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Within the context of sociological criticism theory, a literary work from the 17th century; Nefhatü'l-Ezhâr

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Abstract. Spanning over a period of six centuries from the 13th century till the 19th century, Classical Turkish Literature takes up a reputed position in Oriental Literature. In the earliest centuries, classical Turkish literature was heavily influenced by Arabic and Persian Literature; however upon completing its foundation, it started to embrace a domestic and national character as of 16th century. With the advent of 16th century, particularly in masnavis as used to narrate lengthy stories, a different path was taken from other Oriental literatures in regards to characters and settings in stories. Stories, then, began to evolve within the borders of Ottoman territory and a wider place was reserved to take notice of witnessed problems. In some of these masnavis it is feasible to come across social reflections on the specific period and certain expressions that would most probably not approved at an age this work was compiled. In that sense one of the salient examples is *Nefhatü'l-Ezhâr* masnavi written by 17th - century poet Nev'i-zâde Atâyî. In *Nefhatü'l-Ezhâr* it is detected that defects that the poet witnesses in his society are narrated to his readers in short stories that develop within a plot. In such stories, Atâyî criticizes the kind of people exploiting religion for personal gains and those simple men licking powerful men's shoes for self-interest. In relation to social criticism stealing and injustice of rulers are highlighted-issues by the poet. Further to that, by narrating obscene stories, the poet attempts to unveil a form of corruption that has eroded moral fiber of community. In order to better grasp a literary text and locate the author's messages aimed for the reader, there is need to approach a work from a wide range of perspectives. In our research, stories that are considered to reflect traces from society in the said work of Nev'i-zâde Atâyî will be elaborated within the context of sociological criticism.

Keywords. Ottoman State, Classical Turkish literature, Nefhatü'l-Ezhâr, Masnavi, Story, Social Criticism

Introduction

Sociological criticism theory of which origin is linked with Vico's work "*La Scienza Nuova*" moved forward on the principle that literature does not exist on its own but rather emerges out of a society of which it speaks for. According to this theory, it is the social conditions that designate the author, readers and literary work.¹ In the developmental stage of the theory it is witnessed that a number of intellectuals have all contributed to the process.

French critic Hippolyte Taine who took interest in sociological criticism theory argues that artistic works originate from specific causes like physical phenomena. There exist specific effects of specific causes and not any work can simply fall from the sky without a motive. Climate, physical, political and social condition of countries are determinant factors in the

context of any artistic work. In parallel with biology, physics and geology there exists a determinism in art too; hence its criticism method should be no different than any other science. Explaining a phenomenon should be identical with presenting its causes and effects.² In the analysis of a literary work, Taine who focused on non-textual components that formed a work, emphasized three factors that helped creating a work: "... origin, environment (geographical and social environment) and period (a specific historical stage)".³ On the basis of a scientific attitude Taine examined the effects of these three factors in his work analysis on a particular product and author. "For him just like the presence of facts that exist to be verified, poetic works are also one of these facts waiting to be validated: For instance a novel is, based on the perspective of Taine, nothing but a pile of experiences that would be used for self-identification".⁴ Taine's claim that "if these forces could be measured and deciphered, one could deduce from them, as if from a Formula, the characteristics of the future civilization" and his contention that "when we have considered race, milieu and moment, we have exhausted not only all real causes, but even more all the possible causes of movements" have not been convincing. On every point Taine fails to show the complete concrete determination of literature by race, milieu, moment.⁵ Another acknowledged name in the field of sociological criticism, Gustave Lanson, despite his separation from Taine in reaching absolute verdicts, still adopted an identical approach with Taine in relation to focusing on the salient role of social and periodical factors in creating a work.⁶ However some intellectuals deemed Taine's values as inconsistent and not applicable to outside world.

Structuring of sociological criticism as a method coincides with Madame de Stael's work titled as *De La Litterature Considerée Dans Ses Rapports Avec Les Institutions Sociales* (1800). With the said work sociological criticism turned into a favorable method in France and has gained much acclaim since 19th century when scientific methods started to receive wider attention.⁷

Briefly stated, according to sociological criticism theory a literary work mirrors a given society and human beings. That is why, in the analysis of any work, one should keep in mind that it is nothing but a replica of society. In most of the literary works that have been analyzed in accordance with this theory, it is feasible to attain information on its social structure and sociological state in the period the work was compiled.

