TURKISH SHADOW PLAY

KARAGÖZ

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The shadow play Karagöz is one of the oldest examples of Turkish art. It flourished in Anatolia, exceeded the boundaries of this land and has become the common cultural heritage of a vast area where it had turned into a colourful dream and life stage. Containing different branches of art within itself, Karagöz has a privileged place in the traditional Turkish theatre.

For centuries different faces, dialects and lives were brought together by Karagöz which put in a dialogue with their authentic identities on the same stage. Beyond fiction, Karagöz is often a "reality" show just like life itself. Karagöz with its humorous culture and the elements it created is still alive today and among different life settings it makes us ponder about ourselves.

The conservation, sustenance and transformation of this outstanding example of Turkish cultural heritage within the framework of UNESCO's "Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage" is a necessity that cannot be
neglected for the sake of glorification of the art that carries the values of humanity.

Despite the various claims of some countries about its origin, a scientifically based file prepared by academics and representatives of non-governmental organizations was presented to UNESCO by the Ministry for the purpose of announcing Karagöz as a product of the Turkish culture to the whole world.

During the 4th convention of the UNESCO's 24 member "Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection of the Intergovernmental Committee" which was held in Abu Dhabi from 28th Sept to 2nd Oct 2009, it has been approved that "Shadow Play Karagöz" is the part of Turkish culture and the intangible cultural heritage of humanity.

Getting results from our initiative and efforts for saving it to the inventory of UNESCO's world cultural heritage and registering Karagöz as a branch of traditional Turkish theatre means that traditional art inherited from the past is acclaimed and celebrated as an inevitable necessity of humanity.

Making Karagöz part of an international agenda due to the decision of the UNESCO is actually a new definition of our responsibility which fortunately requires conservation of this art, its development and reaching out to a wider audience. Karagöz, as a stage show where dreams and reality interwine will continue to reflect the universality and the immortality of art in the most beautiful way.
INTRODUCTION

All societies develop their own art and culture in due course, and in this respect they interact with other societies. Certainly, in this trade, those societies with richer and stronger art and culture prevail. If a society does not progress its art and culture, if it does not protect its language which shapes its art and culture, then maintaining its existence can get harder. Thus, some countries go out of existence and their arts and culture gradually become obsolete.

The language of a society and, accordingly its art, resembles the foundation of a house. Those living in a house with weak foundations ought to seek solutions or abandon themselves to despair.

The best thing in the world is love. Love is priceless, and love is beauty. Beauty and love produce art; in turn, art with its various practices refines love and beauty. Thus, art must exist only for love, which serves to beautify it.

Theatre is a bundle of arts. In each society, the foundation of theatre differs due to each society’s art and cultural richness, capabilities and requirements. However, it has been specialized as the native theatre of respective societies. And these native theatres have been called "folk theatre" or "traditional drama".

Some of these powerful and rich folk theatres have survived until today as information, and some of them as practices. These folk theatres must not be considered as rivals to the modern-world theatre, as they represent different colours and beauty. Shadow theatre is a part of folk theatre.

As we celebrate "World Theatre Day" (27th of March) with plays, conferences, declarations and speeches, we predominantly deal with modern script-based theatre. If we confine this special day to only representing this restricted framework of style and repertory we will harm theatre itself.
Is not theatre history—with its art and technique—a part of all nations' pasts? Does not this past reflect the diverse characteristics, along with the characters, histories, and the traditions, of the people of the world?

Today's theatre can approach human relations and world problems from a much wider and scientific perspective. The loneliness and anxiety in the souls and hearts of people find representation in art. In theatre, gloom, anger, and laughter overflow the stage. Therefore, scripted plays have limited the plays and the actors.

The genuine public theatres are forgotten on the 27th of March and suffer due to the ideological and economical crises of the world. The anger and frustration of the people, related to the public theatres, do not find an expression on the stage. In public comedy, sometimes tears flow and sometimes a storm of laughter exists in their tears.

The naive and honest arts of the people should survive on the stage and be pruned of artificiality. Thus, we feel that public theatre must be brought to life by public puppeteers. The drama and comedy of people cannot be considered as just scenery, it acts as an effect too, prompting and directing the theatre.

In the Ottoman Empire, representatives of the diverse people living in the Empire with varied beliefs, traditions, customs, colours, languages, and religions met each other on the stage for hundreds of years. They acted the parts of both actors and spectators. The actors lived their roles and performed themselves as "comedy". Over time, such plays developed and turned into one of the best folk theatres of the world. The best and the most significant branch of it is called 'shadow theatre' or 'Karagöz'.
Just to recap, in Turkey, everyone interested in theatre ought to learn about his or her own theatre. This thought is also valid for every nation. One cannot serve the world theatre in Turkey if he/she ignores the important and significant Turkish folk theatre. Foreigners, who wish to learn about Turkish theatre, should first learn about Turkish traditional theatre.
CHAPTER ONE

SHADOW THEATRE

Shadow Theatre in the World

Shadow theatre has existed since the beginning of the world and it will always continue. Its existence depends on the presence of light and objects. It gains shape and movement according to the light and the objects.

Since the beginning, shadow theatre has attracted human attention. It has affected people in a myriad of ways – sometimes it has scared them, at times it has entertained them and has often made them ponder.

Although it is not certain, China has been acknowledged as the birthplace of shadow theatre. But most certainly, these shows began in the southern and eastern parts of the Asian continent. In these countries, in puppet theatre, especially shadow theatre, we can notice definite differences in terms of techniques of repertory, figure-making, and playing. During the communist revolution in China, this art was scorned at and its players died in the camps. With the help of foreign country puppeteers, Chinese shadow theatre once more resurrected.

In Asia, depending on the countries and regions, we can differentiate the figure characteristics, playing techniques, and repertoire of the shadow theatres. The themes are generally based on legends and beliefs. The curtain is sometimes bigger and sometimes smaller. Due to the...
difference in curtain sizes, the figures are at times played by different players.

No comedy takes place in these plays and live music is used. The screen is usually quite wide, so women and men separate and sit either side of the curtain. This position allows the women to see the playing of the figures.

In later years, due to the interest in Asian shadow theatre and the techniques of Karagoz, non-traditional works were enacted in the shadow plays. This led to the emergence of modern shadow theatre plays.

**Shadow Theatre in Turks**

Karagoz occupies an absolute place in world shadow theatre. However, there are some false perceptions about it. The belief that “the Turks were unaware of shadow theatre previous to Karagoz”, is incorrect.

The Turks lived in Central Asia, in the regions of shadow theatres. They lived in areas neighbouring China during the times of peace and war. Thus, how could the Turks have been unaware of shadow theatre?

As the Turks made progress in leather trade, weaving, and creating dye from plants, these materials formed the basis of shadow theatre – its figures, curtains and figure painting. Besides, many books state that the Turks were invited by some Chinese elites to play shadow theatre. It should be noted that Chinese sources are readily available for shadow theatre research.

In any case, Karagoz’s design, images, and playing style are very similar to the Chinese shadow theatre. Nonetheless the Chinese designs are very perforated. We do not have much information about the figures, repertoire, curtains and plays of Central Asian Turkish shadow theatre. After the
Turks accepted Islam, giving a “life” to an unseen person’s image on the curtain was a contradiction to the Islamic law; since it violated the belief of the singularity of Allah. Thus, the chances to play shadow plays became scarce and, along with puppet shows, shadow theatre gradually faded into oblivion. Those who opposed to the negative view of shadow theatre brought the puppets and the theatre to the villages of Anatolia. Nevertheless, shadow theatre could not find an opportunity to revive in Central Asia until the time that Karagöz emerged after a long time-gap.

**Turkish Traditional (Folk) Theatre**

Undoubtedly, each society had its own theatre, theatre style, techniques and repertoires. Yet, there are not many societies whose plays reach out to our present times nor are there many about whose plays adequate information is available.

In the past, theatre was performed due to the requirements of certain entertainments, events, celebrations, e.g. victory celebrations, sorcery, worshipping, death etc. Though the reasons would not have differed much for Central Asian Turks, the power and richness of their society led to a core theatre which progressed in the course of time. The Central Asian theatre spread with migrations and flourished in the capital of the Ottoman Empire. Thence, Turkish folk (traditional) theatre has come out.

Turkish traditional theatre which has multifarious branches is the most realistic, impressive, and the richest folk theatre in the world. Shadow theatre (Karagöz), theatre-in-the-round (meydan oyunu), meddah (stand alone
shows), puppetry, improvisational theatre (tulûat), village theatre and jugglery branches have come to us from the traditional theatre. The oldest among these branches is puppetry and the latest is improvisational theatre.

Turkish traditional theatre would not have been able to develop and flourish in any place other than Istanbul where it found rich characters, events, themes, spectators, and puppeteers. It embraced all societies regardless of their beliefs and cultures and merged them in the theatre to reflect these differences. Traditional theatre elaborated an Ottoman neighbourhood.

We can observe this concept mirrored in the branches of Karagöz, theatre-in-the-round, improvisational theatre and puppetry. The common
thread in them is the themes and characters. We can say the same things for jugglery but we cannot compare it to any theatre form.

Common and basic characteristics exist among the branches. Firstly, these shows are intended to entertain with impromptu performances, open theatres, and dramas. Secondly, they all require certain show models and styles and combine these shows with Turkish music and poetry.

Though the different forms have common characteristics, the village theatre was not associated with people and events other than those of Istanbul and Muslim Turks. During Ramadan primarily, Karagöz was performed with themes and events of Istanbul. Despite not being the central attraction, the other branches of the traditional theatre and their players also benefited from these month-long theatre festivities.

**Branches of Turkish Traditional Theatre**

**Puppetry**

Research and excavations done by British archaeologists in China unearthed thousand-year-old puppets belonging to the Turks. Their bodies were not of statues or toys. We do not have much information about the past; although puppetry advanced to the Turks, it could not find a way into Istanbul. In Central Asia and in the Anatolian villages it continued at a decreasing pace.

In Istanbul, various puppet shows were performed, not as theatre but as entertainment in big official festivities. Later, the puppet shows performed by puppeteers coming from Europe, and the simple shows performed by Istanbul’s Jewish puppeteers encouraged the Turks to enter into puppetry.

In Turkish puppetry, as in its improvisatorial theatre, the leading characters are İbiş (manservant) and İhtiyar (rich gentleman); similar
to the characters of Karagöz and Hacivat in shadow theatre. Since they did not require a dark place, these shows could be performed in open air, in excursion spots and at circumcision feasts. In these plays, the first part features İbiş’s comedy and the second part features a musical along with dancing.

Currently, İbiş puppet shows are still continuing in festivals and in Ramadan entertainment. Modern puppet shows are also becoming more popular.

**Encomiasts**

Almost every nation had their storytelling – be it long or short, with or without music. The eulogy show in Istanbul has advanced and has been refined into beautiful solo play shows.

Shamans in Central Asia told stories to cure the patients. Later, in caravanserais and coffee-houses people began telling stories about religious dignitaries and religion. Afterwards, they started to play bağlama and tell love stories.

Since the Turks are fond of laughing, encomiasts from the common people started utilizing the themes and characters abundant in Istanbul in their entertaining stories. With the success of last known performers, the eulogy turned into a theatre show. The show gained a certain character with its distinct decor, sound, and use of mimics in storytelling and became very popular. Many successful storytellers’ reputations grew to amazing heights but none had theatre education. Unfortunately there are no encomiasts left today.
**Eulogy Show (Ortaoyunu)**

There is no precise information or documentation regarding how and when this name was given to this play. Researchers were not able to gather much information either. However, we are sure that its roots are in Central Asia as there are some practices of it in the village theatres as a simple form of eulogy show.

The leading players of the shows were Kavuklu (who was the equivalent of Karagöz) and Pişekâr (who was the equivalent of Hacivat). For scenery a folding screen with 3 or 4 pieces was used. Symbolically this décor depicted one house. Smaller such décor depicted working premises. The music was lively and the costumes were multicoloured.

Another aspect of these shows is that the women’s roles were performed by male performers. This creates a funny effect. The Karagöz show is a curtain of illusion and in the ortaoyunu, the curtain is the place of illusions. One can travel everywhere with fastest speed by walking. Every kind of vehicle can be used.

Each show was opened by Pişekâr, who comes in with music, and the show continued with Kavuklu. Whenever appropriate, the performers would turn toward the audience and talk to them.

During this show, it was very difficult to act impromptu without studying the technique. This technique is impossible for performers who learnt acting by studying the text. In one telling comment, after a successful performance a travelling Turcologist asked a famous Kavuklu player about the education he received. The Kavuklu player replied, “Could there be a school for theatre?”
Since puppeteers of the traditional theatre have not written their memoirs, nor described their art, techniques, and knowledge, there is almost no information left for us. What we do know, however, is that they all died in poverty.

By the way, we must add that all of them primarily had another profession. Since shows were not sufficient to maintain their livelihoods, mostly they used to run shops and those shops added a nickname to their fame: e.g. Ahmet the Confectioner, İrfan the Glazier, Rıza the Captain etc.

Another and very important trait was that a performer could act in other theatre genres besides his main genre. For instance a Kavuklu player would perform in an impromptu show upon request or a puppeteer of a eulogy show could act in an encomiastic show.

All shows were performed without rehearsals, director, prompter, and copywriter. Unless it was a dire necessity, no puppeteer would have make-up. If required, the make-up would be very simple. As in these shows they were making conversation based on the comedy and using the humorous possibilities of the Turkish language, any improper behaviour just for the sake of fame would not be appreciated.

The Village Theatre

This branch is different from the others and as such its progress has been limited. Its style and date extend up to the beliefs and traditions of Central Asian Turks.
Primarily, all of the performers are amateurs from the village. Performers are selected just before the beginning of the show by the “head performer”. The roles of the women are played by the male members - the parts of hand puppets and live puppets. They play village bağlamas and village music.

Apart from certain days, these shows are performed at ceremonies like weddings. Nowadays, however, both the makers of these shows and the shows themselves have been declining. Though the themes are updated, they are limited entirely to the village lifestyle. Nonetheless, they are entertaining and humorous.

**Jugglery**

This type of show is common in many countries and performed at fairs. It can even be performed in houses. An object is hidden inside a glass or cup. Then, turning it upside down, the player guesses which cup contains the hidden object. Whoever finds it out wins the award.

This was usually performed by the Jews of Istanbul in the Ottoman Empire. In those times the itinerant entertainer performed this show just for the sake of money. But, later, it turned into a master-apprentice relationship and became a branch of traditional theatre. Much later on, a duo of jugglers would perform at the circumcision feasts and added another dimension to it with the addition of a tambourine.

The shows are brief and the performers use the dialogues available in the eulogy shows and Karagöz. The duo usually wears special outfits. One plays the master with a wooden tong in his hand with which he pretends to hit his apprentice.

The more it turned into theatre, the less the Jews performed these shows. They withdrew from this
branch altogether in the course of time. Presently, there are no performers left to perform this branch of theatre.

**Improvisational Theatre**

This is a new branch of traditional theatre. In this branch, the rich gentleman and the servant İbiş resemble Karagöz and Hacivat. In addition, the rich man’s house contains many more characters such as a servant, a butler, a gardener, and a cook. Events mostly take place inside the house and İbiş is the character who causes trouble most of the time. There are additional characters like the wife of the gentleman, his grown-up children, and the guests. The same staff were transferred to puppet shows.

Improvisational theatre brought into the traditional theatre a new branch with more possibilities and colours. In the past, the eulogy show could be staged only outdoors, as it could not fit indoors. The puppeteers aspired to perform more shows every season; therefore they were in need of halls with a stage and a screen in it.

The emergence of improvisational theatre is associated with an unexpected event. An Armenian puppeteer, Güllü Agop, obtained special permission from the government; other groups were not allowed to stage shows in the halls with text and prompter and without music. Due to this, a eulogy player, Kavuklu Hamdi performed a show in a hall Hamam (Turkish bath).
with stage and screen but his show did not contain text, or a prompter and it was just an impromptu show. Thus, the ban initiated by Güllü Agop was implemented and, through this, improvisational theatre was born.

The shows were named ‘eulogy show with curtain and stage’. The first ever chief comic character and role was featured by a meddah, Ismet Efendi. This main character, İbiş, was abbreviated from the Turkish male name İbrahim and became very popular.

Although there are no more eulogy shows, İbiş, as the uneducated, naïve man who came from Anatolia, continues to exist in our present time with puppet shows.

**Turkish Shadow Theatre**

Karağöz, named after Turkish shadow theatre, is the featuring player of the shows. His inseparable partner Hacivat’s contribution to the dream curtain is undeniable. Although Hacivat’s place can be filled by another character, Karağöz’s place cannot be filled. The comedy level of the show depends on the characteristics of Karağöz, as well as the situation with which he stays in the show. He is neutral and realist. So why and how does Karağöz maintain the theme and convey the success of the comedy to other players?

Certainly, there are people who take away the comedy characteristics of Karağöz and live them. But, there exists only one character that mirrors all of them inside, and that is Karağöz. That’s the reason he is special and no one can take his place.

In any case, each of these can be considered as a source of comedy. Whenever all of them gather around in a single entity, the place where the show is performed fills up with laughter. This happens every time.
Turkish shadow theatre is perhaps the only show among its peers that makes people laugh every time. But only a real puppeteer can make people laugh. And unfortunately, nowadays the number of real puppeteers are becoming less.

A show in this curtain might not be humorous, it might have similar special characters or even the same characters, but it cannot be Turkish shadow theatre. The reason for this is evaluation is that in Turkey, modern shadow theatre studies have been ongoing without Karagöz. Probably these shows would be called Turkish shadow theatre but they will not be remembered as Karagöz. Thus, from now on we should split Turkish shadow theatre into two sections “shadow theatre” and “Karagöz”.

Kayserili Âşık
(Minstrel from Kayseri)
**Karagöz**

Karagöz is the name of Turkish shadow theatre, but it is not a sufficient explanation as Karagöz, at the same time, is a branch of Turkish folk (traditional) theatre. It is also the name of head performer in Turkish shadow theatre. Though there is another head player with him, they cannot be separated. The one who makes people laugh the most is Karagöz and therefore he is the best known and the most loved.

The reason for the long-lasting fame and popularity of Turkish shadow theatre on three continents can be explained by Karagöz alone. Before the discovery of movies, television, and other electronic entertainment, popularity of this show was an explainable event. However, if Karagöz still exists and entertains people in spite of advanced technology, the movie industry, television and theatre then we can attribute it to Karagöz’s amiability and magic. Despite so many animated movies, even animated Karagöz movies, the love and endearment it receives are the proof of its value and significance.

Karagöz is a character derived from ordinary people. His characteristics induce viewers to laugh continuously and uproariously, as the themes are selected according to the common people’s needs and demands.

Colourful costumes, especially hats of Karagöz and Hacivat, are intriguing. Red colour dominates Karagöz and green dominates Hacivat. Karagöz’s hat is also a special one. Researchers associate these hats and customs as a link between Central Asia and Islam. This art featuring two friends with opposite characteristics is the most difficult art event in the world.
Did Karagöz and Hacivat Ever Live?

Many speculations and researches have been done on the genuineness of two lead characters of Turkish shadow theatre. The researches done by both foreign Turcologists and Turkish scholars have yielded no results. Manuscripts and field researches on this particular area yielded some different information. Therefore, since various accounts arose about these two friends, reaching a conclusion has become very difficult. These accounts have caused different information to be raised at different times. For that reason, determining the factual information is very difficult as the facts have been shrouded in darkness. In
addition to this, there are mixed and confusing rumours about Karagöz and Hacivat.

One of the rumours suggests that Karagöz, whose true name was Kambur Ahmed Bali Çelebi, came from a well-to-do family. He worked as a blacksmith in a place called Samakof. During that time, Bursa was conquered and the Ottoman Sultan Orhan I built a mosque in Samakof. Karagöz worked on the construction site as a craftsman binding the stones with iron. The architect of this construction was Hacı İvaz (Hacivat). Due to his witticisms, jokes, and banter, Karagöz caused the work to slow down. This angered the Sultan and in spite of the begging of Hacivat, Karagöz was executed.

Another rumour suggests that the two friends were working on a mosque construction site of the Ottoman Sultan Bayezid I. At every opportunity Karagöz teased the gentleness of his friend and Hacivat joked about his friend’s ignorance and rudeness. Other workers dawdled while laughing with them. The foreman’s warnings did not work. Due to this delay the Sultan wanted to punish the foreman. When the foreman related the story, the Sultan had the two friends executed. Later the Sultan heard about the dialogue which caused the death of Karagöz and Hacı İvaz and he regretted his decision. The stories were known by Şeyh Küşteri as well and he mounted and recreated their shadows. In this way he brought their fond memories to life.

Yet another rumour suggests that the two friends had shops in the market-place during the reign of Bayezid I. Hacivat was a herbalist and Karagöz was an ironsmith. The shops were near a mosque construction site. The friends talked every day with each other, and all the passers-by stopped to listen to them. This distracted the construction site workers and caused delay. Due to this, a vizier issued a death penalty for both of them.

There are other similar rumours but all of them contradict one another regarding the dwelling
places and the professions of the two friends. On the other hand, they reveal some common information. The names of these two friends are the same in all accounts and they always cause delay in a mosque construction due to which they are hanged. Another common point of these rumours is that the mosque constructions were all before the conquest of Istanbul. But sadly, there is not even a brief sample of their dialogue.

Who is Şeyh Küşteri?

Karagöz and Hacivat cannot be separated from one another in the written or oral accounts and performances. Likewise the name of Şeyh Küşteri cannot fall outside the subject. Whether it is the text or performance or an explanation about the subject, this name is inevitably mentioned. Şeyh Küşteri is accepted as the founder of Turkish shadow theatre Karagöz. Therefore, every text and show mentions his name as a dedication.

Şeyh Küşteri was a clergyman who arrived from Iran and settled down in Bursa. He had his own students. He utilized the shadow theatre in order to relate to the students Allah’s great entity, spirit-body connection, the invisibility of Allah and spirits.

The shadows copied the living and on a simple screen he animated them and made them talk. It showed that even when the shadows disappeared and when the light went off, there still existed an entity who gave them life and a voice. But, that could not be seen.
Küşteri used the curtain for teaching. After he utilized the screen and animated shadows of Karagöz and Hacivat in the presence of the Sultan, the Sultan lamented the execution decision. This shadow theatre proved to be a great hit and it gradually turned into Turkish Shadow Theatre.

