

ANIMATED CRITICAL THEORY:  
NASRETTİN HOCA ANECDOTES AS AN ANIMATION OF THEORIES OF  
MARX, FOUCAULT AND SIMMEL

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by  
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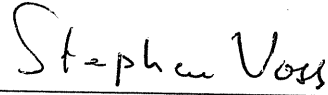
Boğaziçi University

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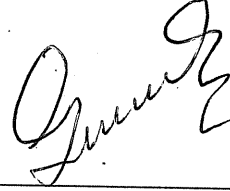
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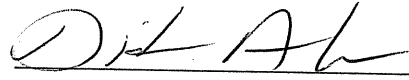
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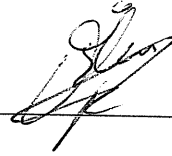
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## Thesis Abstract

Ayşe Balaman, “Animated Critical Theory: Nasrettin Hoca Anecdotes as an Animation of Theories of Marx, Foucault and Simmel”

The purpose of this study at the global level is to draw attention to points of convergence in Eastern and Western sourced tendencies of pre-modern and modern/post-modern thought, while the immediate objective is to discover overlapping themes in the approach to cultural critique present in both. The study will feature, as an illustration of the former, selections of Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes which consist of very short narrations of incidents featuring the Turkish Nasrettin Hodja, a thirteenth century historical figure known as a folk philosopher with international eminence for his wise and humorous remarks concerning cultural practices. The latter will be represented by the critical and cultural theories put forward by the nineteenth century German political economist-sociologist-philosopher Karl H. Marx, twentieth century French historian-philosopher Michel Foucault, and the nineteenth and twentieth century German sociologist-philosopher Georg Simmel.

Regarding the cultural critique in the anecdotes, this study will focus on the recognition of the dynamic quality of object and subject roles in a given cultural incident involving man to himself, man to man, man to animal or man to knowledge relationships. In the said theories, this dynamism is found in the form of a process of continual exchange between object and subject components, which finds a different meaning in each theory. In Marx’s theory, this idea is spelled out in terms of historical dialectic employed in the formulation of “revolutionary practical-critical activity”. With Foucault, this exchange emerges as the simultaneity of man’s object and subject roles in relation to possession of knowledge which he states to be consequential of the transfer from the classical to the modern eras of knowledge. Finally in Simmel’s writings the dynamism in object subject exchange is seen in the form of reciprocity between objective and subjective cultures, the discussion of which he employs in describing modernity and the relevant categories of social experience he analyses.

This study proposes to demonstrate, through the method of content analysis, that the recognition of subject object role exchange present in a variety of forms in the abovementioned theories is depicted in practice form in the Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes, providing an animated theory. Considering the difference in the cultural origins as well as in the eras of the said approaches, discovery of this convergence in thought is meant to stimulate a rereading of the East/West and pre/post modern dichotomies.

## Tez Özeti

Ayşe Balaman, Animated Critical Theory: Nasrettin Hoca Anecdotes as an Animation of Theories of Marx, Foucault and Simmel”

Bu çalışmanın amacı, genelde, modern dönem öncesi ve sonrası Doğu ve Batı düşüncelerindeki ortak noktalara işaret etmek, özelde ise her ikisinde de örtüşen kültür eleştirisi temalarını keşfetmektir. Doğu kökenli kültür eleştirine örnek olarak Nasrettin Hoca fıkraları, Batı kaynaklı kültür eleştirisini temsilen de on dokuzuncu yüzyılda eser vermiş Alman sosyolog ve felsefeci Karl H. Marx, yirminci yüzyılda yazmış Fransız tarihçi ve felsefeci Michel Foucault ve on dokuzuncu ve yirminci yüzyıllarda eser üretmiş olan Alman sosyolog ve felsefeci Georg Simmel’in kültürel ve eleştirel kuramları ele alınmıştır.

Fıkralardaki kültür eleştirisiyle ilgili olarak çalışmada odak noktasını, verili bir kültürel ilişkide tarafların temsil ettiği özne ve nesne rollerinin değişken bir niteliğe sahip olduğuna dair ön kabul teşkil etmektedir. Adı geçen kuramlarda ise bu değişken yapı, özne ve nesne unsurları arasında süreklilik arz eden bir değişim süreci şeklinde görülmektedir. Bu değişim süreci ve beraberindeki özne ile nesne unsurları her bir kuramda farklı bir anlamla karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Marx’ın kuramsal alt yapısında bunu tarihsel diyalektiğin şekillendirdiği “devrimsel pratik-kritik faaliyet” düzenlemesinde görmek mümkündür. Foucault’un kuramında bu değişim, klasik bilgi döneminden modern bilgi dönemine geçişin bir sonucu olarak insanın bilgi karşısında üstlendiği özne ve nesne rollerindeki eşzamanlılık biçimde görülmektedir. Son olarak Simmel’in yapıtlarında ise, özne ve nesne arasındaki bu sürekli değişim, incelemeye aldığı modernite kavramında ve ilgili sosyal deneyim kategorinde atıfta bulunduğu öznel kültür ve nesnel kültür olarak ikiye ayırdığı kültür anlayışındaki karşılıklı etkileşim şeklinde karşımıza çıkmaktadır.

Çalışma, nitel içerik analizi metodunu kullanmak suretiyle, yukarıda söz edilen kuramlarda farklı biçimlerde var olan özne ve nesne rollerindeki sürekli bir değişimin gerçekleştiği kanısının Nasreddin Hoca fıkralarında uygulama düzeyinde resmedildiğini göstermekte, bu anlamda bir çeşit kuram canlandırması sunmaktadır. Bahsedilen iki ana yaklaşım arasında hem kültürel kökenlerdeki temel farklılık hem de dile getirildikleri ortam ve zaman farklılığı göz önünde bulundurulduğunda, düşünce düzeyinde var olan bu örtüşmenin ortaya konması ile Doğu/Batı ve Modern dönem öncesi/sonrası ikiliklerine dair bir yeniden okumanın tetiklenmesi hedeflenmektedir.

## Acknowledgements

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## PREFACE

The idea came up during the theory focused classes I was attending under the critical and cultural studies graduate program. Occasional remarks would be made concerning some proverbs or idiomatic expressions that would remind one of, and at times exactly correspond to, certain aspects of the theories discussed. The fact that these links would either be received in a tone of sarcasm or at best, go by unnoticed was the main motivation behind the consideration of this topic for a study. What made it a choice for my thesis in the above mentioned program was the idea of employing it as a critical compromise between Eastern and Western sourced cultures; considering the structure of the classes with –mostly- Turkish students, with their Turkish cultural background discussing Western sourced theories. After some initial research on Turkish proverbs and idioms, I realized the need to narrow down the material and discovered the “Nasrettin Hoca anecdotes” to be a singular source of Turkish idiomatic expressions. A further look into the anecdotes, however, directed my attention towards the cultural criticism characteristic in the anecdotes. This shifted the scope of this study to this particular aspect of the anecdotes which lend themselves to a possible rereading from the perspective of some significant critical theories, namely those of Karl Marx, Michel Foucault and Georg Simmel. I would like to note that, I have chosen to use the original Turkish spelling of the word “Hoca” in the title, but I have used the Anglicized spelling “Hodja” throughout the thesis for the English speaking reader.

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Beginning with the title of the study, we have on the one hand, the field of cultural criticism which often denotes complicated theories in the social sciences and humanities explaining relationships between concrete phenomena in quite abstract terminology and convoluted styles even experts in the area may have to spend some time understanding. The main body of work involving cultural criticism in this sense has emerged from continental scholarship which is shaped predominantly by what we can call in very general terms, theories of modern/post-modern West. On the other hand there are the Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes, originally *Nasrettin Hoca Fıkraları*, which consist of terse and humorous yet wise remarks made by the thirteenth century Anatolian folk figure Nasrettin Hodja at the end of a very brief narration of a real life incident featuring this figure. Most having become popular Turkish idiomatic expressions through an oral tradition, the sayings in these anecdotes convey a comprehensive critique of culture within the compact make up of the anecdote genre. This study aims to discover points of convergence between these anecdotes and selected critical and cultural theories by Marx, Foucault and Simmel and to see how some ideas present in complicated theory form are depicted in the form of every day experience within the anecdote structure, hence an animated theory.

Before proceeding into a detailed analysis of how these modern/post-modern western theories can be employed in a rereading of these pre-modern eastern cultural products and vice versa, I would like to elaborate on each in their own historical and social context.



Originating in thirteenth century Anatolia, Nasrettin Hodja as a folk figure could be traced back to the Islamic segment of Turkish history. His title as “Hodja” denotes that he was a religious-Islamic- leader of the time. Apart from this, and perhaps a more significant aspect of Nasrettin Hodja’s fame is that studies on his historical identity state that he was a sufi teacher. Thus it is possible to specify Nasrettin Hodja to be a part of the Turkish Islamic heritage. Therefore, as far as narrowing down the “Eastern” sourced “thought” is concerned, we may say that the Nasrettin Hodja component of the study would be representative of knowledge sourced, in part, from Islam. This is not to say that each of the individual remarks made in the anecdotes take as reference point a relevant Islamic notion, but that the overall approach to the subject matter in the authentic anecdotes stems from a heritage of Islamic based and thus divine sourced knowledge. The assertion that “many of the Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes convey a message opposing orthodox Islam” (S. Irzik, personal communication, December, 2009) actually serves to support the Islamic identity of the Nasrettin Hodja figure as the addresser of the cultural critique present in the anecdotes because it is known that sufism also puts into question many practices pertaining to orthodox Islam just as Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes make a critique of the popular understanding of religion that shapes everyday life in a setting where religion predominated culture.

As for the theories of Marx, Foucault and Simmel, we know that these theoreticians lived, were educated and taught in late nineteenth and late twentieth century Europe. Thus it is possible to say that their approaches are rooted in a system of thought shaped gradually long after the Enlightenment, that is, after the final break with scholasticism. Therefore, unlike the Eastern thought component, the Western thought component originates from a humanistic based knowledge. Here, the term

humanistic is used, not in the broadest sense of the word, but rather to denote the human effort which seeks answers to questions within an epistemological endeavor, relying solely on the human potential to discover knowledge, and not taking any superior knowledge as reference point.

Here we have two components originating from quite distinct heritages of thought; Medieval Islamic thought on the one hand, and Modern/Post-Modern humanistic thought: on the other. It is the aim of this study to discover points of intersection in these fundamentally different sourced thoughts through the examination of certain concepts in the theories of Marx, Foucault and Simmel and in the Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes. Let us now provide a brief overview of each.

Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes are a popular source of wise sayings articulated in the form of narrated jokes featuring the historical folk figure Nasrettin Hodja as the main character. In all the anecdotes Nasrettin Hodja is depicted as making a critical remark about the situation experienced while at the same time expressing his criticism through a certain action. The anecdotes originate from the sayings and doings of a Nasrettin Hodja who is said to have been born around 1208-1209 in Sivrihisar, located in present day Turkey. Although there are still some who claim that there never lived a Nasrettin Hodja and that the name only stands for a fictional figure featured in folk stories or sayings, findings evidence that he did, although the exact time and place of his birth is still under investigation\* . Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes have survived for so long and spread to such a wide geography all over the

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\*1. Scholars who are in favor of the idea of the historical existence of Nasrettin Hodja support their claim with inferences from the writings and dates on historical documents such as epitaphs, writings on a mausoleum wall, deeds of trust (Kabacalı 2000, pp. 8-12) and a documented petition for financial support from the state by someone who claimed to be of Nasrettin Hodja's descent and the written declaration providing proof of bestowal (Orhonlu, 1968, pp. 79-80). Scholars who oppose the idea base their arguments on the inferences from similarity in the names and writings/sayings/encounters of other literary or scholarly figures, yet provide no historical documentation or evidence (Kabacalı 2000, p. 20).

world that over time they have taken on a fictional character. This may actually be the motivation behind the rejection of the historical existence of a Nasrettin Hodja or perhaps the issue is a matter of the denial that Nasrettin Hodja ever experienced the events narrated in these anecdotes. It is true that the content of the anecdotes has varied greatly over time. The anecdotes have originated from an oral tradition; however they have also been transferred to written manuscripts. Despite the wide variety of Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes, there are still certain anecdotes which can be found in different manuscripts with identical content. If not experienced by Nasrettin Hodja himself, it is commonly agreed that such anecdotes do display a characteristic that is reflective of the world view of the Nasrettin Hodja who once lived or of a person that is of a similar cultural background. Nevertheless, whether or not the anecdotes have been experienced by him is not necessarily of crucial importance to the project undertaken in this study. The anecdotes are treated as literary texts that bear characteristics of an Eastern-Islamic founded approach to a critique of culture.