1. General Characteristics of Nefhatü'l-Ezhar

In Classical Turkish literature a number of works in the form of masnavi verse that can be accepted as the equivalent of modern story and novel of our age were written. Most of the times poets of the age opted for masnavi by benefiting from the mesmerizing power of poetry in order to write long stories which evolve around a plot.

One of the influential poets of Classical Turkish literature Atâyî wrote his 3170-couplet masnavi, *Nefhatü'l-Ezhâr*, on the model of Persian poet Nizâmî's work *Mahzen-i Esrâr*. On that account generic fictional order of the two works draw parallelism. Nonetheless in relation to context Atâyî who then moved away from the influence of Nizâmî and classical Oriental literature masnavis in general managed to form the main topic of his work on the basis of twenty chapters. Each chapter narrates in itself a story that matches with an aimed topic as is indicated in its heading. In this work an instructional and didactic style attracts attention. Atâyî states that, "A wise man learns civility from the uncivilized". The writer treats moral teachings without disassociating their bond with everyday life.

Among the tenets that make a literary work precious are; being written independently from other texts and presenting an original plot and protagonist. In that regard protagonist(main character) in most of the stories narrated in *Nefhatü'l-Ezhâr* and the plot, as a unique production

of Atâyî, is an entirely original context that has not been detected in any other literary works before. A significant portion of the stories reflects daily life scenes from the 17th-century Ottoman society.⁸ Among the eminent scholars of the period, Atâyî is, as quoted by Kortantamer, “almost a realist, or even more, a naturalist writer who deals with the heroes of a case during his period and surrounding environment; crafting them like an artist in his products and presenting them to readers through striking motifs as noteworthy characters who, almost always, go through peculiar events.”⁹ Within that context, it is manifested that probable events that can take place in any social class could be illustrated in his stories; and as story setting, favorite places were chosen as Ottoman cities like Üsküp, Bursa, Istanbul.

Atâyî has received recognition as a poet observing society and reflecting his observations on his products. As we analyze *Nefhatü'l-Ezhâr* within the context of sociological criticism theory it becomes viable to unravel certain insights that would put a mirror on the 17th - century Ottoman society.

2. Stories narrated in Nefhatü'l-Ezhar

The chapter that constitutes subject matter of *Nefhatü'l-Ezhâr* illustrates twenty short stories. Aside from that in Introduction chapter too there are a few short stories. Prior to analyzing his work in relation to the context of sociological criticism theory, it is suggested to briefly mention these stories.¹⁰ Based on each one's content these stories will be classified under six main headings.

2.1. Stories that Narrate the Types Exploiting Religion for their Self-interests

As claimed in sociological criticism theory literary works bear traces of structure in a society and individuals that make up this society. In Atâyî's work too, introduction chapter illustrates the type of human beings exploiting religion for their self-interests. As largely attested, religion is defined as a set of divine laws of Allah to guide believers towards goodness and righteousness. Believers who submit to the Presence of an All-mighty Creator sincerely strive to follow the teachings of their religion. Yet in any given religious community it is probable to witness certain types exploiting innocent faith of followers. In Atâyî's work the writer takes notice on such people exploiting religion to gain personal benefits in the 17th-century Ottoman society. These human types who impede the structure and order in society work hard to exploit sincere adherence of the devotees. For instance, between verse 578 and 645, there is a title such as “common complaint in the period”. According to the narrated events in this chapter, in Islamic custom, on behalf of the deceased, and in the hope to be a means to forsake the deceased one's sins and to make his/her name remember with gratitude deceased person's relatives offer good deeds as cash or occasionally as food to those in need. Nevertheless some of fake 'scholars' who exploit religion for their personal gain try to usurp these good-will works reserved for the poor by making up a moral cause and fake ordeal. Presented by Atâyî as a sociological criticism this misdeed mirrors how, in those ages when Islamic customs were arduously practiced, religious values were also corrupted.