The name of Şeyh Küşteri is retained in the texts and announced in the shows, on the opening of the play and in a special poem, which is called “curtain ghazel”. While coming onto stage Hacivat is the one who recites this poem. “Ghazel” is a poem-writing template in Turkish literature.

Curtain ghazel’s beauty and meaning wanes if it is chanted other than in the dream curtain plays. Islamic mysticism is widely discussed in curtain ghazels in relation to the show. Karagöz and Hacivat are mentioned as well in curtain ghazels, though not in all.

There have been some exclusively-written curtain ghazels. They are the ghazels written to be read in the shows performed in the presence of the sultans to praise them and wish well-being for them.

In curtain ghazels written in modern Turkish rather than Ottoman Turkish during the last years. Although Şeyh Küşteri was remembered, the subject of Islamic mysticism was not given much emphasis. Some poems were written for children too.

In 1892, the residents of Bursa erected a gravestone to the memory of Karagöz and Hacivat on the spot where the legend claims that they were executed. On this stone a well-known and commonly used curtain ghazel has been written.

Here is the translation of that curtain ghazel:

The images that appear on this curtain symbolize their original,
On the real curtain what appears is Allah’s might.
What is acceptable is the nature and morale appearing on the outside,
But deceiving the eyes cannot hinder the decision of the heart.
All the men in the world can be unwary
But those looking carefully can find the facts.
On the curtain is reflected the imitation of life
Those who did not see the original part of the show can be deceived.

... Ah Kemterî, be well-behaved on the road of Muhammet,

When the curtain of abundance dies down, the oneness of Allah becomes visible.
This gravestone was broken by invading Greek soldiers in Bursa and now lies in the Bursa City Museum.

An Ottoman Theatre?

Turkish traditional theatre, as it is appropriately named, is a like tree grown in soil kneaded with thousands of years of Turkish art and culture. By the time this tree died, only two seeds had come to Anatolia along with the migrating Turks. Due to the love and skills poured into them the seeds became a tree again.
One of those seeds is the village theatre, and the other one is the folk theatre. The latter is rooted in Istanbul and by maintaining its traditional specifications it has grown up to the present. Traditional theatre is the combination of both village and folk theatres and its structure is based on the gene that originated in Central Asia. It is called Turkish traditional theatre. One might inquire about the origins of this theatre, whether is it Central Asian or Ottoman? This question ought to be asked in any case.

With a greater perspective we should exclude village theatre, then the Ottoman Istanbul theatre would be a more appropriate title. But, the Ottoman theatre is not a true title. For example, Karaghiozis is now accepted as Greek shadow theatre, even though considered as independent after some alterations. If it is not Ottoman Karagöz, as its roots are in Central Asia then what else could it be? Besides, both Turkish shadow theatre and Turkish traditional theatre have benefited from the Ottoman Karagöz; and this is not an old issue.

Actually, the definition of Turkish traditional theatre as Ottoman theatre is not an old and common issue. In any case, we have made the same evaluation as far as the application is observed on the stage, such as the characters in the shows and their professions and peculiarities. For example, if you remove many aspects of the Karagoz curtain, such as costumes, professions, peculiarities, accents, and characters of the Ottoman society, and if you then replace them with Turkish people, you will not alter the technique, humour, beauty, and values of Karagoz play.

The traditional theatre has embraced all people objectively with affection and dignity and revealed an Ottoman neighbourhood in the end. Including the Turks without discriminating beliefs, races, colours and differences, with a neutral mirror, it
has reflected the truth. Besides the Turks, we can find the representatives of the society from Jews to Armenians, Greeks to Albanians, Bosnians to Arabs, Persians, and Georgians with a sorting from the most crowded communities to the least.

The Ottoman people of the traditional theatre, despite the peculiarities and as one within the other, are both viewers and players in the Karagöz curtain. In all branches of folk theatre and consequently in Karagöz on a wider scale, we can find all the public figures who exist in society as artists. When we evaluate this from the perspective of the Karagöz play, the curtain has embraced the Ottomans, and vice versa. As a result, art has gained and enriched. A Greek found himself on the screen as a doctor, a Jew as a junk dealer and an Armenian as a jeweller and it made them all happy.

**Karagöz and Istanbul**

Istanbul, for centuries, has been the capital city of the Ottoman Empire. At the same time it has been a centre for education, culture, trade and art. Each minority in the Empire, large or small, has had their representative members in the capital. Therefore, in terms of literature and entertainment, this capital city has been an enormous source of artistic inspiration. Tradesmen from different
strata, traditions, and values were sharing the same city.

This colourful society was a common ground for love affairs, stories, excitements, and sorrows. Different dresses, faces and conversations were all amalgamated into a new richness and beauty.

 Karağöz’s curtain is also known as “the mirror.” The mirror reflects mainly the people of Istanbul, in entertaining and jocular themes and features. No prejudice is reflected from this mirror. Karağöz reflects whatever he perceives through his art and style.

 Karağöz and Hacivat and some other characters speak in Istanbul dialect. These dialogues should be comprehensible to the entire audience. For that reason, these shows help people from different cultural backgrounds to acquaint themselves with a common language.

 The strait in Istanbul splits the city into two as the Anatolian part and the European part. Some parts of the European side is also divided into two, due to a bay. If transportation is delayed due to seasonal weather conditions in the strait, then travelling between other parts of the city becomes difficult. This situation harmed the traditional theatre, Karağöz shows and the puppeteers in the past, especially during Ramadan.

 These three regions divided by the sea revealed characteristics of their respective populations. The Christian population dominated the central region of the European side, while the Jews dominated the entrance to the Bosphorus and on the other side (along the coast of Marmara Sea) Muslims formed the majority. On the Anatolian side, the population was composed of diverse people. This division influenced the art. The main hub for theatres and Karağöz shows was on the European side since the palace, the outstanding mosques
and majority of the population were all situated here. The neighbourhoods and streets with large coffee-houses and halls where shows were staged were mainly here.

Karagöz curtain reflects the way of living in Istanbul and in the Ottoman neighbourhood; but it also encompasses those who temporarily arrived from out of town and those who came from abroad, especially from Europe. They all take their places in Karagöz stories accordingly.

Istanbul had been a popular place among foreign travellers and Orientalists, and it was densely populated by official representatives from foreign countries. Therefore, all those people who visited Istanbul mentioned its theatrical art and especially Karagöz plays in their memoirs, books and articles.

Being in a coastal town surrounded with seaways, Karagöz curtain also features ships and caiques and maritime-related matters.

According to legend, Karagöz and Hacivat were born in another city and shows began in that city, however, the curtain of Karagöz and its shows pertain only to Istanbul.

One of the most peculiar aspects of Istanbul is its multicultural view where neighbouring mosque, church and synagogue fit inside a single frame. In this context, heads of three religions: imam, priest, and rabbi can be seen in the Turkish shadow play together. But all of them appear neutrally on the curtain. Nobody made fun of them because of their differing beliefs or physical
appearance. This was true for people with different religious backgrounds as well.

This warm relationship between people from different religious beliefs helped both Islamic clergymen and non-Muslims play Karagöz shows. This created harmony among people.

**Karagöz at the Court**

The palace in the Ottoman Empire served not only as the headquarters for administration and the residence of the ruling dynasty but also as a place holding significant meaning for arts and puppeteers, directly or indirectly. The sultans were very much interested in the arts and even if they were not personally occupied with art, they had some interest in it and patronized it.

Turkish folk theatre was one of the arts that the court showed warm interest in. Special shows were performed during Ramadan, wedding ceremonies, and celebrations outside the palace. The most important performance was made before the sultan. These performances were considered a great honour for the puppeteers and those who were allowed to perform in such shows were the well-known and admired master puppeteers of Istanbul.

Karagöz was performed most often in the palace, amongst all the other branches of traditional theatre. Thus, the puppeteer who could perform in the palace in front of the sultan was considered to be the most qualified Karagöz puppeteer. He had to be extremely careful while performing his show in the palace and could not utter a single wrong sentence, or obscene and humorous dialogue to make the people laugh.

In such shows they played live music and eulogized the sultan with complimentary words in appropriate sections of the play. The compliments
were offered by Hacivat who opened the show and was the first one who came to the curtain. There was a must-be-read special eulogy and in this case the praise in the poem was totally attributed to the sultan, and again, in the initial part they prayed for the health and success of the sultan. The more successful the show, the higher the prize of the puppeteer. Accordingly, the rates of the puppeteer for his shows in the city would get higher.

The performance in the palace was not necessarily meant to be a performance done solely before the sultan. The puppeteers were also invited for the children and the ladies in the harem. During the show in the harem, Karagöz puppeteer had to be gentler and kinder. For puppeteers, the doors of the palace could be opened for special Karagöz shows on the occasions of Ramadan and circumcision feasts.

For all the shows performed in front of the sultan, the most delicate matter was to observe strict rules on political issues. For instance, during the final stages of the Empire’s collapse, uttering the word “star” was prohibited. The Turkish word for star (yıldız) could not be uttered or published because it might be a reference to Abdülhamit, who lived in Yıldız Palace. Once, when a puppeteer performing before the sultan remembered that the word yıldız was prohibited, he immediately changed the lines in order to avoid the sultan’s outrage.

Although not political, there was another case about playing Karagöz in front of the sultan. Hâfız Bey, as one of the famous puppeteers of the era, was invited to the palace to perform the show called “Karagöz’s Squirearchy” in front of Selim III. In the play, Hacivat buys male and female slaves. He brings them to the home of rich Karagöz. In the meantime, Karagöz speaks to his slave named Selim:
“Seliimmm!”

Karagöz had forgotten that the Sultan’s name was also Selim. The Sultan replied in a loud voice saying, “Yessssss Sir!”

As an experienced Karagöz puppeteer, he did not panic and immediately acknowledged his grave mistake. He brought Hacivat before Karagöz and made him speak:

- “Ahhh Karagöz!.. You have blurted out a wrong word! Its forgiveness is impossible! Now you quit this profession and go to the Hajj!”

Although the Sultan insistently said, “I am not offended! I just wanted to banter. Go on, play!”, the puppeteer was not convinced and said “May God give you a long life! You have forgiven me but this is very unseemly! I smeared my reputation”, and he never again played Karagöz.

**Ramadan and Karagöz**

Ramadan, in the Ottoman Empire and in today’s Turkey, is a holy month for the Muslim majority. Besides special religious activities during certain days, the kitchen has an important place. Other special events during Ramadan, especially in Istanbul are the festivities. One of them is the traditional theatre. During the festivities Turkish musical concerts also take place and together they have been called Ramadan Festivals.

Even up to recent times, the non-alcoholic family taverns with live entertainment programmes used to draw heavy attention from the audience. Due to this intense...
interest, festivities were extended to Gülhane Park (near Topkapı Palace) during the daytime. This was carried out traditionally up to recent years.

Ramadan was a month full of events, entertainment, and fun, and in Istanbul it had a significant importance for people and puppeteers. Out of all the events taking place during the month, traditional theatre was the most interesting one, therefore, almost the entire city was turned into a stage for traditional theatre and musical concerts. Coffee-houses were the key locations for staging these events throughout neighbourhoods.

Formerly, these small coffee-houses were being called reading houses and during Ramadan they were serving as small cultural art centres. In any case, during Ramadan or otherwise, the playing of any sort of game of chance was prohibited. Under these premises, socializing, book reading, storytelling, and bağlama playing were the only permitted activities.

In the coffee-houses there was no stage to perform but the shows of meddah (public storyteller and mimic using speech, accents, behaviour and props.), puppets and particularly Karagöz plays drew attention and almost every evening the spectators gathered to enjoy the shows.

Starting times for the shows were after the religious rites, followed by the breaking of the fast by eating and praying, this went on for hours.

The symbol of Istanbul’s Ramadan and its greatest pleasure was Karagöz play. That’s the reason that the word Ramadan implied amusement and induced a smile on everyone’s face. Patiently waiting for Ramadan time to enjoy Karagöz plays was exciting for children.

In the past, the time for Karagöz shows was in the latter half of Ramadan. Later, it shifted to the end of the first week. As time went by, it started
with the onset of the very first day. Nevertheless, no shows were performed in the special religious evenings and, though not prohibited by religion, on the evening of the last day of Ramadan.

In the rich family houses, after eating the special evening meal, the host entertained his guests with a Karağöz show right after the prayers. Sometimes, family shows for ladies and children were performed separately.

Children were not allowed to go the neighbourhood coffee-houses and watch the performances although Karağöz depicted them, but they could peek through windows or thresholds. In any case, Karağöz plays were not designed for minor audience.

Apart from circumcision ceremonies and festivals, during Ramadan the palace residents also enjoyed Karağöz shows. Sitting in separate cabins, women and children watched the private show performed for the sultan. Shows performed in the palaces had to keep to strict rules on theme, plot, humour, and political views suitable for the court.

During the three-day long religious holidays, tents were pitched according to weather conditions and Karağöz used to take its usual place. Children could enjoy these daytime shows with their pocket-money given by their elders for the Bayram.
Two places named Kırklareli and Orhaneli prevail in the context of Karagöz and Hacivat and their shadow plays, while almost entire subjects and events taking place on the dream curtain are situated in Istanbul. In spite of his birthplace being in another city, an old wooden house is considered as Karagöz’s residence and protected as a historical site.

As mentioned above, there are different stories about Karagöz and Hacivat. However, the previously told legend out of many is accepted as accurate: During the early years of the Ottoman state, Sultan Orhan, after conquering Bursa, started to build a mosque in his name. On the construction site Karagöz works as an ironsmith and binds the stones. Hacivat is the stonemason. While working they banter and other workers listen to them. This slows down the work.

One day, the Sultan comes to see the construction and notices the delay. He asks the reason and from the architect he learns of the two friends responsible for it. He orders their executions. Meanwhile Şeyh Küşteri, living in Bursa and working as clergyman, was using a shadow screen in order to teach his students about Allah and the spirit. He was acquainted with Karagöz and Hacivat. After the execution Şeyh Küşteri learns that the Sultan regretted his decision. He then sets up a curtain and animates these two friends and their conversation in front of the Sultan.
Although this account employs some erroneous information, these are not attention-grabbing as this is a warm story and the Turks preferred to accept them instead of rejecting. However, the foreman in the construction site could have fired these two friends because he could predict that their behaviour would eventually delay the work and he would also see that if they were not fired, then he would be punished along with them. The Sultan, too, would have blamed the foreman for the delay and not the two ordinary workers. In any case, the foreman knew the situation and he could have prevented it from the beginning and not waited for the Sultan to come and punish the two workers.

Another glaring mistake in this tale endangers its credibility. In the Ottoman Empire, the sultans would not give arbitrary and final decisions as it is assumed. They used to consult to the most esteemed clergy in the country. In this case, the clergy of the time would have termed the decision as illogical.

The reason that the hands of Karagöz and Hacivat on the figures are poised in a gesture is related to this tale. When the death order was given, Karagöz had undermined it with a gesture of a fist under his chin and by waving his other hand. Hacivat, however, had expressed his anger by putting his two fists under his chin and crying “Let’s raze it!”

In some accounts another aspect of the story is also narrated: Before entering the mosque for worship, Muslims must clean themselves. For this, there are fountains and public baths near the mosques. Surprisingly, in the construction site where Karagöz and Hacivat worked, the architect did not build such a facility and therefore two friends protested about it by lingering instead of working. But none inquired about the reason.
The story of the mosque, which was taught in schools, was also depicted in the theatre, movies and comics.

The names Karagöz and Bursa are like those of twins. Perhaps Karagöz was not born in this place but their graves were made in the Çekirge Neighbourhood of Bursa and thus, their link with Bursa and their memories have become eternal. The grave was built in 1935; and in 1982, it was turned into a magnificent mausoleum.

In front of Karagöz’s grave is Karagöz House, opened by Union International de la Marionette (UNIMA) Turkey National Centre, Bursa Office in 1997. Shows are performed in a small hall and there is also an exhibition room. Later, a library was also added. Karagöz House hosts Ramadan celebrations.

The very first Bursa Karagöz Festival was held in 1993 and this activity has continued as the International Puppet and Shadow Play Festival. Greeks performers also participate in this festival. In Bursa, the International Golden Karagöz Folk Dance Competition is conducted to keep Karagöz’s name alive.

The name of Karagöz has also been utilized by many businesses in Bursa such as Karagöz Antique Shop, Karagöz 2 Antique Shop, Karagöz Tourism, Karagöz Tea House, Hacivat Souvenir Shop, Karagöz Baklava Shop, Karagöz Car Tyres.

Sadly, the grave and gravestone of Şeyh Küşteri is missing now. Additionally, the gravestone, which is assumed to be Karagöz’s, was broken by Greek House steward.
soldiers. Its pieces are now displayed in the Bursa City Museum.

**Karagöz in Other Countries**

Repertoire and characters of the shadow theatre of every nation reflect that nation’s respective art and culture. Therefore, the shadow theatre of every nation is considered worth a look. In this context, Karagöz draws plenty of interest.

The more realistic, charming, richer and faster the Karagöz rendition, the more humorous the show. Whenever there is a translation during Karagöz play or the written text is given prior to the show, the joy of the audience increases.

Thanks to the features that delight the audience, Karagöz shows have travelled across the borders of Istanbul and then the Ottoman Empire. To understand this dissemination, the attitude of the people in the countries established after the fall of the Ottoman Empire must be taken into account. In this context, the people who are the legacy of the Ottoman Empire and who watched Karagöz plays become significant.

We observe Karagöz shows taking place in other countries after the establishment of the Turkish Republic following the fall of the Ottoman Empire, especially in the last fifty years. These are the European countries. During that period, the Turkish puppeteers has secured a large show area by receiving invitations from other countries and participating in festivals. Most recently, Karagöz has had a chance to be played on screens in the countries of Asia, the Middle East, North Africa and North America.

What is more important, as far as Karagöz is concerned, is that local Karagöz productions in the countries where these shows were once performed by the Turkish puppeteers have already started
to create their own Karagözs. It is also taught in the schools of some countries where students learn theatre and puppetry. Karagözh has played a vanguard role for the shadow and puppet theatre in some countries and has left his name as a legacy.

**Cyprus and Greece**

Beginning in 1571, the Turks settling down in Cyprus brought their own traditions and customs along with them. By this time, traditional theatre and Karagözh shadow theatre had taken root in the island. Like other shows, Karagözh here had taken another shape according to the local characteristics. The most loved Karagözh shows were influenced by local stories, characters, and accents.

In the last century, about 15 Karagözh performers made their own renditions and prepared new shows. About 200 renditions have been left from that period.

As in Turkey, after cinema became popular, the number of performances declined along with the number of Karagözh artists after the 1960s. These shows had actually extended to the villages in times other than Ramadan.

Just as Karagözh became known in the Middle East, Balkans, North Africa and Anatolia in the course of time, shows were brought to Cyprus by people who had watched them in Istanbul. It might be moderated and have gained local characteristics but this fact cannot be denied. Also, some other Anatolian cities where Karagözh shows survived until recent times adopted Karagözh from Istanbul.
In Cyprus, shows were being performed in the coffee-houses, and children and women used to see them briefly outside the doors and windows. The repertoire consisted of just 20 plays and some favourite ones used to be shown for weeks in the same place.

The Greeks of Cyprus were familiar with Karagöz as they lived both on the borders of the Ottoman Empire and side by side with the Turkish people who lived in Cyprus. They also watched Karagöz, performed shows and made figures. There were even some Greek artists who played Karagöz in Turkish.

Although declining in number, Karagöz play in Cyprus Greeks had a longer life in comparison with the original. In those shows, nevertheless, Karagöz was despised, ill-treated, and left helpless against insults since it was thought to represent the Ottoman Empire.

As for the Greece, there was a large Greek community living in Istanbul, the capital of Karagöz. Like other nations, they too watched Karagöz and loved it and made shows of it. The Greeks in Istanbul were travelling to Greece and many Greeks from Greece were travelling to Istanbul too. Therefore, they became familiar with Karagöz like the people of other Balkan countries. Besides, they were living together with the Turks in Greek cities.

In Greece, Karagöz was named Karaghiozis and Hacivat was called Hacivatis. Figures and curtains increased in size and, like cinema, plays were performed in the parks. Characters and themes were altered. However, the Greek puppeteers could not manage to make their figures out of hide. Instead, they used metal, wood and cardboard. More recently, they have been constructing the scenery from cloth and making larger figures from thick plastic boards.
Greek television stations still feature Karaghiozis programmes. Now internationally-known Greek puppeteers visit festivals in Turkey, and Turkish manipulators also visit Greece and set up Karagöz curtain there.

In the repertoire of Karaghiozis there are characters like pasha and vizier, who represent the Ottoman Empire, as well as many other characters and themes similar to Karagöz.
Art of Karagöz

The artistic side of Karagöz play is the fundamental issue of its worldwide fame as in these shows not just one art but many disciplines get together. Karagöz is a bundle of arts. The same comment might be made for other shadow theatre shows but Karagöz has superior traits. It should not be forgotten that the shadow theatre shows can have different traits in respect to art; but not every form of beauty and trait can be considered as superior.

For hundreds of years, Karagöz has shown success in making people from all walks of life laugh, and it can maintain this success as its basis is the pattern of the Turkish language; but utilizing this capability is an art. Furthermore, this feature is valid for the three continents where Karagöz has spread. It is not possible to find this in other shadow theatres. In any case, in their shows there is no purpose of humour.

The depictions of Karagöz represent Turkish folk painting in the shadow theatre, since the shows originated from the people. Further, this trait is also a reflection of the miniature art on the screen. Whatever discipline is behind the depictions and the shows of Karagöz, as in other branches of the Turkish traditional theatre, it is mainly the people who love Karagöz. In any case, the other name of the traditional theatre is Turkish folk theatre. In spite of the participation of educated people in the studies of this subject, this trait of the common people could not be abolished. The dream curtain’s head players and especially Karagöz himself, are of the people. He represents the majority.
Artistry of Karagöz

Karagöz show is the most difficult theatre play in the world. Since it is hard to perform, its player has to be a capable theatre puppeteer. This is true for genuine Karagöz shows and puppeteers, as in every period some performers disregard the art and artistic side. This fact continues today.

Why is Karagöz artistry so difficult, why is it so special? The reason is that the puppeteer in this discipline has to act impromptu, he should know what impromptu is. Behind the screen is the puppeteer who amalgamates his fantasy world with the figure he is trying to control. The puppeteer maintains a successful portrait throughout the show. He acts like a stage director who does not forget his assistant.

