Introduction. This year marks the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Republic of Türkiye. Everyone knows the exceptional role of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in the invention and establishment of modern Turkish statehood. Must said that despite several fundamental reforms carried out by Mustafa Kemal after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, in the mentality of modern Turkish society, the Republic is perceived as the successor of the Empire. This mental

attitude was formed not only because of the domestic and foreign policies of Mustafa Kemal and his followers but also through the fruitful cultural and creative process. Over the past two decades, Turkish filmmakers have made a significant contribution to the promotion of the historical heritage of the Ottoman Empire.

It is no coincidence that we mentioned the historical continuity between the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic. The main characteristic feature of an empire is not the size of the territory, not the size of the population, or even the scale of conquests. The main thing is that ‘an empire, unlike a kingdom or a city, cannot be part of another whole. No one could stand above the emperor: the empire embodies absolute sovereignty’ [3, p. 12]. The empire always offers its own image of the world. It is precisely her strength. Today, the whole world is watching with nosiness how modern Türkiye is moving towards absolute sovereignty towards achieving national interests.

The interpretation of the main material. For many centuries, the Ottoman Empire was a space of tolerance in which a whole family of other peoples lived alongside the titular nation. Greeks, Jews, Kurds, Circassians, and representatives of almost all Slavic peoples not only freely integrated into this gigantic imperial system but also reached the pinnacles of administrative power. It is well known, for example, that the Grand Vizier of the Ottoman Empire under Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent was a Greek convert to Islam, known in history as Ibrahim Pasha. Of course, the linchpin of the Ottoman Empire was Islam. It was the main, but not the only. A significant role in the consolidation of various ethnic groups and confessions was played by the system of social lifts, almost perfectly adjusted in the Ottoman Empire.

For more than 600 years of presence, the Ottoman Empire experienced different historical periods. The greatest prosperity the Ottoman state achieved in the XVI–XVII centuries. It was in time when the territory of the Empire reached its maximum size of 19.5 million square kilometers (1595). At the same time, enormous growth in architecture and art occurred. The creativity of the greatest architect of the Turkic world, Hodja Sinan, falls in this period. The might of the Empire of the XVI–XVII centuries became possible since ‘after the victory over the state of the Mamluks and mastering the sacred places of Islam, Sultan Selim made the Ottomans successors of spiritual traditions’ [4, p. 35]. Secular and spiritual power merged in the person of the Sultan.

Quite rightly, this period in the history of the Ottoman Empire was called the ‘Magnificent Century’. It begins with the reign of Sultan Suleyman Kanuni (the Legislator) and ends with the rule of Sultan Murad IV. The occurrences of that era have gained artistic comprehension in Turkish cinematography in the last decade.

One of the central values of Turkic, Ottoman and modern Turkish culture is loyalty and devotion. That is what the historical series «The Magnificent Century», «The Magnificent Century. The Empire of Kösem», and «You are My Homeland» are devoted to. The main stereotype of behaviour that prevails in all three serials is the devoted man. He is opposed to the stereotype of the traitor’s behaviour. «Traitors wear armour made of lies,» – says one of the characters of «The Empire of Kösem» Murat Pasha. His mouth voices the ethical paradigm of the Ottoman and modern Turkish society.

The plot of «You Are My Homeland» is based on the unique fate of Mümin Aksoy (1892–1948), a captain in the Ottoman army who went down in history as «infidel Mümin». The story in the series unfolded in 1912-1920 during the Balkan and World War I when the Greeks occupied Izmir and its surrounding areas. In the series, under the name Colonel Jevdet and then General Jevdet, this particular historical figure is portrayed, performed by the famous actor Halit Ergenc.