In the ninth story of this work a wealthy man named Husam is mentioned. Husam stands for the type of man who got rich by fraudulently deceiving people. Although he keeps on talking about Allah, good-will and assisting the needy, he has never ever done anything good for one person in reality. Everyone abhors this character having accumulated wealth all his life through manipulative tricks. In the end Husam dies and this wealth that piled up through numerous tricks is then usurped by other names. While he suffers in the unbearable pain of Hell, others live up their lives with his wealth left behind. Husam symbolizes a typical model who, by fooling people, becomes rich by sucking people dry. Since Atâyî felt extreme resentment

towards such men in society and viewed them as a major threat against social justice, he aims to point to the harms inflicted upon society by those having gained wealth through manipulation and fraud.

2.2. The Story narrating Yes-Man types Licking Boots for their Self-Interest

In the tenth story of this work the type of people who, in order to accumulate money, willingly comprise on their personality to gain personal benefits. The poet argues that during that age there were yes-men visible on every corner. Yes-men were also surrounding powerful statesmen and were busy making themselves a laughing stock for viewers. Under no circumstances should Yes-men be confused with traditional humorists in Turkish culture. Those narrated in this story replicate the ones who, with the favor of wealthy people, sustain their lives in comfort. Hard-work and making an honest earning has never ever been a concern in their worldview. In some cases they can even be promoted to senior ranks in state administration as a reward for their boot-licking.

Atâyî, in this chapter, provides examples from the funny acts of a masquerader. There is always this poverty-stricken masquerader (juggler) everyone watches in amazement. Although masquerader makes people laugh as a duty of this profession, it is ironic that destiny never ever puts a smile on his face. The only capital he has on his hands is his funny face. In one instance the said masquerader starts to work as the imam of a mosque. On a Bairam Salaat as everyone in the mosque waiting for his arrival, he wants to make his presence in front of community after putting on rose water and incenses on his face. Yet he mistakenly paints all his face with dark-black ink. He just stands in front of the worshippers with the darkest-face ever and disgraces himself in front of everyone watching.

In relation to sociological criticism theory the trap yes-men falls into is simply a reflection of supply & demand cycle. In another saying, it is obvious that such types of people trigger not much discomfort among members of a society. People indeed feel joyful when viewing hilarious scenes of yes-men.

2.3. Stories on Sexuality

In a number of stories narrated in *Nefhatü'l-Ezhâr*, there is a higher emphasis on the pervasive moral corruption within society. Fifteenth story narrates adventures of a guy whose whole life is wasted away by groping women. This man abuses any woman he encounters on the streets of Istanbul. He even trespass all limits by abusing female maids employed in his house.

In the fifteenth story extramarital sexual affairs and pervert men are harshly criticized. In Istanbul a wily and factious woman intends to mate his womanizer son with a proper girl. It is her desire to match the boy with a girl whose legendary beauty is on everyone's lips. However in reality her fake candidate is old and ugly. Although womanizer-boy hopes to marry a young, beautiful and affluent lady he finds an ugly and poor girl on his wedding bed. After a certain period of time pervert boy lays eyes on the maid(concubine) in their house. Having grasped his inner motives the wife puts all her efforts to stop his sinful initiative. Then the day comes; neighbor ladies meet in this house and start gossiping. As they are busy taking about rumors, pervert boy keeps his hands busy behind the door with the concubine. Right next to pervert boy is a playful ram that is almost a pet to the guy. Once the pervert boy "Hushes" the concubine: Toss! (Stop!), the ram falsely takes the sign as an order for him and by going backwards in the blink of an eye the animal presses the man on ground just like a stone. Pervert boy immediately falls down right in the center of the room and makes a fool of himself.