A successful and genuine Karagöz puppeteer re-writes the dialogues stored in his heart and mind during the show. He can increase or decrease the characters. Even as he lives out his imaginations his ears must be attentive to the people watching him. He must gauge the sounds of joyful voices since they are the only parameters determining his success.

The music and poems never leave the screen. Therefore, the puppeteer must know how to read poetry well. He should also know Turkish music and must be capable of singing folk songs. Like other artists, a Karagöz puppeteer must know how to manipulate other puppets. If required, he could act as storyteller, act on improvisations and even on low comedy. Karagöz

Külhanbeyi (Rounder)
is the ignition spark that lies in the heart of real artists from their childhood.

**Training of Puppeteers**

There has never been a school or a course for training a new puppeteer, or anyone to train a puppeteer. An apprenticeship system is needed, or a puppeteer can teach himself by watching other puppeteers closely.

If a family does not approve of their son’s participation in Karagöz then that child or young man will not be able to achieve his goals easily. As the livelihood of the traditional theatre artists were difficult, families always urged their children to opt for stable professions. Many skilful children who wished to become puppeteers by watching masters were thrashed by their fathers. Many left home or were kicked out by their frustrated fathers.

Traditional theatre did not require a proper education or literacy in order to become a Karagöz puppeteer. But without being apprentice of a master no one could learn this art. It was difficult to enter a show group too.

Begging the master puppeteers for a job was usually a futile attempt, as the puppeteers did not maintain premises for shows, and almost all of them did side jobs to supplement their earnings. However, there was a demand for newcomers, so some could get the chance to find an errand job with masters. Yet, prosperity was not guaranteed, even to successful puppeteers.

In the past, a complete Karagöz team would consist of a porter, an apprentice, an assistant and the master. The apprentice had to wait many years before proving himself in the eye of his master. When he kissed the hand of his master, the master would award him a set of figures. This would take
place during a ceremony made in the presence of other master puppeteers.

**Puppeteers’ Organization**

Long before the very first municipality in the world, in Istanbul, shops, businesses, and artisans were regulated. There was an association for every branch of business. The associations were called guilds.

Every Karagöz puppeteer was associated with a guild and every guild had a board of directors.
Without becoming a member of this organization it was impossible to start a business or to perform an art. Like all the others, Karagöz puppeteers paid fees to the guild.

The duty of this organization was to make inspections, evaluate complaints and regulate works, such as opening a business place or becoming master in a profession. Every business or artisan branch used to gather once a year in a recreation spot in Istanbul. On the appointed day for Karagöz puppeteers, artists, assistants, and their families gathered. They pitched tents for each family and cooked food in large caldrons and distributed them to the tents. Musicians and wrestlers were also called to entertain people. All the expenses were paid by the guild.

The most exciting event during these festivities was called the loincloth girding ceremony. An assistant could be promoted to a higher class, if he performed well. If an assistant was given the right to become a master, then the senior master used to tie a loincloth around the waist of his junior and a letter of approbation granting the licence to perform shows was awarded. Besides this, the master would give his junior a set of Karagöz manipulating tools.

Another duty of the guilds was to inquire about complaints. They could also inquire about the work ethics and endorse punishments even without receiving complaints. In case of the death of a puppeteer, charity aid was offered to his bereaved family.

This assembly of the guild in the recreation spot would gather once a year and continue for a week.

These disciplined operations and regulated system of serving is necessary even today to ensure the quality of Karagöz shows.
Puppeteers

Karagöz is not an easy and simple art. It is a peculiar, national and difficult theatre show. Those puppeteers who can handle this hardship must know how to endure. As the puppeteers did not write their memoirs and no one mentioned them in their writings, we do not know the names of many Karagöz puppeteers. In the Ottoman army there were many players of folk theatre and Karagöz puppeteers but they were engaged in battles and most of them did not return, while some who returned did not continue Karagöz plays. Other than that, conflagrations in Istanbul caused the destruction of a lot of information and things about this art and its artists.

Known and unknown heroes of the folk theatre were obliged to find jobs in other fields in order to maintain their livelihoods. Therefore, they got nicknames from their respective professions: Ahmet the Candy Maker, Rıza the Captain, Cemil the Tinmaker. Some of them died in poverty. Most of them did not even have a proper education. They all spent years learning this profession from their masters. Some of these talented masters were also scriptwriters of their plays; they made their own figures and developed their own shows.

Ultimately, the Karagöz puppeteer profession is a success story of world shadow theatre despite having no school and promising no bright future to those who wished to take part in it. In this one-man show, a single person mimics all the characters, even animals.

Hayalî Küçük Ali

Every nation where shadow theatre is popular might have its own popular puppeteers. Likewise, the most popular puppeteer of the Turkish shadow
theatre was Hayali Küçük Ali. He is also known as the greatest developer of Karagöz shows.

He was not from the Ottoman but from the Republican period. He was a lucky man and was protected by public funds. He used every opportunity to promote and develop Karagöz shows.

Küçük Ali was born in 1886 and by the age of 14 he manipulated his first Karagöz. He fought in the First World War and worked as a civil servant. His real name was Mehmet Muhittin Sevilen. He had learnt Karagöz at the age of eight from master puppeteers of the time. He played ortaoyunu and he was a meddah, too. He had a nice mellifluous voice, fitting for the shows, and was a talented mimic.

He performed in the presence of Atatürk, the founder of Turkish Republic, and also made figures. Küçük Ali wrote plays which furnished us with information and he also published classical Karagöz texts. The major reason why he became so successful in his puppetry was his vast knowledge of music and folk culture.

He dubbed Karagöz in the first-ever radio transmissions in Turkey. His frequent appearances in the shows and during Ramadans made him famous. Later, Community Centres (Halkevleri) became popular and he was able to perform his shows in these premises too. His radio broadcasts lasted for 25 years.

Küçük Ali, whose artistic life continued until he was 70 years old, taught his son making figures and one of his grandsons manipulating Karagöz. Another grandson, Tuncay Tanboğa learnt how to make figures and the manipulation of Karagöz from him. Küçük Ali served Karagöz until his death in 1974.
What is Figuration?

We call the apparatus wielded in the shadow theatre and the materials used as shadow puppetry. It can be either coloured or black and white. It is flat and made of metal, wood or plastic boards. Though it is permitted to use cardboard, currently in Asia especially tanned hides are preferred.

The figures can be motionless, partly moveable or animated. Some of them can also be perforated. Internationally they are called figures, but for Turkish figures, the specially-given name is \textit{tasvir}. These \textit{tasvirs} can be animated, multi-coloured or motionless. The motionless \textit{tasvirs} are the ones wedged on the curtain as “décor”, e.g., Karagöz’s house, caïque, a vase with flowers, public bath, fountain or tree.

When figures leave the screen they move backwards. Some puppeteers have built hinged figures that can turn to both sides but since their production and usage is difficult, they have not become common.

The heights of the figures are designed according to the height of the curtain. As a general rule, the sizes of all the figures correspond to Karagöz’s size which is 34 or 37cm.

The type of animal skin used in Karagöz figures is generally camel hide. Since the camel is a desert animal, it endures hot environments. Therefore, its tanned hide does not get curled up in the heat. Besides, it has a lighter colour and transparency. But it is hard to obtain and might be expensive. As well as camel hide, calf leather is also used.

Raw hide is processed in two steps. First, both its sides are cleaned by passing it through chemical
and mechanical processes. Next, fat, hair and dirt are brushed off. Then it is thinned down according to the desired fineness, and dried by stretching. Further, to use this hide in shadow theatre other processes are needed to make it transparent and thick. The prepared sheet is called parchment.

The figure-maker cuts this parchment into pieces. The leather must be straight. Then the figure-maker puts the template of the desired figure onto the hide and plots the figure. This is called a mould.

The figure-maker then removes this figure from the hide. He makes holes as needed and cleans up. Next is the process of painting. In the past, figure-makers preferred the vegetable dyes used in the rug business as these figures had a better appearance and were discoloured. In our time, there are still some figure-makers who use their own vegetable dyes. After the dye dries, the figure-maker makes holes for the rods and then binds the joints.

In old Istanbul, corner stores used to sell Karagöz figures for children made out of cardboard. But they easily wore out. In 1982, plastic figures were produced for the first time by the writer of this book who manipulated them. Their sizes were larger and they had more joints and pieces. Therefore, they were much more mobile figures. It is not appropriate to make changes to the moulds and colours of commonly used figures. There is not an exact number for the figures produced, but we can easily say that hundreds exist.
Figure Moulds

Mould-making is an important task in the figure-making and as relevant as the figures in Karagöz shows. The moulds are necessary in order to keep the standard of the classical figures. In due course, deformation might occur as figures are copied from one mould to another. Some untalented figure-makers also might damage the continuity of moulds.

If not articulated in the mould drawing, there is only a one-piece figure. If articulated, the pieces are separated from each other. Some moulds indicate the colours or paint in respective colours to be used. Generally they make these drawings on a piece of white paper and keep them in a dossier.

The mould is a drawing technique of entire parts of the figure whether articulated or not. Before making a new figure it is necessary to prepare a mould. Somewhere on the mould written details are given about the figure. Moulds without joints can be for inanimate objects or even living things.

Since characters are copied from the real life of Istanbul, figure-makers are careful about keeping true to their original. They work meticulously, thus differences in vernacular features can be found. For example an Armenian from Istanbul, Kayseri or Van can be recognized in the figures, in facial expression, beard and moustache.

In the past, figure-makers drew figure moulds on the transparent and fine papers with pencil. Thus, they could easily transfer the images onto a hide. In due time these materials and works have become obsolete.

Farhad
When re-making the moulds or imposing on the hide the contours become deformed and these deformations get bigger in time. The least deformed contours are the faces and beards of the two friends.

**Showpiece**

The showpiece is the common name for a group of figures. This term is used for inanimate, still, and inarticulate figures. The showpiece can also be a figure but not every figure is a showpiece. In the moulds and figures of the showpieces there are no standards.

We can divide showpieces into two categories. The first category covers the opening showpieces which are minority in number. Just before the beginning of the show, they are displayed on the curtain and illuminated. As the show begins, the puppeteer blows a whistle called *nâreke* and with a particular movement he withdraws this showpiece from the screen. The purpose of these showpieces is to amuse the spectators before the beginning of the show. The most commonly used one is a vase with flowers. There can also be a boat, a fountain or a lemon tree. The image on it is not associated with the theme itself but it might carry a special meaning depending on the theme.

The second category consists of those showpieces which are used as décor on the screen. They are usually animated or still figures. They are directly associated with the play. Therefore, in every play, these showpieces can change or they can be used in more than one show. For example, a mountain is
used for the ‘Shirin and Farhad’ play. The residential house of Karagöz can be on the screen of every play. The image of a witch is also unarticulated and still as a whole, but since it represents a witch it is not considered as a showpiece. In the play ‘Bloody Poplar’ a poplar tree is visible in the middle of the screen. It represents a living creature but still it is considered as a showpiece.

Mountains, fountains, public bath houses and bedlams – all these showpieces must be kept erected by leaning them against the screen. For this purpose, there is an extra and unpainted braid which is inserted under the screen. But there is no such thing for a boat.
Cardboards and Plastics

Until recent times, children who wanted to animate Karagöz in their houses could only use cardboard figures, as the hide figures were rare and expensive.

Even today, students who cannot find produced figures in the market try to make their own figures from cardboard. Since they do not know how to make them, they do not succeed in their attempts. As they are unable to impart a transparency to the boards, the figures appear in the curtain as dark shadows only. In old Istanbul, cardboard figures were produced using semi-transparent and thick boards.

There are some tips for making cardboard figures. First of all, a white cardboard with one matt side is needed. On the shiny side, pieces of the figure to be animated are drawn. The pieces are painted with ink or with a felt pen. Then the pieces are cut out and removed. Before joining the joints of the pieces you need a small saucepan or a metal plate. You must now melt pieces of white candle in the saucepan or metal plate. When this concoction starts smelling of burnt fat, hold the coloured cardboard pieces with metal tongs and submerge them into the melted wax. Now, remove the pieces and dry them. You should notice that melted wax gives out smoke and a bad odour; therefore, you should do this outdoors or on a balcony.

The pieces, which were soaked in the melted wax, get a transparent sheen and become stronger. After cleaning up the mess you can join the joints by inserting a fine wire or thread into the joints and binding them on either side.

Inserting the figures onto rods thicker than a pencil requires a special technique. Just figure out how to do it and find out for yourself. But do not forget the cardboard figure’s frail nature! Then perhaps you can use thumbtacks.
The following is another method of figure-making: First of all you must find transparent plastic boards 0.3-0.5 mm thick. You can get them either from department stores or you can make them yourself using an x-ray film. You can even use the wrappings of shirt boxes.

As in cardboard figure-making, first of all you must transfer the pieces separated from their joints onto the transparent board. In order to start painting them, you must cut out the pieces. Use glass paint to paint them. You should do this step in open air and in the shade. After drying the paint, colour another layer. Take care to clean your brush and dry it well during the painting process. You will need two brushes, one fine and one thick. Paint all inner drawings and the black outlines with the fine brush. Take care while painting classical characters, especially Karagöz and Hacivat, that the colours are not changed.

After painting, cut out the pieces from the board using scissors or a knife and cut the ragged edges. As with the cardboard figures, the joint holes must be put on top of each other and joined with a thread or a fine wire, and then tied on both sides.

The biggest difference and difficulty with using plastic figures is connecting the slab with the rod. Amateurs can manage it with a thumbtack, but for a stronger figure you can use a wire bent into a U-shape. To do this, you can pass the wire through the chest of the figure then tie it to the end of the stick.

**Tools to Use**

In the figure-making you cannot use many different tools. The important thing, however, is not the use of these tools but having the...
talent of drawing and the knowledge of chromatics. Once again, to make a good figure the tools are not so important and if the hide is not tanned in a proper way then in any case your tools will not help you to make a good figure.

You can use simple scissors just to cut the outer lines of a figure without holes, but to connect the joints you need a second tool. This can be a nail with a sharp tip of 2 mm thickness. The set tool is a round wire and when you use it you must hold it in your palm.

A master figure-maker can make a figure just by using a special knife called nevregân. Moreover, instead of using scissors, cutting the outer lines will give better results and to do that you can use the nevregân which clears away the hide and evens up the holes.

To open these holes you can use a special stapler. Recently, technological advancements like the burning-up process with an electrical device can be used also. Using such tools requires competence, it also adds another dimension to the figures.

The size, curl, and shape of the holes are important. If the hole is too deep or the tips of the lines are very close to each other, then you can expect sagging in the hide and enlargement of the holes while working on the figure.

The soft slab of wood where the hide is processed is so fragile that if necessary attention is not given then you can stab the perforator deeper than required into the leather. If the leather is hard and dried, then it can cause the nevregân to slip. Though not considered as tools, broken glass slivers can also be used in hide cleaning.
Chest Owners

Untalented and inexperienced puppeteers with inadequate figures received very much less money and did not get jobs. Some of these poor puppeteers rented figures when they had no choice. They also bought cardboard figures sold in grocery stores as children’s toys and used them in their shows. Certainly, these toys did not look professional on the screen.

However, expert and famous puppeteers used to make figures themselves or order figures from figure-makers. These master puppeteers carried a small chest wherever they went; inside the chest they kept their figures and some tools that they might need. They decided the title of the play just before it started.

*Double-headed Zenne*
Some figure-making enthusiasts made figures for all the shows they performed in. In order to avoid people copying them, they used a special chest for their equipment. Whether the chests were self-made or bought, the owners of the rich figure sets were called chest owners and they were well-known people.

 Whenever a different play was requested, the chest owner could produce it from his chest. So he was able to perform a variety of shows. Masters with chests were proud of their capabilities. The chests of those puppeteers who quitted or died were considered as important collectibles and classified according to the number of plays and figure-makers. These chests would be sold.

 The chest that kept all the figures together had a different name among puppeteers; it was called ‘dream chest’. Unfortunately no such chests remain today. Many of them got burnt in fires, some of them got depleted as their contents were sold after the demise of the puppeteer. Currently, puppeteers do not have such old customs.

 **Being a Figure Collector**

 Collecting items is a useful pursuit. Some people do it for fun, some for curiosity and some to earn money. While some subjects and collections do not carry artistic significance, some are considered priceless.

 There is a big difference between collecting bottles and matchboxes and collecting statuettes, postcards and paintings in particular. Whether made unprofessionally or professionally, collections gain value as they get older.

 So what is the relation of this information to Karagöz? There is a significant relation because
Karagöz figures have international importance and value. This is also true for the figures of countries where shadow theatre exists. In some collections there are figures from various countries.

Collections in the hands of governments cannot be sold but private collections can pass on to other hands in due course. Since Turkey is the place where these figures are produced, figure-makers and individuals usually do not keep collections, and the existing collections are often smuggled out of the country.

In Turkey and abroad, museums, libraries, universities, and institutions that has to do with puppetry keep Karagöz figure collections. Karagöz collectors in Turkey sometimes exhibit their collections during Ramadan.

The most valuable figures in a collection are primarily those made of camel leather and painted with carpet dye (vegetable dye). Additionally, the older the collection, the more valuable it is.

As is usual in other collection subjects, figures can be made to look good by putting them through some special processes. Not every artist knows about this and, thankfully, can do it.

Since some figure-makers are more talented and more enthusiastic, their figures are famous and valuable as well. Only specialists who know about the puppeteers of the past can judge the value, age, and leather quality.

Nobody knows exactly the number of figure collections in the world. Works of some contemporary figure-makers living in Bursa, Ankara, and Istanbul have been purchased, especially by foreign museums.

Turkish institutions that have important figure collections are the Turkish Radio and Television Institution, Yapı Kredi Bank, National Library, Topkapı Palace Museum, Istanbul City (Municipality)

Some collections are renowned by the name of their first owners such as Metin And Collection, Cemalettin Saraçoğlu Collection, Behzat Butak Collection, Kâtip Salih Collection and Hidayet Gülen Collection.

Karagöz figure collections abroad are at the University of Oxford (and some US universities), Pitt Rivers Museum, Horniman Museum (London), Museum für Volkerkund (Hamburg), Volkerkunde Museum (München), Deutschen Ledermuseum (Offenbach), Musée de L’homme (Paris), Theatermuseum (Kiel), International de la Marionette (Lyon), The Plastic Arts Museum (Jerusalem), Institut für Theaterwissenschaft (Köln) and Montreal McGill University (Canada).

Finally, it must be noted that another collection, secondarily significant and valid only for Turkey, is of old Karagöz gramophone records which are 16 rpm records.
Stage and Screen

The dream curtain in Karagöz is a theatre. If there is a stage in the theatre, then there should be a stage in Karagöz too. Previously, this stage was a flowered fabric. In the top centre, there was a mirror, actually a white screen. Gradually, some puppeteers started to use dark velvet for the cloth screen. At the top of this screen, there was an uçkar through which a string was passed. Before starting the show the screen was tied to two nails pinned to the wall on each side.

Inside the mirror and underneath it, there was a wooden shelf and in the middle of this shelf there was a light source called shem’a. The show space was generally in the form of a rectangle. The Karagöz screen was set up on one of the short sides of this rectangle. If possible, the back of the stage would face the wall and in between there was a space for the puppeteer to operate.

The old and simple material was the classical stage. When Karagöz puppeteers began to manipulate hand puppets too, then a need for another stage arose. This stage consisted of a large screen folded in four parts and was made of wood.

In recent times, Karagöz shows have been performed not only in Anatolia but all over the world, therefore folding screens are now inadequate. The stage frames are now made out of section steel and
aluminium pipes. Hence, the front of the stage has been enlarged and the white screen has become bigger. This enlargement means that the stage looks better and is easier to install, dismantle, and move. Performing the puppet shows on a different stage and screen space raised the need for new backgrounds, decors, and new stages.

**Figures and Rods**

The figure and its rods are like the two friends inseparable. The rods used for animating the figures convey the spirit of the puppeteers. The rods give life to the painted pictures on the screen. Karagöz puppeteers manipulate these rods by placing them between their fingers, like playing a piano. These rods add a magical life to the picture and colour the beauty of the dream curtain.

Except for some characters like Chengi and Karagöz, all the characters are animated with a single rod. The rods of Karagöz, Hacivat and Chengi are marked, because they must be easily available every time.

The rods are sharpened on one side like pencils. They are then inserted into the holes in the figures, which open in a special way. This strengthens the outer area.

In order to accomplish this, the tip of the rod is soaked or heated up. The tips become deformed in time and are renewed by sharpening with a knife. This also reduces the length of the stick and leads to a replacement. To keep the rods straight, hard tree wood is used.

Just before the show, an assistant inserts the sticks in the figures and lines them up according to their appearance on the screen. If not inserted properly, the figure can fall off the stick. Such unfortunate occurrences may distract and worry the puppeteer.
If the figure is inserted properly, then it will not fall easily. To insert and remove the figure with one hand, you need to turn the stick. To prevent slippery sticks, they should not be polished and painted. To turn the figures both ways, the inner part of the stick must be specially prepared. In other regional theatres wires are used instead of sticks.

**Light**

The light also denotes the shadows. The magic and the success of the shadow theatre are due to the light. Technology improvements have developed light sources, characteristics of the light and benefits from it. The shadow theatres and at the same time Karagöz have benefited from these developments, which have provided opportunities for its existence. The name of the light source in the Karagöz show is shem’a.

The highlight of the Karagöz play is definitely to amuse people. But, poorly produced figures negatively affect the quality of the show, thus a puppeteer needs light as much as he needs talent.

To show the appearance of the figures on the screen, Karagöz puppeteers use the most developed light source of their time. The most used and the best known light source was the candle. Electricity, on the other hand, offers many more possibilities to every Karagöz puppeteer.

In the dream curtain, a flickering light was acceptable, as a light which did not flicker had not been invented then. The shadows cast by the sticks were accepted as a part of the Karagöz show and there was no way to get rid of this shadow. Their annoying existence for current spectators must also be considered, especially now, when there is a possibility of using colourful lights in the final episode with dance and music. Though the shadows multiply with an increase in the number of light
sources, now we have the means to eradicate these shadows.

In case of electricity blackout during a show, battery-charged light sources can be used. And we can use fluorescent lights to eradicate the shadows.

