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FACULTY OF HUMANITIES**

With the right of manuscript

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**The Joke in the Folklore of the Peoples of Oghuz
Descent
(Turkey, Azerbaijan and Iraqi Turkmens)**

1005- Philology

ABSTRACT

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General Description of the Work

Topicality of the theme: A joke occupies a remarkable place in the folklore of Oriental peoples. This genre is particularly valuable in the folklore of the peoples of Oghuz descent (Turkey, Azerbaijan, Iraqi Turkmens). Research on jokes has its own historical and literary foundations, having been conditioned by the vast expansion of this genre in space and time. Specialists try to establish the date of the origin of jokes. Irrespective of the conducted work, the issue has not so far become a subject to special research in its complex and comparative perspectives (R. Aksoy, S. Akdeniz, M. Apaydin, H. Arsal, and others). Hence, research on jokes of the peoples of Oghuz descent is topical and significant with respect to study of the centuries-long traditions, history and culture of the above mentioned peoples.

A joke, notwithstanding the present-day technological progress, is still very popular in our days. It somehow echoes everyday problems. Hence, the processing and scholarly analyses of texts of jokes are of international importance.

History of Research on the issue: studies of jokes of the peoples of Oghuz descent mainly focus on the history of the inception and development of the genre, its characters. These issues were addressed in a number of works presenting considerable data on the case in point.

During my work on the thesis, I mainly used literature in Turkish, Azerbaijani, English, and Russian. Unfortunately, Turkmen scholarly literature dealing with the case in point is very scarce.

Among Turkish and Azerbaijani authors, the works by Z. Batur, Z. Bayraktar, A. S. Levend, I. Gruda, E. Karadayi, H. Özcan, O. Öztürk, H. Arsal, E. Kemirli, M. Kazımoğlu, A. Mirahmetov, I. Sönmez, M. Arasli, G. Paşayev, and others.

During my work on the texts of jokes, I referred to the texts published by I. Gruda, E. Karadayi, N. Dmitriev, V. A. Gordlesvki, U. Demir, F. Z. Arslan, F. F. Erşahin, E. Nâib, N. Kevseroğlu, N. Beyatli, M. H. Tahmasif, b, Kerimli, H. Ivgin, F. Burhan, G. Abdulbak, E. Ahmet, A. Çakiroğlu, and others.

The works in European and Russian languages by R. S. Health, I. Kunosh, A. Titze, N. K. Dmitriev, V. A. Gordlevski, I. Braginski, I. M. Sokolov, and others have been valuable in terms of the study of the case in point.

During the comparative study of a joke, *Caucasian Folklore*, the work by the Georgian scholar L. Chlaidze, was of considerable help.

Unfortunately, jokes by Iraqi Turkmen have not yet become a subject to a special investigation. With respect to the above said, the present thesis is the first attempt by the author.

Aim of the work: The work is aimed at manifesting the tendencies of the inception of the joke genre, its development through time and space, plots, characters, linguistic (lexical) properties, style, the vital and literary values, social motives, at studying of the satire and humour, at complex investigating the genre by means of the comparative method.

Scholarly novelty: The joke of the peoples of Oghuz descent, as a peculiar and diverse genre of folklore, has not yet become a subject to ubiquitous scholarly research within a comparative perspective. This is primarily true with respect to data occurring in Iraqi Turkmen's folklore. Iraqi Turkmen's joke enter the circulation as the jokes by an individual author, poet Esat Nâib, a part of which was published in 1973, and another is available for me as a manuscript book.

The work is a first attempt to reveal the structure, form, style, and linguistic properties of Iraqi jokes.

Theoretical and practical significance of the work: The data, analysed in the work, are significant in theoretical and practical perspectives. The conclusions, arguments and critical comments, presented in the thesis, can be applied by individuals working in various domains of humanities, predominantly, researchers of Oriental studies. The data and research outcomes of the work can be used at universities at programmes of Oriental studies and philology. The analysed data are a valuable source in historical and cultural perspectives as well.

Methodological basis of the work: In the study of the problems of the thesis, descriptive, comparative-historical, and areal research methods were applied.

Structure of the work: The volume of the thesis constitutes 162 types pages. It consists of an introduction, 3 chapters, and conclusions. The work is followed by a list of references and sources (104 items). The work is appended by definitions of Turkmen and Azerbaijani words.

Approval of the work: The work was at Akaki Tsereteli State University, and the discussion was held at the Department of Oriental Philology, Faculty of Humanities, ATSU. The papers, related to the thesis, have been published as articles.

FOREWORD

In the formation of the Central Asian civilization, the peoples of Oghuz descent occupy enormous place. After their appearance in the history, the Oghuz people underwent socio-cultural development.

Chapter 1 "The Place of the Joke in the Folklore of Oghuz Peoples and the History of its Scientific Study" deals with the history of the inception and development of the joke in Oghuz folklore. It explores the definitions as plot, time, environment, style, structure, form, characters, similarity and different

of the Oghuz joke with other genres of folklore, it identifies idiomatic expressions and maxims.

Chapter 2 "Coverage of Historical Facts, Everyday and Social Motives in the Jokes of the Peoples of Oghuz Descent" addresses the areal of the spread of jokes, characters of jokes (Hodja/Molla Nasreddin, Behlül Danende, İncili Çavuş, Bekri Mustafa, Qulu Şayida, Tamerlane, Temel, Dursun, a ruler, a merchant, a qadi, a woman, a child, an animal, etc.).

Chapter 3 is "Language, Satire and Humour of the Jokes of the Peoples of Oghuz Descent".

Abridged Content of the Thesis

INTRODUCTION

The people of Oghuz descent is one those in the world having the ancient history and culture. It is proved by *Divan-ı Lügat ü Türk* – the dictionary compiled by Mahmud al-Kashgari in the 11th century.

The people of Oghuz descent are peculiar with richness of folklore data: epics and legends, jokes and tales. The joke is one of the rich domains of folklore. The Turkish for a joke *Fıkra* is of Arabic origin, similarly to the Azerbaijani *Latife* and Turkmen *Nükte*.