To give a glimpse of the image of Nasrettin Hodja, he's often depicted as a short and stout man sitting backwards on his donkey (one reason for which is mentioned in one of the anecdote analyses) with a turban on his head indicating his status as a *hodja*, a religious leader. The unique characteristic of the anecdotes is that they provide a criticism in practical form and not simply in word. The short instances are shown to represent compact forms of some of the cultural criticism in theory form. This is why the title of this study features the idea of "animated theory". A total of fifteen Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes have been examined in the study, most of which are abridged translations from Turkish in Pertev Naili Boratav's (1996) compilation from their manuscript versions, and others from Nurgül Özcan (2000).

Regarding the theorists, one thing common about all three is that none of them are described as scholars of a single field. Rather, they have produced works belonging to a variety of disciplines. Their works are among the primary references of critical and cultural studies. Karl Heinrich Marx (1818-1883) is commonly described as a German philosopher, political economist and sociologist; Michel Foucault (1926-1984) as a French philosopher, historian and sociologist; and Georg Simmel (1858-1918) as a German sociologist-philosopher.

The specific aspect of Marx's broader social critique analyzed in this study is his formulation of a "revolutionary practical-critical activity". For purposes of clarification this notion is broken down into the concepts of "revolutionary activity", "revolutionary practical activity" and finally "revolutionary practical-critical activity". In Foucault's critique, the focal concern is the analysis of "Man and his Doubles" featured in his book *The Order of Things* (1966/1973). The breaking down of the concepts here correspond to the four subtitles Foucault employs in this analysis. These concepts are "the analytic of finitude", "the empirical and transcendental", "the cogito and the unthought" and "the retreat and return of the origin". As for Simmel, the main interest in the study is fragments of analyses he makes on social culture with reference to modernity. These analyses involve the themes of "money" and "adornment".

All the Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes included in this study embody a certain critical outlook which was found to be present in different forms in the respective theories. This common approach involves a recognition of the dynamic quality of the relationship between object and subject roles and the continual exchange between the two in any given cultural interaction versus the assumption that they each are defined static roles assigned to particular parties in any given circumstance and that there

exists a uniformity in the holders of object subject positions. The object of criticism in all of the anecdotes is man's failure to see this dynamism and judge and act upon the acceptance that these roles are fixed, be it in a social, legal, economic, educational or epistemological context.

This study proposes to demonstrate that a similar critical approach can be found in the cultural critique present in the theories of Marx, Foucault and Simmel. However, the definition of the subject and object components of this "continual exchange", as well as the structure and nature of the exchange differs in each theory according to their context.

In Marx, the subject and object elements correspond to the social classes in conflict within his sociological analysis. Based on this context, the subject and object are specifically the exploiters and the exploited and the continual exchange is spelled out in the form of historical dialectic which allows for the classes to exchange roles throughout the dynamism of history. The elements of social classes in the sociopolitical context of Marx's writings emerge as indefinite conflicting categories within his philosophical inquiries. It is this theoretical framework, within which we will examine how his formulation of "revolutionary practical-critical activity" can be found in the Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes featuring a critical look at man to himself, man to animal and man to man relationships within legal, educational and social contexts.

In Foucault's writing, the continual exchange between object and subject roles is seen in the form of an ambiguity between man's position as both the subject and object of knowledge. While he has agency over knowledge in determining the human sciences that convey this knowledge, he is at the same time made object of it in constituting the matter of these studies. Foucault examines this within the broader

framework of his effort to conduct a genealogy of knowledge, and more particularly, man's relationship to knowledge. According to Foucault, at the rupture point between the classical and modern periods, man emerges as an "an enslaved sovereign, observed spectator" (Foucault, p. 312), pointing to the simultaneity of his subject and object status, with regards knowledge as reflected in his examination of the human sciences and their transformation over history. Foucault points out certain dualities under which this paradoxical status of man can be observed. The critique in Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes which focus on man's relationship to knowledge will be examined to demonstrate such a continual exchange between epistemological object and subject roles. As a finding of this study, the correspondence between Foucault's positioning of man in an equivocal mode as both subject and object of knowledge as a consequence of the transfer to the modern era of knowledge and the critique of man's relationship to knowledge lending ambiguity to man's subject status in the anecdotes dating back to a pre-modern era, will be shown to constitute a basis for reevaluation of the concept of modernity.

With Simmel, this object and subject role exchange comprises the very foundation upon which he grounds his cultural critique at large. Simmel puts forward the concepts of objective culture and subjective culture in elucidating his understanding of culture as a process involving a continual exchange between the two. Objective culture is described as the development of contents of life external to man while subjective culture denotes the impact of this development on the development of the individual. His analysis of fragments of social relationships involves this dialogue between the two aspects of culture- the objective and the subjective. Within Simmel's general theoretical framework, his critique starts at the point where within this continual exchange, objective culture dominates over

subjective culture, hence his critique of modernity. It is under this light, that the Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes featuring a criticism of this reign of objective culture over subjective culture found in social interaction within legal, economic and general social settings will be shown to depict an animated representation of the fragmentary sociological analyses Simmel carries out. Similar to the one with Foucault, this convergence also may lead to a rereading of the recognized approaches to modernity.

The study will focus on analyzing the different ways in which the common dynamics in these theories can be found in practical form in the Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes, and thus, how the anecdotes offer an “animated theory”.

Though it may seem so at first sight from the title, this work does not intend to engage in an application of the said theories because it claims neither to encompass the theories in the totality of the context in which they had been written nor to display a verbatim realization of their content within the anecdotes. Rather it seeks to highlight the insights the theories provide for cultural criticism and how these insights can be found in practical form in the anecdotes through a content analysis of the anecdotes.

Therefore, the animated theory section in this part will feature a two-fold examination of the anecdotes and how they comprise an “animated theory”, involving both structure and content. The themes discovered both in the theories and the anecdotes are treated at the theoretical level, that is, independent of the details about time and place which may be attached to the content. Such details are given in the beginning of the discussions on the theories as well as the Nasrettin Hodja figure in order to provide background information and a general overview of either the circumstances under which they had come into being or the different responses directed to them.

The study is organized in the following order. The “Background” chapter will present first a discussion of the *fikra*/anecdote as a literary genre, followed by some information on the historical figure of Nasrettin Hodja and his times and its relationship to the formation of the Nasrettin Hodja folk figure and finally, a discussion of the literary and cultural criticism significance of the Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes. The next chapter entitled “The Anecdotes and Cultural-Criticism” is the main discussion chapter in the study, examining the overlap of the elements found in the theories of Marx, Foucault and Simmel and in the anecdotes. Thus the chapter is divided into three parts, each part featuring three sections: a “Background” section, a “Theory” section and an “Animated Theory” section. Each “Background” section provides some introductory information on the respective theorists and a general overview of the content and/or method present in their theories. The “Theory” sections focus on the elements in their theories relevant to the study, namely, the aspects which highlight the function of the object subject role exchange. Each “Animated Theory” section examines how these elements can be found in the Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes in the form of a critique of cultural relationships between man to himself, man to animal, man to knowledge and man to man in legal, economic, educational and social contexts .

The first part entitled “The Anecdotes as ‘Revolutionary Practical-Critical Activity’” examines the anecdotes in relation with Marx’s critique; the second part entitled “The Anecdotes and Their ‘Doubles’” analyses the anecdotes with reference to Foucault’s critique; and the third part entitled “The Anecdotes as Fragments of Social Interaction” looks into the anecdotes in relation to Simmel’s critique. Finally the “Conclusion” chapter first presents a brief overview of the analyses in the main



chapter, secondly discusses a possible interpretation of these analyses and lastly makes mention of possible future topics of inquiry the study might stimulate.

## CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND

### The “*Fıkra*/Anecdote” as a Literary Genre

The title of this study features Nasrettin Hodja sayings or narration of the events experienced by this figure as “anecdotes”. Here this term is meant to stand in for the Turkish term “*fıkra*”. Although this is not the only term used for purposes of designation in other works on Nasrettin Hodja where the anecdotes have been referred to as “*latife*” (Tevfik, 1883; Istanbul, 1887; Türkmen, 1989), the near equivalent of “pleasantry” (Malouf, 1854; Barrow, 1916) or tales (Walker, 1967; Shijie, 1986), or “jokes” (Ardanacı, 1999), or less commonly “subtleties” (Shah, 1983), we will take the most common designation and treat these textual products as “*fıkralar*” (plural form of *fıkra*), using the term anecdotes as an equivalent, and provide information on the *fıkra* as a genre before going into the particular type of *fıkralar* gathered under the name Nasrettin Hodja.

Folkloric studies carried out on Nasrettin Hodja feature the anecdotes in close relationship to the “tale”. Some works even refer to the anecdotes as tales, or stories (Yağan, 1974; Hossain, 1991) of Nasrettin Hodja. One can come across the equivalent of tale or story in other languages in international work done on the Hodja. This is perhaps because the anecdote and tale come quite close to one another as literary genres. Boratav, for example, while answering the question of how to perform clustering of material in preparing an archive for folkloric topics, lists tales and anecdotes under the same group (2000, p. 33). This is not to say, of course, that he treats them as identical. On the contrary, in listing both, he acknowledges their difference, while at the same time pointing to their proximity. Among the several

differences between the two, is that the anecdote is much shorter and more compact than the tale. Rather than making a comparison between the two however, the purpose here is to provide an introduction to the anecdote as a literary genre. Therefore we will look straight into how the anecdote is described in folklore studies.

According to Köksal's definition "Fıkra is the name given to an independent genre in oral literature which consists of either an idea or event borrowing its substance from life and reflecting both individual and social corruption, decay and conflict between old and new through a fine sense of humor and sharp witticism, produced generally in prose with short yet intensive narration" (1997, p. 123).

Summing up this definition one comes across the following descriptive elements in explaining what makes up an anecdote: that it is oral, in prose form (though some anecdotes are later on retold in poetry form by poets), reflects various problematic aspects of society and bears in itself a certain sense of humor.

This element of humor has received much attention from scholars of various disciplines in examining anecdotes. Concentrating on folklore studies for now, some works even suggest that this quality is the distinguishing feature of the anecdote. In offering a less detailed definition, Köksal narrows it down to "a literary genre that meets the need of laughter within an esthetic structure" (Ibid) and points to the rise of the genre *fıkra* as "a way of expressing with various words, the laughter directed at others". When the issue comes to laughter in certain anecdotes however, there is a mainstream objection to reducing the anecdote to mere laughter. Such objections hold that not all anecdotes aim at laughter. Köksal addresses this issue from a different perspective. He qualifies the point he makes about laughter by pointing out that not all laughter is humor in drawing attention to the objectives behind the various extensions of humor with reference to Fowler's Humor Classification

prepared by Prof. Türkmen, where the purpose is held to be: “discovery in humor, enlightenment in witticism, correction in satire, giving pain in harsh jokes, impairing prestige in insult, contextual limitedness in irony, proving one’s self in derision, self relief in mockery [...]” (as cited in Köksal, p. 123).

In Turkish literature there are several types of anecdotes. Some are distinguished by regional characteristics and others by the particular philosophy they convey. Anecdotes mentioned under the name “*Temel Fıkraları*” for example are said to represent a stereotypical image of people coming from the Black Sea region in present day Turkey. The character *Temel* in these anecdotes is made a representative of how the minds of people belonging to this region function. Other examples are *Erzurum*, *Kayseri* and *Bayburt* anecdotes which reflect the thinking style and behavior of people coming from these cities in Turkey.

The other types of anecdotes represent certain philosophies intrinsically independent of regional differences. Such anecdotes usually feature real personages who actually lived in a certain time period and have developed into being anonymous in time, as they come to serve as a mouthpiece for the views and practices of the people. This representative function of these anecdotes along with the fact that the original figures were also a part of society and were influenced by the regional customs and traditions of their own societies show that such anecdotes may also bear regional traits, especially in terms of the visible aspects of culture. Such regional qualities however do not constitute any fundamental distinction. What distinguish these anecdotes are the teachings behind the criticism in them. The most prominently known examples of these are the *Bektaşî* and Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes. The *Bektaşî* anecdotes are originally based on the sayings of the real person *Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli* and the acts of his followers; and the latter anecdotes on Nasrettin Hodja himself.

The classification of anecdotes into different types, as well as the gradual transformation of original figure anecdotes into general folk sayings over time, partly explains the varying degrees of sophistication in anecdotes. According to Yüce's description, "anecdotes are products that could be graded on a wide scale ranging from the most blatant comedy and jokes to the finest play of thought and intelligence" (1997, p. 63). This note on anecdotes may well be said to apply to Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes as well, to a certain extent, considering the compilation of the Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes consisting of a mix of jokes and narrations coming from a variety of sources which are attributed to Nasrettin Hodja. An example of this particular characteristic in Yüce's description could be the difference in sophistication between the anecdote featuring Nasrettin Hodja as sitting for urination for one day and one night because of confusing its sound with that of a fountain nearby (Boratav, 1996, p. 96, anec. 18) on the one hand, and the anecdote featuring him in a dialogue with the famous ruler Timur (also known as Tamerlane the Great) where Timur asks the Hodja to appraise his worth and the Hodja responds with an amount equal to the price of a fancy garment, to which Timur replies that this is the worth only of his garment upon which the Hodja responds "I had taken that into account" (Boratav, 1996, p. 137, anec. 181).