The fact is that «infidel Mümin» or «traitor Mümin» was a scout unsurpassed in history, whose art can be compared neither to Kim Philby, nor Richard Sorge, nor other «knights of the cloak and dagger». Captured during the hostilities near Thessaloniki, the protagonist was able to convince the Greeks of his hatred for the Ottoman Empire, which «abandoned its loyal soldiers», in the words of Jevdet. Thus began his new career, and the former Turkish officer rose to the rank of general and the position of deputy commander of the Greek corps stationed in Izmir. For several years, he passed on invaluable information as Mustafa Kemal’s personal agent in the Greek army.

For many years, General Jevdet lived in constant conflict with himself, compelled not only to make anti-Turkish speeches but also to take concrete actions against the rebels and the population of Izmir. All this time, his family is unaware that he has remained loyal to his homeland and is a spy. His closest people condemn him, his mother abandoned her own son, and the people of Izmir on the street call him a traitor and literally spit in

his face. Solely before the tragic outcome, Jevdet confesses to his family that he is a scout. While carrying out a crucial mission to disrupt the Greek plan of attack, General Jevdet was discovered and executed. His wife shared his fate.

The fate of the film character Jevdet embodies the most profound drama of the cultural stereotype of loyalty and devotion to the Homeland. Outwardly, it is the mask of a traitor, but in reality, it is sacrifice, the highest degree of passionarity, sacrificing oneself for the future of the country and the people.

Fidelity and betrayal in history and cinema are connected by surprising, sometimes invisible threads. Loyalty to one member of the Ottoman dynasty can turn into betrayal towards another. The pole of betrayal appears here sometimes as an absolutisation of the idea of power. The perniciousness of betrayal and illegitimate aspiration to power is perhaps the essential theme of the cinema works devoted to the history of the Ottoman Empire. The stereotype of behaviour determined by the irrepressible striving for power, the very image of a person overwhelmed by power, was embodied in the person of Safiye Sultan, whose role in the series «The Empire of Kösem» brilliantly performed by the actress Hulya Avshar. This calamitous path leads inevitably to death.

The most important cultural stereotypes are focused on the images and actions of the main characters of the series «The Magnificent Century» (2012–2014). The Ottoman Empire was a state with an absolutely streamlined hierarchy and, therefore, the norms of behaviour of the dynasty members and the courtiers served as a model for the middle and, partly, the lower strata of society. Speaking about the ethical standards and, at times, cruel morals of the ruling elite, one should take into account that the Ottoman Sultanate is a military feudal state, the basis of which was laid by Turkic tribes that migrated to Anatolia in the 11th century, and «led by the military nomadic aristocracy» [2, p. 163]. Therefore, any attempt to seize power or refusal to obey was punished mercilessly. In a word, the series «The Magnificent Century» is about power.

However, Turkish filmmakers, especially screenwriter Meral Okay, extremely tactfully presented the theme of power. Firstly, through the entire film narrative, which is 138 episodes, the love story of Padishah Suleyman and Hürrem Sultan runs like a red thread. Secondly, all the events unfold against the background of everyday life and holidays of the palace harem. In

a conversation, one of our Turkish colleagues once complained that out of the 46 years of his reign, Sultan Suleyman (1520–1566) spent about 40 years on campaigns. Regardless, on the screen, everything looks as if all he did was unravel the endless intrigues of residents of the harem. Of course, this is not the case. However, the threads of the numerous conspiracies, in most cases, did lead to the harem. This environment was sometimes more dangerous than an external military threat.

The Sultan's favourites competed for his attention, which means power. If any of them became the mother of a possible heir, the Shahzade, the struggle turned into a real war. The empire had a mechanism to prevent competition between heirs. Upon the accession of one of the brothers to the throne, the others were executed. Thus, during the obtainment of Sultan Bayezid II, 19 of his half-brothers had been killed. His son, Sultan Ahmet, whose name is carried by a majestic mosque in the centre of Istanbul, coming to power, abolished the lethal rule but subsequently would pay for it a cruel price. Sultan Suleyman, suspecting treason, puts his two sons to death. The heads of viziers, military leaders, and courtiers flew off from their shoulders at the slightest hint of foul play. But at the same time, anyone who had faithfully served the Sultan and the state could occupy the highest position in society, regardless of nationality and social origin. One should not forget for a moment that the Sultan is the shadow of Allah on earth, the master of the world.