Oghuz jokes render funny stories from everyday life, problems occurring in society laconically, by means of humour. Significant members of a rising action in a joke are a narrator and a listener. In terms of reflection, Oghuz jokes are divided into two: in one, a narrator is known, while, in another, it is unknown.

CHAPTER 1

The Place of the Joke in the Folklore of Oghuz Peoples and the History of its Scientific Study

Naturally enough, the date of the inception of Oghuz folklore is unknown, like those of other peoples. Oghuz jokes originate from the depth of centuries, being circulated orally. In Oghuz folklore literature, a joke, fable, parable and other genres play a great role in the study of a community's traditions. In terms of this, a joke has been the most popular of the folklore genres.

Generally, jokes are rarely preserved in the written form. The exception is the jokes associated with Hodja Nasreddin. In various countries, Hodja has been referred to in different ways. *Molla Nasreddin* (Azerbaijan), *mola nasredini* (Georgia), *Hoca Nasir* (Kazakhstan), *Anasthrathdin* (Greece), *Nasreddin Afandi* (Uzbekistan), *Efendi* (Tajikistan), *Nasreddin Hoca* (Turkey), *Nasreddin Oca* (Tatarstan), *Nasreddin Ependi* (Uyghur), *Molla Nasreddin* (Iran). The common element for all names in various countries is "Nasreddin." *Nasreddin* is a word of Arabic origin, literally meaning "Victory of the Deen." Written sources allowed the famous Turcologist V. Gordlevski to suppose that Nasreddin was born in Sivrişehir, spent a greater part of his life in Akşehir, and died there. That should have happened in the 13th century. Some believe that Nasreddin was Tamerlane's contemporary. Hodja's first jokes might have been associated with his birthplace. In Turkey, two towns, Akşehir and Sivrişehir compete for the honorable title of Hodja's birthplace. Generally, a number of countries claim to be Hodja's homeland. It was in the 14th century when the famous Turkish poet Lami recorded Hodja's jokes for the first time. In his book, he included Hodja's jokes together with those of his own and of his renowned disciples. The jokes seem to have been circulated very fast. Evliya Çelebi, a 17th

century traveller, writes that Hodja's jokes are estimated as ten times as many as one hundred.

The collection and scientific study of the texts of Oghuz jokes began in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The jokes, originating from the depth of centuries, have been vitally preserved not only among the peoples of Oghuz descent. As Abdülkadir İnan wrote, "for so many centuries, Hodja Nasreddin, riding a donkey, goes from the Chinese wall till the Pyrenean peninsula." Due to their traditional oral short form, jokes are easily preserved in mind and widely circulated, having been greatly facilitated in Turkey by *meddah* (storytellers) and in Azerbaijan by *Oxuncu* (readers; cf. Georgian *oxunji*).

In Turkey, the first samples of the joke genre were published during the Tanzimat era. The first newspaper *Takvim-i Vekayi* ("Calendar of Events") was published in 1831, and jokes appeared in it. Jokes in print became widespread since the early 20th century. Specifically, beginning from 1908, newspapers and magazines frequently published jokes. Jokes, which used to be circulated only orally from a people to a people, from a village to a village, were recorded by the writer Ahmet Raşim, followed by the writers Falih Rıfku Atay, Refik Halit Karay, Orhan Seyfi Orhon, Peyami Safa, Burhan Felek, Ahmet Kabaklı and Çetin Altan. Print editions made it clearer that humour generates critical thinking, and critical thinking generates and nourishes humour.

The first humorist magazine, published in Turkey by Teodor Kasap, was *Diyojen*. In 1903, he left the newspaper *Şarkı-Rus* (Oriental Russia), published in Azerbaijani, and, in 1906 in Tbilisi, began to publish a humorist magazine *Molla Nasreddin*. The magazine *Fas'tan İran'a* ("From Morocco to Iran"), published in 1906-1917 in Tbilisi, in 1921 in Tabriz, and up to 1931 in Baku, comprised a wide circle of Muslim readers and enjoyed great interest. The magazine was published in Azerbaijani, Russian, and,

sometimes, Ottoman and Persian. It was accompanied by cartoons needing no captions. Earlier, in 1910, Veled Çelebi İzbudak, with the penname "Bahar", published Hodja Nasreddin's jokes with the title *Letaif Nasreddin Hoca*. It is noteworthy that, in 1892, in *Calendar of Georgia*, Valerian Gunia published Hodja Nasreddin's 27 jokes. In 1893, Alexandre Mirakishvili published 125 jokes, translated from Ottoman under the title *Molla Nasreddin's Witticisms and Ottoman Proverbs*.

The systematic study of the Azerbaijani folklore literature started in 1880s. The first researcher of Azerbaijani folklore was the writer Yusuf Vezir. Among other Azerbaijani researchers the following have been well-known: Mehmed Arasli, Behlül Abdulla, Rafik İsmailov, Aziz Mirahmetov and Memmethüseyn Tahmasib who wrote special works on Molla Nasreddin's jokes. Besides, all provinces of Azerbaijan have their own Molla Nasreddin and their traditions are still alive. Molla Nasreddin's jokes are popular almost in all the cities of Azerbaijan. His character seems to have become an Azerbaijani citizen. In terms of being popular in Azerbaijan, Molla is followed by the character of Behlül Danende.

It is noteworthy that topics of Behlül Danende's and Molla Nasreddin's jokes are different. Among the local jokes, circulated in Azerbaijan, we should identify Şeki jokes (mostly associated with Hacı Dayı), Karabakh and Abdal Kasım jokes, Dagestani jokes, and others. Despite the distinctions, almost all jokes are associated with the names of Molla Nasreddin and reiterate plots of Hodja Nasreddin's jokes.

The people of Oghuz roots, living in the north of Iraq since the 13th-14th centuries, are known as Iraqi Turkmens. Most of them live in the city of Kerkuk. Their folklore heritage has not so far become subject to special investigations. There are only some works dealing with Iraqi Turkmens' proverbs and sayings. Local jokes are published in newspapers and magazines. These newspapers are *Beşir* (1959), *Kerkük* (1938), *Ileri*. In

March, 1961, in Baghdad, "Türkmen Kardeşlik Ocağı" (Association of Turkmens' Fraternity) published the magazine *Kardeşlik* ("Fraternity") in Arabic and Turkish. A half of the magazine was printed in the Roman alphabet, and another in Arabic.