In the next part, I will provide a brief overview of Nasrettin Hodja as a real person along with a discussion of the treatment of the Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes as the narration of his doings and sayings on the one hand, and as cultural products resulting from people's identification with and use of this character in conveying their own messages on the other.

## Nasrettin Hodja Anecdotes- The Real Person, Formation of a Folk Figure and Literary and Cultural Criticism Significance of the Anecdotes

This part of the chapter is devoted to analyzing the background of the anecdotes by exploring the real Nasrettin Hodja as a person, his times, the formation of the Nasrettin Hodja figure in the anecdotes, the issue of authenticity of the anecdotes with reference to the multiplicity of Nasrettin Hodja images and the significance of the Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes as literary and cultural productions. Furthermore, certain textual characteristics of the anecdotes will be discussed. Finally, their relevance to cultural criticism will be addressed.

### Describing the “Nasrettin Hodja Anecdotes”

When speaking of Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes, we are speaking not only of the unique events believed to be actually experienced or told by the historical Nasrettin Hodja person in the thirteenth century and retold and spread orally over time; but also of other anecdotes which feature the Nasrettin Hodja figure as the main character and can be considered cultural productions of people who have lived since then over the wide geography which this figure’s fame has spread to. While the former type of Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes is limited in number, there is a countless number of the latter, considering the fact that they still continue to be produced even today by a wide variety of people to serve as their mouthpiece for whatever point they may try to get across.

Fundamentally, the common characteristic that gathers these anecdotes under the same title Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes is that they originally reflect the worldview

of Nasrettin Hodja as a scholarly and wise personality as well as a folk representative of ordinary people and their responses to the events they encounter, through the personality of Nasrettin Hodja. However, because these anecdotes have spread over time to a wider geography, and thus to the oral tradition of numerous people and their cultures, it is common to come across anecdotes referred to as Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes which do not reflect and at times contradict this general quality. Although the authenticity of such anecdotes can easily be questioned and proven false based on historical documents, the common view may consider them under Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes. Nevertheless, an effort has been made in this study to include only those anecdotes which are held by scholars to be authentic and reappear with the essentially same message in many of the compilations of the anecdotes.

#### The Real “Nasrettin Hodja” and the Formation of the “Nasrettin Hodja” Folk Figure

As far as Nasrettin Hodja’s historical existence is concerned, according to Özkan, there are some, like R. Basset, who claim that there is no real person as Nasrettin Hodja and that he has been transferred to Turkey from the Arab *Cuha* who is an old comic literary figure, linking the confusion to the similarity between the words “Hoca” and “Cuha” (as cited in Kabacalı, p. 19). According to others however, there did live a real Nasrettin Hodja and his anecdotes were translated into Arabic in the sixteenth century and were named “Nevadiru Hace Nasruddin Efendi Cuha”, although there is no compiled version of the anecdotes of the Arab *Cuha* mentioned above.

Despite such claims, however, there are now historical documents (see footnote 1.) which provide evidence that there did live a Nasrettin Hodja as a real person. One of the most substantial among these is the “presence of a *wakf* [a charitable foundation] of Nasrettin Hodja listed in a record of census for *wakfs* and real estate [...] conducted by Gedik Ahmet Pasha in 1476, nine years after Akşehir had been added to Ottoman lands” (Erginer, 1969, p. 10). Although the exact date and place of his birth is still a topic of investigation, according to the findings so far, he is said to have been born in around 1208 or 1209 in the village of Hortu in Sivrihisar located in Anatolia - present day Turkey. He served in a variety of religious and administrative positions such as *imam* (local religious leader) and *kadi* (local judicial officer). Service under these occupations is only a part of what makes up the scholarly/religious/leader/critic identity of the Nasrettin Hodja figure. Examining the era in which the real Nasrettin Hodja lived, would be of further help in understanding the formation of this figure. This involves exploring thirteenth century Anatolia.

The thirteenth century in Anatolia was quite a unique time period in terms of historical records politically, socially and culturally. The political and social aspects resulting from specific historical events will be dealt with here and in connection with the formation of the “Nasrettin Hodja” folk figure. The cultural aspects of the era, which were consequences of the more gradual changes in society, however will be addressed in the parts discussing the cultural-criticism relevance of the anecdotes with a specific emphasis on the role of the Hodja as a cultural critic.

The findings as to the estimation of the time of his birth indicate that Nasrettin Hodja must have lived during the Seljuk reign (Erginer, 1969, p. 11). The thirteenth century was a time when the Anatolian Turks went through a great rise in



the first half of the century and a catastrophic fall at the start of the second half. Tragic events took place during this century under the Anatolian Seljuk State, such as the *Babai* Rebellion in 1240, the Mogul incursion in Anatolia and the occupations between 1243 and 1250, throne struggles between Seljuk *Şehzades* (princes) between 1254 and 1264, along with other rebellions and the *Karamanoğulları* (a principality) occupation of Konya, leading to great destruction in the lives of Anatolian Turks (Turan, 1997, p. 75). This state of affairs with such political turmoil was a part of what had given Nasrettin Hodja's criticism its subject matter involving a questioning of judicial and administrative authorities among other issues dealt with in the anecdotes. In relation to these socio-political circumstances, R. Turan lists Nasrettin Hodja among other prominent religious figures such as Yunus Emre, Mevlana Celalddin-i Rumi and Hacı Bektas-i Veli, by referring to them as "important sources of victory for the Turk society in this time of hardship, [...] who, with their religious, knowledgeable, brave [...] identities and powerful thoughts and ideas and praiseworthy tolerance, have exceeded the bounds of the Turkish geography and have each become universal identities" (as cited in Turan, A., 1997, pp. 75-76). They were considered important sources of victory in virtue of their leadership role in a sufi world understanding, which the "Turkish Muslim people living in Anatolia then directed their attention to as a source of healing due to the need to relieve the deep suffering they had gone through and as a source of hope promising order, justice, security and happiness under those social and political circumstances" (Topçu, cited in Turan, A., p. 76).

Turan provides much written evidence on the religious personality of Nasrettin Hodja, the most basic point being that "he is known to have received his first Islamic training from his father, the imam of the village Hortu" (Turan, 1997, p.

76). Later on, he inherits his father's position and then immigrates to Akşehir to become the pupil of Seyyid Mahmud-Hayrani who is a sufi teacher mentioned as a follower of Mevlana Rumi in a work about the moral tales of sufis written by Ahmet Eflaki, a fourteenth century literary scholar (Ibid, p. 77). This aspect of his life points out the fact that Nasrettin Hodja had undergone a moral and spiritual training under the sufi discipline. He is known to have lived there in Akşehir, until his death, where the Nasrettin Hodja tomb still exists today. This tomb, after his death, had been built either by his family or the *medrese* (Islamic university) which was also listed under his charter of *wakf* (Erginer, 1969, p. 10). This can be considered another element in his life that suggests he was “medrese man” (Ibid, p. 27), pointing to his religious and scholarly identity.

#### The Nasrettin Hodja Image in the Anecdotes

Although one can find the Hodja to be representing a wide variety of types and occupations in different anecdotes, there are several elements that always accompany the Hodja figure. Among these elements, which have been subject to interpretations, are his title as “Hodja”, the “Turban” he wears on his head as a symbol of his position, and the donkey he rides on. Before we examine the symbolic significance of each of these, let us go over the socio-cultural circumstances under which the Nasrettin Hodja image emerged.

The thirteenth century for Anatolian Turks was a period of transition from the nomadic and pre-Islamic lifestyle led in the Central Asian steppes to the settled and Islamic way of living in Anatolian lands which had always been one of the crossroads of civilizations. Başgöz (1999) makes a comparison between the two

different cultures resulting from this transition in which the Hodja lived, stating that “within the nomadic order, man is a ‘communal man’, a man strictly dependant on the community [...] In the Hodja’s time, this kind of society no longer exists” (p. 122). He further explains that the “communal man”, especially with the lack of private ownership, is not very well developed in terms of making independent decisions, whereas the settled village man is a unique individual obligated to live his life based on his own decisions. This causes confusion in the people and their relationship to one another and to their values and customs, “just like the chaos and complications experienced today in the transition from the village community to the industrial community” (Ibid). The significance of this similarity between this era and modernity will be discussed further in the Conclusion. It is under the circumstances of the transition between such fundamental changes that according to Öngören, “almost all communities [...] give rise to a guiding leader” (as cited in Başgöz, 1999, p. 123). In this case, this figure is Nasrettin Hodja.

Going back to the three elements in the Nasrettin Hodja figure under this light, his title as a Hodja not only refers to his occupational position, having served as an imam, but also suggests a sense of respect, considering the idea that in his times, “the rank of Hodja is superior to many other titles and ranks [as can be seen in the Turkish cultural understanding that], the mud under Hodjas’ horses’ feet is regarded as an ornament on the sultans’ robe” (Yüce, 1996, p. 64). Caferoğlu states this as being the reason why university professors are also given the same title (as cited in Yüce, p. 64). This reference to Nasrettin Hodja’s religious personality explains one of the major elements prevalent in his anecdotes: high morals in general, and justice in particular, which Yüce links to the many new ideas introduced by the Islamic understanding such as the existence of another world where divine justice will

prevail (Ibid, p. 66) in contrast to the injustices present in such chaotic circumstances. He also draws attention to the Islamic elements, in having brought about a settled civilization forming a contrast to old Turkish culture, constituting a feature characteristic of the Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes. Yüce makes mention of this contrast in relation to the reasons why the Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes have gone beyond the personal experiences of the real Nasrettin Hodja and have acquired, throughout the long passage of Turkish culture, the form of a Nasrettin Hodja image. He includes this among the reasons behind the variations of the anecdotes due to varying regions and time periods where cultural characteristics of periods both before and after Islam are present. These cultures, as he writes, “are at times in harmony and at times in conflict with one another”. Researchers indicate that the donkey belongs to the Central Asian steppe culture, whereas the turban belongs to settled civilization (Ibid, p. 63).

Whereas Yüce mentions the donkey as representative of old Turkish culture, Kabacalı (2000) treats it as a trait that highlights the humble character of Nasrettin Hodja, drawing attention to the donkey in contrast to the horse which signified heroism in old Turkish culture. This has significance in terms of depicting Nasrettin Hodja as a wise and prominent figure, almost a hero, who is yet never exaggerated due to other features that portray him as being down to earth such as his donkey and plain lifestyle seen in the anecdotes. Kabacalı points to this folkloric aspect of the Nasrettin Hodja figure in detailing its contrast with the hero type.

The Hodja is never a hero. He is neither someone whom female listeners will adore and before whom they will float away from reality due to his young age, good looks, physical strength, masculinity and smart remarks; nor a supernatural being whom men identify themselves with and who beats evil beings and all evil with his own strength, living a life full of adventures and telling with enthusiasm about his travels to far off

countries, going from the bedroom of one beautiful woman to another (pp. 37-38).

His position as a Hodja, a religious leader, as represented by the turban, on the one hand, and his humble lifestyle as symbolized by the donkey figure, on the other, places Nasrettin Hodja in a unique mid-way position in which he is respected while at the same time looked upon within simplicity as an ordinary person.

### Multiple “Nasrettin Hodja”s and the Problem of Authenticity

Addressing the issue of the authenticity of the Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes and the multiplicity in the type of “Nasrettin Hodja” figures found in the anecdotes requires recognition of two distinct treatments of the anecdotes. One of these approaches the anecdotes as the once original doings or sayings of a historical Nasrettin Hodja and the world view representing him, which have undergone countless changes due to their wide extent over time and place, becoming anonymous folkloric productions, while the other treats the anecdotes as such, independent of their relationship to the real Nasrettin Hodja. In the discussion that follows, both approaches will be taken into consideration.