Sixteenth story narrates the case of a homosexual man. This is a malicious man desiring to exploit any young boy he comes across. This evil guy does all he can to yield to his flesh. He abhors women so profoundly that he abstains from even mentioning the name of his own mother just because of her gender. One day he accidentally meets a man whose traits are identical to his personality. He keeps on demeaning women and tries to persuade him to be on the same page with his perversion. The man feels discontented about the situation and intends to teach him a lesson. One day pervert guy brings home a boy he fooled. However things do not work as planned. As the night calls, guests arrive and these men, since they know the guy's malice, aim to stop his plan and catch him red-handed. As it gets quite dark everyone retires in bed. Guests pretend as if they are asleep. Assuming that everyone is fast asleep pervert man comes closer to the boy. Lustfully he tries to abuse the boy to satisfy his horny spirit. All of a sudden guests come to the scene and witness revolting move of the man. They light a candle at that moment and catch the man red-handed in a loathsome state. The man who wanted to teach him a lesson in the beginning is also among the guests and mocks the guy. In the end the participants agree to murder the guy.

A similar case is narrated in the eighteenth story too. This chapter illustrates the story of a guy who, driven with lust, falls into disgrace in the eyes of society: an asshole good for nothing used to live in Bursa. That guy swims day and night in spa pool; wanders around all naked. Those who see him feel pity rather than wrath. This guy, although not perpetrator in reality, pretends as if he were the offender. Then one day, after taking leave of the spa on his way home he usurps a boy on the street to take him back home. He, without any delay, turns on the oven to heat water. Dwellers in the city follow them behind the curtain. All of a sudden they scream and jump with the musical instruments on his hands; kudum (a small double drum), ney (reed-flute), def (tambourine) etc. They make fun of the pervert guy and that idiot man feels cheap as being caught red-handed in the middle of his villainous action.

In the seventeenth story another character who is ruled by his uncontrolled sexual impulses is the protagonist of the story. This is a guy who cannot help but masturbate endlessly. This guy, who habitually masturbates anytime, even attempts to reach self satisfaction in common public places. One day he comes across a crowd nearby Beyazid Mosque where people gather around a juggler to view his show. In this huge crowd this pervert guy sets eyes on a young boy, alias Kuloglu. He immediately approaches the boy from his back and pinches him. The boy, not knowing what to do, cannot move anywhere in the crowd. Since pervert man is short he can only manage to reach his prey on his tiptoes. Another person realizing his evilness places two burning-hot pieces under his toes. Pervert man, the moment his heels touch the hot fire, screams in pain right before falling backwards. Kuloglu feels great shame. Lying on the ground in a messed up and terrible position pervert man is subsequently beaten heavily by bystanders.

Thirteenth story narrates controlling the self. Atâyî argues that the self(the flesh, body) is the invisible enemy of man. A reasonable man should, by all means, run away from the desires of his inner self and never lay eyes on another man's harem. Whatever mishap may befall on a man comes from his self. On the same issue Atâyî narrates a case that was experienced by Üsküp mufti Muhammed Çelebi: A man accompanied by Muhammed Çelebi has feelings for one of the neighbor women. Although he attempts to unite with the woman she does not give him a pass. The truth is this woman is a lesbian (dike) woman who has an eye on the daughter of her suitor. She throws a tool named Dildo into girl's bedroom. The girl becomes bewildered at first but after a while she collects her senses and decides that the best action would be consulting to mufti. This girl with dildo in her hand pays a visit to mufti to seek advice. Mufti consoles the girl and assures that any necessary measures would be taken. After her

departure a man who married her daughter with an old man comes to the presence of mufti with his daughter and son-in-law. Visiting man claims that his son-in-law is old and useless; not even capable of shirking husbandly duties and asks the mufti to divorce this couple. Mufti orders them to wait for a year and unless nothing changes at the end of this waiting period, he promises to approve their divorce. Yet the man insists on issuing divorce here and now. Mufti then loses all his temper when seeing such impudence. The man in the end once again claims that his son-in-law has no manhood and inquires about the specifics of a husband as instructed in Holy Book. Maddened with this question mufti shows the dildo brought earlier by the girl: "That's exactly the size, now you see!"