Initially, the illustrated book of Hodja Nasreddin was published by Necat Kevseroğlu in 1969. In it, the jokes deal with Tamerlane.

Among the Kerkuk literary men, we should not Esat Nâib, alias Nâib-oğlu. The majority of the jokes, published by Esat Nâib in 1973, are based on historical facts, covering the everyday life of the people of Kerkuk in a humorous way. Among them, there are numerous subtle jokes, revitalizing actual events from the lives of Iraqi Turkmens (associated with positions and duties: executor, governor, secretary, teacher, judge, officer, merchant, barber, butcher, worker). Characters, representing various occupations, occur in the jokes of Kerkuk Turkmens. Hodja/Molla Nasreddin is among them. Names of actual characters too occur in *Kerkuk Jokes* by Esat Nâib: those of Nâib's father and his friends. His jokes are written in verse, in the form of distichs. One part of them deals with contemporary individuals, while another renders popular stories from Turkmens' historical past. Iraqi Turkmens' jokes, associated with Hodja Nasreddin, were collected and published by Necat Kevseroğlu in 1965. The Azerbaijani scholar Gazanfer Paşayev published a collection of Kerkuk Turkmens' jokes.

Among contemporary Turkish specialists, H. Özcan's paper "Jargon in Bektaşiyе Jokes" has been significant. Concerning the Bektaşiyе jokes, H. Şahin's paper "Jokes and Theoretical Significance of Laughter", M. Arıkan's paper "Foundations of the Cognition of Power in the Bektaşiyе Jokes", Y. Gruda's "Bektaşiyе Jokes in Verse", H. Özcan's doctoral dissertation "Traditions and Foundations of the Bektaşiyе", T. Özer's paper "Bektaşiyе Jokes Told in Nevşehir" have been remarkable.

In Turkish folklore, besides Hodja Nasreddin, I identify jokes about Temel. Alongside with texts, Eyüp Karadayı's book *300 Jokes about Temel* analyses investigations concerning Temel. Hüseyin Ayan's book *Mevlevi Witticisms and Jokes* addresses the study of the Mevlevi. Halit Karaoğlu's *The World's Humorous Jokes* is a study of globally famous jokes and their characters.

The jokes, associated with the name of Bu Adam, have also been very popular. These are a collection of anonymous jokes, the main character of which is referred to as Bu Adam ("This man"). They were collected and published by the well-known writer Mehmet Tevfik in the 19th century. Later, Academician N. Dmitriev appended the Bu Adam jokes with an introduction and a vocabulary and, in 1928, thus published it as a workbook for students in the Ottoman language. It should be initially stated that those jokes were greatly influenced by those of Hodja/Molla.

Noteworthy data appeared in the texts published by Atila Çakiroğlu *Jokes in Verse*. In it, jokes appear as Ruba'is (quatrain). It only Çakiroğlu who records jokes this way. Also important are the narrators of jokes living in regions of Azerbaijan: Qulu (18th c.), Hacı Qulu (19th-20th cc.), Xarrat Qulu (1823-1883), Abdürrahim Bey (1860-1922), Xudu Bey (19th-20th cc.), Karbalayı Şirin (1868-1931), Amdalı Mehdiyev (1882-1941), Abdal Qasım (1873-1921), Küne Demir (1903-1973), Fadar Yusuf (20th c.), etc.

1.1 A Place of the Joke in the Folklore of the Peoples of Oghuz Descent

A joke is a hard-to-believe, mostly fictional, unusual, funny story, nimbly rendered by a sharp eloquent person. It is a genre of a humorous discourse, having a specific form, content, and particular tone. Culture of a people, living in a certain province, is best seen in a joke. It is widespread

both in urban folklore and in countryside. Brief humorous texts show well a people's ethnic culture.

A joke is aimed at not only making public laugh but also making them think and at teaching them a lesson; at covering socially crucial problems, human evil and kindness by means of a brief narrative. Jokes were created not just to entertain the high society but, generally, for people. Representatives of all layers of public can find themselves in a comic situation. The popular narrator of Oghuz jokes is Hodja/Molla Nasreddin.

Characters of Oghuz jokes mostly live in countryside and, therefore, jokes cover village life. However, it can be assumed that they were composed in town, within certain social circles. Shifts of political and social formations did not diminish the role of its author satirists and humorists.

1.2 Peculiarities of Oghuz Jokes

Faith, traditions, folklore, music, spectacular genres of Oghuz peoples have been interconnected. However, alongside with similarities, there are sizeable differences as well. In jokes, individuals able of smart, witty statements are typicized. People ascribe witticisms, instant smart replies to one character, and the narrator is a jester Molla/Hodja Nasreddin.

A story, rendered in a joke, deals with one or two characters, being juxtaposed, and their contradiction is transformed into an unusual, funny story. An action, developed in jokes by means of witticism, either actually takes place or a fruit of one's fantasy. Time by time, a joke takes on new data. A joke meets time; therefore, an old one is appended with a new detail or is altered by a new one.

Plot: Social, political, historical, and geographic plots are identified in jokes. An actual story becomes a plot of a joke. Human relations are rendered by means of ludicrous kind criticism. Jokes address all social layers.

In Oghuz jokes, characters are diverse. Both imaginary and historical personalities occur in them.

Albeit a joke assumes an eloquent and smart author, it however cannot reach poeticity, elevated literary peaks. Unusual, hard-to-believe everyday stories are a funny case. A joke is based on human relations, their contradictions, being rendered by means of light irony. In a joke, a tone of a sentence is lightened.

In terms of plot, the Azerbaijani joke does not very much differ from its Turkish counterpart. Its plots are political, historical, and social. The characters present the images of Molla Nasreddin, Behlül, famous historical personality Tamerlane, and other humorous ones. Besides, the Shia-Suni differences have not been covered in the jokes. Hodja/Molla are both servants of the faith, "Nasreddin".