The former approach explains the multiplicity of the Nasrettin Hodja images with reference to the historical Nasrettin Hodja, and the anecdotes which are considered closest to being authentic. According to this approach, it is a fundamental characteristic of the anecdotes that although Hodja has knowledge, he makes himself look as though he lacks knowledge, in other words, hides his knowledge (Köksal, 1997, p. 127). This feature comes out because, as Boratav states, “[...] elements of ready answers, wit, common sense, naiveté and strangeness are closely tied. This puts forward his personality as a man of folk wisdom and at the same time points to

the unique nature of his anecdotes” (as cited in Köksal, p. 127). Furthermore, Nasrettin Hodja is not always the same person in terms of occupation or status that comes with it. As Sakaoğlu (1997) points out, “It would be wrong to see him as a ‘Hodja’ in all of his anecdotes. It is important to remember that he had a life outside his vocation as a hodja” (p. 39). This particular characteristic of the anecdotes featuring the Hodja in different occupations and statuses is also frequently addressed within the context of dissimilar identities representing a wide range of social statuses, occupations, dialects, personalities and even elements indicative of belonging to a completely different century in containing encounters with his non-contemporaries such as Timur. Therefore the issue is not limited to difference in identity but even the times. As Köksal points out, “It would be a wrong approach to think of the life scenes in the anecdotes under his name to be taking place only between the years 1208-1284”, drawing attention to the anecdotes containing dialogues with Timur, who lived in a later century, as a typical example. (Köksal, p. 124)

Therefore while in some anecdotes these multiple identities are held to show other sides of the real Nasrettin Hodja, in others they’re considered to stand for the multiplicity of cultures and identities that the anecdotes have spread to, representing the universal views and practices of common people, and not necessarily those of Nasrettin Hodja, nor those of Turkish people in particular with whom he interacts. This must be the reason behind the wide geographical spread of the anecdotes under different names and yet conveying identical messages. In discussing the Hodja’s unique speech technique Göçgün (1997) refers to the representative value of the Hodja, citing the following remark of Ziya Gökalp, a prominent Turkish poet: “Nasreddin Hodja is not representative of Turkishness but a representative

individual. We may even say that he is a genius in his vocation” (as cited in Göçgün, p. 34).

This representative quality of the anecdotes has led to the wide variety of the Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes as well as the multiplicity of the versions of a single anecdote. Yüce bases the varying degrees of sophistication in Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes on the variety of regions and cultural levels the anecdotes have spread to (Yüce, 63). Köksal backs the same idea in drawing attention to the unifying characteristic of the anecdotes compiled under the Nasrettin Hodja title:

[...] for the Hodja is a countenance who has consolidated different personality types in his own person. We will be misled if we get too eager to always see him as an intellectual, a noble state representative or an imperfect man of wisdom [...] (Köksal, 1997, p. 131)

As Yüce (1996) affirms, “Neither stupidity nor wisdom alone can be enough for a fikra” (p. 64). Thus the contradicting elements in the anecdotes do not always comprise evidence for questioning their authenticity. Even if there were no anonymous additions to the anecdotes, those considered more genuine than others in relating the doings of the real Nasrettin Hodja may also combine paradoxical qualities such as wisdom/naivety, wealth/poverty, and rural/urban. Nerimanoğlu (1997) expresses the same point in wondering whether Nasrettin Hodja is a townsman, a villager, or a city man; poor or wealthy; domestic or social and concluding that he is all of them and links this aspect to his quality of being a “universal and diverse type seldom found in world literature” (Nerimanoğlu, pp. 156-7).

A similar idea is present in a study on home culture in Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes (Cunbur, 1997) where the author points to the scarcity in the Hodja’s life despite having a considerable income, by examining the scarcity of household furniture and tools inferred from the setting and the dialogues in many of the

anecdotes. She cites examples where the Hodja is in need of selling the wool his wife spins at home, or where his wife spins wool to pay off debts, or where the Hodja is embarrassed even in front of the thief who finds so little furniture to steal. She points out that a family of little means is seen in Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes despite the known fact that he had served in various wakf positions such as being an *imam* (local religious leader), *hatip* (religious lecturer), *kadı* (local judicial officer) and *miiderris* (teacher) which are all paid positions (p. 169). This particular examination may be said to point to the humble life style of Nasrettin Hodja, but it also foregrounds him as being representative of all parts of society whence the variety and variation in the anecdotes.

This of course shouldn't mean that all the anecdotes told under the title Nasrettin Hodja, although they may not be true of the real person, do reflect his world view. As mentioned before, these anecdotes have come to be employed as a mouthpiece for the views and approaches of the common people as well. Oğuz (1997) refers to these different anecdotes, which clearly do not belong to the real person Nasrettin Hodja, but rather to the common view of people represented in his personality as "anecdotes of a living Nasreddin Hodja within the dynamism of culture in addition to the structured anecdotes of a once living Nasreddin Hodja" (p. 72). For purposes of tracing the world view of the real Nasrettin Hodja, however, one will need to resort to a careful examination of the manuscripts containing the anecdotes or to works that have taken seriously the question of authenticity and which display diligence in their research of the authentic versions of the anecdotes in the manuscripts.

According to some approaches which examine the anecdotes without taking into consideration their relationship with the real Nasrettin Hodja, such changes



which the anecdotes have undergone have been linked to ideological reasons as well. (Başgöz, 1999, p. 120) In addition to giving an account of the ideological uses of the anecdotes within the context of Turkish history, Başgöz also cites Ulrich Marzolph's seminar on "Humor and Ideology" which states that under the influence of various ideologies, both in and outside of Turkey, the anecdotes have changed and in the former Soviet Union and China for example, the Hodja has been depicted as a mouthpiece for the proletariat. (as cited in Başgöz, p. 121)

Another view on the variety of the anecdotes is "these anecdotes played an important role in constituting a melting pot for different and even opposite cultures..." (Yüce, p. 27). In short, regardless of whether or not the changes have been treated with the assumption that they portray the real Nasrettin Hodja, such discussions hold significance in terms of highlighting the universal characteristic of the anecdotes, either by way of representing universally common approaches to the acts of people or in being employed to represent the ideologies of a certain group of people with completely different agendas.

#### International Counterparts of Nasrettin Hodja

There is much literature on the influence and introduction of Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes in different cultures and on the anecdotes resulting from such interaction. Other than the spread of the anecdotes to other geographies such as Central Asia, the Balkans, and Europe, another aspect of the Hodja, addressed in literature, has been the international counterparts of the Nasrettin Hodja figure. Attention has been drawn to the similarities between Nasrettin Hodja and other similar figures around the world such as the Japanese Ikkyu (Kojima, 1991). Sakaoglu (1992) provides a

list of some others in his study “Turkish Anecdotes and Nasrettin Hodja”. Among these are: the German Till Eulenspiegel, American Paul Bunyan, Arab Cuha, Bulgarian Hitar Petar, English Joe Miller, Italian Bertoldo, Russian Balakirew, Yugoslavian Kerempuh and Era (p. 117).

In such literature examining similarities between the Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes and other folk figures around the world, the characteristics unique to Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes are also indicated. Discussing the motif structures in Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes, Sakaoğlu (1992) provides an examination of Stith Thompson’s review of the anecdotes compiled by Albert Wesselski, with Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes provided with numbers in his motif index catalogue. Here some Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes are listed under the relevant motif type number in the catalogue. Sakaoğlu makes mention of the motifs in the Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes which fall under categories that include other anecdotes by other nationalities. He also draws attention to three of the Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes that comprise the only examples under their respective categories (pp. 117-118). Discovery of these anecdotes serves to highlight their uniqueness.

### Nasrettin Hodja Anecdotes as Literary Products

Continuing with the characteristics of the anecdotes and having looked into the various approaches to the Nasrettin Hodja figure in the anecdotes, let’s move on to how the anecdotes (which are considered to represent the real Nasrettin Hodja’s world view) as individual compositions are treated with respect to their literary aspects.

Nerimanoğlu (1997) draws attention to the literary value of the anecdotes with reference to their significance as a tool for teaching history of philosophy. In commenting on the starting point of the study of history of philosophy in Azerbaijan and expressing his opinion favoring folk philosophy, including some Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes, as a method to start teaching it, he states his rationale for saying so in pointing out that in Azerbaijan, they call the anecdotes *Hodja Nasreddin Latifes*; *Latif* meaning beautiful in Arabic. “In other words”, he goes on to say, “Hodja Nasreddin makes beautiful mention of the ugliest thing as well. [His anecdotes] are built on the fine and beautiful characteristics of the brain; a system that finds an element of beauty even in the ugliest thing” (Nerimanoğlu, p. 157).

Küyel (1997), in her article discussing Nasrettin Hodja’s personality as a man of wisdom, states with reference to Aristotle’s Poetics that the comic element found in the Hodja is “neither harsh, tough and repetitive, nor does it result from mechanical and automated actions and mockery nor from a type of situation or character comedy or word play” (p. 30). Köksal (1997) points to another literary trait of the Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes in an attempt to explore how the anecdote as a genre relates to other literary genres. He points out that the “The displaying of the event bears the characteristics of drama instead of story” (Köksal, p. 129). At the same time however, Kabacalı, in his discussion on the elements in Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes, which he claims to bear traces of Brecht’s epic theater, comments that:

There is no excitement and dramatic suspense in the Hodja anecdotes. This is a characteristic of form and content in the anecdotes. Furthermore, we already all know how a Hodja anecdote ends. No matter how negative the events will be, the negative element will never be dramatized to the extent of causing the listener to become emotional and cry. On the contrary it leads to laughter and as a result of this laughter we see that the people are encouraged to make self criticism, judgment and to think and experience (Kabacalı, p. 37).

Looking further into the features characteristic of the Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes, one thing that strikes us immediately is that they are not stories or mere sayings but they are made up of action that the Hodja experiences himself. The critique is carried out in the form of practice thus acting out the criticism. In his article addressing some philosophic perspectives of Nasrettin Hodja, Velioğlu (1996) draws attention to the methods of achieving *hakikat* (reality/truth) in the Hodja anecdotes, referring to one of these methods as “*pratiki faaliyet-practical activity*” (Velioğlu, p. 111). He points to the relationship Nasrettin Hodja forms between absolute and relative *hakikat* in referring to the following statement: “Reality varies. It is necessary that people, before they can benefit from relative reality, must grasp absolute reality in practical form.” (as cited in Velioğlu, p. 112).

This takes us to another quality of the anecdotes in their approach to criticism. This criticism in practice is neither offensive nor destructive. All the Hodja’s anecdotes bear a “guiding” quality (Köksal, p. 125). The action as well as the dialogue between the Hodja and other characters ends in a way that will draw attention to a particular quality of the reality concerning the subject matter. As for the subject matter, it addresses universal issues such as morals, marriage, problems earning a living, theft, a questioning of justice and deeds of the administration through a criticism of judicial and administrative authorities (Ibid).

To make a few notes on the texts of the anecdotes, the characters in dialogue with the Hodja are either described in definite form based on their relationship like his wife, his neighbor, his friend, the townspeople, the town youngsters; or based on their occupations like the *kadı*, a tradesman, an architect; or indefinitely as, a man, an acquaintance, a villager, a miser, a poor man, a rich man. Nasrettin Hodja is generally referred to as “Hodja”, “My Hodja”, “Master Hodja”. The tense used is

usually either present simple or a near equivalent of past perfect. The voice is always third person.

### Nasrettin Hodja Anecdotes and Cultural Criticism as Content

Having emerged in a period of transition between major fundamental changes in the lives of Anatolian Turks, the Nasrettin Hodja figure can be considered, in Turner's words, a "man between two cultures" or a "marginal man" (as cited in Başgöz, 1999, p. 123). It is not only this in-between position of the era in which he lived but also his occupation as a local religious leader of the people that has equipped him with the role of a critic of culture. Başgöz explains this process as follows:

He is neither a villager nor a townsman, or rather he is both a villager and a townsman. The Hoja is both an imam affiliated with the official and town culture and a villager with his barn and hayloft. This type who occupies an in-between position is able to view critically both cultures and to combine selected values from each in his own personality. This way he becomes an insider for both cultures, and because he is not trapped in a single one, he is able to rise to the universal. (Başgöz, p. 123)

A literary analysis of the anecdotes as well as a folkloric examination of the interregional and international influence of the messages conveyed in them serves to highlight that Nasrettin Hodja's in-between position is not limited to the abovementioned transitions in his era and his personal background but also holds true for his reconciliatory role as a critic of culture addressing the more global dichotomies of matter versus soul, modern versus pre-modern and East versus West. A work that represents the Nasrettin Hodja figure within the context of his role serving a critical dialogue between such dichotomies is Adivar's play *Maske ve Ruh*

[Mask and Soul] (1953) featuring the historical characters of William Shakespeare, Ibn Haldun, Timur and Nasrettin Hodja in a fictional interaction with one another. Andrea, in her article “Dialogism between East and West: Halide Edip’s *Masks or Souls?*” (2006) provides a comprehensive analysis of this play, addressing the issue of how Nasrettin Hodja’s

[...] sage humor enables the synthesis of masks and souls that renders him the forebear of Shakespeare’s wise fools and existential philosophers. By the end of the play, the transposition of Shakespeare into ‘Shake’ (homonym for ‘Shaykh,’ meaning Sufi spiritual teacher) dialogically assimilates the English ‘Bard’ into the Turkish Islamic idiom of Nassir-eddin Hoja... [by way of a] cross-cultural dialogue [which] exceed[s] the boundaries set by orientalist and patriarchal discourses (Ibid, p. 5).