2.4. Story on Encroaching on Illicit Property and Stealing

In the nineteenth story, after illustrating the evil in encroaching on illicit property, it is mentioned how a thief self-inflicts his own punishment. In an orchard a thief entertains himself until midnight with his mates drinking alcohol. In fact this watches an opportunity to perform his skills. One of his friends wears a golden-gilded belt. This belt is his target. Doped by the drinks everyone flies over the moon, except for the thief. Swiftly he places the belt inside his bosom and runs away in a hurry. As he runs out of breath, he realizes that the belt is about to fall. He grasps the object and suddenly feels a huge pain. That is because what he mistakenly stole as the belt was a snake after all. Thief rushes back to his friends' assembly once bitten by the snake. To stop infusion of toxin to entire body, the thief is forced to cut his own hand. Thus he is righteously punished because of his misdeed.

2.5. Story Narrating the Sacrifices made for the Sake of Love

As the subject matter in thousands of works, love's influence on human beings is presented in an unorthodox manner in one of the stories in Atâyî's masnavi. In the society there are many numbers of lovers, youngsters in particular, more than ready to sacrifice all they have for their amour. Atâyî in an attempt to validate the might of love narrates a story of passion. A Muslim boy and an exceptionally beautiful Christian girl fall in love. Although love burns up these two youngsters alive, it seems improbable for them to unite since they adopt different faiths. It simply looks impossible to receive any approval of society. Stricken with grief and worry both fall flat on their backs. In desperation they seek refuge in an imminent death. Muslim boy torn apart when knowing that even after death they would not be able to unite since in Muslim faith all Christians are doomed to Hell while he, as a Muslim boy, would hopefully reside in Heaven after death. Aspiring to meet his lover in the next world if not here on Earth, he converts to Christianity and dies in Christian faith. The grief tearing the heart of this Christian lady grows much bigger upon finding out his death. However she has no idea about the boy's conversion to Christian faith. Although she is hapless because of their impossible love in this world she still entertains hope to unite in the afterworld. Not knowing about his newly adopted Christian identity, she decides to accept Muslim faith. As seen both lovers converted their faith for the sake of only love.

In relation to sociological criticism theory, Ottoman State is a nation embracing people of different faiths. Although these citizens practice different religions they live in the same zone in daily life practices. As a social reality it can reasonably be argued that love is such a strong feeling that it has no boundaries against religion, language, race, color or any other difference and lovers are willing to change their faith just to be together.

2.6. Expectations from State Administrators

First story in Nefhatü'l-Ezhâr comments on administrators. As a common belief in Turkish culture, it is believed that sultans are shadows and agents of Allah on Earth. Thus Sultans are mandated to duly perform this holy mission. Sultans should, above anything else, stay distant from inflicting tyranny and injustice; be willing to forsake their peace and comfort for the sake of public welfare. They should abstain from vanity and false pride, act in honesty and decency. They should win the hearts of subjects by lovely words, not by sword.

3. An analysis of the work within the scope of sociological criticism

Sociological criticism theory attests that any given literary work entails in itself salient insights on a social structure. In order to apply this theory in a literary work it is essential to implement certain methods.

As argued by J. Kennedy and Dana Gioai in their work *Literature: An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry and Drama*¹¹ in order to analyze literary works within the context of sociological criticism a number of key questions could be asked. Based on these questions outlined by Gürçay¹² who applied the questions on a poetic text it is viable to examine Atâyî's Nefhatü'l-Ezhâr work within the context of sociological criticism theory.

3.1. On the Society Treated in this Work

3.1.1. Who are more influential; who are not in the society?

Founding fathers of the Ottoman State are of the origin of Muslim Turks. Notwithstanding this fact as an effect of territorial expansion in the course of time the State started to entail different ethnic groups such as Greeks, Armenians and minorities of different religious faiths in the same vein. Ruling class of the state is reserved to Muslims. In terms of social life there is not an apparent conflict among people of different faiths and yet the story illustrating impossible bonding between a Christian girl and Muslim boy, regardless of their strong love in between, indicates the presence of a cultural clash.

In the work there are some chapters that point to the fact that state administrators are expect to rule lawfully. Considering the features of the century, state administration is reserved to Ottoman dynasty. The poet narrates that as of 17th century a diversion from justice notion broke out in different institutes of Ottoman State while he specially focuses on the justice notion.