**Music and Special Effects**

A Karagöz show without poems and music is unthinkable. A particular music is played for each character, according to his/her country or nation. For example, European music is played for
a European character. The Turkish music played is dominantly Turkish classical music, folk music, instrumental melodies and children’s songs. At the end of each show a female dancer appears to entertain the spectators. But, even the Turkish music is in the ‘accent’ of that character. Sometimes it is a humorous song. All the music is played with Turkish instruments.

In the past, if it was required, Karagöz puppeteers brought a group of musicians to their shows. Until recent times, puppeteers used tape players but now they play music from CD players.
Essentially, the puppeteer music in the Karağöz show must be played with tambourines and with nâreke, and the song must be sung by the puppeteer and his aide.

Today’s technology can have unexpected failures, but in such cases the puppeteer and his aide cover the gap without revealing it to the audience. In Karağöz shows the effects must be prepared by the puppeteer himself. A dream show includes effect mimicking. The puppeteer makes the sound of the instruments with his mouth to make the people laugh.

**Nâreke and Tambourine**

Without Karağöz, nâreke and tambourine might exist, but without these two instruments making a Karağöz show is akin to treachery of the Turkish shadow theatre. These two instruments are very important, because jointly and separately they form the indispensable duo for effects and music.

The tambourine might differ in shape but the same instrument is used all over the world. In Karağöz, the tambourine is called dayre and the person who plays it is called dayrezen. The instrument must have five double bells in five places around its loop and a handle between the bells. Its skin must be strained and if it gets slack, it must be heated. The right way to play the tambourine is to hold it in one hand and to keep it upright. To get the right sound the bells should hit against the skin.

Nâreke is a special instrument and the legend says that it was invented just for the Karağöz play. It is a simple instrument, but if you can tune it well then you can get a nice sound which resembles the clarinet. Nâreke is a piece of reed approximately one span and two knuckles long, both its sides are open and an adult person can easily insert his finger into it. On one side, there is a hole about one
finger from the end and this side is closed with a piece of nylon. When one speaks through the hole it yields a vibrating sound, but you cannot play it by blowing.

In the scenes where Karagöz is swooping down to Hacivat from a window, the puppeteer makes a clattering sound with tambourine. In scenes when the swing moves, the puppeteer creates a rhythm pattern. Nâreke can be used in various sound effects like that of a ghost or a humanoid, a cat or a dog, a baby’s cry, sound of an engine, an aeroplane or even a UFO.

Apart from these two instruments, a puppeteer can mimic the sounds, with or without using simple instruments. With coordination his assistants can play them too.

**Dancing**

Till the end of the show, there are poems and music in the Karagöz play, but the dancing takes place only before the finale. Thus, the dream curtain has been acquainted with this art for hundreds of years.

The very first name we encounter on this subject is chengi. Chengi is the general name for ladies
doing folkloric dances. Additionally, the puppeteer might coin a name to that of chengi. In Turkey, this term is used generally for folkloric or professional dancers in real life.

For many years, not many dancers appeared in Karaoğz’s curtain. Therefore, only a few chengi pictures have reached us as figure moulds. In recent years, like real female dancers, nude chengies also started to appear on the Karaoğz curtain. The male dancers in the shows are named köçek, and they exist in real life too. In the past köçeks were not favoured in the dream curtain and until recent times they did not appear on the stage.

In today’s Karaoğz play, this part of the programme is enriched and prolonged. Chengi comes to the stage in the final, but before that other folk dance groups from around the country appear on the stage.

Nowadays, in these parts of the show, a celebrity singer sings popular songs. Even now this part has extended to the international platform with bullfights. Currently, the slow-paced folk dances of the Aegean region and the vibrant folk dances of the Black Sea region are featured on the dream curtain. The dancing part of the Karaoğz show ensures that audiences leave the show with fond memories.

**Improvisation**

Impromptu is an important aspect of art, as it is a verbal and visual art. In Turkish music, the mutual poem duel of minstrels is a tradition. When minstrels play bağlama instrumentally, then they make impromptu poems too.

If the basic characteristic of the Turkish traditional theatre is comedy, then its supporting basic factor is the staging of impromptu shows.
In all the theatre branches other than comedy, especially in the theme plays, improvisation would spoil the show.

This playing system exists in all traditional theatre branches but the hardest is in ortaoyunu, because in this show there must be a large team of players.

Today, in all countries people experiment impromptu shows. In the motherland of impromptu theatre, Turkey, theatre is staged with written text. It is very difficult to enact impromptu in those shows as it requires experience, talent, vernacular language knowledge, expertise in folk literature and native culture. Additionally, in order to use the techniques of impromptu, one should know ordinary people very well.

The impromptu system in traditional theatre pushes the director, prompter, rehearsal, and stage-using techniques partly or completely out of the frame. Impromptu is in fact a meeting ground of original theatre and the genuine theatre player with the audience. But, this can be possible only in comedies.

There must be a difference in meddah, Karagöz, and traditional puppetry, which are one-man shows, with respect to impromptu. Especially in Karagöz, where there is a visual wall between the spectators and the puppeteer, there is a sound connection. A puppeteer gives animation and voice to many characters, as a director he administers his aides and beyond impromptu, he shapes the theme.
Parts of the Karagöz Play

Karagöz is a show that embraces almost all the characteristics of traditional theatre in itself. Therefore, the show took a shape which was suitable for the theatre techniques. It has now taken a consistent form:

Part I- Prologue

This part is acted by Hacivat. As we see in Karagöz scripts, Hacivat comes to the stage singing, and then he stands in the middle of the stage and reads a special poem. To start the show, he invites his friend to the stage. Karagöz insistently refuse to come, and then jumps out over Hacivat. After a brief brawl Karagöz remains where he is and drones, while Hacivat runs away.

Part II- Dialogue

This part of the play is called by its special name muhâveren. It starts with the return of Hacivat. After pre-dialogue they talk on a subject but they cannot agree on a single case. From time to time, Karagöz’s spouse intervenes in the conversations as a voice-over from her house.

Part III- Proceeding

In the Ottoman Turkish, this part is called fasıl. The title of the show is debated here. Now all the characters in the play appear on the stage.

Part IV- Final

In the previous part, the matter is concluded. The duo exchanges their final words. A dancer comes for a short dance, after that the two friends do the finale and leave after greeting the audience.

Dialogue

Dialogue is conversation between two people. In the dream curtain it gains another dimension
between Karagöz and Hacivat. These conversations take place in a stressful atmosphere and from time to time it gets tougher. The two friends have conflicting characters; Karagöz is unemployed and uneducated while Hacivat is an educated businessman. Hacivat attempts to civilize his friend and to teach him etiquette while trying to pull him to safety whenever he strays.

Dialogue is the never-changing part of the show. The private talks between the two friends are the best loved parts of the show. Since the prologue part of the show prepares the spectators for the dialogue, the two friends act freely on the stage. Although they have opposite characters, they cannot leave each other and they treat each other very badly. Their sweet dialogue and brawls entertain people. In real life we can find friendships like that of Karagöz and Hacivat.

The dialogues encompass important properties too. They are independent of the terms of the themes and therefore only some of them can be used in the shows. To make them comprehensible, the introduction and the final parts must be included at the beginning and the end of the dialogue.

An expert puppeteer can prolong the parts of the two friends and with an extra part he can make it as long as the normal show. In some shows, some special dialogues other than this part can be added so that the duration can be extended.

Finally, a dialogue can be either with or without a theme. If a theme is written, then the dialogue must include an entry and a final part. Some dialogues are so popular that everyone, from children to adults, admires them. Even just reading the words can entertain the audience.

Dialogues can be separated into two categories as classical and new, but no one can count the exact
number of dialogues. Some of the dialogue names are ‘Wisdom, Riddle, Comes and Goes, Musical, Dream, Name Changing, My Father Died, Money Deposit, Reputation, Advice, Fake Patient, Lie’.

In some of these dialogues, Karagöz’s wife is also involved, but she never appears and only talks from her house. The dialogue of ‘Comes and Goes’ is not just a single one. This is a general definition. In these dialogues no particular subject is debated. According to the name of the dialogue, one of the friends enters the stage and says whatever he wants to and then he leaves. Then the other friend enters the stage, answers and leaves. This goes on. The dialogues are uttered in the style of poems.

In the ‘Comes and Goes’ dialogues, as in the written plays, the language contains a little Ottoman style. As Karagöz does not comprehend the sophisticated words, he mimics them with his concocted sounds and spectators laugh at his plight. Dream dialogue is a general term too. Under this title, different dreams are told as if they are real. Nowadays, puppeteers write many new dialogues and develop the old dialogues.

**Dialogue Extracts**

*Fake Patient*

On the way home or on his way to work, Hacivat always passes Karagöz’s house. Seeing this as an opportunity to have a chat with his old friend, he calls on Karagöz.
One day, again, he is near Karagöz’s door. He hails his friend, but as usual he does not get an answer. This is Karagöz’s cunning plan. Hacivat believes that Karagöz is sick and thinks that he must pay him a visit, but he does not want to go empty-handed. Karagöz hears what Hacivat says to himself and immediately asks his wife to spread a bed for him and he lies in the bed.

Hacivat, meanwhile, continues to grumble. He thinks that an orange will not be enough and that with the fruit he must also buy a sweet. On hearing that, Karagöz covers himself with another quilt. Hacivat thinks a sick man will need hot soup too, and then he must buy some rice as well. Hearing all this, Karagöz keeps on covering himself with more quilts. When his wife complains, Karagöz explains to her that he is about to become sick, but there is nothing wrong with him.

Hacivat decides that in order to cook and heat the food he will need wood and coal so he must buy them too and he must also bring a doctor. Karagöz’s wife rebels against her husband’s demand for quilts as there are no more quilts left to cover him with.

After a while, Hacivat assumes that his ignorant mate will make wrong use of all these things and will harm himself. Furthermore, he remembers that he had seen him looking healthy yesterday. “And now how can he be so sick?” he asks himself. He is suspicious and gives up bringing all these gifts. Meanwhile Karagöz hears this conversation Hacivat was having with himself and he removes his quilts one by one. Finally he rages, and jumps out over Hacivat from his window.

Dream

Once again Hacivat stops by Karagöz’s house. Today he has a little more time and he wishes to chat with his friend. Karagöz does not want to chat because he is vexed at something and he starts explaining.
Karagöz has once again quarrelled with his wife. She wants to buy a dress to wear to the wedding ceremony of their neighbours but Karagöz was broke as usual. He is desperate, he goes out and while strolling he meets a miserable man sitting somewhere. Seeing the man smoking, Karagöz covets it and the man lets Karagöz smoke a few puffs.

Soon after that a storm starts. The storm is so powerful that it makes Karagöz fly up in the air and lands him in a field. Karagöz realizes that he is inside a big well, but as he was hooked onto a fig tree he had not fallen down into the well.

Meanwhile, Hacivat anxiously and sadly listens to his friend. Sometimes he gives advice and sometimes he does not understand and asks questions.

Karagöz goes on speaking. He rescues himself by holding onto a bucket used for pulling water from the well. Just before he is about to run away he notices a gardener carrying a big knife in his hand for cutting and collecting cabbages. Karagöz is scared of being accused of stealing and therefore hides himself inside a large cabbage.

His plight does not end here as the gardener cuts off the cabbage inside which Karagöz is sitting and sends it to the marketplace. Thus, Karagöz goes to a vegetable seller and then to the house of the buyer and then to the kitchen. The water boils inside a large cauldron. While Karagöz tries to sneak out of the house, a cook comes and puts him inside the cauldron.
Frightened, Karagöz opens his eyes and finds himself still sitting. The man who had been smoking had gone away. Karagöz realizes that he had unwittingly smoked a drug-filled cigarette and he was zonked out sleeping there.

Some of the dream dialogues similar to this, Karagöz falls off his bed. However, Hacivat listens to these dreams thinking they are real but in the end he understands and gets angry with his friend.

Name Changing

As in each dialogue, Hacivat once again stops by his friend’s house and calls him out. As he disturbed Karagöz by calling him out, he (jokingly) fights with him. At the end of the fighting Karagöz remains on the floor and Hacivat (out of the screen) disappears.

Soon Hacivat returns and finds Karagöz standing. They make peace and start to talk. Meanwhile, Karagöz remembers his name and starts complaining about his name. He wants to change his name because wherever he says his name, people are amazed. The children and adults who like him flock to the place where he is to see him. The only remedy to get rid of this annoying situation is to change his name.

Hacivat accepts this offer but he also wants to change his own name. He finds a name for himself: Deniz (sea) and for his friend he finds the name ‘broomstick’. Karagöz rejects this idea and demands a change in their names. Hacivat accepts this demand.
Hacivat offers to repeat all the names they both remember so that they can memorize all the names easily. They decide to sing out the names. Karagöz likes this idea.

As they dance and sing they repeat the names together. When they come to their own names Karagöz says Hacivat’s name as “Broomstick Hacivat!” and Hacivat says Karagöz’s name as “Sea Karagöz!

Karagöz loves this name-repeating game and absorbs himself only with the name so that he replies to all the questions Hacivat asks with the adopted name. When Hacivat asks “What does your mother eat? What does your father eat?” Karagöz answers to all of them: “Broomstick Hacivat!”

After a while Hacivat asks Karagöz, “What do you eat?” and Karagöz again replies, “Broomstick Hacivat!” Then Karagöz realizes that his friend is making fun of him and he gets angry again. “You’re shameless!” he accuses. “You made me sing and you made all of us eat broomsticks!” He hits Hacivat, and Hacivat again disappears.
The Show is the Testing Ground

The distance between the dream curtain and the first-time spectators is very important, but even more important is the enjoyment of the spectators. For the puppeteer, each show is like a new examination.

The examination board is the crowd: the jury has chosen itself. The puppeteer is not aware of the examination. He might not be noticing it, but after years he realizes that these examinations were the basis of his failures or successes.

To enter this examination, first of all the puppeteer should learn the differences between a nice display and a nice show. In a nice display, there is only backstage and the dream curtain but in a nice show, there are also the locality, the spectators and reality. The show is formed on the basis of the reality and beauty. The show does not forgive mistakes and failures.

The first potential mistake for the Karagöz show is an improper indoor lighting, which must be dimmed rightly. However, even if the indoor lights are not dimmed properly, it is not considered as the puppeteer’s mistake because the puppeteer can interact with the audience and can get positive results. If the show is the examination ground, then is it limited to the indoor lighting only? The quality of the stage and the outer appearance of the stage are also important issues for the show.

When we look at the matter from different perspectives, we can find solutions. In this examination, the factors of the puppeteer, location, spectators, and organisers seem simple. But if children bustle in front of the stage during the show then the puppeteer is definitely disturbed.
The Show Template

In every branch of traditional Turkish theatre – although each is different from another – there is a show template. Show templates are larger than the play’s screen.

As with the screen, the show template has been formed by the accumulation of age-long experiences. They provide a convenience for the puppeteer and his aide since they can learn and initiate the things which they should perform.

There is no break in the show. It starts and ends. But if it is long, upon request, it can have an interval.

The show template is like a screen script of a movie director but unwritten. Actually a written show template would be useful for new puppeteers. For example, in the written texts you cannot find information about the characters’ ways of entering onto the stage.

When everything is ready for the show, the showpiece is on the screen but the curtain is kept dark. Just before the beginning of the show the screen light is turned on.

Chengi
When the show starts a small bell rings three times and with the bell the indoor light is dimmed. With the blowing of *nâreke* (a special whistle), the showpiece is removed from the screen. With the singing of a song, Hacivat enters the screen and proceeds. His paces must match the rhythm of the song.

Hacivat stays in the middle. He reads his special poem. He expresses his wishes and with an introduction he calls his friend. Karagöz does not want to come. Hacivat insists with a song, “Oh, for some amusement!” Karagöz rages and jumps over his friend from the window.

They fight and as they wrestle they push each other to either side. In this scene, the figures must not hit each other and the tambourine can be used freely. In the end, Karagöz is defeated and licks the dust. Hacivat flees. Karagöz whimpers for a while, frets and though strained, he stands up. Thus the introduction ends.

When Hacivat returns the dialogue part starts. The two friends initiate a talk on any subject. Karagöz cannot help hitting Hacivat occasionally. Sometimes, Karagöz’s wife joins the conversation as only a voice. In the end Hacivat cannot tolerate the bad temper of his friend and goes out. When Karagöz is left alone he sings, “If you want to go, then you go! I am not tied here… I’ll go home and sit in my window and watch what’s going on in the world!” and he goes home. Thus the dialogue ends here. However, if the show is to be finished, then at the end of the dialogue, the duo must settle the matter amicably.

Usually the show goes on and puppeteer initiates the actual ‘themed’ and ‘staffed’ part without any delay. Many different characters appear in this part and each of them comes with one musical work. This act can take one to three minutes.
The show template must show the basic theme, and the plan is not changed during the show. Therefore, what characters appear in this part and with what music they enter is not important as far as this part is concerned. But, as previously mentioned, this treat can be important for new plays. The music must be written so that the aides can play their instruments accordingly. Where the tambourine and nareke will be played must also be indicated.

This show template can be a writing plan for those who are going to write a new Karagöz text. If we consider the play as a body, then the planning can be considered as a skeleton.

**Repertoire**

In all branches of the theatre, the repertoire is a very important issue. It denotes the seriousness, impoverishment, richness, and diversity of that discipline.

For the branches of Turkish traditional theatre, repertoire is very important. The repertoire issue has not been researched separately since Karagöz is accused of being a simple, museum-piece and just a Ramadan entertainment. The only research that has been done was limited to an index of the staged plays. This is important but we should also know the repertoires of each branch in the context of the whole theatre.

Being a part of this whole picture, Turkish shadow theatre owns tremendous resources. This is the speciality easily reflecting dreams on a screen.

In respect of its repertoire, Karagöz is one of the most resourceful branches of theatre. The most important aspect of Karagöz and other traditional puppetry is the difficulty of having a single manipulator. However, puppeteers often found themselves required to confront this difficulty as,
in order to make a contract with a coffee-house, a puppeteer had to perform 28 different shows. This repertoire progressed in due course and finally a classical repertoire was collected. Today we call them old-style plays.

As far as a puppeteer is concerned, a new show meant a new set of figures and this was not so easy to obtain. Therefore, many puppeteers started hiring their figures.

The plays which are in the general repertoire of the Karagöz show are varied because any subject in Karagöz can amuse people in a successful show. In order to achieve this, the puppeteer must be an experienced master.

Stories, legends, epics, and also novels and theatrical works can be played on the screen. The internationally-known love story of ‘Layla and Majnun’ can turn into an unforgettable comedy on the Karagöz screen. But, it is not possible to classify plays as just old style and new style plays.

Some of the old style plays are ‘Silly Watchman, Raid, Bathhouse, Bloody Poplar, Fake Bride, Bedlam, Acrobats, Fountain, Circumcision. and Poesy’.

Some of the new style plays are ‘Cookery, Partners, Cacique, Fire, Doctor, Fake Cat, Photographer, Sorcery, Lady with Dagger, and Circumcision of Karagöz’. Some plays have been renamed several times.

Among some contemporary plays are ,Karagöz the Iceman, Karagöz the Mayor, Karagöz the Journalist, Karagöz the Captain, Karagöz in Traffic, Karagöz in the Dance Hall, Karagöz the Lorry Driver, Karagöz on Aeroplane, Karagöz Casting His Vote in Elections, and ‘Karagöz the Village Headman’.

There are other factors in developing and enriching the repertoire. For example, puppeteers living in Istanbul were forced to create different plays if they aspired to become famous puppeteers.
In the course of time, new plays started to arise due to social developments and these plays became a part of the repertoire, e.g., the swing play. Every puppeteer can play it in his own way. Therefore, the repertoire issue in Turkish traditional theatre is different from other shadow and puppet plays.

Another practice must be pointed out here: An old-style play can be presented as a fresh, new-style play to the spectators of the day. By altering characters and the flow of the play, puppeteers can produce and perform new plays. Swing and cacique are two examples of such plays. Old-style plays are also called the ‘classical repertoire’.

Some plays which were written later and not classified as anonymous can be considered as new plays too. Puppeteers are updating those plays before they play them.

As in plays with scripts, in Karagöz show there can be favourite plays. The same play can be performed by different puppeteers on the same occasion, as it can have both different spectators and different plays. The best examples of them are swing and cacique.

No neighbourhood coffee-house features a Karagöz every evening anymore. Therefore, today’s puppeteers are not required to maintain 28 plays. Since spectators have different wants in today’s Ramadan festivities, there is no need to maintain such a rich repertoire.

**Characters**

Each human figure appearing on the Karagöz screen is called character. Some of these characters can be seen in almost every play and some of them in only a few plays.
There is no answer to the question “How many Karagöz plays and how many figures are there?” Likewise, we cannot answer the question “How many characters are there in the shows?”

There are characters which have been forgotten or there are many characters which were privately made then discarded. Many new characters were developed together with new plays and most of the old ones were left in oblivion. There will always be new plays and new characters. So there are hundreds of characters to whom new ones will be added.

These hundreds of characters are the players of the Karagöz theatre on the dream curtain. For an easy and correct evaluation of both plays and players they need to be classified. This has already been done. The general classification turns up as character classification, but these opinions are arrived at from different angles.

The simplest and most general classification is made with two groups, which are ‘women and children’ and ‘men’.

In another general classification, the characters are divided into ‘people of Istanbul’, ‘people of the Empire’ and ‘people coming from abroad.

Another classification is according to the characters’ appearance on the screen. This is the group of all the characters, including Karagöz and Hacivat, who appear in every show. They speak Turkish with Istanbul accent. The best known characters are Toughie, who helps to conclude the show with a happy ending; Chengi (dancing girl) who brings happiness in the end, Bebe Ruhi (Dwarf), and Çelebi (gentleman).
Some characters do not appear in every play but they are staged in many plays. They represent some regions with their accents. For example, some are Arabs, Jews, Armenians, Greeks, those from the Black Sea, Persians, immigrants and Albanians.

Not that many, but some characters appear only in some plays within the repertoire and they are not well-known because they are associated only within a particular theme, for example the internationally-known love story of ‘Layla and Majnun’.

Some of characters in this group are characters who are not completely healthy. They stammer or are alcoholics, drug addicts, mentally retarded or handicapped. However, these characters appear on the screen impartially and realistically. They are not humiliated and are treated as the realities of the dream curtain.

Another view in the classification of characters is that, even in a dream, the curtain is a neighbourhood. There are some who reside there and there are some who come there from outside. Thus, the characters can be sorted into two main groups.