Andrea presents the play as providing a dialogue between the dichotomies of modernity/pre-modernity, matter/soul and East and West (more specifically, “potentially colonizing” West and Turkish Islam). In her analysis, she examines the representational significance of the characters (and their twentieth-century manifestations) and plots within this framework. The conflict of modernity is represented by the interaction between “Shakespeare’s spirit as the cosmopolitan reporter Will Shake [and] the Hoja’s spirit [which] ‘descend[s] and enter[s] the body of Nuzhet Nassir’, a twentieth century free spirit alienated from the ‘machine-era’ dominating” (Ibid, p. 6) the worlds both characters belong to. The duality of matter/soul is represented with “a series of allusions to Hamlet [...] [leading to] the quintessential existential challenge, ‘[t]o be or not to be,’ thus [conveying] the dilemmas of modernity” (Ibid, p. 9). Finally, the coupling of Christian West and Turkish Islam is summarized as follows:

Shake is initially defined by his potential antagonism to the Muslim Hoja. The religious and cultural distance between the two characters is soon bridged, however, as they understand each other through the humor of the wise fool and the wisdom of the existential philosopher, which they both encapsulate. Shake recognizes the Hoja’s companion

as ‘a most human donkey [...] A most wise ass, a philosopher of a donkey’ [...] And he commiserates with the Hoja over modernity’s imminent invention of ‘a process of dehumanization of the souls’.  
(Ibid, p. 11)

Having cited an example of how the Nasrettin Hodja figure is employed as a device for representing a critical dialogue between cultures, let us reiterate the focal aspect of cultural criticism in the anecdotes relevant to the project undertaken in this study. In the Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes, criticism of a particular practice or understanding ensues from the acknowledgement that all roles man may assume in his relationship to objective reality- that is anything external to him- is constantly subject to change and a static role cannot be prescribed for either. In the anecdotes these relationships vary. At times it is man to man in terms of a super or subordination within contexts involving roles of the leader and the led, the judge and the defendant, the teacher and the student, or the subject and the ruler. Sometimes the man to animal relationship questioning human supremacy over the animal is used as a tool to convey a critique of a certain cultural acceptance. In other cases, man’s relationship to knowledge is treated questioning his agency over it. Thus the subject and object roles are depicted to be ever dynamic.

In relation to this study’s aim to point out common ground between the two distinct approaches to cultural criticism in the anecdotes and in the selected theories, this dynamism in object and subject roles can be seen in the form of a continual exchange. The subject component of this critical approach can refer to man in general, the human being or the subjectively determined values or views of the social individual depending on the context of the theory a certain anecdote is analyzed in connection with.

In Marx's critique, we will discover points of overlap between his theoretical formulation of "revolutionary-practical-critical-activity" as a solution for the vices of his times and the critical approach present in the Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes towards prevalent culture. In Foucault's critique, we will examine how his approach to the dualities of "man" with respect to his relationship with knowledge he articulates in his book *The Order of Things* can be found at a practical level in the anecdotes. In Simmel's critique, we will see how a couple his analyses on social culture are depicted through the anecdotes. In each of these, emphasis on the dynamic exchange between object and subject roles present in the criticism embodied in Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes will be discovered to emerge in a way unique to the context of each of the said theories.



## CHAPTER 3: THE ANECDOTES AND CULTURAL CRITICISM

### The Anecdotes as “Revolutionary Practical-Critical Activity”

The recognition of continual exchange between object and subject roles seen in the criticism employed in Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes in practical form can be found in components of Marx’s theory of “revolutionary practical-critical activity”. Here however, it functions within the dynamics of historical dialectic where the object and subject exchange is held to be taking place in the form of a conflict between economic classes which take turns in carrying out object and subject roles throughout the course of history. The following section will provide a brief background on the philosophical foundations of this sociological theory in order to better elucidate the theory section where the conceptual and universal ramifications his theory yields as far as its relationship to the critique in Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes is concerned.

#### Background

When looking at Marx’s social critique, one will come across the idea of viewing society based on conflicting economic relations that determine historical progress within the larger framework of the evolution of mankind moving towards realizing the human potential. Within this general paradigm he focuses on the historical segment he himself experiences and comes up with his own definition of the problem as well as articulation of the solution based on the socio-political circumstances thereof. Establishing those who hold the capital in their hands as the exploiting class

under the economical conditions of his day, he designates the proletariat as the contradicting force that has the potential to cause the formation of a classless society through a revolution carried out consciously having comprehended it as a historical task to be realized.

As with any other, this theory cannot be called purely the product of Marx as far as all the components of the theory are concerned. It has its theoretical and methodological foundations in the philosophical and sociological insights of previous theorists. However, naturally there are specific contributions which are known as being uniquely his products. Aside from these, Marx's major accomplishment is held to be that he managed to work out a complete criticism along with a concrete programmed solution to the prevailing vices of his day through an organized synthesis of the ideas of those before him.

Looking into what parts of his theory are derivative and what parts are specifically his contributions, one comes across a productive interplay of the ideas of Hegel and Saint Simon, among many others. According to Berlin (1963), Marx took Hegel's understanding of history as a battlefield of contradicting elements but it was he who "translated it into social terms, of the struggle between classes" (p. 113). Yet before Marx it was Saint Simon who had already put forward the idea of economic relations being the determining factor in history and specifically that it consists of "the process of a continual conflict between economic classes" (Ibid, p. 74), explaining it as a cycle in which the ruling class, having control over economic resources, have a tendency to exploit the others who in turn "grow corrupted by the long years of servitude, and become incapable of conceiving ideals higher than those of their masters" (p. 75) and so when in power are no less exploiters. In other words, the exchange in object and subject roles runs in a cycle. Having acknowledged this,

Marx's contribution had been to add to it, the idea that the only way to social freedom would necessitate the creation of a classless society due to his belief that it is in the nature of a stratified society that as long as there are class differences the one stronger in terms of political economy is bound to claim superiority over the rest. Thus he proposes the "eradication of all class differences" through "action" which he specifies as the "revolution"; the vehicle of which would be the "proletariat" due to his idea that "it has, unlike other classes, no specific claim, no interest of its own which it does not share with all men as such: for it had been stripped of everything but its bare humanity" (Berlin, p. 126) and due to the role this class assumes based on the turn taking involved in the dialectical process at large.

Aside from the fact that Marx's theory employs theories of other theorists, mainly Hegel and Saint Simon, an element that is uniquely Marxian in his synthesis, and the aspect of Marx's theory this study will focus on is his formulation of a "revolutionary practical-critical activity" (Marx, 1888/1978c, p. 121) which covers the fundamental dynamics of his theory. It is here that we find the process of object subject exchange in the way Marx had addressed. We will take a look at this formulation in stages, examining one by one each component in the phrase "revolutionary practical-critical activity".

## Theory

### "Revolutionary activity"

Marx provides a synthesis of Hegel's essential approach to existence which acknowledges, on the one hand, a reciprocity between mind and matter, and on the

other, several of the features of his idea of dialectics, namely that is antagonistic, violent and creative towards progress, in formulating his emphasis on practice and action which he equates to the “revolution” to be realized by the proletariat within the context of his time. Hegel’s dialectics involves “the notion of struggle and of tension provid[ing] precisely that dynamic principle [...] required to account for movement in history” (Berlin, 1963, p. 46), which implies that the progress in history is not smooth and works through violent moves felt between contradicting tendencies, which do eventually result in a creative revolution moving forward. Here, each promise of “solutions breeds new crises [...] grows in strength and sharpens until it turns into an open conflict, which culminates in a final collision, the violence of which destroys all the contenders” (Ibid).

It is possible to see in Marx as well that the repetition involved in a dialectical cycle is not devoid of any revolutionary potential; and on the contrary, serves to realize that potential. Marx takes Hegel’s idea of violence described as being a means of bringing about this dialectical progress in history and in a sense, provides a more fundamental theoretical description in placing emphasis on the more neutral terms of “action” or “practice” as the force to cause either of the opposing elements to perform the task history has assigned to them. As Berlin puts it, according to Marx, “the revolution, which alone can [remove contradictions] must occur not in the super-structure-the world of thought- but in its material substratum, the real world of men and things [...] the real content of a belief is the action in which it is expressed. The real convictions and principles of a man or a society are expressed in their acts, not their words.” (pp. 119-20).

### “Revolutionary practical” activity

This brings us to the stress Marx places on the “practical” nature of this activity. It has to be specifically practical. It is possible to see this attitude in Marx’s expression such as “All social life is essentially practical” (1978c, p. 122), “you cannot abolish philosophy without realizing it” (1845/1974, pp. 59-60) and “Life is not determined by consciousness but consciousness by life” (1845/1978b, p. 47). It is equally-if not more- possible to see the importance placed upon theory in the same vein. The emphasis on practice seems to have been carried out more at the expense of leaving theory at the background than at the price of a complete rejection of it. Indeed this would’ve gone against the spirit of critical activity. This affirmation of spirit is seen in his acknowledgement that from the start the “spirit is afflicted with the curse of being burdened with matter” (1845/1978b, p. 50), yet he makes this affirmation in a way that draws a closer attention to matter, as illustrated in his choice to work his critique out of the historical condition of Germany he himself was experiencing at that particular time.

### “Revolutionary practical-critical” activity

This action however is not a blind act, but one that requires the subject destined to carry it out to have critically comprehended the need for it and to perform it accordingly, as far as the ‘critical’ component in the formulation “revolutionary practical-critical activity” is concerned. As Berlin points out, according to Hegelian metaphysics, “the sole method by which those who have the good of society at heart can improve society, is to develop in themselves and in others the power of analyzing

themselves and their environment, an activity later called criticism, the growth of which is identical with human progress” (1963, p. 49). Again, Marx combines this idea of analytics and makes it an indispensable component of the “revolutionary practical activity”. In his own words, “All social life is essentially practical. All mysteries which lead theory to mysticism find their rational solution in human practice and in the comprehension of this practice.” (1978c, p. 122). This critical understanding that is seen as a must in practical activity is reflected in Marx’s approach to the first step that needs to be taken by the revolutionary leader in order to make possible the revolution by the proletariat, which is “to disseminate among the masses the consciousness of their destiny and their task” (Berlin, 1963, p. 154).

It is important to note that although Marx’s spelling out of these concepts rests on an examination of a historical segment, namely the politically active state of affairs in nineteenth century Germany and the turmoil of class struggle, his proposals have theoretical implications and refer to more fundamental dynamics of human consciousness and behavior. So if in historical terms the Marxian critique was spelled out as “revolution” by the “proletariat class” having “comprehended their task” in the “historical dialectic”, against the economic circumstances allowing the class consisting of holders of the capital to exploit them, as a first step in the making of a “classless society” in order to emancipate all men; then in theoretical terms it prescribed a concrete “action” that needed to be realized “critically” by the “comprehending subject” within the “contradicting elements” to replace the prevailing order of relationships with one that is anticipated to be more worthy of efforts that will lead human beings to realization of their full human potential.

Keeping in mind the purpose of this study, as not a one-on-one application of the relevant theories to the anecdotes, but as an examination of the overlap of the

concepts put forward by both, it is possible to see several corresponding themes that run through the anecdotes. Thus within Marx's critique, notions such as "economic relationships as the determining factor in the historical dialectic", the "proletariat class", "revolution" and "classless society" at the level of the particular historical context of his times may as well correspond respectively to: "dialectical tension between contradicting elements", the "subject suffering from the conflict", "revolutionary practical-critical activity" and a "resolution enabling the realization of human potential" at the theoretical level. Hence the notions that have been put forward by Marx as parts of the proposal for the emancipation of society at that particular time in history emerge as variables within a more far reaching Marxian theory of cultural critique which anticipates a human emancipation.

### Animated Theory

When going through the anecdotes, we will look into how such ideas, at the theoretical level are inherent in the make up of Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes as cultural criticism, illustrating a revolutionary practical-critical activity. In the anecdotes, there is no call for action towards a revolution that will change, for the better, the corrupt aspects of society. The Hodja figure himself is the activist and goes through his own revolution every time he encounters a new situation. It is possible to see him react in an almost opposite direction when faced with similar situations. Although this may not necessarily mean that he lacks certain principles and codes upon which he grounds his actions, it surely does show that he does a re-reading of how they may be applied on a case by case basis.

Another point to make a note of before examining the anecdotes is that the anecdotes are not meant to sermonize through criticism but to represent the critical aspects of human action. The Hodja himself is an embodiment of critical-practical activity, so to speak. His actions speak for the critical practice. At points this critical practice does symbolically criticize a certain behavior, while at times it is limited to being representative of a particular paradoxical human condition. Some anecdotes concentrate on how he interprets a particular situation while others directly focus on portraying his actions and reactions. So in all the anecdotes included in this part, words are accompanied by action, and in most, the action itself constitutes the statement.