The plot of the Kerkuk Turkmens' joke is social stories about Hodja/Molla Nasreddin. Adventures of Hodja/Molla Nasreddin seem to deal with whole public and generalized with respect to all unjust rulers. Topics are diverse everywhere: life and death, heaven and hell, family, religious festivals (Bayram, Ramazan), Padeshah, rich and poor, nature, food, drink, craft, guest, qadi, drunken man, etc.

Time: In jokes, the factor of time has been generalized, losing concreteness. Time may only be concerned in the jokes whenever a character is a historical figure. In the joke, the factor of time is associated with plots of everyday stories and ideas. The exact chronological date has been unknown.

A popular character of Azerbaijani and Turkish jokes is Tamerlane who used to be dealt with in oral and written jokes even following his death.

Space: The joke deals with what has happened within an actual geographical area, while many other events take place in an unreal, imaginary space. In jokes, customs and interests change from a region to a region. A joke gains circulation swiftly and acquires credit with respect to an area. It

will speak the language of the geographical area it enters. A mountain, a valley, a field, a river, a desert, a plateau, a sea of the country, in which the story goes on, appear in the plot.

Public and characters of jokes belong to a certain geographical area, town, village, quarter, etc. a story goes on both within a sizeable and lesser space. The role of the social milieu is also great in jokes. A listener finds a connection between a story and characters in jokes. Characters are to be evaluated always in combination with space and things. Turkish, Azerbaijani and Iraqi Turkmens' jokes respectively present various places, palaces, nature, institutions, etc.

Change of space is accompanied by change of a plot. For instance, the sea and a fisherman appear in the plots of the Black Sea coast jokes, while, other jokes, as exemplified by Bektaşiyе jokes, display a mosque and other religious institutions. Generally, a joke portrays everyday life: home, school, mosque, bazaar, bath, road, court, field, garden, etc.

Form of narrative: In contemporary literature, particularly in texts of jokes, a stable character fills a situation and the joke become complete. A narrator of some jokes is known, while, in others, he is unknown. Generally, a joke, as a continuous narrative, consists of an introduction, a text, and a conclusion.

In Turkey, Yılmaz Gruda collected Bektaşiyе jokes and published them in the form of a *vers libre*. Jokes in such a form occur only in Turkey.

The jokes, occurring in Azerbaijan, are greatly influenced by Turkish folklore.

Esat Nâib's *Kerkuk Jokes*, on the one hand, consist of actual stories and characters. On the other hand, a joke is followed by a verse line, written as a quatrain, which is a satirical stanza associated with a plot. Such jokes occur only with Iraqi Turkmens. The influence of Anatolian jokes is observable in those from *Hodja Nasreddin* published by Necat Kevseroğlu.

1.3 Oghuz jokes and their similarities and differences with other folklore genres

Structure and form: Oghuz jokes are in a way similar to other folklore genres: fairy tale, proverbs, riddles, tongue-twister/pun. It reveals most similarities with fairy tale novellas. They are characterized of retelling a story for the sake of joyous amusement and entertainment. A joke may occur in a text of a fairy tale. A person, referred to in a fairy tale, is "a type", "an image". Persons, referred to in a joke, are "characters". The scene is mostly laid in the past. Both genres convey teaching of a lesson in order to instruct, and, meanwhile, contain satire. Plots of the genres are distinct, but, in a fairy tale, a plot is more principal. Both genres have a special narrator. A joke is brief and a fairy tale is long. A joke covers actual life, while a fairy tale is a fantastic story (inn, magician, angel). Extraordinary characters and legends frequently occur in a fairy tale, whereas this is not a case with a joke. Thus, in terms of content and architectonic, they are different.

With respect to structure, Oghuz jokes reveal both similarities and differences with other folklore genres. It is structurally firm. Its internal structure consists of two parts: it opens with a long story, followed by a short one, and an unexpected end. It is characterized by novelty and pragmatism. Hodja, being in a seeming dilemma, quickly finds a way out. His answer is entirely acceptable even for Tamerlane.

A joke consists of three parts: introduction, main story (topic), and ending. Topics of jokes are social, political, economic stories. Normally, a joke has no title; they are given titles only by publishers. An introduction and a story are short. An introductory part has one or two sentences; characters and time are definite. More frequently, time is indefinite: the time, date of a story is not mentioned. A story is conveyed comprehensively and in detail. It deals with either one or two individuals, and a different situation is generated by means of personal differences between them; frequently, a character

calmly ridicules his "victim". By telling an unusual story, a narrator provokes interest among listeners.

Generally, jokes are composed of either a witty word or a story. These stories are either actual ones or fictional. New characters constantly emerge in jokes. In a fairy tale, a story is always fictional, a fruit of fantasy.

A joke presents a process and end of a story. An end of a joke is very witty and covers either a smart or a stupid character. Owing to that, the principal property of a joke is that a funny or an introspective story is conveyed by means one or two sentences in the end, which can be assumed the most significant part in order to render an action contradicting the story. Final sentences emphasize the main idea, meanwhile, forming a witty and comic ending.

Characters: Characters of jokes reveal similarities and differences with those of other genres of folklore. Most similarities occur with characters of fairy tales. In a joke, a character is either actual or fictional. Actual characters are: Hcdja Nasreddin, Behlül Danende, İncili Çavuş, Bekri Mustafa, Kulu Şeyda, Tamerlane, etc. Jokes refer to statesmen: Sultan, Padeshah, vizier, qadı, commander, writer, etc., occupations associated with religion: apostle, mufti, Bektaşî, Mevlana, etc.

Characters of a fairy tale are only imaginary ones comprising almost all layers of public: Padeshah, vizier, white-bearded old man, stepmother, magician, jinn, fairy, kindness, evil, clever, stupid, bear, fox, wolf, etc.