The dream curtain and Kuşteri Square once were the Ottoman neighbourhood, but after the establishment of the Republic, when the Ottoman Empire became history, the same zone turned into Istanbul neighbourhood. As it was unable to become a Republican district, it remained as the Istanbul neighbourhood but new characters of the Republican society entered the dream curtain and they are classified accordingly.

Hacivat
Synopsis of Some Plays

Bloody Nigâr

This is a classical play. Since it is a well-known and popular play, it has been adapted onto the stage as well as featured as a motion picture, but the movie is for adults only.

A Çelebi (a kind, rich and educated man), who is a playboy gentleman, depletes the money of the ladies Salkım İnci and Bloody Nigâr (a pert and quarrelsome woman), and after that he vanishes. One day they meet each other. They cannot make a deal and they deceive him. They take him to their house, and once they arrive at their house, they beat him. They strip off his clothes and throw him onto the street.

Karağöz notices the plight of Çelebi and tries to get back his clothes. He enters the house and hails the women. The women compliment him and take him home. First they beat him and then throw him naked onto the street. Hacivat comes and after seeing what happened to Karağöz enters and asks for the clothes, but after soon he also finds himself stripped on the street.

Later, some others also experience the same thing. Meanwhile, a toughie, Tuzsuz Deli Bekir (Bekir the Unsalted Sane) arrives and the ladies are intimidated by him and cannot refuse him for the clothes. To celebrate this happy end, Güllü, a dancer girl, comes and starts dancing.

Reverse Marriage

Çelebi’s brother Matiz, a toughie, begins to consume excessive alcohol. Çelebi feels sorry for his brother and asks Hacivat for help. He also pays him some money.

But no family will consider such a man as a prospective husband for their daughter. Hacivat begs Karağöz to arrange a bride. Karağöz refuses,
but when he learns that he will get money, he accepts.

Meanwhile, Matiz is persuaded to marry. When they go to see the girl on his behalf, they see Karagöz disguised as the bride-to-be. They like her and put on a ring. Chengi (a dancing girl is called by this name) comes and they are entertained.

After everyone leaves, an imam (a Muslim clergyman) arrives for the wedding. Some neighbours are present as witnesses.

After performing the marriage ceremony, Matiz and Karagöz remain alone. When Matiz reveals the face of Karagöz and sees him, he is enraged and attempts to attack him. But since he is drunk, Karagöz beats him.

When Matiz realises his plight, he apologizes and promises not to drink anymore.

The Witches
Çelebi and his sweetheart Zenne quarrel for no reason. Their mothers are witches. First, Zenne’s mother changes Çelebi’s appearance and when Karagöz sees him, he derides. When Zenne sees
what happens, she feels sorry for her boyfriend. So Zenne begs her mother to return Çelebi back to his former self and she does so. The two lovers apologize, kiss, and make up.

When, the other witch sees Karagöz mocking her son, she turns Karagöz into a donkey and when Hacivat arrives to save Karagöz, she turns him into a goat.

When the witch disappears, the two friends pray and once again they return to their own human shape.

**Karagöz as Watchman**

Zenne is a woman who led an immoral life. She frequently moved from one house to another. Now, she moves to the house where Hacivat is also residing. Bekir the Sane (toughie) is Zenne’s boyfriend and he strolls around the house. Karagöz is not fond of him and hits him. Seeing that he is fearless, the toughie likes Karagöz. He makes him a watchman in Zenne’s house.

Karagöz starts to watch the house. Meanwhile, Zenne leaves the house, she meets Çelebi, whom she knew previously, and invites him to her house. Çelebi promises to come later and Zenne gives him a password before entering the house. The password is the word ‘nail’. Karagöz eavesdrops on this conversation.

After Çelebi and Zenne go away, Karagöz attempts to enter the house. He utters the password but he says a wrong word and cannot go inside. He continues to watch and, as he watches, Tiryaki (drug addict) and Bebe Ruhi (spoiled dwarf) come. Zenne tells them the password.

Karagöz cannot say the password in a proper way and therefore he cannot enter and he gives up his attempts. He knocks the door and talks to Zenne. He explains what he has seen and he tells her that
he will tell what he knows to the toughie. To silence him, Zenne takes him inside her house.

The other men inside the house go on drinking and having fun. Then, the toughie (Bekir the Sane) forces the door open and enters. Zenne hides Karagöz with the fowls and others inside the closet. The toughie understands what’s going on and he brings out all of them but he is surprised when he sees Karagöz wearing a watchman uniform. He dumps all of them onto the street.

Karagöz goes around and informs people that toughie is in Zenne’s house and all the neighbours gather in front of the house.

In the end they drive out toughie from the house and beat him.

**Dream Curtain**

There is not just one name for the place where the Turkish shadow theatre plays are performed
with a dark framed white cloth. Each name has a different reason and meaning.

In order to pay respect to the person who started this show, it is also named Küşteri Square. This name also reminds us of its association with Sufism and that art is related to faith.

Another name for the screen is ‘mirror’. It means that these shows reflect ordinary people, all the stories and characters are derived from the people. This mirror is actually unbiased and neutral. It reflects the beauty, right things, and good things together with ugliness, wrong things, and bad things in a way everyone will laugh at and enjoy. Besides, in order to complete its job it gives advice and displays tragedies.

For the white curtain where the shows are realized, the latest term used in conversations, writings, and poems is the dream curtain.

After watching a movie, or a TV programme, they all become a dream but with the existing materials, we can watch them anytime we want. When a Karagöz show ends, it becomes a dream and remains as a dream.

There is something else. All the shows taking place within this curtain are completed with the imagination of the spectators. This situation is not only true for the images, but also for the voices and the conversations. Whatever is missing will be completed in the minds of the spectators, and this attribute makes it possible for the Karagöz play to develop its repertoire and show techniques.

The peculiarity of the dream curtain is also reflected in its figure names and pictures according to the show themes like in the plays ‘Bloody Poplar, Witches and Magic’.

Yahudi (Jewish)
In the dialogue taking place between Karagöz and Hacivat, which is staged before the actual show, there is no image related to the dream. Karagöz is unemployed and jobless, and he dreams, but it is not necessary to show images regarding these dreams.

In the curtain of dreams, it is not required to show all the fantastic creatures. For example, the abduction of Karagöz by a UFO landing in front of his house is just a dream for him.

**Duration of the Show**

Karagöz always denotes a show. Whatever the subject, the ultimate purpose is to display the shadows on the curtain. The most important issue in the show is duration.

There is no definite duration for any show and there cannot be. The main reason for this is the impromptu nature of the show. Certainly, a puppeteer himself estimates a certain time but it is not precise and even if it is, it cannot be implemented.

Even, when the puppeteer is given freedom in this area, a certain duration period arises according to his experience, ability, knowledge, and culture. The important duration is the duration ordered by the show owner. If the duration is specified, the puppeteers must comply with it. If necessary, he cuts off characters and abridges conversations but with the opportunity provided by improvisation he handles the theme all over again.

If the given duration is not enough to cover the entire show,
then he extends the final part, the dancing part and develops the dialogue part. However, the most annoying thing for the puppeteer is ordering him to finish his show in such and such a time! If the puppeteer receives such an order, then he will become flustered because during his show he becomes one with the show.

A time-limited show for the puppeteer is a challenging thing. He cannot concentrate on the show and if spectators consist mostly of children, then they distract the puppeteer.

Sometimes, although the duration is known, some shows are cut short. This has to do with the success of the puppeteer (!) If the spectators do not enjoy the show, then they start making a noise and spoil the show.

Looking at today’s shows, the dialogue part can take about twenty minutes and the actual themed play can take about thirty minutes. If only the dialogue part is staged separately, then it can take about thirty minutes because at the end of the dialogue there will be a dancing part.

Let’s give an example regarding the dialogue and duration by relating a case that took place in the past which involved the power of a Karagöz puppeteer in the art of improvisation:

During the reign of Selim III, a puppeteer, Hafız of Kasımpaşa, makes an agreement to stage a show for a circumcision ceremony in Beylerbeyi but he forgets to tell this to his assistants.

When the time comes, he goes to the waterside mansion thinking that his assistants have already
prepared everything. But, when he arrives he cannot find his aide. If he goes back and then returns, he will be delayed. He goes to a shop and buys a bedsheets and Karagöz and Hacivat figures without telling anyone.

The time comes and the show begins. As Karagöz and Hacivat start talking with each other, the spectators start to laugh and this happy mood goes on for a long time.

Nobody notices how quickly time passes but the puppeteer ends the show. His host is enraged and says:

- What do you mean the play has ended? Our deal was for three shows, going on all night till the morning! Now before ending the first one, you want to finish it!

The puppeteer shakes his head and replies:

- Yes sir, what you say is true, but Karagöz is a show of the night!

And he opens the curtains of the house. To the spectators’ amazement they see sunlight, and the embarrassed host congratulates him.

**The Show Team**

Karagöz is manipulated by one puppeteer but there is confusion about this subject. It is true that the dream curtain is animated by one puppeteer only. He animates the figures, and voices them. But he is not alone behind the screen and though he can be alone, he should not be. In recent years we witnessed a tragedy where each friend was manipulated by different puppeteers and we also witnessed another tragedy where some puppeteers initiated shows completely single-handedly. This is impudence to the art, and ignorance and treachery to the Karagöz play. Karagöz is manipulated by one person only, but the assistants wait behind. They set the stage together.
According to the information which reached us from historical sources, the Karagöz team consisted of five people, especially while staging shows in prominent locations. Other than the masters, there are four assistants. One of them is a porter. One is a novice and does chores, one plays the tambourine and the last one helps the master puppeteer in taking and giving the figures used in the screen. The last two assistants also sing the songs.

The main purpose of this task-sharing is to train future puppeteers. This is a long procedure. At the end of this procedure, the master releases his aide after an examination and a ceremony. Those who leave are replaced with new novices and this goes on. But with technological advancements having such team numbers became expensive. Therefore, today the number of assistants is limited to just one or two. Nevertheless, for the convenience of the master, a team should have at least two assistants.

How to Do a Karagöz Show

To become a Karagöz master, one has to start training as a novice in a team. In the field of traditional theatre, there are no schools, and neither is a long-term course available. Therefore, new puppeteers are not able to amend their faults and their flaws remain, probably they will never be able to revise their mistakes. Therefore, we should explain the things that must happen in the shows.

The show is the basic thing, but it must be in integrity with the script. Even if he is a master, the Karagöz puppeteer should revise his repertoire from time to time so that he can memorize comedy techniques and talking styles easily.

The biggest enemy of a puppeteer is smoking, because mimicking different voices strains the throat. Since he frequently needs to cough, his voice is muffled but even if he is not a smoker, a
A glass of water should be kept ready for him.

Just before restarting, the master should do his final checks. Even in an acoustic place, he should not use a microphone because laughing voices will be heard through it. Children’s voices especially will be heard over the microphone. Since this play’s nature requires improvisation, two-way discussion is inevitable.

Actually, in order not to lose the attention of the spectators, the techniques of open theatre and improvisation can be utilized. In particular, Karagöz should question the spectators and if possible he should keep them involved in the play. The puppeteer must never forget the traits of Karagöz and Hacivat.

New puppeteers especially should follow these two rules:

1) While the two friends are talking, especially in dual conversation, spectators must be able to distinguish their voices easily because they cannot see any lip movements. Therefore, one of them must have a high-pitched voice and the other one must have a deep voice. For Karagöz, the most suitable voice is the voice such as one has while coughing: deep and grating. He can use his own voice for the other characters. With a finer voice he can make a child’s voice, or a female’s and Hacivat’s voices.

2) Characters must enter the stage from the sides, not from top of the screen or one after another. Or they can walk in and out.

During manipulation, the puppeteer must listen carefully to the audience but at the same time he
must not lose track of the play. If spectators laugh at a certain movement, then he can repeat it to make them laugh further. This repetition must be at certain intervals with the right timing. He must not be in a hurry; he must wait for the right moment.

Especially during the dialogues of Karagöz and Hacivat, the figures must never be still, the action must never cease.

Sometimes, during manipulation, a figure can fall off the rod. This can happen to even the most experienced puppeteer. If such a thing occurs, the puppeteer must not panic about it; he must keep his calm and keep talking as he inserts the figure onto the rod.

He must take into account factors such as the site of the show, the traits of the spectators and he must present his humour on the dream curtain according to this reckoning. Before and after the show, he should make good wishes for Karagöz.

Prior to the arrival of the spectators, he should check the room from different perspectives and he should study the sound and visual characteristics of the area. In order to keep a check on the time, he should keep a watch on the shelf. These hints are valid also for other puppetry and shadow theatres.

**The Humour Techniques**

Not every person or society laughs at the same things in the same way. For example, in a comedy theatre, different players make people laugh in different ways. This is also true for the clowns in a circus. Therefore, the humour capacity of a human character and the puppet or shadow theatre figure will not be the same.

In the dream curtain, there is a potential for humour which cannot be achieved by human players. For example, a human player can make people laugh with his gestures. This is not possible
in shadow theatre. Conversely, a shadow figure can make people laugh by jumping around, tumbling or falling down. Therefore, puppeteers, scriptwriters and other shadow theatre staff can learn and develop new techniques to amuse spectators.

Karagöz always has the potential to make people laugh. Just following some rules in the dream curtain will make people laugh. Humour techniques are very important for all branches of Turkish traditional theatre because this is the main purpose of all these plays. Therefore, the humour in Karagöz shows with humans will lose its effect on spectators, although it will have other effects.

The humour in Karagöz has been found to work since it has relied on folk humour, mimics and the humour potential of the Turkish language. The figure-makers and puppeteers must develop humour techniques for contemporary and future shows based on visuals, movement and silent humour.

In the dream curtain, there are many different subjects fit for humour. Animals and other live or inanimate creatures can contribute more to the comedy.
Ban on Karagöz

The word ‘prohibition’ next to something like Karagöz, which makes people happy, does not fit well and it appears to be a contradiction. Banning was something that actually happened, but there were two reasons for it. The main request was for the indefinite banning of Karagöz and the other one was the implementation of this request but not as a long-term exercise.

It is well known that in order to reflect the shadows of figures, a source of light is needed. There were various sources; for adults the source was the şem’a and for children it was a candle. These two sources of light were the reasons for ban on Karagöz.

The şem’a was a thick wick made out of cotton thread and this wick was kept in oil put in a palm-
sized plate. The tip of the wick was outside the oil and gave out light. Sometimes, due to a hand or arm hitting it or because of a flare up in the oil there was always a hazard of fire because all around the şem’a was cloth.

Children used candles at home to reflect the figures onto curtains. Screens were made of simple materials and the flames of the candles were very near to the curtains, thus inducing danger of fire.

Old Istanbul houses were all wooden and if a fire started in a house, it could spread to the nearby houses. Since it had caused more than one conflagration, Karagöz was penalized with a temporary ban.

Those who wanted a complete ban on Karagöz were the people who supported the idea of leaving shadow theatre back in Central Asia. They argued that the only being who could give life was Allah, and a Karagöz puppeteer could not give life to images on a curtain. This appeal was rejected by Sheik ul-Islam, the highest clergy of the Ottoman Empire, and the Karagöz play survived.

The Progress of Karagöz

Art is for society and it is one with the society. Art can flourish along with the society. If it cannot progress, it loses people’s interest and fades into oblivion. In this bitter end, the artists who were not able to contribute to the progress of that art can be blamed. But, artists primarily struggle to keep their arts alive because, above all, they themselves have to live on something.

Progress in the shadow theatre can be swift and continual for modern shows, but it is difficult for theatres based on tradition and can go wrong. In some shadow theatres simple and classical beauty should not be blemished.
Some shadow theatres show progress spontaneously but if they are not supported with goodwill, the progress will be much slower. And this is the case for Karagöz! Because it was accused of being undeveloped, it was marginalized.

First of all, nobody can claim that Karagöz started today, because it started hundreds of years ago. Meanwhile, some progress in the shadow theatre requires technical developments. One of the most important developments is the light source.

In the past, they used joined cotton thread to light the dream curtain and reflect the colours of the figures. It was inserted into the oil plate and lit at the tip. Afterwards they used kerosene lamps, coal gas, and candles. Now from behind the Karagöz curtain, they use various electric light bulbs. Is not that progress?

Modern shadow theatre shows are open to all sorts of innovations. Yet, Karagöz has a peculiarity; the show templates. Thus, although it might look undeveloped, it consists of all the necessary beauty. If that is harmed, then what is done in the name of art will debase and destroy the art itself.

**Sufism in Karagöz**

Even just pronouncing the words Turkish shadow theatre can cause us to smile. This theatre has an unknown supporter which is also its basis; each show executes a lesson of Sufism.

This peculiarity does not exist in the other traditional theatre branches apart from the puppet show where the manipulator is invisible. Actually, it exists naturally in the shows of all shadow and puppet theatres. Then what is so-called Sufism?

First of all, we must remember the subject of philosophy. This science studies matter and life and their indications in universe, in society and in the spirit. The Greek word *philo-sofia* means
‘seeking the essence and origins of everything’. The philosophy which studies the creation of man and his place in the whole universe utilizes hard sciences. Those who deal with these studies are called philosophers.

The special name of the Islamic philosophy is Sufism. According to Islamic philosophy, the only creator and life source of the universe is “Allah”. Allah is the one who has no creator. Whatever exists is the work of Him. Everything is the sign of Allah who is eternal and perpetual.

Sufism seeks answers to questions within Islamic belief and opinions through the “way of heart” because it is not possible to reach the entity of Allah, who is the creator of everything, through the “way of mind”.

The subject is definitely very deep and tremendous. To comprehend its connection with Karagöz, however, this information is sufficient. By the way, it must be added that, together with its progress, the subject of Sufism penetrated into Islamic literature, theatre, pictures, music, poetry and dance.

Now let’s go back to Karagöz’s dream curtain. If it is dark everywhere, then the Karagöz screen cannot be seen. With the light of the show, the curtain is illuminated, even if it looks empty. The figures and the puppeteer wait backstage for the show but the spectators cannot see them. Now, when we look at the situation from the perspective of “Sufism”, the spectators cannot see that the puppeteer and the players who
are going to appear on the screen are actually present.

Afterwards, articulated and skin-made pictures appear on the screen because the manipulator wants it thus. Let’s say, during the play the lights went off and the curtain darkened. The players would not be visible even though they were still there on the screen, but the manipulator who initiated the show behind the screen is still invisible. There is electricity but it is turned off. The puppeteer is behind the screen but the spectators cannot see him.

From the perspective of Sufism, they are very fitting and clear examples. The creator is also invisible but he still exists. The curtain is like the world and the universe. Electricity and the light is the spirit but in invisible form. Even without philosophy and mysticism this thing would exist. That’s to say, this evaluation exists in Karagöz and puppet shows naturally. This was the same experiment Şeyh Küşteri, the founder of Karagöz and Turkish shadow theatre, conducted with his students.

However, the puppeteers of Karagöz could never forget Küşteri and his Sufism lessons. They created a new part in the Karagöz shows where Küşteri and his lessons are remembered. As mentioned earlier, the other name of the curtain is Şeyh Küşteri Square. When Hacivat opens the show, he reads a poem called ‘curtain ghazel’. This poem reflects the Sufism side of the show. This beautiful poem is recited even in today’s shows and at the end of the poem we all remember Küşteri. After the poem, as Hacivat makes the introduction talk, he uses belief themes.
Comedy of Karagöz

Laughing is a requirement for every human being of every age. It is very important for human health. Turkish people have always loved laughing and making people laugh. Therefore, all branches of the traditional theatre and especially Karagöz shadow theatre aims to entertain and amuse people.

Laughing is an easy thing but to make people laugh is difficult. Each society and each person can have a different sense of humour. Therefore, comedy is an art.

The success of Karagöz shows is in proportion to the laughter of the spectators. Laughter is a thing of beauty and therefore the Karagöz play and its puppeteer must be evaluated from this perspective. The raw material of comedy are people, and the puppeteer processes it, shapes it, adds value to it and then returns it back to the people again. This production is the real success of Karagöz because the puppeteers involved in this show are a part of the people.

The curtain amalgamates dream with reality and embraces them together with humorous things. In any case, even the pictures, starting with Karagöz's, bring a fond smile to people's faces. The curtain renders the enrichment of sound and conversation in mimicry. Thus it contributes to the art of humour. The source of conversational comedy is the wealth of the Turkish language which is a suitable language for comedy. Even proverbs, riddles, and idioms can be used successfully.

Erroneous usage of the language, sentences, and words can yield opportunities in comedy. In the show, overseer, director and main source of the comedy is the leading character of Karagöz himself. In any case, all the events are for him and everything is shaped by him because Karagöz is a comedy in all respects. The characteristics of
Karagöz have all originated from the ranks of ordinary people.

Above all, his illiteracy is the most productive source of his risibility. This paves the way to make him easily amusing and shapes the theme nicely. His illiteracy and in this context his unawareness of calculation is an obstacle for him in finding a job. In almost every play, due to his ignorance, he makes a hash of everything he does. Besides his basic ignorance, Karagöz’s awkwardness wreaks havoc at times.

Summarily, the comedy source of the Turkish shadow theatre is Karagöz, but the treatment of the other characters and themes adds to the success. It is obvious that Karagöz is not just Karagöz by himself alone.
As a leading character and a character creating joy on the curtain, his gift is his bluntness. He cannot control his behavior and tongue. Karagöz is constantly unemployed, his kitchen swarms with rats and he meddles with everything because he thinks that he can make money with anything.

Due to his ignorant courage he ventures into every business. He is always ambitious. He wins with his practical cunning, for example in wrestling and in a poetry competition.

His conversations, his questions, and his answers… in everything we can find humour; but his voice supports this humour because it is a thick, rude, and broken voice. Karagöz, either on the screen or off the screen, is a symbol of joy by himself.

**Atatürk and Karagöz**

Atatürk’s demand was for continuity in Turkish folk theatre and at every opportunity he watched Karagöz, puppet shows and ortaoyunu. He supported players and praised them. In his time performers went on tours and performed their shows all over the country.

Once, Atatürk learnt that the theatre actor Hazım Körmükçü also manipulated Karagöz, and during a banquet he asked him:

- Do you manipulate Karagöz well?
- Yes Sir, it was my childhood ambition. It also helped me to start my theatre career.

Atatürk listened carefully:

- Then, if you do a show I would like to see it!