While examination of the structure of the anecdotes will take as its outline Marx's theoretical formulation of "revolutionary practical-critical" activity and how the structure of the anecdotes corresponds to it, analysis of the content will concentrate on the overarching theme of "continual exchange in roles" between the components within any given cultural relationship and how it underlies the cultural criticism contained in the Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes.

#### "Revolutionary practical-critical" activity in the anecdotes

The following anecdote is the source of the typical Nasrettin Hodja image which has come to be used as a symbol of the Nasrettin Hodja figure representative of his global style and message. Having been subject to a variety of interpretations, extending even to those which treat it under Sufism, this anecdote could also be read to depict a "revolutionary practical-critical activity" as suggested in the theoretical ramifications of Marx's formulation explained above.



Nasrettin Hodja gives a lesson. While leading the people, the Hodja in front of them sits on his donkey backwards. They ask him, ‘O Hodja, why have you done so?’ Hodja replies: ‘If you walk in front of me, your backs would face me. If you walk behind me my back will face you. It is better that we proceed like this’. (Boratav, 1996, p. 105, anec. 55)

Here, Nasrettin Hodja is in the position of leading a group of people which implies a subject role for this particular situation compared to the people being led, who assume object role, in the sense that the Hodja is the one who has knowledge of the target direction and thus the role to direct the people. However without making any allusion to this, he points out that he will not accept turning his back towards the people he leads, nor accept a position where their backs would be turned. He does not put this in so many words as to make a critical comment that perhaps, there should be a constant communication between the leader and the led, but shows it through the practical activity of sitting on his donkey, backwards.

In this anecdote, the tension between being in the position of leader and the agency it involves, while at the same time understanding the necessity to maintain communication with those who are led, is resolved in the Hodja’s act which questions the nature of leadership and the social roles it entails. He may be implying that “the leader and the led have no static status, but dynamic roles and that the relationship may be based on the possibility of a continual exchange between these two roles” (S. Voss, personal communication, 2007). There has been and may be alternative interpretations of this anecdote. Whichever way, as far as the social roles involved in leadership are concerned, it offers a new understanding to the conventional perception. The Hodja figure literally acts out his critique about leadership and thus proposes a revolution, so to speak, in the commonly accepted idea of leadership within the cultural mindset he addresses, thus displaying a “revolutionary practical-critical activity”.

Another anecdote demonstrates the similar notion of making a critical statement through action which embodies a revolutionary view on the issue of human agency vis-à-vis objective existence in the form of a critique on human supremacy over other living beings.

One day the Hodja gets on a stiff and stubborn donkey, but is unable to control it. A passer-by asks: 'Where to Hodja?' He replies 'Wherever the donkey wishes.' (Boratav, 1996, p. 208, anec. 431)

It is possible to take this anecdote as an illustration of Marx's axiomatic statement on the roles of the conflicting classes within the notion of historical dialectic: "What is necessary will arrange itself" (1843/1978a, p. 12). Although an agency is expected from the proletariat to carry out the revolution, within the framework of the dialectic at large, the revolution is anticipated regardless of who actually embodies this agency. The proletariat just happens to serve in the realization of the particular stage reached in the dialectical schemata. The anecdote conveys a similar idea in the practical activity of the Hodja riding on his donkey, accompanied with a verbal affirmation of the situation he's in. Here, the Hodja is minding his own act of riding on the donkey and upon receiving the question he gives the rhetorical answer "wherever the donkey wishes". Despite riding, and thus being in the subject position of controlling the donkey-his medium or object, the Hodja is unable to control it and is in a way controlled by it. Therefore, as far as "animated theory" is concerned and among other possible interpretations, this anecdote seems to express a questioning of the agency allotted to the agent. Here again a critical statement is made, via the act of riding on the donkey, that perhaps triggers a question as to the real nature of agency. In appearance, the Hodja is the agent, whereas in reality he is at times under the agency of what is taken to be his medium. The Hodja's act accompanied with his

verbal comment “wherever the donkey wishes”, serves as a practical expression of this contradiction and the on going exchange between object and subject roles.

A similar idea, as far as content is concerned, of implying the ambiguity of the space one occupies in contrast to assigning a stable status to an individual, is represented in the anecdote below again through a practical activity embodying a critique of human nature in man’s relationship to himself.

One day in Akşehir, the Blind Kadı and Subaşı (local administrator), one walking on each side, take Hodja to Hidirlik. On their way, the Blind Kadı, making fun of the Hodja, says, ‘Hodja, have you ever made a slip of the tongue?’ Knowing his intention Nasrettin Hodja says: ‘I was just about to, a moment ago but I decided not to.’ The Blind Kadı asked, ‘Against whom, what was it?’ The Hodja answers, ‘Just a while ago when you were carelessly proceeding, I was almost going to call you over by saying ‘heey Blind Kadı’, it came to the tip of my tongue but I withdrew it.’ The Blind Kadı says, ‘You’re some man Hodja. Sometimes I look at you and see a real tightrope walker, but sometimes you seem like an oaf. I can’t decide what to make of you.’ Continuing to walk in between the Blind Kadı and the Subaşı, the Hodja says, ‘What’s so difficult to understand? As you can see, this odd man, myself, is in between the two of those you mention.’ (Özdamar, p. 30)

It is not difficult to see the metaphorical significance of the characters in this anecdote. In saying that he is something in between a tightrope walker and an oaf, the Hodja is clearly referring to the Blind *Kadı* and the *Subaşı* respectively. The simultaneous use of the verbal comment and the Hodja physically situated in between the two, serves as another illustration of a practical critical activity. The tension here seems to lie in the alternative connotation of the ambiguous statement “this odd man, myself, is in between the two”. Aside from the insinuation of a counter insult against the persons, the Hodja situates himself in between the two identities of a tightrope walker and an oaf at metaphorical levels. He sets himself as being neither a tightrope walker who represents a subject status in his claim of agency over the tightrope- possibly signifying anything that a capable person

manages to handle- nor an oaf representing a passive object in the face of other subjects which have influence over it. He reaffirms his status as middle ground which borrows from both object and subject roles, once again, demonstrating a critique on the idea of agency.

Just as in the Marxian understanding of historical dialectics, the proletariat has come to be in a position to display agency not despite, but due to, having been an object of the exploiters, so the Hodja represents, in his person and his position in the setting of the anecdote, the possibility of simultaneously bearing the two paradoxical attributes. Embodied in the idea of a continual exchange between object and subject roles within the Marxian formulation is the concept of innate contradiction. As suggested in Marx's statement relating to the process of historical dialectic, "everything is pregnant with its contradiction" (Berlin, 1963, p. 178). Contradicting elements opposing one another to bring about a new element bearing traces of both, are here represented to be an intrinsic quality of the subject in question, that is, the personality of the Hodja in this particular anecdote.

Another example of revolutionary practical critical activity involving the idea of the exchange between object and subject roles can be seen in the following anecdote which features the Hodja's physical cessation of the lecture in order to engage in a critical statement about the conventional understanding of education and more specifically of the roles involved in the teaching and learning process.

Before beginning his religious lecture, the Hodja asks the congregation: 'Do you know what I'm going to talk to you about?' They say: 'No'. Upon this response the Hodja refuses to proceed saying 'since you don't know, what is there for me to tell you, why should I go to the trouble?' The next time before preaching the Hodja asks the same question. Based on their previous experience, the congregation says: 'Yes'. 'All right then,' says the Hodja, 'since you know, what is there for me to tell you?' The third time they meet, the Hodja asks: 'Do you know what I should talk to you about?' Half of the congregation replies 'yes' and half 'no'. The Hodja comments,

‘then why don’t those who know tell those who don’t?’ (Boratav, 1996, pp. 94-95, anec. 11, 12, 13)

By rejecting both responses, the Hodja obviously draws attention to something other than a third, correct response. The aim doesn’t appear to be obtaining the proper answer. Rather the Hodja seems to be calling into awareness the essential quality of the teaching and learning process and requesting a revision of the conventional code with which the reciprocal experience is processed. The Hodja implicitly criticizes the conventional approach which assigns static roles to the deliverer and the recipient of the material taught and proposes the possibility that both parties take on the alternate role. Here the set up of the anecdote has the Hodja assign the practical activity to the receivers of the criticism. His words are what cause the congregation to leave the mosque without having heard the religious lecture. The practical activity is meant to call attention to a criticism of the existing underrating of education. The revolution in thought, to speak in Marxian terms, is sought after through a revolution in act, as represented in the Hodja’s gesture of letting the listeners go upon their unsatisfactory response.

The anecdote below provides yet another illustration of the idea of revolution in mental paradigms through practical critical activity. Here the object of criticism is a certain practice within the judicial order and the critique involves an exchange in the roles assumed by the actors involved in the justice delivery system.

A man comes behind the Hodja and slaps him on the back of his neck. The Hodja goes straight to court. The Kadi says: ‘The compensation for one slap is one akçe.’ The man who had slapped the Hodja was the Kadi’s acquaintance from before. He goes to find money but hours pass and the man doesn’t show up. The Hodja gets up and slaps the Kadi and says: ‘O Kadi, since one slap is worth one akçe, you can have the one akçe when it’s brought.’ (Özcan, p. 48)

Here again is a very clear demonstration of revolutionary critical activity in practice.

Having encountered the tension between an infringement of a right deserving a

punishment and justice denied, the Hodja provides a criticism of the situation through his practical act of slapping. The resolution here is quite interesting in that it suggests realizing a revolution in the make up of the judicial system which allows for equating a physical harm with a certain material unit (the *akçe*). The act of slapping by the party wronged seems to serve, on the one hand, to reinforce the notion of its unacceptability and contradiction to justice, and on the other to introduce the idea of an exchange in roles as to the object and subject positions in the delivery of justice. Marx's notion of practical critical activity calling for a revolution is thus acted out in the anecdote.

Finally, featured next, as another example of animated theory, is one of the most famous among the collection of Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes. The message in it has actually taken the form of an idiomatic expression in Turkish; "*ye kürkiim ye/help yourself my fur coat and eat,*" used to criticize the practice of assigning social value based on personal material wealth. This same anecdote is also treated under the part on Simmel's cultural theory. Here, in this part, its relevance to Marx's theory in terms of offering another animation of "revolutionary practical-critical activity", involving a recognition of the exchange between subject and object roles as the medium which serves to bring out the criticism, will be examined.

One day the Hodja goes to a wedding. They offer those who are in elegant attire to come to the table to eat. No one offers him to come. But because he's hungry he eats anyway and leaves. Another day, he's invited again to a wedding. This time he borrows very fancy and expensive garments from different people. When he arrives at the wedding, everyone rises and offers the Hodja to enjoy the food and none them start before he does. In response to the great attention he gets in his new looks, addresses his fur coat about the food and offers it to, 'Eat the food!' Everyone is surprised and they say, 'How can an object eat food?' The Hodja says, 'Nowadays high esteem goes to those who have, not to those who lack.' (Boratav, 1996, p. 137, anec. 180)

Here the Hodja acts out his criticism of the people's attribution of value to a human being in virtue of a material belonging. By addressing his fur coat and inviting it to indulge in the food, he expresses his criticism in practice by representing the transformation of the "object" into a "subject". He suggests a revolution in the cultural coding causing improper attribution of social value, through his practical activity. Similar to Marx's proposal of emancipation of mankind within a classless society, through a revolutionary practical activity, the Hodja's act resolves into a leveling of everyone present through pointing to the exchange between the opposing elements of subject and object. By stating that a mere possession, an object, acquires being and becomes a subject, the Hodja brings to mind the opposite (subjects becoming objects) by implying a question of the extent to which the people who are present are individual "subjects", in reducing all of them to the same level of material possessions as opposed to "subjects" who own them as "objects".

## The Anecdotes and Their “Doubles”

Here in this part, the encompassing notion of a recognition of the continuous object subject role exchange in performing a critique of culture which is present in the Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes will be shown to represent an animation of the theoretical critique of culture found in Foucault’s writings. With Foucault, this object subject role exchange is found in the form of a constant alternation in man’s role as both the subject and an object of knowledge. Whereas in the previous part on the anecdotes and Marx’s theory, the subject matter of the critique in the individual anecdotes (when read independent of the theoretical association) covered a wide range of topics, here in this part, the selection of the anecdotes all deliver a critique of the common understanding of knowledge.

Before going into a discussion of Foucault’s critique which is employed in the “Animated Theory” section of this part however, an overview of the criticism directed at Foucault’s writings will be presented in the hope that it will help to explain the choice of a more fragmented treatment of Foucault’s ideas versus a more holistic approach to those of Marx addressed in the previous part. With Marx, we had examined a unified and conclusive theoretical formulation relating to his social critique, whereas with Foucault we will be analyzing a particular fragment of his writings which does not seem to make a claim to offer any decisive theory to the issues he brings up but rather focuses on providing a comprehensive critical description of them. Hence we will begin with several comments on his writings in an attempt to provide a background to the elements in his critique this study features.