In a society it is revealed that those with an eminent religious identity are the ones with influential and authoritarian power. Some of these names can, by abusing religious authority they hold, attempt to fool the public.

It is seen in a story that yes-man has an acknowledged position within society. There is nothing special about humanitarian values for those people who, by their funny and boot-licking gestures, see no harm in becoming a laughing stock. Their juggling action as a profession is not an artistry in its modern sense; these are the demeaning and tragicomic acts in essence for the sake of earning material interests by forsaking their personality and character traits in an attempt to entertain viewers. Yes-man is a typical model corresponding to boot-lickers in our age.

3.1.2. What are the formal and informal rules in the society? What would happen in the violation of a law?

Ottoman State is ruled by the laws that combine Islamic norms and Turkish customs. Acts that violate Sharia laws are punished in accordance with the sharia decrees.

In terms of social morality context same-gender sexual affairs, man to man or woman to woman, are labeled as perversion and those who choose such relations are, if detected,

subject to punishment. In the work, at the end of stories evolving around this subject, they receive punishment by the witnesses even before they stand on trial.

Those who fall into sexual perversion that clash with social morality become a laughing stock deserving pity at the end of a story. The poet intentionally finishes their story in a pitiful ending. That is because the poet himself treats the subject matter in a socialist and moralist viewpoint. The destiny of characters that disrupt moral fabric in society is purposefully designed to end in a gruesome way to draw a lesson.

Against all the conventions in social approval the work narrates a story on pedophilia. By depicting the worst ending awaiting those with perverted feelings towards immature kids, the writer warns readers for the societal disapproval against any of these perverted acts.

In the work stories that specifically narrate violation of social moral codes it is witnessed that main characters are punished by the society and this punishment is executed in the form of either lynching or murdering.

The society disapproves stealing and seeking after undeserved gains. For instance, in the story about stealing, a snake bites a thief's hand. To stop the infusion of snake venom to whole body his hand is cut out of obligation. This practice is a reference to Islamic Sharia laws in tit-for-tat decree; those who steal with one hand have to lose the hand that steals. The poet narrates the deserved punishment in Muslim faith. Indeed he masterfully presents in his fictional story as an obligation to prevent infusion of venom into perpetrator's body.

3.1.3. What is the position of man and woman in society? What is the nature of man and woman relations?

Ottoman society aims to abide by effective Islamic law in relation to man and woman affairs. Nonetheless as a patriarchal-male dominated society, men always take the front stage in stories which are always narrated from a male perspective.

3.1.4. Which notions are valued in society (love, order, honesty etc.)?

Dwellers in the Ottoman State territory, in general, live by the rules of mutual peace and tolerance. Traditionally, honesty is always forestaged, but in the stories it is witnessed that there is an imminent downfall in this common point.

3.1.5. How can money change people's life?

In order to attain material gains essential tenets are merit and progress. However in one of these stories, as a sign of the Ottoman society's corruption in that age, there are certain names trying to earn undeserved gains through boot-licking and masquerading.

3.1.6. What type of government is in charge? How is the process of electing administrators? What are the rights of citizens?

Ottoman State is a system ruled through Sultanate (reign order). State administrators used to be commonly appointed on the basis of merit in previous centuries. However in the century the poet lived, there were traces of favoritism, bribery and social-clout across state institutes. This is a clear sign that those with no merit started to take role in state administration hence Atâyî, in the first story of his work, warns rulers not to oppress commoners and underscores concepts such as merit and justice repeatedly. The reason that the poet principally emphasizes these matters and assigns the first story in his novel to depict administrators is due to the unease he feels against emerging defects in state administration. The poet argues that a disruption in state control would eventually lead to a disruptive social harmony.

3.2. Comparing the analyzed society and society that the reader belongs to

3.2.1. In the society depicted in this work; are there any social cases not acceptable by the community?

In the society unlawful management, administrators' tyranny over commoners, usurping a senior position thanks to their social clout are deemed as unapproved actions.

These types of people who, by abusing religious values and pretending to be the sole divine ruler, exploit humans' feelings are heavily criticized in this work.