But Hazım Körmükçü was reluctant:

- But Sir; there are several Karagöz plays. I might make a gaffe in your presence!
- It doesn't matter, don't worry! You can say everything behind the curtain, provided that it casts a light for the people.
- Sir, in any case the dream play is animated by light. It has dispersed light from its beginnings.
- Then let’s watch your talent!
- Watching me is not the point; you can cast this light to people yourself. (For this memoir and others see: Nail Tan, Atatürk ve Türk Halk Kültürü.)

In 1931, the performer Hadi Poyrazoğlu was resting in a tea garden in Istanbul with his friend when a gentleman approached him:
- Are you puppeteer Hadi?
- Yes I am!
- Atatürk wants a Karagöz puppeteer in Yalova, would you like to come?
- With pleasure!

They went and in the evening his friend manipulated Karagöz, and Poyrazoğlu manipulated the puppets.
Meanwhile, he could not forget that he was in the presence of Atatürk and he could not be blunt. Therefore, at the end of the show he was restless. Atatürk went upstairs and invited them there too. He was afraid. But nothing happened. Atatürk asked them to continue on their way and thanked them. They kissed his hand and left.

“In the tea gardens we were receiving 5 liras for each show; when we opened the envelopes we found 50 liras. It was a big money”, Poyrazoğlu said.

Karagöz performer İrfan Açıkgöz tells another story about Atatürk and Karagöz:

“One day I was sitting in a performers’ coffee-house. Someone came in:
- Who is İrfan the Karagöz puppeteer?
- I am, sir.

Then together with three other people we started a journey. We arrived in Ankara. In front of a mansion house we got out of the car. Mr. İnönü met us. His children would be having a circumcision ceremony.

We set up the screen and started to manipulate. Then we heard mayhem. Everyone was running around.
- Atatürk is here!

He came and went next to the children. He called us. He complimented us and asked some questions about Karagöz and ortaoyunu. Upon his request we started ortaoyunu entitled “Letter”. Then in the end we stood in front of Atatürk. I said to my friend:
- This is the man who made revolutions and saved the people from ignorance!

Atatürk was smiling. He said to İnönü:
- They are the performers of Turkish live cinema... Protect them!
Show Locations

In the past, the name of Karagöz could remind us of three things: Ramadan, neighbourhood coffee-houses and entertainment. When we talk about Karagöz show locations, we must remember above all the coffee-houses. After that comes rich men’s houses during Ramadan; and at other times the circumcision ceremonies of rich people.

In the past, the only thing required for a screen were two nails on the wall. A large space was not required. Hence, performing shows was an easy task.

The best locations for the shows were places where it could get dark. For other branches of traditional theatre, not even a nail was required. Therefore, open spaces were suitable for them.

For the Karagöz show, it was not possible to set up a screen in an open space because, due to the wind, the light source could get extinguished. So, setting up a screen in between two trees was not a solution for Karagöz.

As far as Karagöz was concerned, the most important and valuable place was the court and the presence of the sultan. In any case, it was not possible to set up a screen which could easily be installed in a coffee-house and the team of performers had to wear their best dress.

Especially during Ramadan and Bayrams, the favorite Karagöz locations for children were empty grounds. Due to the lack of halls it was not possible to perform shows in the schools.

Now, suitable places for the dream curtain have multiplied. Cultural centres, theatre halls, Ramadan tents all can be performing grounds for Karagöz and puppetry. Meanwhile, we must not forget school halls.
Karagöz and Foreigners

The Karagöz shadow theatre is pristine, its screen is small and its language is Turkish. Why then do foreigners who cannot speak Turkish show an interest in Karagöz? In Turkey, this question is debated even today. For those who know Karagöz there is an answer.

European researchers and intellectuals showed interest in Karagöz hundreds of years ago. Travellers arriving in Istanbul watched Karagöz too. In any case, only a few countries could be mentioned in shadow theatre, but being a successful comedy made Karagöz different.

In recent years, Karagöz has participated in puppetry and shadow theatre festivals all around the world, and predominantly in Europe. It is a favourite show and the most important thing is that it can entertain people.
From Japan to China, from the United States to North Africa and India people are surprised about Karagöz and the fact that it has a single manipulator although it is a long show. Karagöz’s funny voice also interests them.

Each theatre performs its play in its own language and the Karagöz show is performed in its own language. In order to overcome the difficulty of language, sometimes simultaneous translation is used but the result is not so successful. Before doing a show, performers introduce Karagöz and give a synopsis. Since it is impossible to translate the Turkish humour literally, it loses some of its comedy.

In order to promote Karagöz, specially-prepared performances written in English might be staged. Themes and plays can be adapted for foreigners too. In the shows performed by us in several European countries, we have shortened the dialogue and added different animals and dances to attract the attention of foreign spectators.

**Karagöz and Children**

The subject of shadow theatre and puppetry is linked to children anywhere in the world. Children love watching and puppet manipulating. All these things are useful for them for different reasons.

Children love Karagöz. The dream curtain of Karagöz was not open to children until recent years. Even during Ramadan in coffee-houses, getting a chance to view Karagöz for children was not easy.

Perhaps, Karagöz was not suitable for children in terms of the theme and messages because the language in the plays was the Ottoman Turkish and the humour style was not appropriate for children.

For children, freely viewable and proper Karagöz shows were performed in circumcision ceremonies.
Nowadays, circumcision operation is realized within minutes and boys who have been operated on can resume their normal life on the same day.

Unlike today, in the past the circumcision operation took weeks and at times dangerous situations could emerge. After the operation, boys were obliged to remain in bed and sleep because there was a danger of bleeding.

That’s why, in order to abate the fear and nervousness of the boy before the operation, to keep him busy after the operation, and distract him, the biggest job lay on the shoulders of the illusionists. Using the tambourine and singing, they tried to entertain the children.

Before and after the circumcision operation, other than the illusionist’s shows, there were puppet shows of İbiş and Karagöz.

If the host was a rich man, then the entertainment would be for a longer time. Nowadays circumcision is a painless operation, therefore boys are not required to lie in bed and the dream curtain of Karagöz has lost this particular occasion.

In Turkey, the Karagöz shows in schools have now become widespread and the number of puppeteers has been increasing. Their quality and success rate can have a positive or negative effect on the interest of the children. Therefore, this issue is important for
the future of Karagöz. In any case, since the word ‘child’ immediately evokes the word ‘school’, then this issue carries more importance.

The writer of these pages seized an opportunity to have an interview with the Minister of Education in 1991 and they debated privately the issue of “Turkish Traditional Theatre and Schools” and, upon the request by the Minister, a project was prepared and presented. The project explained what measures should be taken from kindergarten through to university. As a result of this project, the Turkish traditional theatre, including Karagöz, was included in the lessons of Turkish Language and Literature.

Today, primary school children learn how to make figures from simple materials and how to write Karagöz scripts.

Thus, together with teaching children how to make the Karagöz shows we have paved the way for the production of puppetry tools. Enthusiastic children will develop their skills and talents during their summer holidays and new manipulators will emerge. But, it is necessary for theatre clubs to maintain year-long rehearsals with selected students and to perform their shows from time to time.

In the schools of developed countries, students attend puppetry workshops. There are magazines, publications and clubs for children. All these activities take place according to their school programmes. In Turkey, it is necessary to have progress in schools, both for children and for the Karagöz play.

Since the applications of Karagöz and puppetry take place in the schools, shows that originate outside carry more importance. Therefore, there
must be some qualifications for the puppeteer and for the success of the shows.

The puppeteer who is going to manipulate Karagöz to children and students should be knowledgeable in the relevant subjects. As before, the themes that were played for adults cannot be played for children. The right way to play for children and students is to rewrite the themes.

Now, apart from being a comedian, for these special viewers Karagöz is in the position of being a tutor as well. Surely, the rules in manipulating and the subject treatment must not be violated. Besides school and children’s songs, right pieces of Turkish music might be used.

The following is a short list of some subject headings: ‘traffic, reading practices, tree planting and forests, hygiene, balanced diet, zoolatry, friendship, and diligence’.

Children make all kinds of noise besides laughter. Therefore, singing the songs together and asking questions from Karagöz and Hacivat at times, while involving them in the play can lower the noise.

As well as providing the opportunity for asking questions before and after the show, children can explore behind the curtain too. If time is available then some enthusiastic children can manipulate the figures. Also they must be encouraged to play Karagöz in their summer holidays.

During the show, the puppeteer must be careful to note where they are laughing and after the show he must get feedback and ask for their opinions.

**Karagöz Anecdotes**

Being an illiterate, unlearned, philistine, ignorant, harum-scarum and unemployed man, Karagöz’s conversations in the shows might sound like anecdotes, though they are not.
In Turkey, when we talk about anecdotes, first Nasreddin Hoca, then the Black Sea region and Bektashi anecdotes come to mind.

Just the name of Karagöz makes us smile and his plays make us laugh and he is an endearing character but people do not tell his anecdotes. Despite this, many of his ‘anecdotes’ have been edited and printed in book format.

Some of those anecdotes might be cited here:

**Grant**

Unemployed Karagöz is scared that his wife will not accept him into the house and he rents a broom shop, but he cannot make the business prosper; so he fails to pay the rent for months.

His enraged landlord comes and jokingly asks Karagöz about the rent:

- You have not paid anything for months, you don't seem like you will be paying. I'll give it to you as charity, and then you won’t have to worry about the fees.

Karagöz is confused:

- I will talk this matter over with my wife tonight and I will tell you my decision tomorrow. Let’s see what she says.
The owner of the shop is astounded:
- I am giving you the shop and I am not asking for money for it. So, what else are you going to discuss with your wife?
- Thank you but... Your shop is very old; you'd better renovate it and give it to me as new!

**The Prayer of a Beggar**

One day Karagöz gets a bag full of money. He does not need to look for a job anymore. He is confused about what to do. He did not even tell this to his dearest friend Hacivat.

But his wife does not accept the money:
- We will burn in hell! You find out its owner and return it to him!

Karagöz starts to look for the owner of the money bag instead of looking for a new job but he cannot find him and gives up.

His wife says:
- Spread the word around! Call poor people, and hand out the money to them!
- You'd better do this giving out business, so I can wait in the queue.
- Noooo!

Karagöz goes around and calls poor people to come up to his place. When he comes back home, he sees that the front of his door is packed with poor people. He lines them up in single file and starts handing out the money that his wife gives him from behind the door.

Meanwhile, someone whispers in Karagöz’s ear:
- Give me two lots of money and I will pray more for you!
- No, then I will burn in hell! By the way, if your prayers were acceptable then you wouldn’t come here in these ragged and tattered clothes!
**Half is Mine**

The time was after midnight. Karagöz was sleeping heavily. His sleep was so deep that the noises around him did not disturb him.

Meanwhile, his wife was trying to soothe crying baby and she was not in bed yet. Then she remembered something and tugged at her husband’s arm.

Karagöz complained without opening his eyes:
- What happened?
- The baby is not sleeping. If this child is mine and yours, then half of him is yours and half of him is mine. Get up and you try to put him to sleep!
- All right! You are right! But first, you put his half to sleep and then I will put the other half to sleep.

**I Must Have This Meal!**

The wives of both Karagöz and Hacivat went out together to wander around and to call in sick. This way they could return late.

It was a weekend and since his shop was closed, Hacivat was resting in his house. Karagöz came to Hacivat’s house to visit him. After a while they both felt hungry, but there was nothing to eat.
Hacivat gave some money to his friend:
- Buy one kilogram of beef and one kilogram of rice! We have oil and onions at home. I will cook beef pilaf and we will eat together, oh my Karagöz!

Karagöz was reclining on the cushions:
- I don't feel like eating. You go and buy whatever you want, Hacivat!

Hacivat nodded his head. He went and came back with beef and rice:
- Take this rice and, as you are just lying there, you sort it!

Karagöz shook his head. He looked at the rice and then he again reclined on the cushion:
- You know that I have lost my eyesight because of my joblessness. If I sort rice, I cannot see the stones. If you eat rice with stones in, you could break your teeth.

Hacivat again did not say anything, but after a while he brought the meat and showed it to his friend:
- Oh Karagöz, at least chop up this meat!

Karagöz pushed the meat with his hand:
- You lucky beggar, I told you I don't have good eyesight. What happens if I chop my fingers instead of the meat? In any case I have never held a knife in my life. We have knives in our house but we never buy meat.

Hacivat did not say anything again. He rolled his sleeves up and cooked the rice. While Hacivat was cooking the rice Karagöz was busy sleeping but when he smelled the cooked rice he found a spoon and came:
- You worked very hard, if I don't eat this pilaf you will be offended.

Hacivat couldn't help smiling. He started to speak but Karagöz was not listening to him...
Is Karagöz Obscene and Worthy of a Museum?

When art is in the hands of people whose hearts lack the fire of art, then they depreciate it for the sake of fame and money. Those who cannot or do not want to see the reality find opportunities to deliberately denigrate and condemn this art. The basis for all art is to seek and present the beauty.

For different reasons, since the beginning, some people were against Karagöz. From time to time they requested bans on these shows.

Certainly, not all of those puppeteers were properly educated. They were not all at the same level of knowledge and culture. But those who were against the shadow theatre did not show any interest in eliminating ugliness from it and bringing it to a desired level.

One of the biggest claims against Karagöz is its obscenity. Is it worthy of a museum, being a simple art when we compare it with today’s art disciplines? None of these is right.

First of all, about the obscenity, this concept varies according to each individual and each belief. All art harbours some sort of obscenity which can be boundless too. This does not mean that this art is obscene because the one who shapes and moulds the art is man himself. Admittedly, in the Turkish shadow play Karagöz, some shows involved obscenity and some even showed pornography. This cannot be the concern of the art but its performer. Then what is the source of defamation of Karagöz in society’s opinion?

In the past, in the Port of Istanbul, there were seaman bars. And in these bars, some (non-Muslim) puppeteers were performing pornographic Karagöz shows to spectators. And again, in some rich Ottoman houses, there were some special shows. They invited travellers coming from
different European countries to these shows. Since those travellers wrote their observations, this information reached today.

Who can use improper images and stories in the shows performed for families and the sultan? How can an experienced and esteemed puppeteer bring himself to perform such a thing? Even if he wants to, he cannot do so.

Due to the ignorance of some people who refused to study and learn realities, these accusations gathered significance. If these accusations were made just for the sake of criticism, then they would harm Karagöz.

First of all, we should know that old and new shadow theatres exist in other countries too. In those countries nobody from the field of art and theatre accuses this art.

All the arts that reach us today do so after making progress and if the owners of those claims want this art to develop further by using today's technology, they must explain their opinions too. Karagöz cannot be defended by blemishing it!

**Script Writing**

Writing poems, stories, novels, and legends is not the same thing as writing for the theatre. What is particular about theatre-writing is the existence of its schools and courses.

Karagöz is a theatre. Everything is ready: the stage, dream curtain, puppeteer and viewers are waiting. But what if there is no play there?

There is always a play and if one is not available, then we can find one. A new scriptwriter educated in these schools cannot write a Karagöz play just by sitting at his table as easily as he writes other type of texts. Even if he writes, that text will not be performed. By reading many texts he ought to comprehend the style of Karagöz.
This is a different field. The same assessment can be made about other shadow and puppet theatres too but Karagöz is different from all the others. Therefore, a scriptwriter must know this art from all the different aspects and acquaint himself with
it very closely. Also templates of theme-treating must not be forgotten.

The writer should know after all, that his text will be applied as improvisation. The Karagöz playwright must not forget that he is writing a comedy and, while he writes, his writing must be amusing to himself first.

The writer should choose a theme with the aim of staging it on the dream curtain. Before starting to write, a writer must watch at least one Karagöz show completely and after the show he must inspect backstage. He must also observe spectators’ reactions during the play. He must consult with the puppeteers.

Without understanding the characteristics of Karagöz and Hacivat it is a futile attempt to write a Karagöz show. If he wants to create and add new characters to his play, the writer must study other characters and learn about their abilities.

**Karagöz and Politics**

Politics and ideologies associate themselves with all the art forms in all countries and this fact is widespread today. We see this in shadow theatre too. One of the best examples of this is the Greek shadow theatre, Karaghiozis. These shows were used in the struggle for national independence against the Ottoman Empire, and during the German occupation people cited them to protect national independence.

In Karagöz shows, criticism mixed with derision and black humour extending to the sultans and the ruling classes is put on the stage. But, this is not true for every puppeteer and show.

In these shows, the themes and humour come from the people; political opinions reflecting the social life were part of Karagöz shows too. Though being comic, these shows have consequences. In
some situations, instead of banning these shows and making the people enemies of the government, the authorities tolerated the shows.

Some information and examples on the subject of Karagöz and politics have reached us. The Janissaries and clergy have taken their share from these folk theatre shows.

We can give an example showing how far Karagöz can reach: The place is Aleppo. The year is 1768 and the Ottoman Empire is waging a war against Russia. The Janissaries of Aleppo are criticized for being unsuccessful and the Karagöz show tells the story of their deportation from the front line; spectators applauded but the show was banned.

And again, in the era of Sultan Mahmud II, a Karagöz show deals with the ignorance of a commander and navy commander and the sexual perversion of an administrator.

Once, during the era of another Sultan, Abdul-Aziz, an important statesman was displayed on the screen with a show depicting his bribery and the subject was openly presented to the people. The way of dealing with the subject was considered too harsh and the play was banned. After that, subjects about prominent personalities were all prohibited and faced fines.

Here’s an example from the period of the Empire’s final days, during the era of Abdülhamit II: The famous Karagöz puppeteer, Mehmed Efendi, works in the palace. One night the Sultan asks him for a show. They set the screen and start the play. In those days, utterance of the word *yıldız* (star) was prohibited as the residence of the Sultan was called Yıldız Palace. Therefore, a pun with the word *yıldız* was prohibited.

During those days, if someone wanted to buy star-shaped vermicelli and said “*yıldız*”, they would be arrested and exiled. The puppeteer is well aware
of this. Still, during those days there is a Karagöz song: “See the moon, see the star/See that girl.” During the show, comes the time for this song. The puppeteer starts singing it and immediately realizes the problem so he changes the words to: “See moon, see air/See that girl!”

Karagöz should benefit from today’s rich subject of politics, and politics must not be forgotten in this nice and effective folk show. In developed countries, puppets of famous politicians are featured in the television programmes. This technique has been used in Turkey in the past but Karagöz is a charming and lovely tool of propaganda during the time of national elections. In the elections of 2009, in the province of Bursa, the two friends’ inflatable dolls were used.

In the past, Karagöz and Hacivat were political heroes in the cartoons of Ramadan; but nowadays nobody draws them.
Animated Cartoons and Karagöz with Lotte Reiniger

Lotte Reiniger was doing animation even before the cartoons of Walt Disney. It was in the form of black shadow animation or rather-black shadow animation. Is not Karagöz too a colourful and vivid animation coming from centuries back? Here, a question arises about the link between Reiniger and Karagöz.

Yes, there is a connection between the two of them which is not mentioned in the books. Madam Reiniger was in Istanbul during the Istanbul Festival. She had given a speech and presented her shadow animation movie entitled “The Adventures of Prince Achmed”.

Together with some other Karagöz puppeteers I waited at the door and we introduced ourselves to her. She gave us some advice. After that she brought out a palm-sized paper carton from her small bag and a pair of curved scissors. She cut out that paper carton quickly and made a human shape. Thus she showed us how she had made her figures.

After that she carefully took in all of us. She said, “I was inspired by your Karagöz”. That is to say, the basis of the animation movies was Karagöz. We were very proud and we glanced at each other.

After that Madam Reiniger shook her head meaningfully at us and
continued: “So what have you done for Karagöz?” We glanced at each other again, but this time we swallowed and stared at our feet! She seemed to know that we would not be able to answer. She departed.

Yes, what were we doing for Karagöz? Nothing!... If there was a request, we set up a screen, we performed our shows and after that we dismantled our screens. That was so simple! How would we develop this curtain and this screen? How else could we utilize this art and technique in other fields? There could be answers to these questions but nobody is asking them.

**Movies and Karagöz**

With its colourful and hectic dream curtain, Karagöz has become a harbinger of the future inventions. With music, conversations and effects... Like a movie theatre in darkness... On three continents and in many countries... Among old and new shadow theatres of three continents, Karagöz was the closest to cinema and also the most endearing one.

With the advent of cinema in the Ottoman Empire, Karagöz’s existence was in jeopardy. Karagöz was unable to compete with cinema, and could not match it. Later, it became evident that cinema could be a venue for Karagöz.

Karagöz shows started to be filmed. Karagöz shows started taking place in movies. Nobody was expecting this friendship. But, it was not sufficient and it could not develop.

There are no documental movies about the traditional theatre but there could be such a documentary and now we could use it to develop Karagöz. This represents a big loss for us.

There is a documentary about Karagöz. It received awards abroad, but it had many flaws. We participated in a documentary film competition
and were awarded with an honourable mention; but the script could not find a way out of the file. Another Karagöz-themed movie is *Sinekli Bakkal*. It was a successful movie. There could be Karagöz movies about children. Such documentaries could be useful in schools.

**Karagöz and Television**

Having been a dream screen of the past Karagöz is a productive source for the television programmes of today and the future. But, even during Holy Ramadan, only some television stations show interest in Karagöz and their shows do not go beyond the rudiments. In the past, there were even some years when Karagöz did not have a place on TVs during Ramadan.

Negligence of Karagöz in television during Ramadan shows that the television producers are unaware of Karagöz. Since the dream curtain is open to every subject, it could be used in many different television shows. If a Karagöz project is offered to television producers, they initially try to produce it as a children’s programme and then only for Ramadan. This is a big mistake since Karagöz could be manipulated almost every day with a different subject. State-run television channels are also broadcasting archive movies during Ramadan and therefore not producing new ones.

In reality, Karagöz is a treasure for television. It can be used in entertainment, children’s programmes, culture-art, health, education, advertisements, music, and promotions and even in the news. If it was used live and in the right way, it could bring a new dimension to television.

The two friends could be announcers in some programmes. There could be quiz shows, for example, and manipulation competitions for children and adults.
Actually, what is right is to give a place to all traditional theatre branches throughout the year. A public poll could be conducted to find out viewers’ demands.

**Puppets and Karagöz**

Puppetry keeps its prominent position all over the world and it is right that it should have a prominent place. The figures of shadow theatre and Karagöz are puppets too. Although they are not twins, Turkish hand-puppets and Karagöz are siblings.