Proverbs, idiomatic expressions and maxims: Sometimes, a principal plot opens with a proverb. Such jokes occur everywhere and sometimes the proverbs are identical in terms of their sense. Frequently, a joke ends in instructive witty, aphoristic statements,

A joke have frequently become a source for witty saying and, moreover, a proverb. Proverbs, originating from jokes, are of a humorous and satirical character. For instance, in Turkish and Azerbaijani, the

expression "ipe un sermek" ("S/he is hanging up flour over a rope") is used in the same meaning as "To cause and reason – salt is missing" ("mizezmizez dos marili ak'liao"), uttered when somebody does not want to do something and tries to invent reasons. Another widespread proverb is "ne zaman iki kirli insan karşılaşırsa birbirleri için ikisi de kutsal olur demiştir" ("When two dirty one meet, they are pure for each other"). The more the sense of unexpected in a joke, the greater is expressiveness. There is inconsiderable difference between a joke and a proverb. A joke portrays people's everyday life. Proverbial sayings are characterised by a rhythmic order, sometimes of an internal rhyme. A message is laconic, brief. This is what its definition refers to "clear-cut word".

CHAPTER 2

Coverage of Historical Facts, Everyday and Social Motives in the Jokes of the Peoples of Oghuz Descent

Jokes are based upon social life of public, historical events and facts. Irrespective of the similarity of the customs of Turcophone peoples, each of them have a number of peculiarities of their own. Therefore, I will address this issue with a view to the territorial principle.

The area of the Black Sea coast jokes spreads from Sakarya lowland till the Georgian frontier and is rather sizeable. Here, plots, associated with navigation and fishing, are salient.

Iraqi Turkmens are a Turcophone people inhabiting the north of Iraq. They live in Erbil and Kerkuk, and adjacent villages and towns, also in Altinköprü, Küştepe, Dakuk, Tazehurmatu, Karatepe, Kifri, Leylan, etc. jokes echo everyday stories of Iraqi Turkmens living there. They cover historical present and past. For example, the jokes, covering the massacre

having happened in Kerkuk in 1959, written by Esat Nâib. He, as a patriotic participant and an eyewitness of those events, was forcibly exiled by the authorities to the city of Nasiye for 2 years. He did not cease his literary activities. The following jokes of the period are remarkable: "Arbitration Court", "Did he miss an exam?", "Don't touch anybody's freedom", etc. the joke "Freedom" openly accuses the existing regime:

"An American Democrat and a Russian Communist are travelling together, each of them was praising his country. The American said: In my country, he have such freedom that, if I criticise President Truman in a crowded place in front of the White House, Washington, DC, nobody will prevent me; I will even receive applaud.

The Russian Communist replied: "We have more freedom. If I criticise President Truman in a crowded place in front of the Kremlin in Moscow, nobody will prevent me; I will even receive applaud".

"Don't be afraid, brave man, this word is true,
All roads lead to Rome (Ride you horse to gallop)".

Societal events, all domains of social and political history are presented in comical colours, wittily rendered in Hodja's jokes. They refer to famous historical personalities such as Mevlana – a great Turkish Persian-speaking poet, a founder of the Mevlevi Order. His versified jokes are well-known, which tell about events in the history of the Mevlevi Order, presenting religious characters in satirical forms. The Mevlevi jokes are distinct from Hodja's ones, irrespective of the fact that they too occur in Hodja's times.

Among the famous characters of jokes, the Bektaşîye have been remarkable. According to these jokes, the Turkish Sufi Hacı Bektaşî Veli's contribution has been enormous in popularising of Hodja Ahmed Yesevi's teaching. Bektaşî means dependent on "Hacı Bektaş Veli", following his way. The Bektaşî jokes were first investigated by Dursun Yıldırım. They

convey implications on humour, satire, confidence, criticism, apprehension, mind, composed by a talented author. These jokes saliently demonstrate the Bektaşîye's tolerance.

The character of the jokes, widespread in Shia Azerbaijan, is Hodja/Molla Nasreddin. Most of the jokes are associated with the name of Tamerlane: "Bath", "Padeshah wants you to say", "Tamerlane's question", "Elephant doubled", etc. generally, objects of Hodja/Molla's ridicule are representatives of various social layers: he defeats Tamerlane, Shah Abbas, Pasha, a merchant.

Similarly, the famous comic character is Behlül Danende. Behlül (Pehlül, Buhlül) is known as Behlülü Dana in Oriental countries. A great number of jokes about Behlül Danende have been preserved and widely circulated. Behlül is still a living character in all parts of Azerbaijan. According to legends, actually Behlül was from Kufa, Iraq. Based on sources, he lived in Baghdad in the times of the fifth Abbasid Caliph Harun al-Rashid (788-809). According to some information, she might have been either a brother or a milk sibling to Harun al-Rashid. Reports about Behlül have been based on legends. Initially, Behlül was an ordinary man. Later, he was greatly influenced by the tradition of hymns and mysticism, stopped being an ordinary man and turned into a different one. Besides, his talk is witty and venomous. By means of these traits, Behlül appears as a carrier of a popular philosopher's identity. Behlül, both in Turkish and Persian and Arabic literatures, is a character of jokes. Hodja and Behlül emerged almost simultaneously in the first selected collections of Oriental culture and Anatolian jokes. According to the jokes, the dead are more reliable than living ones. Concerning Behlül, I will cite the joke "The dead are more reliable":

"One day, Behlül was found playing between tombstones. They asked him:

Hey, Behlül, what are you doing in the grave? Are not you afraid at all?

Behlül answered very calmly: I am together with those and talking with those who do not try to suppress me and to scold me behind my back. They are more reliable than the living ones”.

Even peoples' religion occurs in comic colour in Oghuz jokes. The observation of Hocja Nasreddin's jokes arouses suspicions that he might have received his first lessons from his father, might have been influenced by religion and the Mevlevi mystic order. Hodja Nasreddin was a serious person with sound moral features, brought up based on the Islamic faith, and a just judge. This is exemplified by the joke “Qadi”:

“One day when Hodja was serving as a qadi, two men came to him, and one told that another one had bit his ear. The other man said that it was the first one who bit his own ear. Hodja told both of them to leave and come later. When the men left, Hodja held his ear to find out whether he would be able to bite it, and, when he was pulling it, he fell down and broke his head. He banded the wound and sat down. When the men came back, Hodja said: Gentlemen, you cannot bite you own ear, moreover, you may fall and break you head”. Similar jokes are “Teacher”, “Hodja and Preaching”, “Hodja Nasreddin as a qadi”, etc.