## Background

Although placed under the title of the ‘theory’ section in this study, there is quite a bit of controversy among the serious readers of Foucault as to whether or not he has offered a theory of anything. While one- like Ian Hacking- in his “Michel Foucault: Immature Science”- argues that “*The Order of Things* exemplifies a theory of knowledge” (as cited in Rorty, 1986, p. 41), the other questions:

Does Foucault give us a sketch of, or a basis for, something like a new theory of knowledge? Or should we perhaps conceive of his ‘archaeology’ as a sort of successor discipline to the theory of knowledge or perhaps a supplement to it? It seems to me that Foucault says a lot of things which suggest that he wants such a theory, and a lot of other things which suggest that he doesn’t. My own hunch is that, whatever he may want, he has set things up so that he cannot have such a theory. (Rorty, 1986, p. 41)

It is not only his identity as a theoretician that is under investigation but also the status of his writings and which discipline they might belong to. As O’Farrell remarks, “Even a brief survey of the literature produced on Foucault’s work reveals an overwhelming interest in the question of how his work is to be classified. What ‘discipline’ can it be annexed to?” (1989, p. 20) Another questioner of the nature of Foucault’s work intelligently asks, in a concise way what his works do and do not comprise:

‘Who is Foucault?’ The question crops up less often than it used to. But people are still asking, with some justification, ‘What is he?’ If a thinker confines himself to a single, accepted discipline- as does a Levi-Strauss to anthropology, a Lacan to psychoanalysis, an Althusser to Marxist theory- one has at least a unified object, with recognizable limits and a recognizable history against which one can assess his personal contributions [...] ‘is he some kind of a philosopher?’ people ask. ‘Well, yes, in a way, one answers. ‘He studied philosophy and has spent much of his adult life teaching it.’ ‘Then why does he write not about Plato, Descartes and Kant, but about the history of madness and medicine, prisons and sexuality?’ ‘Well, he is more of a historian than of a philosopher, though his approach to his material is very different from that of a historian.’ ‘Ah, a historian of ideas!’ ‘Well,

no. He has spent a lot of time and energy undermining the preconceptions and methods of the history of ideas' [...] 'Then what?'[...] (Sheridan, 1980, p. 19)

The difficulty of situating the domain of his writing as well as the lack of unity and coherence one encounters after an examination of the body of his work seems to constitute, in itself, a part of the uniqueness of his project. As White points out;

If he continues to fascinate (some of) us, then, it is not because he offers a coherent explanation or even interpretation of our current cultural incoherence but because he denies the authority that the distinction coherence/incoherence has enjoined in Western thought since Plato. He seeks, not the 'ground' but rather the 'space' within which this distinction arose. (1987/1994, p. 51)

Foucault himself not only acknowledges but also promotes this ambiguity concerning his authorial identity as well as the lack of unity and coherence in his writing throughout the course of time in his remark, in the *Archeology of Knowledge*: "Do not ask who I am and do not ask me to remain the same" (Foucault, 1989, p. 19). Thus, that "[...] notions of 'method', 'starting point' and 'theory' are, officially, anathema to Foucault" (Rorty, 1986, p. 43), instead of posing a weakness, seems to single out Foucault's style and in a way that legitimizes from the outset any inconsistency.

What then, are we to find in studying Foucault, what does he have to offer? For the purpose of this study, a close look is taken at particular elements in his work *Les Mots et les Choses*- "Words and Things", translated into English as *The Order of Things* (1973)- which are held here to provide certain insights into the nature of man with regards to his relationship with knowledge. After all, it was this work with which "[...] Foucault assumed his current eminence" (Steiner 1971/1994, p. 398). Thus, although one might find differences in conclusions drawn in this book with his later works, this will not constitute a problem for this study because it is not

necessarily after the conclusions it may offer in terms of a theory of knowledge, but rather tries to capture particular insights offered by its components, particularly the part featuring his analysis of “Man and His Doubles”.

In his book *The Order of Things* (1973), Foucault makes an examination of how the concept of “man” as an object of knowledge has introduced itself into the sphere of human sciences, “or more simply, an account of how the organizing models of human perception and knowledge have altered between the Renaissance and the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century” (Steiner 1971, p. 399). Regarding the time frame specified in this definition it is important to bring up Foucault’s note that, “[...]the terms themselves have no importance” and revise the designation by saying, in his own words, “let us say our prehistory and what is still contemporary” (1973, p. 304).

In this book, Foucault attempts to make a self reflexive history of the sciences within his broader project of “reorganizing of culture in which we are still caught” (Foucault, 1970, p. 43). Here, the notion of “man” is held to be a product of the transfer from the Classical episteme to the Modern in Western culture. In Steiner’s definition, man could be described as a “symbolic product of the ways in which certain men have, over a very short period of history, thought about themselves and human knowledge” (1971, p. 401).

While Foucault does situate his analysis of the concept of man within an examination of the human sciences with reference to the fundamental change which took place in the approach towards the sciences after the Classical period, this particular aspect of Foucault’s analysis- that is, this distinction between the Classical and Modern periods- will not hold a point of interest for this chapter of our study, because no such distinction can be found in the connotations of the individual Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes featured here. Nevertheless, as the analysis of the human

sciences with respect to this shift in epistemes does constitute the backbone of Foucault's investigation and is implemented in each of the segments of Foucault's analysis we will be examining, we will take a brief look into how it functions in clarifying the components of the theory this study does examine.

He repeatedly refers to the beginning of the nineteenth century as the rupture point between Classicism and Modernity in introducing "man" as a new mode of thinking in Western thought. He explains this shift with reference to the classical human sciences and their modern counterparts, so to speak. He relates this "new presence of man" to "the particular arrangement of the episteme that justifies it" (Ibid, p. 312). In this new "episteme"- which can be defined as "the whole set of the presuppositions of thought" (Steiner 1971, p. 400) or as "the structure of thought which epitomizes the thinking of a particular age [...] the underground network of assumptions and thought processes, the 'mind-set' which limits the scientific, philosophical, and cultural thinking of an age" (Strathern 2000, p. 78)- according to Foucault, the classical study of language becomes philology; that of life becomes biology and the concern with labor becomes political economy.

References to the concepts of language, life and labor thus continually run throughout his analysis of the emergence of man in the new locus man occupies in relation to his new status as a mode of thought. Foucault outlines this new status of man in defining him as a paradoxical being which holds knowledge in a way involving simultaneously both his agency/authority over and subjugation to knowledge. Carroll (1978/1994) points to this description in saying "[...] Foucault stages both the birth and death of the subject-man in Les Mots et les choses." (p. 157). This birth and death of man, as a subject, as an authority, are examined in the section on "Man and His Doubles" (pp. 303-343) particularly under four categories

of analysis, each of which will be introduced in the following “Theory” section and elaborated on throughout analysis of the anecdotes in the “Animated Theory” section.

## Theory

These four categories of analysis are: “the analytic of finitude”, “the empirical and the transcendental”, “the cogito and the unthought” and “the retreat and return of the origin”.

### “The analytic of finitude”

Among these, “the analytic of finitude” may be said to constitute the backbone of the remaining categories, because it necessitates the latter as consequential. Here, Foucault draws attention to man’s dual aspect revealed at the turn of his rise as a knowing subject who, coming to realize his finite being as an object of knowledge, finds himself within infinity and who, “as soon as he thinks, merely unveils himself to his own eyes in the form of a being who is already” (1973, p. 313) the object of a knowledge which existed before him.

It might be possible to say that it is precisely this “analytic of finitude” which serves as the basis for Foucault’s critique of the human sciences (biology, economy and philology) that runs throughout the book. White (1987), in his article testing the idea of anti-humanism in Foucault’s discourse, spells out this idea of finitude in terms of a “limitation” man is caught in when, at the turn of the episteme, he becomes the subject of a knowledge which takes as its object the way man lives,

labors and speaks within the framework of the human sciences.

The history of human sciences shows us efforts to locate the nature of 'man' in his being as 'living, producing, speaking' animal; but these 'living, producing, speaking' [beings] themselves dissolve and escape identification, behind the discourses intended to reveal their substance- only to reappear in a new guise, as the subject of new 'sciences' when a given notion of 'life, labor, or language' finds its limit in language itself. (p. 62)

Now let us situate this idea within the context of the matrix Foucault describes in analyzing the function of finitude. For man, finitude finds presence, paradoxically so, in the endlessness of the "possibil[ity of] acquisition of knowledge (Foucault, 1973 p. 342)". This is because, just at the point where man, as a mode of thinking, is to subjugate the domains life, labor and language through categories of knowledge framed within the human sciences, this very mode of thinking gets caught in the limitation innate to the language it produces which is the only tool it has to represent its knowing status. This limitation which becomes visible in language, serves to trap the initial effort to subjugate the said domains of knowledge in finitude, leaving man in the ambiguous locus between finite capability and an endless possibility of obtaining knowledge.

#### "The empirical and the transcendental"

In explaining the relationship between man and the duality of "the empirical and transcendental", Foucault points to the shift in epistemes wherein man in his finite being is being put in the position of "revealing the conditions of knowledge on the basis of the empirical contents given it" (Ibid, p. 319). He is to utilize his transcendental quality of knowledge to be able to "know" his own empirical being. As Schrift (1988/1994) points out, "for Foucault, 'man' names that 'strange

empirico-transcendental doublet', the analysis of whose 'actual experience' functions at the transcendental levels of the biological and historico-cultural conditions which make empirical knowledge possible" (p. 281).

Drawing on Foucault's idea of "man" appearing as both the object and subject of knowledge, Racevskis (1980/1994), in his article examining the nature of the subject in Foucault's discourse, indicates that "man is indeed the subject of knowledge, but in both senses of the word, since his own social reality is determined by the discourse he utters" (p. 140). In other words, Foucault's "man" is a "strange empirico-transcendental doublet" (Foucault, 1973, p. 347) whose empirical content as spelled out in his social reality is known by way of being subject to his transcendental function which can be found in the discourse he employs as a knowing subject. In other words, man is a knowing being only inasmuch as he subjects his empirical aspect to his transcendental aspect. On the other hand, his transcendental aspect would have no function were he not to have an empirical aspect. His transcendental quality of knowing cannot function unless it takes as object his empirical qualities of life, labor and language. It is because both aspects necessitate one another in giving man that in-between status of object and subject with regards epistemological authority/sovereignty that he is referred to as an "empirico-transcendental doublet".

This "empirico-transcendental" quality is a necessary consequence of his position in the "Analytics of Finitude". According to Foucault, "finitude" lies at "the foundation of all the empirical positivities, and of everything that can indicate itself as a concrete limitation of man's existence" (Ibid, p. 315). Here, Foucault is referring to concrete human practices which are simultaneously products of his agency and also forces which dominate him. Indeed, it is the empirical forms of "the

spatiality of the body, the yawning of desire, and the time of language” (Ibid) listed at the basis of the analytic of finitude with regards to man’s position vis-à-vis the human sciences- referring respectively to the studies of life, labor and language- which constitute these limitations.

Yet the limitations caused by such empirical positivities do not mean that man is eventually constrained and remains subjugated. Foucault points out that, “Heralded in positivity, man's finitude is outlined in the paradoxical form of the endless” (Ibid, p. 314). Man is described as an existence to whose experience,

a body has been given, a body which is his body- a fragment of ambiguous space, whose peculiar and irreducible spatiality is nevertheless articulated upon the spaces of things; to this same experience, desire is given as a primordial appetite on the basis of which all things assume value, and relative value; to this same experience, a language is given in the thread of which all the discourses of all times, all successions and all simultaneities may be given” (Ibid).

Thus we see the relationship Foucault directs attention to between man’s finite being at the foreground of an infinity on the one hand and his empirical qualities coupled with transcendental ones on the other, in his understanding of the emergence of a concept of “man” as the aftermath of the shift to the modern understanding of the human sciences.

#### “The ‘Cogito’ and the Unthought”

Foucault furthers his point on man’s empirico-transcendental aspect resulting from his relationship to finitude, in his analysis of “the cogito and the unthought”. He explains, “If [man] is that paradoxical figure in which the empirical contents of knowledge necessarily release, of themselves, the conditions that have made them possible, then man cannot posit himself in the immediate and sovereign transparency



of a *cogito*” (Ibid, p. 322). This has two consequences.