They could be manipulated in the same shows, with the same themes, and by the same puppeteers. It was an old practice and will continue in the future too. Those puppeteers who work in Karagöz workshops are also making their own puppets. In any case, in Turkish puppetry, the leading characters, İbiş and Bey, are the equivalent of Karagöz and Hacivat; therefore puppeteers do not find Karagöz hard to manipulate.

Another interesting point is that some puppeteers take Karagöz and Hacivat puppets to the stage. But we can say that it is not a good practice. It is as harmful as live Karagöz is to curtain shows. This practice was not spread much and that limited the harm. Instead of developing puppet characters and shows, taking advantage of Karagöz’s name by imitating it damages Karagöz.

Similarly, if the hand-puppet İbiş came to the Karagöz screen with the same name and appearance, it would similarly harm İbiş’s show. If a puppeteer tries to use his art in

*Baba Himmet (The Turk)*
another traditional form, it shows his inadequacy in his art. It cannot be considered as cooperation between performers in different fields.

We should also mention that there is no such closeness between the puppets and shadow theatres of other countries.

**Karagöz and Poem**

Theatre is a bundle of arts. In the bundle of Turkish shadow theatre, many arts have been gathered together. Additionally, these shows are performed by just one puppeteer.

In the curtain, there are various examples of Turkish folk images. In the dream curtain, music and poetry take their place alongside the comedy. Spectators enjoy poetry, music, and banquets too.

Poems take part in the Karagöz show in various types:

- Initially, when Karagöz arrives, he chants “curtain ghazel” which is a poem. These are written privately and some of them are Sufi poems talking about the show.

- Since Turkish people love writing and listening to poetry, the abundance of poems in Karagöz do not bother them. Also, Karagöz, as a poor man, enters poetry competitions to earn money. He even competes with minstrels. This is the subject of a show entitled “Karagöz Poesy”.

- Throughout Ramadan, every neighbourhood has a drummer. They go from door to door and collect tips by singing a “mani”, a sort of folk poem. These manis are about Ramadan. Karagöz cannot miss this opportunity for collecting money. He takes a drum and along with his friend, he goes around the neighbourhood. When his turn comes, he chants absurd poems and fails to collect any money. This is the subject of another show.
• In every show, during the dialogue there is a part of “comes and goes”. In this part, both Karagöz and Hacivat come to the screen one by one and then go away. At every entry, they chant a verse. For example, Hacivat comes and after chanting a nice verse, he goes out. Karagöz comes and tries to imitate his friend, but he fails. It goes on like this. Certainly, each entry of Karagöz will be a cause for laughter.

• The lyrics of the music taking place in shows are actually poems.

• There are many poems in the show of folk tales named “Tahir and Zühre”. Troubles are told by reading poems.

• In shows or in texts, there is always poetry fluency in all conversations, which, if voiced well, can add to the beauty of the shows.

• In shows, riddles, proverbs and idioms are used along with poetry.

• In the introduction, there is a short speech made by Hacivat where he conveys information about the play and expresses his good wishes. If arranged properly, it can be a nice poem.

But, poems in these plays and poems treated as conversations are all based on the humour potential of the Turkish language and literature. When conveyed into another language, their beauty wanes.

In Karagöz figures, costumes change according to the play and his role. This issue is very evident in ‘Poetry Competition’: Karagöz dons clothes like a minstrel’s and comes to the stage with a saz in his hand. When he is a Ramadan drummer, a very big drum is on his shoulder.
The following is a curtain ghazel written by the writer of these pages:

Many years passed but we are forgotten,
But we didn’t forget all of you and we both returned here.
One of us is ignorant; the other one is educated,
Round beard is Karagöz and goatee is me.
Let’s watch and draw a lesson,
Our job has been to make people laugh for centuries.
They say true friends tell the painful truth unsparingly, that’s the reason for our fight.
When we leave the curtain, once again we are old friends.
Screen-curtain is an excuse; let peace be from the heart,
You learn how to laugh, we follow you from behind.
The life passes like it was yesterday, the question is not to be forgotten,
We want new friends to laugh and to make us laugh.
Don’t let us reduce friends but increase,
Let your entertainment increase and your affection too.
We learn such a play from our master Şeyh Küşteri,
With Ünver Oral our curtain yields many a lesson.

Let’s give an example of Karagöz in ‘Poetry Competition’:

MINSTREL: Those sick of the affectionate chat
do not require medicine for their problems,
Those who do not expect health do not want a doctor.
KARAGÖZ: The patients of love don’t want to have sweets with many eggs,
If you serve him plates full of meat he still doesn’t want from the honey.

Since Karagöz has been loved warmly and affectionately, the subject of poetry was carried outside the shows. Therefore, the subject of Karagöz which was a part of children’s poems found its place in the poems of the adults too.

As long as poetry lives in the dream curtain of Küşteri, there will be new poems written for Karagöz and his shows. Some will laugh with them and some will seek Allah in the curtain since these poems give a sample of world life.

**Karagöz in the Picture and Cartoon**

Karagöz is a picture no matter the figure’s shadow casts on the screen or its image is just looked at on the leather. It is a special, different and important picture.

The figures are accepted as a part of Turkish folk painting. In any case they reflect people, ordinary characters, people’s daily lives, people’s understanding of pictures, painting styles and tastes.

The sight of all the creatures including humans is from the side view. It reminds us of Turkish Miniature Painting Art. In any case, in many of these miniatures recreational events of the sultans are pictured. There are images similar to Karagöz and Hacivat; however, there is no image of Karagöz or Hacivat or any other characters in any of those illustrations from Kayseri.
miniatures. Even that is a big similarity among them.

When we establish a connection between the dream curtain and pictures, then we must add the art of photography into that as Karagöz includes a wide range. Colourful and private figure workshop of the puppeteer, the screen pictures, backstage, manipulation efforts, art and technique, adult and young spectators standing in front of the curtain with their laughing faces and tears in their eyes; they are all potential sources of inspiration from the perspective of photography and the art of pictures. But there is no such a work produced. These images somehow did not get the attention of foreign artists too.

As it is with the other branches of Turkish traditional theatre, unfortunately we have only few pictures available. There are only a few paintings where the Karagöz screen in coffee-houses and happy spectators are pictured and they all belong to Turkish painters.

Apart from being a part of miniatures and folk painting, another connection is the acknowledgment of figures as the world’s first caricatures. If one pored over the beauty of the drawings, it would not be wrong to compare them with caricatures.

In the Ottoman Empire, there was a daily newspaper named Karagöz whose circulation continued for a long time and in other newspapers many pictures of Karagöz and Hacivat appeared. Karagöz was circulated daily even in the Republican era for a while.

In the caricatured Karagöz, classical drawings were used or Karagöz characters and images were stylized. Especially during the Republican era, after the legislation of the Latin alphabet, Karagöz characters were successfully portrayed.
In these works, Karagöz drawings were used almost exactly the same as on the screen. When their faces were needed, the faces of persons subject to the cartoon were used, sometimes without beards.

After the number of shows began to decline, Karagöz cartoons disappeared from newspapers even during Ramadan. Today we cannot find such cartoons, and new cartoonists unfortunately do not know Karagöz. This can be considered as a big loss.

Karagöz, Hacivat and others in cartoons actually helped with the continuation of the art of theatre. Besides, Karagöz figures gained a new appreciation and beauty in the drawing of each cartoonist.
Karagöz is a Treasure

Turkish shadow theatre cannot be compared with both modern shadow theatres and traditional shadow theatres declining in number. Since it has reached the present time with continuing progress, Karagöz has overwhelming features. Its initial aim was to make people laugh and entertain. Since the Turkish language and literature is appropriate for such humour, Karagöz was successful.

Karagöz is a real treasure for our time. But, considered just as comedy, this art has not been studied and explored. Limiting Turkish traditional theatre and Karagöz to one-month long Ramadan feasts caused it to remain out of sight. Karagöz is not only for children but for the child in everyone’s heart.

Even if they are for children, Karagöz (and the puppetry) must not be just something to watch. Children must take up Karagöz as their hobby. Manipulation of Karagöz helps children overcome their shyness and develop speech ability. The workshops include picture painting and handiwork. The show includes music, instrument-playing, poetry and mimicry, teamwork and cooperation. Those who participate in the workshop will read and study and afterwards start to write scripts. Their culture and knowledge will be heightened and without even realizing they will become theatre fans who know the art and techniques of the theatre. Karagöz (and puppetry) is a treasure, together with their productions.

Whatever their age, Karagöz is also a venue for disabled people for leisure purposes, treatment, and developing their skills. Karagöz, which was not
considered to have these properties until today, is a form of treasure.

Laughing is a healthy practice. Today’s scientific studies have discovered the usefulness of laughing, especially with its role in boosting body resistance.

The painting and cartoon studies are other treasures for Karagöz. Karagöz is a special treasure too – if it is noticed – for movies and television broadcasts. It is a unique source for the gift market with its special costumes, colour, cute appearances, and heritage. For example, until today nobody has produced t-shirts with Karagöz and Hacivat pictures.

It is an accurate representation for publicity material of the country. Karagöz could be an interesting item for tourism if it is applied to dolls, postcards, CDs and books.

In Turkey, even as its own culture and art, Karagöz is still not known in many parts of the country. Therefore, interviews, debates, exhibitions and Karagöz Days would enrich programmes of festivals and serve the country’s tourism.

For children’s programmes, Karagöz is a treasure. If correctly checked we could see stories, poems, novels, plays and drawings included in Karagöz. It is a pleasure to know, and some of them will realize that. But those involved must know Karagöz very well.

Nowhere in this country can you see Karagöz murals on school walls but you can find many animated movie characters. Even in tourist-specific regions, you can hardly find Karagöz items in souvenir shops. In children’s clothing you cannot see images of Karagöz and Hacivat. On wall plates as well there are no pictures of Karagöz and Hacivat. Karagöz is a treasure, not something to ignore.
Keeping Karagoz Alive

Even if we recognize the importance of Karagoz for the Turkish and World theatre and shadow plays, if it is abandoned, all this talk will be meaningless.

Our task must not be that of praising Karagoz, ceremonies, and publications but rather maintaining its cultural heritage. Only new artists can keep the values alive.

Therefore, in order to keep Karagoz alive our immediate and urgent task must be the training of new puppeteers. The social conditions and potentials of today have brought to a standstill, the practice of apprentice training. Hence, the implementation of new apprenticeships has a temporary effect and results in a drop in quality.

Keeping Karagoz alive must not be an independent effort but must join together with Turkish traditional theatre. It cannot be achieved by master puppeteers or by foundations. It can be achieved only by the government – and the government must do it.

A convention on traditional theatre has not yet been organized. While it must be realized immediately, we must find suitable buildings and start essential enterprises such as a “Public Theatre Centre”. This must be the main effort to save Turkish traditional theatre and especially Karagoz.

This centre, for education, studies and publications must accumulate the complete material about the subject: figures, publications, visual and sound materials, manuscripts etc… That’s to say, this institution would have its museum, library and archives. This centre would provide materials and publications from other countries, subscribe to publications on puppetry and shadow theatre, and establish relations with concerned foreign parties. It would also produce publications.
For example, the old and valuable materials kept in the Topkapı Museum and in the City Museum of Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality are still out of sight.

Of course this centre, on behalf of the government, would achieve the most important task of training new puppeteers and become a hub for the concerned parties as it would have halls and workshops.

Its shows and the museum would have an entrance fee, and by selling its publications it could draw income. Without having such a comprehensive approach and without its performers we cannot raise new puppeteers in universities or schools.

Additionally, the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the municipalities, private institutions of culture and art must show their efforts with this centre in the form of new working programmes. Because art is the property of society, it must be kept alive for society.

This centre would keep Karagöz in its true form and conduct Karagöz competitions to promote it. These competitions could be arranged as being open to the public, for schools and for puppet masters; and they could compete under the categories of scriptwriting, shows, figure-making, pictures etc.

This centre would produce documentaries and show recordings of Karagöz and other theatre branches, which have not been produced so far, and there is a big need for this.

In this centre, there would be conferences, discussions and meetings on the subject. Courses would be long-term and real productions would present the most splendid Karagöz shows because the puppeteers would not have been able to afford such productions in the past.
To perform shows, one would need to get licence from this centre and thus, traditional theatre, including Karagöz, would be rescued from the lack of supervision and monitoring.

Some theatre players are today trying to make money from Karagöz shows; but they are not properly trained for this art.

**Live Karagöz**

Ortaoyunu is accepted as a Karagöz curtain on the theatre stage and this is absolutely correct as the properties of repertoire and the characters are very similar. In any case, they are from the same root. Karagöz becomes “Kavuklu” and Hacivat becomes “Pîşekâr”.

Due to their free acting and having human players, they act and behave differently, which is very natural.

In the ortaoyunu, Pîşekâr (Hacivat) opens the show with music. The main décor is made according to the dream style. Parts of the play are also similar. So then, why was there a need for “Human Karagöz?” Actually, there was no need and therefore it did not last long.

The spread of Western theatre and especially movies became dangerous for the traditional theatre and its performers. They had to do something interesting which would lure spectators but the different branches of traditional theatre were not able to compete with the charm of the movies.

In the end, Karagöz and Hacivat turned into humans as a coerced invention, and they landed on the theatre stage. Thus, the name of the show became “Live Karagöz”.

Although some new companies and famous performers attempted to initiate such a new
branch, spectators did not show interest and finally they abandoned the idea.

Yet, “Live Karağöz” is not forgotten. In the “Çeşme Başı” ballet dance of Ferit Tüzün, Karağöz took on a brief role. He also appeared in a movie. The most important event was a theatre play for adults which included all Karağöz characters.

In the mid 1970s, when Turkey had only one TV station with black-and-white broadcasting, the Karağöz and Hacivat duo took roles in a children’s programme called “Oyun Treni” (Game Train). Instead of Kavuklu and Pişekar, Karağöz and Hacivat became the children’s favourites.

They were successful in children’s theatre too. The important fact is not the attention that the duo received during the shows. The shows were not reviewed and they started becoming widespread in recent years in the Ramadan tents.

The curtain required a lot of time in order to perform Karağöz play. Moving equipment from one place to another, and installing and dismantling the sets were not easy tasks. After all, the dream curtain required darkness.

On the other hand, in the ‘Live Karağöz’, just two people, Karağöz and Hacivat could dress quickly and take their place on the stage. The task of arranging the installments was not there. When they did not need a third person, they were able to perform many shows one after another. In the end, making money from lower entrance fees was not a big problem.

Live Karağöz shows became widespread and these performances started to take place during festivities and in schools too. But, the increase in the number of shows caused a decline in the number of Karağöz shows in the curtain.

Live Karağöz performers were unaware of the genuine Karağöz and they had the wrong costumes.
Their shows were not charming and of low quality, yet they started to appear in advertisements, promotions, and celebrations.

We cannot totally reject Live Karağöz but it must have certain standards. Companies performing Live Karağöz shows can do it with ortaoyunu and the children can play Live Karağöz too. However, excessive Live Karağöz is causing the curtain Karağöz to disappear.

**Foreigners and Karağöz**

If the title is “Karağöz from the point of view of foreigners” then its assessment is also from a different perspective. This title is about how much they enjoyed the shows. This title is not based on research but on personal evaluations.

The foreigners’ evaluations of the dream curtain have been very wide and deep. First of all, the travellers passing through Istanbul or stationed here for businesses purposes mentioned Karağöz in their memoirs or writings. They mostly related the stories about them featuring obscenity and pornography which caused a misrepresentation of information in the studies and books about Turkey.

The basic error on the subject is that: During the time of sailing ships and steam ships, there were clubs for seafarers in the port of Istanbul. In these premises, some non-Muslim puppeteers were manipulating pornographic Karağöz shows specially designed for the seafarers. These puppeteers performed the same shows in the houses of the rich for their foreign male guests.

The subject of pornography has been a part of art since the beginning. Unfortunately this, being applied to Karağöz, gave a wrong message that Karağöz was about pornography. This information was used to discredit Turkey. With the beginning
of the Republican era in particular, these shows discontinued.

Many people came to Istanbul for the purpose of watching and researching Karagöz and Turkish traditional theatre. Many of them published articles and books on the subject. Furthermore, their works were sourced for studies and research taking place in Turkey.

One of the most important works is Hellmut Ritter’s three volumes of Karagöz. In these large-sized and illustrated volumes, there are many play texts in Turkish.

All these works predominantly contain information regarding the branches and Karagöz’s history, biographies of Karagöz and Hacivat based on rumours, shows and repertoires. Nevertheless, technical information is almost non-existent and the absence of photographs of the shows is the biggest deficiency of these works.

Hungarian researcher Ignacz Kunos studied and made research on traditional theatre and Turkish folk literature. In his writings and books he received attention from the European Turcologists. Kunos (1862-1945) helped to widen and spread the research on Karagöz and Turkish folk (traditional) theatre.

Kunos watched Karagöz many times with keen attention and made notes. In one of his books he expressed his thoughts:

"Orientalists in Europe showed interest in my books, which I was the first to compile and edit. They are translated into several languages. There are scientific and literary articles about my works. Prof. Jacop has written several books."

We do not observe the effects of these plays in Turkish literature history. If Turkish writers could pay attention to Karagöz, they could write many
valuable texts as these shows are gradually diminishing. This year (1924), when I was in Istanbul, I looked for Karagöz but I could not find any show.

Cinemas and French comedies have replaced Karagöz. Luckily, I have compiled and published all these plays and saved them from disappearing. I hope my efforts will not prove futile. I am very proud of serving my Turkish brothers’ national literature.

We should also note that not a single book on Turkish traditional theatre (and Karagöz) written by foreign nationals has been translated into Turkish.

**Updating the Karagöz Show**

Today society and technology have been rapidly developing. Accordingly, the arts also should be developed and updated. But the limit cannot be the same for every art and their frames are different.

It paves the way for the future of modern shadow theatres, but the same cannot be said for traditional shadow theatres and Karagöz since they have a tradition to carry on. It does not mean that Karagöz cannot be updated or it is not updated. Indeed, Karagöz came to the present day with certain updates.

Updating can be perceived as a progress for Karagöz. However, if this progress is applied in an uncontrolled manner under the title of innovation, it will blemish the show because any innovation, made either deliberately or unwittingly must consider the basic tradition.

Then how can we update Karagöz and in what subjects? Every updating must have an explanation. It must meet a need and fill a gap. After the updating it must be recognized separately.

The person, who is going to update the Karagöz play, must know and study everything about Karagöz. But, in our time, nobody cares about
preparatory work; they just act and consider that that’s enough.

On this matter, there is something we should know: if there are some people in Turkish traditional theatre who want to modify Karagöz in an unorthodox manner, then they must let Karagöz go by himself.

In updating Karagöz, there might be many different works which do not give a perception of development. This is an inevitable fact and it will not blemish the tradition.

Updates in Karagöz show can be arranged under these categories: in playwriting, in play themes, in characters, in figure-making, in stage-making, in manipulation and in shows.

There are many possibilities to update it in order to enhance and endear Karagöz. We must certainly use these possibilities. In fact, by updating Karagöz we can give a good answer to those who call Karagöz a simple, insignificant museum piece. But, just as it is unacceptable to modify a Shakespeare or Moliere play in the name of developing it, we must consider the same to be true for the Karagöz play.

In any case Karagöz has been undergoing developments for centuries. This can be easily seen in the costumes of Zenne. There has been updating in the characters, in the themes, and in the stage. Today, we use a microphone and electronic equipments for the music. Now the screen is illuminated in a different way. This updating provides ease and ‘beauty’ for the spectators.

The music, particularly the Turkish music, has a significant place in the Karagöz play. In the same context, instruments are very important. Therefore to use organ, flute, guitar, piano, drums and similar instruments under the pretext of updating is a betrayal to Karagöz. In any case, where will these innovations take Karagöz?
Besides, these instruments cannot comply with Turkish musical techniques. In Turkish music there are thousands of works to be chosen for the Karagöz show.

In attempts to update Karagöz, we have tried to replace the cloth curtain with a glass plate but failed. Each update must be based on a logical reason and it must have an explanation. All these ideas for updating the Karagöz play are valid for the other tradition-based shadow theatres too.

Together with all the opinions expressed here and with research and experiments we have carried out many developments on the Turkish traditional theatre and, as the writer of these pages, we were successful in our attempts. Karagöz was not degenerated but updated.

Here is a list of our innovations applied to the Karagöz play:

- Our classical plays like “Swing” have been updated or we have applied them to the modern spectator. We have written new plays like Karagöz the Iceman, Karagöz in Space and Karagöz the Mayor.
- We have created a new stage which can be used in new and different shows as well as for puppetry. In this stage we use perforated steel sheet.
- We have enlarged the stage.
- We have enlarged the curtain.
- We have enlarged the size of the figures to match the size of the curtain.
- In the dialogue part, there was an unused blank screen. We decorated and enriched it by placing a cloud, sun and meadow on the screen.
- For the first time in World shadow theatres we used screen credits in Turkish and English.
- Especially in the Chengi part we have used colourful lights.
• In the plays we used Turkish language and humour easily understandable by children.

• We brought new characters to the curtain: internationally-known Nasreddin Hoca and Turkish legend hero Keloğlan.

• By removing the ground floor of Karagöz’s house we opened space for band usage. We changed the characters’ view and provided the opportunity to use the characters from both sides.

• Most importantly, although we knew how to produce leather figures, we ventured to use plastic plates.

• By making more joints we created much more movable figures so that we could shake the liquid inside the bottle that a drunkard is drinking from.

• We brought innovations to puppet production and we will continue to bring novelty to Karagöz.

*Flower vase*
NOTE: Why This Sample Play?

There are about thirty plays which are accepted as the classical Karagöz repertoire. Later, many new plays were written. Some of them are eternal favourites. In the third group there are some updated classical plays.

The “Karagöz Swinger” play is one of the most loved plays. It is also loved in other countries. The swing in this play brings action and vividness to the screen. The translation of the text must carry all the important properties of Karagöz which should be understood by foreigners. Therefore, we have written this text independently while keeping its template as the original.
**Figures**

**Characters:**
Many characters come onto the stage talking in different dialects. Some of them speak in Istanbul Turkish: Karagöz and Hacivat, their families, Çelebi and Zenne. Turkish spoken by the minorities is broken. Karagöz’s wife is mostly invisible, we just hear her voice. Bebe Ruhi is a spoilt child. Zenne is a name for ladies in general. People from the Black Sea region speaks a specific Turkish peculiar to the region. Tuzsuz (Unsalted) is a drinker and a tough guy. Pinky finishes the show with a dance.