In various regions, Hodja Nasreddin has become to belong to various religious sects. The topics of god, faith, and mysticism occupy a great place in his jokes. Nasreddin demonstrate his essential knowledge of Islamic moral and philosophy. The jokes show that Hodja/Molla is a carrier of mystic culture.

Traditions and customs are rendered in comic colours in jokes. It happens because jokes are aimed at not only making laugh and amusing a listener but also at making think, thus influencing society. Jokes somehow

reflect social structure of society. Hence, some jokes present positive aspects of life as well.

Composing of jokes has been associated with crucial problems of society. It is determined by significant topics; for example, “Brother merchant”, “Little difference”, “What should I pay for”, “Shop-keeper's laughter”, etc.

Woman: It is salient that a woman is one of the main characters in Muslim jokes. She plays a role of a bridge in society. Her share is enormous in communal life. For example, the jokes published under the following titles: “Camel Skull”, “Father's Prayer”, “Praise of Cheese”, “Blue Beads”, “Warmth of Snow”, “Masculine Dignity”, etc. In Hodja Nasreddin's Akşehir and Konya jokes, a woman is a mother, wife, sister, grandmother, aunt, daughter, daughter-in-law, etc.

Based on the Black Sea coast jokes, a woman is allocated a significant place in social life. A woman's role is particularly advanced in the jokes associated with Temel. A woman is never ridiculed in them. They greatly respect a woman but make her appear in very comic situations. This is exemplified by the joke “When will the resurrection take place?”:

“Hodja was asked, when will the doomsday take place? Which doomsday?, he said.

Hodja: Which resurrection? How many resurrection are there?, they asked.

Hodja: There are two resurrections. If my wife dies, it will be a smaller resurrection; if I die, it will be a greater one, he replied.”

It is noteworthy that a woman's character is tabooed in the Bektaşiyе jokes irrespective of great respect towards woman. A totally different situation is in jokes of Azerbaijan. Funny stories about women are told by the renowned and eloquent character Molla Nasreddin, Behlül, etc. Hodja/Molla listens carefully to his wife's advice. Sometimes, Hodja protects his wife

from scandalmonger neighbours. For instance, the joke "Please ask my wife to proceed the way or not":

"Once Hodja was told:

- Your wife is always outdoor walking from a street to a street.
- I don't think that you are telling the truth – replied Hodja.
- Had it been the truth, she would drop in home".

In Azerbaijani jokes, a woman (Kadin) is a mother (Anne), wife (Avrad), grandmother (Büyükanne), aunt (Hala), sister (Kızkardeş), daughter (Kız).

A woman appears in similarly positive positions in Kerkuk jokes as well.

Child: Child is most beloved among the characters of Oghuz jokes. Jokes demonstrate a child's naivety. In Oghuz jokes, a child acts smartly and correctly in all ages. For instance, in the jokes "Nothing", "Fresh talent", "Cautious son", "The song of Molla's son's", and others.

In Kerkuk jokes, the relationship of a child and father is particular; they address the problem of a child's polite upbringing and obedience to parents.

Statesman: Characters of statesmen are diverse. It seems that the Oghuz people have had powerful rulers since ancient times, having frequently become characters of jokes: Padeshah, Sultan, Pasha, qadi, first secretary, mufti, etc.

Many statesmen appear on stage in everyday vital moments in the jokes of Hodja Nasreddin, Behlül, and Bu Adam.

Azerbaijani jokes too portray a number of statesmen; Padeshah, Shah, Caliph, vizier, philosopher, scientist, and others. Particular popularity is enjoyed by Tamerlane. There is no social barrier for Hodja/Molla Nasreddin. Formidable Tamerlane is sometimes a naive ruler in front of dexterous Nasreddin. For instance, "You are a guest here":

"Once Tamerlane gave peaches to Molla and said:

Take them to my palace.

Molla took the peaches to the cemetery and left them there. When Tamerlane came back home, he asked Molla:

- Where did you take my peaches?

Molla answered: As you ordered, I took your peaches to your palace, that is, to the cemetery. Your real palace is there, and this one is temporary where you are as a guest."

Similarly acute is the following joke:

"Tamerlane is asking Hodja – What would be my nickname, had I been Abbasid?

- Neuzü Billah, that is, May God rid us of you, answered Hodja".

Tamerlane is a character of many other stories: "Ruler's generosity", "Tamerlane's dreams", "Dexterity of a fox", "Power of fear", "Spiritual father".

Animal: Animals, as characters, occupy a significant place. The relationships of an animal and a human are presented in comic colours in jokes. The main character is a donkey which is frequently ridden by Hodja with a turkey under his elbow all over the world. A donkey, as a domestic and calm animal, is a companion of all humans' and, specifically, Nasreddin's everyday life, as in the following jokes: "Good-for-nothing donkey", "Goat", "Bloodhound", "Molla's camel", etc.

Generally, jokes emphasise a donkey's patience, endurance, its loyal service to humans. Other animals occur as well: wolf, horse, sheep, ox, deer, etc.

Bird: It is remarkable that there is a particular relationship between birds and a hunter. Characters of jokes are: nightingale, parrot, pigeon, falcon, owl, eagle, bat, pheasant, peacock ("Molla's turkey", "Owl", "Crow", etc.).

CHAPTER 3

Language, Satire and Humour of the Jokes of the Peoples of Oghuz Descent

3.1. Language: While rendering a funny story, the language of a joke, more exactly, of its narrator is simple and laconic. A story is rendered by means of a popular, colloquial language. Naturally enough, characters of jokes speak dialects pertaining to local territories. Oghuz Turks' customs and traditional popular literature are very rich. Oral Oghuz literature are almost devoid of the influence of foreign vocabulary.