In a story depicting the stance of poet and society at large against extramarital affairs the fall of a poor boy abusing a housemaid after being hit by a ram in front of everyone is presented in a sarcastic style. Behind the doors, abuse of the pervert boy a housemaid is not a socially acceptable act hence the poet, by means of a ram, punishes the pervert boy in the way he deserves.

By featuring social value norms in some of the stories, same-sex (homosexual) affairs, man to man or woman to woman are, openly criticized; besides it becomes evident that pedophilia is demeaned as perversion and child abusers are forced to face a huge reaction from society. In this work the most noteworthy chapter that narrates obscene stories depicts both pedophilia and homosexuality. Within the framework of value judgments extolled in Ottoman society these are the kinds of acts that would never ever be tolerated. The poet masterfully narrated in a story the probable events that could take place in any given society and managed to once again embed within the plot a societal reaction.

3.2.2. Can readers from a different time and place interpret differently the views promoted in the work?

The views embedded by the poet into stories about justice, merit, undeserved gain, masquerading and stealing are interpreted similarly in almost all societies. Besides, particularly man to man or woman to woman affairs as narrated in obscene stories are deemed to be immoral acts in most societies. Still in some communities such afflictions are deemed tolerable and even treated as the legal right of humans. However all nations think the same about the abhorrence against child abuse. For instance, in modern age, sexual abuse of a child is listed in the category of major crimes.

3.3. Does the poet approve or criticize the society analyzed in his work?

3.3.1. Does the poet deem workings of society in his work to be right or wrong?

Nev'i-zâde Atâyî is a poet illustrating in his works all defects and/or actions that he deems to go wrong in his society. In particular he narrates the kind of cases he finds to be immoral in a story format. In these stories, as has already been mentioned above, he prepares a doom ending for the villain characters. This method clearly reveals the stance of the poet.

3.3.2. What are the values, merits, character traits and actions that the poet finds to be acceptable?

The poet, in many chapters, extol the values of justice, honesty, forgiveness, morality, respect for social values, respect for human rights, not aspiring to undeserved rights or status, protecting children's rights, protecting women's rights and many other global values.

Conclusion

In classical Turkish literature obscene and sexual matters are hardly ever narrated as mandated by traditional approach and beliefs. To make it more clear very few poets dared

enough to mention such matters as dictated by general practices and Nevi-zâde Atâyî is among these few names.

According to sociological criticism theory literary works entail in themselves a great number of social elements. Without society there is no literary work either. It can be argued that many stories depicted in Atâyî's work bear traces from social fabric. Stories that have presumably taken place in two metropolitan cities, Istanbul and Bursa as the capital cities of Ottoman State, are worthy of attention since the poet is in the category of realist artists. The mission of the poet is teaching benevolence to readers by exemplifying evilness. This feature gains an instructional and didactic quality to the work.

Atâyî's mission in his work is wording moral and human attitudes and behaviors observed in social life and teaching & instructing the society through the stories. The matters he analyzes can reasonably be viewed as a major reaction against matters that pervaded for ages. Atâyî; by distancing from antique stories like Leyla & Mecnun, Ferhad & Şirin who have been analyzed for centuries, managed to return to his native lands. He chose various events taking place within the quarters of Ottoman cities such as Üsküp, Bursa and Istanbul. The fact that he analyzed in his stories the kind of topics uncommon in classical literature tradition and the way he inspected unorthodox matters in his work are major novelties that divert from typical concepts of the period.

Based on the principle that art mirrors society it becomes viable to create a document out of literature works to shed light on the life practices and customs of a given society.¹³ As a poet having lived in the 17th century, in Atâyî's work a number of problems witnessed in a social structure are narrated through a realistic viewpoint. The poet presented his stories through exceptionally factual depictions. In every single story the poet designed fate of characters that he deemed to be villain and malicious in a reprehensible ending and made them a fool in the eyes of beholders. In the work of Atâyî there is a deeper purpose in choosing as socially unapproved characters mostly and building the story around their acts and motives in life. By virtue of being a socialist and moralist poet Atâyî presents to his readers observed defects in social structure and moral issues through influential and memorable fictional stories imbued with sociological criticism.

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