In both «The Magnificent Century» and «The Empire of Kösem», the Janissary Corps acts as a kind of «collective hero». At critical moments of the change of power, the life of the Sultan and the entire dynasty depended on their support. Concerning the stereotype of behaviour defined by loyalty and devotion, the Janissaries show a certain ambivalence and duality. If, during combat actions, they unquestioningly fulfil the will of the supreme power, then during palace coups, the corps members could take both the side of the Sultan and the side of the conspirators, who, as a rule, themselves belonged to the Ottoman dynasty. The scales oscillated depending on the understanding of the principle of justice, in the perception typical of the Janissaries as the collective protagonist of the historical plot. The active role of the Janissaries in the political life of the Ottoman Empire can be explained from the position of Lev Gumilev's theory of ethnogenesis and with the help of the concept of passionarity: «Passionarians can be raised. For example, the Turks raised Janissaries from the children of

captives. They carried out a strict selection...That is, in history, there were attempts to create passionarians artificially, and quite successful» [5]. Since passionarity is «the presence of vital forces, which is not afraid of death» [5], this inner energy motivated the Janissaries to defend the principle of justice by sacrificing themselves.

Almost each piece of Turkish cinema art necessarily reproduces the most important cultural stereotype – the attitude towards the elders. Many ancient teachings, which spoke of the coming Apocalypse, asserted that the first sign of the approaching Day of Judgement was disrespect for the older generation, misunderstanding of each other, and, virtually, war between them – parents and children. Today, we already see that if an aksakal (elder) was treated with special reverence, he was in charge, solved disputable issues, and people went to him for advice; and, most importantly, family ties were unbreakable also because the older and younger generations lived together in one house – the elder was at the head of the table. He can and wants to pass on his life experience. But today, an elderly stand in a queue at an ATM to receive a pension (I should note that it is well deserved, money earned by him). In the eyes of many young people, he is a person who receives handouts from the state, its freeloader, its dependent.

Respect falls on all sides – they do not ask older member of the family when they can disturb him or ask for advice; they get up from the table and sit down at will. In the vast majority of young people live separately, i.e. the very notion of the head of the family dissolves. Later, even more disastrous metamorphoses with family values occur – the young generation begins to treat the elders as dependents, people who give unnecessary, useless advice, waste their time, and so on down the list. In the eyes of young people, nothing depends on the older generation – it does not benefit society, does not occupy prestigious positions, and, most importantly, does not bring profit to the community. In the first and second parts of the series «The Magnificent Century», the archetype of the aksakal is raised to an immeasurable height. Moreover, this archetype also has a female face and is expressed in the title «Valide Sultan», similar to the European concept of «Queen Mother».

We move naturally to the cultural stereotypes that reflect the place and role of women in Ottoman and Turkish society. Women gained their rights from a historical perspective not because suffragettes, feminists and further down

the list fought for these rights. The main point is again a question of being – as soon as women started to receive wages on par with men (for the same labour contribution), they gained self-respect and rights. To be a financially independent person is equal to being free. If we go back to the generational issue – elders, when they stop earning, lose their power and authority. We do not see anything like this in the history of Turkic society or Turkish historical serials. In the Ottoman Empire, a woman has rights just because she is a woman. And, pardon the tautology, from the moment she becomes a woman in the whole sense of the word, becomes mother, the realisation of her rights begins. A concubine from the harem, regardless of nationality and social origin, having given birth to an heir, becomes not only a favourite but, in the limit, can become a legitimate member of the dynasty and receive the status of «Valide Sultan».