The language and lexicon of jokes are of particular importance in jokes. Naturally enough, Turkish dialects are distinct from those of Azerbaijani and Turkmen. Each character of a joke mostly speaks their native dialect, for instance, the Black Sea coast dialect, which is greatly influenced by Laz.

A Laz is a popular character in the Black Sea coast jokes. He is portrayed as a comic character. Laz Temel is a collective image of the Black Sea coast: moderately intelligent, dexterous, comic and humorous character. In contemporary Turkish folklore, Temel is a representative of the middle layer of the Black Sea coast people. Other characters, referred to in the Black Sea coast jokes, are: Dursun, İdris, Yunus, Fadime, and others. Humorous passages, having emerged as a result of civilisation, abound in them.

Characters of the jokes of the Black Sea coast and Konya speak local dialects, subtle, simple sentences, and Laz lexical units and those of Arabic and Persian origin rarely occur.

In specialists' opinion, Azerbaijani jokes were spread in provinces in dialect forms. Owing to this, famous Molla Nasreddin's, Behlül's and other jokes are composed on the same dialects.

Azerbaijani jokes circulated among the peoples of the North Caucasus: Karachays, Balkars, Circassians, Ingush, Ossetians, etc. it was

facilitated by the fact that, in the 19th century, "Tatar" was an international language in the Caucasus.

Since 13th-14th centuries, Northern Iraq was populated by ethnic Turkmens. In this geographical region, Kerkuk Turkmens were a part of the Ottoman state. Their writing is based on Arabic. Arabic and Persian words occur in their jokes.

The language of Iraqi Turkmens' is close to Azerbaijani. The Kerkuk variety is closer to Azerbaijani than to Turkish. Besides, the Kerkuk dialect is more similar to Tabriz Turkish than to Azerbaijani. Linguistic peculiarities of Iraqi Turkmens were reflected in the jokes of Kerkuk Turkmens. They have maintained the popular Turkmen language. Uniqueness of the Kerkuk dialect has been demonstrated with its lexicon.

The Bektaşiyе jokes are composed in particular verse form. Yilmaz Gruda's book *Bektaşiyе Jokes in Verse* has been identified because they are written in verse. The jokes, written in this form, occur only with the Bektaşiyе.

3.2. Satire: In Oghuz tribes (Turkey, Azerbaijan, Turkmens), "satire" is rendered by the word of Arabic origin – *Hiciv*. A joke itself contains an ironic understanding of a story; therefore, its principal component is satire. Satire and humour of Oghuz jokes are in accord with the geographical area. In the Black Sea coast jokes, the population and their activities are portrayed in satirical forms. In the Bektaşiyе jokes, satire and overt irony are conveyed laconically; however, humane attitude has been readily observable. A joke does not make anybody blush and does not make anybody feel uneasy. Even Hodja Nasreddin appears in funny situations; hence, he becomes a subject of ridicule. Hodja/Molla is a syncretic personality. Sometimes he is a sage, and sometimes he is stupid and reckless but always satirical and humorous. "Hodja was asked: What is done with the

Old Moon when the New Moon appears? – They cut it and make stars, answered Hodja”.

Restraint is peculiar to the Bektaşîye jokes, essentially associated with religion, fanaticism, and conservatism. Satire is descriptive in Molla Nasreddin’s jokes.

Satire occupies a great place in Iraqi Turkmens’ popular literature. In satirical forms, jokes portray outlook, way of life, phases of life from birth to death, joy and sadness. Among the jokes, the most satirical plot has been given in Iraqi, Kerlek witty sayings; this is because they render true stories. For instance, “A stingy man’s account”, “Rebellion”, “Every good-looking one has a shameful aspect”, “Unseen”, etc.

3.3. Humour: The Oghuz equivalent of “humour” is *Mizah*. It is of Arabic origin. Since the 13th century, jokes portray political, economic, social, and religious situations in a humorous, funny, ridiculous form. Humour provides for the readiness of a comical milieu for the relationship of an individual and a community. As different from satire, it is more sympathetic than aggressive. Inequivalence of an action and its judgement generates a comic situation: “Hodja visited a city and walked in a bazaar. A man pestered asking what day it was. I don’t know, son; this is my first time in this city and I have no idea of its days. Ask a local one, answered Hodja”.

Most of the jokes deal with social problems. Extreme material poverty has been rendered by means of incredibly light humour. “Bu Adam was standing in the street together with his father. They saw a dead man being carried out. Bu Adam asked his father: Daddy, where is this dead man taken to?”

Father – The dead man is taken where there is no food, no drink, no clothes, in a word, where there is nothing.

- Alas, daddy, are they taking him to our home? – exclaimed frightened Bu Adam”.

In jokes, the message of the social and psychological unity of public, of friendship, fraternity, tolerance, love, respect, patience come from Hodja Nasreddin’s and other personalities. In the jokes of Turkish public, social humour comprises all layers of society. Iraqi Turkmens composed powerful jokes in prose and verse dealing with social issues.

Jokes portray Padeshahs’ everyday lives and relationships with people in the Ottoman period in comic colours. Particularly famous are İncili Çavuş’s jokes. His real name is Mustafa Çavuş. He lived in the later half of the 16th century and the earlier half of the 17th century at the palace under Sultan Ahmed I. his jokes deal with palace people and, particularly, Padeshahs. For instance, the jokes “My God, Padeshah!”:

“By Padeshah’s order, İncili parodied one of the viziers and entertained the Padeshah. When the vizier learnt this, he got angry and said: “I must teach İncili a lesson as model for all”.

Sadden İncili told Padeshah about his problem. Padeshah said: “Let’s see if he does anything to you, I will hang him at once” – as soon as he finished, İncili said, “God, my Padeshah, can you hang him before he kills me?”.