- Karagöz
- Karagöz’s Wife (Voice Over)
- Hacivat
- Dwarf (Sassy)
- Zenne (A Lady)
- Karagöz’s Son
- Black Sean (Fisherman)
- Toughie (Drunkard)
- Pinky (Folkloric Dancer)

**Animals**
- Monkey
- Serpent

**Objects**
- Karagöz’s House
- Cloud
- Sun
- Swing
PART ONE

INTRODUCTION

Bell rings three times.
The location gets darker.

With a whistle (nâreke) blowing the “flowered vase” painting (showpiece) waiting on the screen will be removed from the top by shaking it to both sides.

Music commences.

HACİVAT: (Enters singing a song. He walks and stops in the centre. He reads his special poem (curtain ghazel). After that he starts to talk) Satan is bad, double faced... Wise men cannot be deceived by him! Let's hope bad people find the punishment and let's start our show... All of you, welcome to the show! I know, you come here to laugh! What I am going to tell you is that I have a friend. We like each other very much. But we cannot get along with each other because my friend has never been to school. But he still meddles with everything and spoils everything. Therefore he is always jobless and unemployed... My friend’s name is Karagöz. Everyone knows him, everybody loves him. Because he makes everybody laugh. He doesn’t come out easily but let’s call him to the curtain! (He hails) Karagöz, Karagöz! I know you are at home, come quickly to me!

KARAGÖZ: (Voice) Karagöz is not at home!

KARAGÖZ’S WIFE: (Voice) Heyy, Karagöz Efendi, you still here? I thought you would go to search for a job.

KARAGÖZ: I am going right now! (From window) Hacivat leave my place immediately!

HACİVAT: Dear Karagöz, come to me!

KARAGÖZ: You woke up my wife; if I come to you, I will bash you! (He goes inside).
KARAGÖZ’S WIFE: (Voice Over) Heyyy, you still here? No bread tonight... Rats are doing the hunger dance in the kitchen.

KARAGÖZ: (Voice Over) Good then I’ll take them to the dance contest.

KARAGÖZ’S WIFE: (Voice Over) You joke with me ha! You scum! (Hitting effect with tambourine).

KARAGÖZ: (Voice Over) Don’t hit me honey, I’ll put my trousers on and I will go immediately. Don’t hit me! Ohh, please!

KARAGÖZ’S WIFE: (Voice Over) I’m going to the neighbour to fill my empty stomach. You go now, don’t come back without getting a job, Karağöz Efendi!

KARAGÖZ: (Voice Over) Okay, I’m going! (From window) Are you still waiting for me Hacivat Efendi?

HACİVAT: Oh yes, I am still waiting my Karağöz!

KARAGÖZ: If you don’t go away I’ll call the police!

HACİVAT: Come back soon, I’ve got good news for you!

KARAGÖZ: Leave your messages over there and get a life!

HACİVAT: (Grumbling) So many spectators are waiting. Now you, how will you come? (He hails as if singing a song). Oh, for some amusement; some amusement!

KARAGÖZ: (From window) Hey, don’t make me crazy!

HACİVAT: (Cont.) Oh, for some amusement! Amusement for everybody!

KARAGÖZ: Now I will show you what is amusement! (He jumps over Hacivat from the window) Now you see the amusement!... (They brawl and jostle for some time)

HACİVAT: Oh my Karağöz you bit my ear!
KARAGÖZ: And you broke my nose!
(Karagöz remains on the floor. Hacivat runs out of the curtain)

KARAGÖZ: (Lies on his back and grumbling). I hit him once but it is wasted. He hit me ten thousand times. You bloody goatee... If you come back I will bash you! (He gets up and complains)
HACİVAT: (Comes) Oh my dear Karagöz, how are you?

KARAGÖZ: O unloving goatee, how are you? (He hits him)

HACİVAT: (He is driven out of the curtain and comes back) Sir, why did you hit me? Is it fair?

KARAGÖZ: It is fair because I only joke.

HACİVAT: Okay; have it on your own way! Do you know why I called you?

KARAGÖZ: I know, to get a beating…

HACİVAT: Don’t joke oh my Karagöz! Being penniless is a very bad thing… I brought you nice news.

KARAGÖZ: Are you a newsmonger?

HACİVAT: Not like that, I found a nice job for you.

KARAGÖZ: I don’t want it!

HACİVAT: You don’t want to work? How come? How come? Just now your wife said, “Go and get a job.”

KARAGÖZ: To surprise her I didn’t tell her.

HACİVAT: Oh very nice; what job is this?

KARAGÖZ: Well, there are many jobs, but I haven’t decided yet.

HACİVAT: Say just one of them

KARAGÖZ: Okay, I’ll tell you, Hacivat! For example, directorate of national education…

HACİVAT: Sorry? Did I hear wrong? That’s to say you could be a director and you haven’t decided yet?

KARAGÖZ: Yes, exactly…

HACİVAT: Don’t joke with me, oh my Karagöz! You are still an illiterate!
KARAGÖZ: Now if I hit your back with an Ottoman Slap, you will see how to write and read... I even have a diploma.

HACİVAT: You have a diploma? How did you get it?

KARAGÖZ: I entered an examination, and they gave it to me.

HACİVAT: I am surprised but at the same time I am very happy. So you don’t tell anyone? You studied your lessons and entered the examination, did you?

KARAGÖZ: Bravo, you got it!

HACİVAT: Then, is this diploma a primary school diploma or a high school diploma?

KARAGÖZ: I haven’t checked it yet.

HACİVAT: I am very curious, oh my Karagöz! Bring it and we’ll see!

KARAGÖZ: No! I lost it!

HACİVAT: How come you lost it? It is very important... Where have you put it?

KARAGÖZ: Under my bed! While I searched for it I stumbled.

HACİVAT: Now I start getting confused. Why did you put your diploma under the bed? It’ll get creased...

KARAGÖZ: If I find it, I will go to tailor Ahmet Efendi and I have him iron my creased diploma.

HACİVAT: Okay then, when did you get this diploma?

KARAGÖZ: When? Just last night...

HACİVAT: You didn’t understand again. Did they give you the diploma in the night? Did they deliver it to your home?

KARAGÖZ: Exactly, Hacivat! Last night a well-dressed man came. He examined me in all the subjects. After that he brought out a diploma from
his bag and gave it to me. He knew that I had passed the examination... He said, “With this diploma, you can be a mayor, a governor and even a deputy... you can be a director wherever you wish, you can be a minister...You just decide, I will appoint you to that position”.

HACİVAT: Really? And after that?

KARAGÖZ: After that, the man suddenly disappeared, Hacivat. And I thought I could bring it out in the morning, I put it under the bed.

HACİVAT: Okay, I got it, you entered the examination in your dream, and you received your diploma in your dream. And I thought you were talking about real life and I was pleased to hear your story; but now I know that you have got nothing at all; anyway, just forget it! I’m going to my shop. (As he walks off) Good bye!

KARAGÖZ: If you go away then I will go home and take a nap. My wife isn’t at home anyway... Maybe I will get a job in my dream. (He goes to his house.)
HACİVAT: (He comes and hails) Karagöz, Karagözzzzz!

KARAGÖZ: (Voice Over) You brazen guy, you have come to get a beating again! (From window) You leave my door at once, if you don’t go I’ll just take a piece of wood and come down.

HACİVAT: Oh my Karagöz, come down quickly! You will be very happy... I found you a job.

KARAGÖZ: What position? Mayor or governor? I am coming (He comes up) I am here... Did you bring me my first month’s salary too?

HACİVAT: What salary sir? Just listen to me! After I left you, when I went to my shop I saw something. I remembered you, and I rented it immediately. They will bring it here. I will send you customers. You save the money. In the evening we will share it.

KARAGÖZ: Thank you very much, Hacivat, but what have you rented? What job shall I do? I couldn’t understand yet.

HACİVAT: Sir, this is a surprise! You will learn soon... I wish you good luck with your new job, oh my Karagöz! I’m going to my shop now. (He goes)

KARAGÖZ: I’ll go home too. Perhaps my wife will bring food for me from the neighbours. (He goes to his home)

A swing appears in the screen.

KARAGÖZ: (Comes out of the house, when he sees the swing he gets scared) Mommyy, what is this? I think a UFO has fallen from the sky! No, it is not a UFO! It looks like a swing... Very nice! The customer will come and he will pay me money for swinging. But I have never done a swinging business. I have
never got on a swing in my life... How will it be? Let's try it! (He gets on the swing). Swing me swing me the swing! Come on! (He is enraged) This swing didn’t hear me. (He shouts) You swing me or I'll bash you! This swing is both daft and lazy... They deceived Hacivat too. Let's see what will happen? (He hails) Swinger is here! Let's get on the swing, let's give money to Karagöz!

DWARF: (He arrives with a child’s son and he jumps around) Hello, hello!

KARAGÖZ: Oooo, a customer, well the money arrives. (He hails) Hello!

DWARF: My mommy gave me money for a swing.

KARAGÖZ: Your mommy said very good... Now you get on!

DWARF: I am a little one, don’t you see? You put me on it.

KARAGÖZ: Come! (He puts him on the swing). Sit well, otherwise you’ll fall off! Ohh, your shoes are in my mouth. Iggghh, gross, your bottom is stinging.

DWARF: Swing me oh daddy!

KARAGÖZ: Don’t call me daddy! I don’t know your mother!

DWARF: Please swing me!

KARAGÖZ: I am hungr, my head is spinning, I forgot how to swing it.

DWARF: Just push it from the edge, it swings by itself.

KARAGÖZ: Okay... (He pushes, the swing hits him on the return and Karagöz falls down) Ohh my mommy! Swing hit me.

DWARF: (Laughing) Good, you learnt very fast! (He swings and sings a song).

KARAGÖZ: (He stops the swing) Finish; now you go down!
DWARF: You put me on now you put me down!

KARAGÖZ: Another customer comes, so I’d better put you down. *(He lowers Dwarf).* Give me money! You said your mother gave you…

DWARF: But I ate ice-cream with that money.

KARAGÖZ: Now what shall we do? Go and bring money from your mother?

DWARF: Okay, Karagöz auntie! Good bye! *(He goes.)*

KARAGÖZ: This shorty made me an auntie… Never mind. *(He hails)* Swinger is here!...

ZENNE: *(She arrives with a suitable song)* Hello, Sir!

KARAGÖZ: *(Grumbles)* Ohh money has came. *(He hails)* Welcome two-legged money, sorry, anyway, welcome miss! Hello!

ZENNE: I want to swing…

KARAGÖZ: I’ll swing you… Get on!

ZENNE: But I am a lady, I cannot get on. Aren’t there any steps?

KARAGÖZ: *(He grumbles)* Stepss? Damn, money’s gone! *(He hails)* Well lady, if I become steps?

ZENNE: All right sir! Now!

KARAGÖZ: Immediately! *(He lies under the swing. Zenne steps on him. She tries to get on the swing but she fails. Karagöz squirms in agony.)* Oh my lady, your high heels made holes in me.

ZENNE: *(Just before falling down she stands up)* Take me in your arms and put me on it!

KARAGÖZ: Nooo! My wife will see! I’d better buy some steps. Other ladies and children can use it.

ZENNE: Okay Sir… I wish you nice customers. *(She goes)*

KARAGÖZ: Good bye lady, good bye! *(He grumbles)*

A swinger is here! But I am tired now, let’s sit here
a little bit. (*He sits, he dozes off, and he starts snoring*)

A monkey comes in and romps around, it gets on the swing. It climbs on its rope, and comes down. It jumps down and it goes to Karagöz and pulls his shoes.

**KARAGÖZ:** (*Waking up*) Oh dear, who is it? It is eating my shoes! Hey, leave it, I don’t have any other shoes! Where did this hairy beast came from? Shoo! Shoo! (*He kicks and stamps and when the monkey runs away he stands up*)

**HACİVAT:** (*Comes*) How are you, oh my Karagöz? What are you doing?

**KARAGÖZ:** Don’t you see, I am a swinger now.

**HACİVAT:** Very good! How much did we earn?

**KARAGÖZ:** We earned nothing, Hacivat!

**HACİVAT:** Sir, it is still early, people will come. Good bye! (*He goes*)

**KARAGÖZ:** Good bye! Send me some customers. (*He hails*) Swinger is hereee!

**KARAGÖZ’**S **SON:** (*He arrives singing a child’s song. He hails*) Daddyyyy daddddyyyyy!

**KARAGÖZ:** What happened son? What’s wrong?

**KARAGÖZ’**S **SON:** Give me money!

**KARAGÖZ:** What are you going to do with the money?

**KARAGÖZ’**S **SON:** I will give it to you and I will get on the swing!

**KARAGÖZ:** My son, if I have money I will buy bread, olives, sugar etc. I couldn’t make any money yet.

**KARAGÖZ’**S **SON:** Then swing me free of charge!

**KARAGÖZ:** Noooo! The swing is not mine, it is Hacivat’s… If I make money, first I will pay the rental of the swing.

**KARAGÖZ’**S **SON:** (*Suddenly bursts into tears and shouts*) Yessss, yessss!
KARAGÖZ: Now you go home, study your lessons! When Hacivat returns I will ask his permission to swing you free of charge.

KARAGÖZ’S SON: Okay my Karagöz daddy! Thank you. (He goes)

KARAGÖZ: (Grumbles) I’ll go home and come back. When I work I start feeling hungry. (He goes home)

A snake enters. With hissing it crawls. Passes from the top of the swing. Halts in front of Karagöz’s house.

KARAGÖZ: (Comes out, hails) Swinger is heree! (Suddenly he notices the snake, he cannot understand and he scrutinizes it) Mommyyy what’s this? What kind of a customer is it? (He goes into his house). Honey, there is a giant worm in front of the door.

KARAGÖZ’S SON: (Voice Over) It is not a worm, it is a serpent.

KARAGÖZ: Son, if it doesn’t go away, customers won’t come and I cannot make money!

KARAGÖZ’S SON: (Voice Over) In foreign countries, they manipulate them. I will play music and maybe it will away.

KARAGÖZ: Play my brave son!

Hectic music plays.

Snake squirms and goes away.

KARAGÖZ: (Comes out) It is gone… (Approaches the swing. Hails) Swinger is here; swinger, come to the swinger and bring money!

BLACKSEAN: (He comes singing and dancing) Hello!

KARAGÖZ: Oh, the money has come. (He hails) Welcome!

BLACKSEAN: Where are the sails of this dinghy?

KARAGÖZ: What sails? A swing won’t have a sail.
BLACKSEAN: Who executed this dinghy here?
KARAGÖZ: Who executed what? This is not a dinghy, this is a swing...
BLACKSEAN: Can you go fishing with this swing?
KARAGÖZ: No, you cannot go...
BLACKSEAN: Then what is the purpose of this?
KARAGÖZ: This? Come and get on; you will see what it is for!
BLACKSEAN: Okay then I’ll get on! (He gets on the swing with the help of Karagöz)
KARAGÖZ: Stay well! This is not a fisherman’s dinghy...
BLACKSEAN: Good but I am bored sitting here.
KARAGÖZ: Now you will have no more boredom! (He starts to swing him)
BLACKSEAN: (He enjoys swinging and starts to sing a song) ha ha ha...
KARAGÖZ: (After a few pushes he stops the swing) Okay, it’s finished, get down!
BLACKSEAN: (Gets down) My head is spinning, I feel like going to the clouds. Good bye!
KARAGÖZ: Give me money, money!
BLACKSEAN: What money do you want?
KARAGÖZ: Swing fee!
BLACKSEAN: You forced me to get on and you swung me. You will give me money!
KARAGÖZ: Oh yes, you are right. But I am here to make money; I must take bread home. My wife and my child are hungry...
BLACKSEAN: You say right but I don’t have any money!
KARAGÖZ: Then leave your jacket, I’ll sell it and I’ll compensate the swing’s fee.
BLACKSEAN: You are very clever! You forced me to get on the swing. Therefore you will pay me!
KARAGÖZ: Alas! What will happen then?
BLACKSEAN: But I like you, swinger and also I feel pity for you! I have some fish in my pocket, I’ll give them to you.
KARAGÖZ: Well, if I bring home only a few fish, my wife will bash me.
BLACKSEAN: Then I’ll send you a bag of fish. I wish you prosperous customers. (He goes)
KARAGÖZ: Good bye, the man carrying fish in his pocket! (He hails) A Fisherman was here. (Grumbles) I am confused too.
HACİVAT: (Comes). Oh my Karagöz, did you start a fishing business?
KARAGÖZ: A fisherman was here, he swung but without paying. He went. And I am confused now.
HACİVAT: Ha ha ha! Anyway, you bring out the money so we can share it!
KARAGÖZ: I am tired, so I will take out the revenge on you. We didn’t make any money... In any case you didn’t send me any customers...
HACİVAT: Sir, don’t get angry immediately! I joked. I will walk around and send you some customers, also I must find a crowded place. Good bye! (He goes).
KARAGÖZ: Good then... (He hails) Swinger is here, swinger, come and swing, he is leaving soon!
TOUGHIE: (Before entering he shouts) Heyyy, I am here! Nobody scares me, show up!
KARAGÖZ: (Grumbles) I am not scared of anyone! Then I’ll hide here. (He conceals himself behind the swing).
TOUGHIE: (Comes with a suitable song/ Shouts) Where is the swinger?
KARAGÖZ: (From his hiding point) Swinger went to find customers.
TOUGHIE: Then who is that speaking?
KARAGÖZ: (From his hiding point) I am the swing...

TOUGHIE: A swing never speaks! Are you mocking me? Stand up, I saw your backside!
KARAGÖZ: (Instantly he stands up and immediately he hides himself again; grumbles) Mommyy! He has a sword too. I don't want a customer like that.

TOUGHIE: Heyyyt! If you don't stand up, I'll make mincemeat out of you!
KARAGÖZ: Alas! No meat is left at home, send us a hundred grammes!

TOUGHIE: Stand up! Now!
KARAGÖZ: (Stands up) Mommyyyyy, iggghhhh!

TOUGHIE: What is your name?
KARAGÖZ: Well, when I saw your sword, I forgot my name.

TOUGHIE: Okay, you pay your taxes?
KARAGÖZ: If I make money, I pay.
TOUGHIE: Good! You will give the tax to me!
KARAGÖZ: Sure, if you can find me, you can get it!
TOUGHIE: What did you say?
KARAGÖZ: I said, how much tax shall I pay?

TOUGHIE: This is a good question. Remember, this is a tourist place. If you earn one dollar then you will pay me two dollars' tax!
KARAGÖZ: Sorry, I didn't understand, well I understood, yes...

TOUGHIE: Who is the owner of the swing?
KARAGÖZ: That's a good question. The swing is Hacivat's, he will come now. I am going.

TOUGHIE: Where are you going?
KARAGÖZ: Well I am scared and I messed my
pants, I will change my underwear at home. (He goes.)

HACİVAT: (Comes) Welcome, Sir!

TOUGHIE: You welcome too, Hacivat! I was here to collect my tribute and taxes. But the swinger fled home.

HACİVAT: Sir, there are no customers in this place. We will dismantle the swing and reinstall it in a more crowded place.

TOUGHIE: Okay then, when you have changed the place of the swing you inform me!

HACİVAT: Sir, when I install the swing in a new place I will inform the police to stop people extorting money from me. I will pay my taxes to the government.

TOUGHIE: Really? Good, anyway I was about to go. I just stopped by to see you. Good bye! (He goes)

HACİVAT: Good day, Sir! (He hails) Karagöz, Karagöz!

KARAGÖZ: (Comes) Oh my Hacivat, has that man with the sword gone?

HACİVAT: Oh yes, the sword’s gone… How much money have we made?

KARAGÖZ: I gave up, you wait now!

HACİVAT: Oh my Karagöz, customers are not coming here. I gave up too. I found a nice place. I’ll send two people. They can take the swing from here to there. Now I’m going.

KARAGÖZ: Hey, don’t go! Won’t we celebrate the new place of the swing?

HACİVAT: Sir, you think I forgot it? Now I will send you our oriental dancer girl “Pinky”. Then we will enjoy it together with the spectators.

KARAGÖZ: Send her here! I will go to my window and sit there. I will watch her together with my wife and with our empty stomachs. I’ll feel better.
HACİVAT: Then I’ll watch from the edge of the curtain. (He goes)

Oriental music commences.

Pinky enters dancing, the dance goes on.

Karagöz comes and as they dance together the music ends and Pinky goes. But Karagöz does not realize Pinky’s absence, he continues to dance.
KARAGÖZ: Ahhh, ahhh!..  
HACİVAT: (Comes) Karagöz, Karagöz!  
KARAGÖZ: (Halts) What happened Hacivat?  
HACİVAT: What are you doing, sir? The dance finished but you keep dancing?  
KARAGÖZ: What to do? The music is nice, the girl is dancing well, I couldn’t help dancing.  
HACİVAT: Okay! Thus our show ends. Now let’s collect our money from the boss and after that we’ll go shopping for the kitchen.  
KARAGÖZ: Ah Hacivat! This is very good news! Otherwise my wife will not let me go inside the house…  
HACİVAT: Then we wish our spectators and everyone who likes or dislikes us, good day. Good byeeeee! (He goes)  
KARAGÖZ: If we have done wrong things and uttered wrong words, please forgive us! We come onto the stage because we love you so much. You too don’t forget us and don’t let us be forgotten! Good bye! (He leaves as he greets the spectators like Hacivat.)

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Note on Usage

Modern Turkish uses the Latin alphabet, modified to ensure that there is a separate letter for each main sound. The spelling thus aims at phonetic consistency. For Turkish artists, place names, publications and special terms this book employs modern Turkish spelling. Proper names have been kept in modern Turkish with one exception – Istanbul has been rendered with normal English spelling using I rather than İ unless it is part of a title. Consonants have more or less the same sound as in English, except for:

- **c** like *j* in English
- **ç** like *ch* in English
- **ğ** the “soft g”. Depending on the adjoining letters, this is dropped, pronounced like *y* in English, or treated as lengthening the preceding vowel.
- **ı** is a back, close, unrounded vowel which does not exist in English, the nearest equivalent being the phantom vowel in the second syllable of rhythm.
- **ö** like ö in German or eu in French peur
- **ş** like *sh* in English
- **ü** like ü in German or *u* in French
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