Conclusion. Turkish cinema has risen to the global level within a very short time. The locomotive of this process was the serials, first of all historical ones. Suffice it to say that the series «The Magnificent Century» was purchased for demonstration by almost 100 countries. It became possible because Tükiye has built an economy of cinema and created a business environment conducive to the development of cinematography. Cinema is not only creativity but also production. It is necessary not only to generate but also to realise film products. And this is business. Without this, the presence of a national film school in the modern world is impossible. We all remember the success of filmmakers from Georgia, Latvia, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, etc., in the 1970s and 1980s. What have we heard about Georgian or Czech cinema in the last 30 years? Obviously, the economies of countries with populations of 10 million (or less) simply do not «pull» the film industry.

However, no business strategies would help if Tükiye's historical serials did not have an appropriate artistic level. Cinema is a synthetic art. The success of a piece of cinema comes from dramaturgy, directing, camera work, acting, the art of set designers, make-up artists, etc. But even this is useless if there is no content, no meaning. Like any other art, cinema creates art images that reflect the principal values and cultural stereotypes. These are family values, attitude toward women and children, respect for elders, loyalty and devotion to the Homeland.

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TÜRK KİNOSUNDA DAVRANIŞIN MƏDƏNİ STEREOTİPLƏRİ (TARİXİ SERİALLAR NÜMUNƏSİNDƏ)

Məqalədə Türkiyə kinematografçıları tərəfindən XXI əsrdə yaradılmış ən məşhur tarixi serialların pafosunu müəyyən edən davranış tərzinin bəzi mədəni stereotipləri nəzərdən keçirilir. “Sən mənim Vətənimсэн”, “Möhtəşəm yüz il” və “Kösem imperiyası” seriallarının baş qəhrəmanlarının davranış tərzinin stereotipləri təhlil edilir. Osmanlı imperiyası və 100 illiyi bu il qeyd olunan müasir Türkiyə Respublikasının mentalitetləri arasında müəyyən varisliyin mövcudluğu təsdiq edilir. Bu varislik ilk öncə sadıqlıq, vəfa kimi mədəni stereotipdə öz ifadəsini tapır. Bu etik norma adı hallanan serialların süjetlərinin qırmızı xəttini təşkil edir və burada əsas mövzu hakimiyyət uğrunda mübarizədən ibarətdir. Sadıq insanın əksi kimi satqın obrazı çıxış edir ki, onun davranış stereotipi onu qaçılmaz cəzaya və labüd ölümə gətirib çıxarır. Tarixi serialların dramaturgiyası sadıqlıq və satqınlıq qütbləri arasında yaranan gərginlik üzərində qurulur.

Açar sözlər: tarixi serial, mədəni stereotip, sadıqlıq, satqınlıq, hakimiyyət.

Рена Абдуллаева (Азербайджан)

КУЛЬТУРНЫЕ СТЕРЕОТИПЫ ПОВЕДЕНИЯ В ТУРЕЦКОМ КИНО (НА ПРИМЕРЕ ИСТОРИЧЕСКИХ СЕРИАЛОВ)

В статье рассматриваются некоторые культурные стереотипы поведения, определяющие пафос самых известных исторических сериалов, созданных кинематографистами Турции в XXI веке. Анализируются стереотипы поведения главных героев сериалов «Ты –

моя Родина», «Великолепный век» и «Империя Кёсем». Утверждается, что существует определенная преемственность в менталитете общества Османской империи и современной Турецкой Республики, 100-летие которой отмечается в этом году. Эта преемственность выражается, прежде всего, в таком культурном стереотипе, как верность, преданность. Данная этическая норма образует красную нить сюжета названных сериалов, главной темой которых является борьба за власть. Антиподом верного человека выступает образ предателя, стереотип поведения которого приводит его к неизбежному наказанию и неминуемой смерти. Драматургия исторических сериалов строится на том напряжении, которое возникает между полюсами верности и предательства.

Ключевые слова: исторический сериал, культурный стереотип, верность, предательство, власть.