The political jokes represent a veiled criticism of the failure of the Ottoman Empire in World War I. In these jokes satirically and humorously convey the impact of war on people’s mental health and the changes taking place in the conservative, traditional and religious society of wartime Turkey. The black humor jokes represent a veiled criticism of the failure of the Ottoman Empire in World War I

Many jokes were composed and written in the Republican period. One of such examples is the joke “Service”:

Atatürk organised a dinner in the Dolmabahçe Palace to honour a head of one of the states. A waiter came in with a plate in his hand; he stumbles and the plate poured between the hands and breast of the head of

the foreign state. The place became a mess. Everyone was waiting for Atatürk's reaction. As contrast to the expectations, he was not angry with the waiter. He turned to the head of the state and told him very calmly: "Your Highness, please, forgive us. I taught this people everything but I was unable to teach them to serve!"

Azerbaijani jokes too evaluate the activities of state and political leaders of old and new periods humorously. To exemplify this, I will cite the joke "A Jew's resourcefulness":

"Telegram: "Moscow. Kremlin. To Lenin. Comrade Lenin, please help a poor Jew". Next day, Rabinovich was summoned to a due place and told:

- "Are you stupid? Lenin died so many years ago.

- You don't say so; when you need it, he is immortal, and when a poor Jew is in need, you say that he died long ago".

The political joke started to incept and develop among Iraqi Turkmens following the Republican years. Esat Nâib's and Kevseroğlu's jokes render political plots. Jokes from that period about the massacre of Turkmens have been well-known.

When dealing with satirical humour, we should particularly address black humour. Black humour almost does not differ from satire and criticism, but its criticism is more ruthless. Black humour is salient in the jokes of Hodja Nasreddin, Bektaş, Temel, Dursun. This is the case, for instance, in the joke about Ternel "Hell":

"Time came and Temel died, went to the other world. When angels where punching him to drive to hell because of heaviness of his sins, Temel addressed the: Listen if you behave so, be sure that nobody will come here!"

In jokes, the dialogue between Hodja Nasreddin and Tamerlane well demonstrate Tamerlane's tyrant, unjust behavior and, simultaneously, his

leadership and Mongolian character; specifically, "The Most Dangerous Beggar", "Tamerlane's Question", "Who Brings Misfortune", "Tamerlane's Nickname". In order to exemplify that, I will cite the joke: *Tamerlane and the Other World*:

"One day, Tamerlane asked Hodja:

- I wonder whether I will be sent in the other world? Heaven or hell?

Hodja concentrated immediately and said:

- Your blessed heart should not be occupied by such things, my Padeshah. What will you do if you go to heaven? Great khans like Hulagu and Genghiz are in hell. Is the Great Padeshah like you less than them to go to heaven?"

Black humour has been similarly well observable in the jokes of the Bektaşîye Dervish Order. The topics of these jokes are: heaven, hell, doomsday, evil, kindness, death, etc. the same can be said about Azerbaijani and Turkmen jokes. The usage of black humour in jokes has a satirical character and warns public.

CONCLUSION

The joke genre is an essential part of the folklore of the peoples of Oghuz descent. The common literary and folklore character of the Oghuz world is Hodja/Molla Nasreddin. Since the 13th century, the inception of the joke in Turkey, Azerbaijan, and Iraqi Turkmens has been associated with Hodja Nasreddin. In various regions his name was trans iterated in different ways: In Azerbaijan – Mulla Nasreddin, in Turkey – Nasreddin Hoca, and in Iraqi Turkmens – Mulla Nasreddin/Nasreddin Hoca. Besides *Nasreddin*, the Oghuz folklore is familiar with Bu Adam, Behlül Darendê, İncili Çavuş, Temel, Kulu Şeyda, and others. The study confirms that the character of Hodja has greatly influenced them.

Jokes are peculiar with the diversity of plots. In some jokes, such as those of the Bektaşî and Mevlevî, preference is given to the topics of faith and religion. A greater part of the jokes reflects secular life. The plots of

Iraqi Turkmen's jokes are based on true stories. Frequently, the main plot of a joke ends in a proverb. Such jokes occur everywhere and, in a number of cases, proverbs are similar in terms of their implications. Jocular situations take place in: countryside, town, a palace, a court, a district, a bazaar, a mosque, at school, highlands, near a river, a garden, a desert, and elsewhere. Naturally enough, the jokes of the Mevlevi and Bektaşî refer to religious and cult locales: mosque, heaven, and hell. Black Sea coast jokes differ considerably from those of other provinces, and this can be conditioned by non-Oghuz descent of the local population and their activities.

Jokes are composed in language varieties of various provinces. Hence, their forms differ. A story is rendered in prose; however, frequently poetry is also used. It is predominantly a case in Iraqi jokes. Atilla Çakiroğlu's jokes are composed as quatrains. The Bektaşî's jokes are written in verse. In Esat Nâyb's collection *Kerkuk's Witty Statements*, every joke ends in a satirical *beyr* (distich) according to its plot.

Plots of social jokes of Turkey, Azerbaijan, and Iraqi Turmen are identical. Naturally enough, plots, associated with faith, abound in the jokes of the Bektaşî and Mevlevi dervish orders. Historically, despotism, pressure, and injustice reigned the Oghuz peoples, having been reflected in jokes as social humour. As for black humour, it is peculiar with more ferocity. Their plots are: judgement, heaven, hell, death, etc., being rendered in ironic and comic colours.

A joke is circulated swiftly; even state borders can prevent them frequently. During the process, its language, character, situation may change, but the narrative form remain unaltered.

Published scholarly papers relevant to the thesis:

1. A Place of the Joke in Popular Literature. Scientific Journal Language and Culture. Kutaisi, 2012, pp. 133-136.
2. A History of the Scholarly Study of the Joke (Based on the Peoples of Oghuz Descent). International Conference Language and Culture. Kutaisi, 2013, pp. 545-549.
3. The Echo of World War I in Turkish Jokes. Proceedings of the International Conference on WWI. Akak Tsereteli State University, 2015.
4. Language, Satire and Humour of the joke of the Peoples of Oghuz Descent (Turkey, Azerbaijan, and Iraqi Turkmen). Yearbook VI. Kutaisi, 2014. (in press).
5. The Jokes Based on Social Motifs in the Folklore of the Peoples of Oghuz Descent. Working Papers of the Faculty of Humanities, ATSU, #13, 2015. (forthcoming).