One is that although man is able to independently exercise his power to think about the contents of knowledge, the existence of this ability is dependent on and is to an extent shaped and administered by his finitude on the one hand, and the empirical contents of knowledge on the other. This is a characteristic that marks modern man’s contradictory relationship with the human sciences. “The modern cogito does not reduce the whole being of things to thought without ramifying the being of thought right down to the inert network of what does not think”, which means that “the ‘I think’ does not, in its case, lead to the evident truth of the ‘I am’” because it is ambiguous whether it is possible for one to

say that I am this language I speak, into which my thought insinuates itself to the point of finding in it the system of all its own possibilities, yet which exists only in the weight of sedimentations my thought will never be capable of actualizing altogether [...] that I am this labour I perform with my hands, yet which eludes me not only when I have finished it, but even before I have begun it [...] that I am this life I sense deep within me, but which envelops me both in the irresistible time that grows side by side with it and poses me for a moment on its crest, and in the imminent time that prescribes my death. (Ibid, pp. 324-25)

Thus the empirical contents of knowledge comprised of language, labor and life which are subject to man’s transcendental sphere of “thinking” within the human sciences, nevertheless undermine and place into question his “being” by overthrowing his sovereignty, because of the fact that he is unable to exercise any empirical power over these contents.

This leads to the other consequence brought on by the modern episteme’s failure to confirm “being” based on “thinking”. This would be the paradoxical nature of man in that he is not only overthrown empirically (because his empirical reign is restricted through his finitude) but always outthought (because his transcendental sovereignty is again restricted by his finitude which disables him from mastering the

contents of knowledge he knows is beyond his reach) by the possibility of non-thought contents which is ironically thought, once again by man himself. His ability to think gives him the independence to “think of” a possible realm of thought inaccessible to him, even though he cannot conceive of its contents. Given this realization, with the shift from the previous episteme, “the question is no longer: How can experience of nature give rise to necessary judgments? But rather: How can man think what he does not think?” (Ibid) -that is ‘how can he think the unthought’- referring perhaps to contents of knowledge he is unable to think about or those which are out of the sphere of his knowledge. The implication of this, regarding man’s status with the shift to the modern episteme, is that:

it became possible [...] to investigate man in his entirety- at the risk of discovering what could never be reached by his reflection or even by his consciousness [...] the unconscious, and the forms of unthought in general, have not been the reward granted to a positive knowledge of man [...] Man has not been able to describe himself as a configuration in the episteme without thought at the same time discovering, [...] an unthought which it contains entirely, yet in which it is also caught” (Ibid, p. 326).

Thus, Foucault points to the paradoxical task of the thinking subject in being in a position to unthink the content which has served as the basis for its thoughts and make it possible to reach towards that which lingers on as the remains: the unthought. The modern episteme has set for man a task, the accomplishment of which is dependent on the dynamics of a vicious circle. The sovereign subject is to reign over a knowledge he is simultaneously the object of.

It is noteworthy to point out here, that this dialectical relationship between the empirical and thus the objective contents of knowledge and the knowing subject (the cogito) also emerges in Simmel’s critique, which will be detailed in the next part, in the form of an ongoing exchange between objective and subjective cultures. While for Simmel, the recognition of this exchange is what comprises and helps to

define the cultural process at large, for Foucault it serves as a device that signals the need to question the nature of the epistemological existence of man, the central figure that comprises the subject matter of and at the same time brings into discussion the concept of culture.

### “The retreat and return of the origin”

Finally Foucault discusses man’s relation to “the retreat and return of the origin” as another trait that positions him between his knowing mode of being and himself as the object of knowledge within “the analytic of finitude”. When man tries to locate an “origin”, a beginning of existence, he is actually “reviving, without knowing [...] all the intermediaries of a time that governs him almost to infinity” (Foucault, p. 331). Situating this notion within the transfer to the new episteme, “It is no longer origin that gives rise to historicity; it is historicity that in its very fabric makes possible the necessity of an origin which must be both internal and foreign to it” (1973, p. 329). White’s allusion to the dynamics of the idea of origin within the context of his analysis of the constitution of the domain of knowledge in the shift of epistemes might be helpful in understanding Foucault’s use of the phrase.

‘Life, labor, and language’ were also historicized in the nineteenth century, in the hope that by the study of their evolution in time, their deeper unities would be discovered. But this enterprise, carried out most completely in biology, economics, and philology, was as doomed to failure as that of the Classical age. For the ‘origin’ that it relentlessly pursued just as relentlessly receded from any positive identification (The Order of Things, p. 333). The historical approach to the study of ‘life, labor, and language’ revealed neither the Origin nor the Subject of these activities [...] (White, p. 63)

According to Foucault, “the original in man, does not herald the time of his birth, or the most ancient kernel of his experience [...] it indicates ceaselessly, and in an ever-

renewed proliferation, that things began long before him [...] (Foucault, 1973, p. 331). Having “began long before him”, these contents of “life, labour and language [have] acquired their own historicity” (p. 329) with modern thought. Yet the analysis doesn’t stop here to simply conclude that man used to be a subject of knowledge in the Classical episteme but now in the Modern, he has become the object of the knowledge he was once subject of. Foucault makes this point only in order to set the basis for his further inquiry into how man emerges as a being caught between the two positions in relation to knowledge.

A task is thereby set for thought: that of contesting the origin of things, but of contesting it in order to give it a foundation, by rediscovering the mode upon which the possibility of time is constituted- that origin without origin or beginning, on the basis of which everything is able to come into being [...] Time would then be suspended within that thought, which nevertheless cannot escape from it since it is never contemporaneous with the origin; but this suspension would have the power to revolve the reciprocal relation of origin and thought; and as it pivoted upon itself, the origin, becoming what thought has yet to think, and always afresh, would be forever promised in an imminence always nearer yet never accomplished. In that case, the origin is that which is returning, the repetition towards which thought is moving, the return of that which has already begun, the proximity of a light that has been shining since the beginning of time. (Ibid, p. 332)

Thus man, in his pursuit to track down and discover the human sciences and their origin and man’s origin through the way opened by a “retreat of the origin” is hindered by the “return” of this possibly existing origin in the form of a realization that man, in his efforts, each time encounters the existence of a realm which was there long before the point of origin he would manage to locate within the human sciences. Thus, while man is able to think of an origin and wishes to locate it, he discovers that doing so unveils a realm that is outside the scope of his thinking because that origin (marking the start of things) which he is able to locate can only mark the start of things contemporaneous with his start, thereby bringing into

question the origin of the realm that is not (and can never be) contemporaneous with his origin. This points to a preexistence man was not there to witness (which can be considered an existence unthought for man). Therefore man is once again caught up in an ambiguous space between a search for a fancied origin and the recognition of a historicity that cancels out the initiatory status of this origin, thereby placing into question his knowing status.

### Animated Theory

It is interesting to see that all four sets of these dualities which cover a wide theoretical formulation as to the status of modern man and his relationship to knowledge can be found in the criticism present in Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes at the level of practical everyday experience. In the anecdotes, the singular instances bear traits of the positioning of man in an intermediate realm within the interplay of these four dualities. It may be possible to say that the element of the constant subject object interchange with relation to knowledge Foucault lays down in his analysis emerges as a device that helps to foreground the criticism of the commonly accepted understanding of knowledge seen in the anecdotes.

### “The analytic of finitude”, “The cogito and the unthought” and the anecdotes

Starting with the first and third of these dualities, the following two anecdotes may be considered great practical depictions of the theoretical statements present in Foucault’s elaboration on the “analytics of finitude” and the “cogito and the unthought”, in which he points to man’s quality of having the ability to think “about”

the existence of a knowledge that is beyond his limits, that is his finitude, despite the inherent implication that it is “unknowable” to him, rendering his subject role in knowledge ambiguous.

Both anecdotes deal with man’s knowledge and do so in a way that precisely coincides with the context of these two categories of analysis by Foucault. Both anecdotes lay down the tension between the finite nature of man’s knowledge and his thinking ability to apprehend the infinity in which he is situated yet has no access to except in the form of thought. He can enter the infinite realm only inasmuch as he acknowledges his capacity to utilize the ‘cogito’, that is to ‘think’ of the possibility of unthought contents which are out of reach of his finite being. In both of the following anecdotes, Nasrettin Hodja is established as a “subject who thinks and knows” precisely because he “thinks about and knows” the limitation he is caught in at the point of intersection between his infinite ability to think and his finite ability to know that there’s a point beyond which he cannot think of. In other words, his act of thinking has the potential to go on endlessly whereas the contents of this thought are limited. Here is the first of these anecdotes which present a critique of the common understanding of the nature of knowledge.

One day, a pupil of the medrese [Islamic university] interested in challenges of knowledge comes to Akşehir and asks ‘Who is the most knowledgeable of our town?’ They describe Nasrettin Hodja. He searches and upon finding him says: ‘Master Hodja, I have forty questions for you. I ask for a single answer for my forty questions.’ The Hodja says indifferently, ‘Go ahead and state your questions’ and after listening to the forty questions all ears, answers saying ‘La edri kulliha’, meaning ‘I don’t know all things’ and silences his challenger in a single answer. (Boratav, 1996, p. 255, anec. 538)

From the very start, the anecdote positions the Hodja as being sought after with reference to his fame as “the most knowledgeable”. In the outcome of the encounter, by silencing the questioner, his position as “the most knowledgeable” is reaffirmed

both despite and because of his confession that he “does not know all”. He is the knowing subject not by virtue of being the subject as holder of the endless epistemological sphere in its entirety, but in virtue of being a subject having access to the idea of the endlessness in the sphere of knowledge; in being able to recognize the ‘unthought’ through his thinking, that is the ‘cogito’. A similar function is seen in the following anecdote which puts to test the dynamic involved in the mental paradigm that assigns validity to knowledge.

One day his neighbor asks the Hodja: ‘O Hodja, you know everything. Can you tell me where the center of the earth is?’ ‘Right where you are’ answers the Hodja. ‘O Hodja how can that be?’ ‘Hey man, you asked and we answered. If you don’t believe it, go ahead take the *arşın* (yard measure) and measure’. (Özcan, p. 24)

Isolated from the theory aspect, a basic reading of this anecdote delivers a questioning of verifying knowledge. Assuming that this dialogue dates back to a time when people were not very much aware of the idea of the roundness of the world, the quite cursory testing of the Hodja’s knowledge receives a seemingly mocking response which actually questions the nature of knowledge and parameters by which it is verified. With regards the element of object subject role exchange which helps to bring out this critique, here again, the Hodja is initially situated as the knowing subject by the acknowledgment “you know everything”, but then a turn is made in challenging him about a particular knowledge content. The Hodja is again able to answer and is given back his position as a knowing subject; yet an ambiguous space is left as to the limit of his knowledge through the questioning of the accuracy of it. However a response is provided again with reference to unresolved tension between man as a knowing subject and his limitedness, and between the contents of knowledge he is able to think of and those he cannot. The only difference between the two anecdotes is found in structure in that this latter anecdote features the tension

via the person of the questioner and not through the Hodja himself as with the previous anecdote.

In both the anecdotes, although man's confines in terms of being a knowing subject are emphasized eventually, the set up of the anecdotes both leads to the affirmation of the Hodja as the "knowing" authority within the context. His knowledge of his limits both regarding his ability to think and regarding the unthought, as far as thinkable knowledge contents are concerned, establishes him as a knowing subject both despite and because of the manifestations of 'finitude' and the 'unthought' putting him in the place of the "enslaved sovereign" (Foucault, 1973, p. 312) - to put it in Foucault's description- as far as epistemological sovereignty is concerned.

"The analytic of finitude", "The empirical and transcendental" and the anecdotes

Next, it is possible to see an animation, in the next couple of anecdotes, of Foucault's understanding of the position of man as an entity accommodating the features mentioned both in "the analytic of finitude" and in the "empirical and transcendental". This latter analysis had drawn attention to the status of man positioned in a tension between subject and object roles within the realm of a knowledge treatment which is held to be distinct from the former episteme, in that it highlighted the paradox of his empirical and transcendental being based on his "finitude" with regard to the attainment of knowledge. He had pointed out that man is "a strange empirico-transcendental doublet, since he is a being such that knowledge will be attained in him of what renders all knowledge possible" (Ibid, p. 318).



This position of man as an entity accommodating both empirical and transcendental contents through a dialogue that functions to make possible a knowledge, can be traced in the anecdote below which equates acquisition of knowledge as a transcendental entity, to the empirical category of experience.

One day the Hodja falls off the roof and hurts his foot. His friends come to visit him and ask how he is. The Hodja asks: 'Is there any one among you who has fallen off a roof?' 'No, there isn't' they reply. 'Then none of you will know how I am', responds the Hodja. (Boratav, 1996, p. 156, anec. 250)

The anecdote starts with a request for gaining knowledge of the Hodja's condition after the accident. The questioners are demanding access to a transcendental realm in seeking knowledge of his impaired empirical being. The object of knowledge is empirical yet possession of it, that is, the knowledge thereof, is transcendental. In other words, while the actual experience relates to the empirical aspect, the ensuing knowledge of the experience relates to the transcendental. The anecdote renders the empirical and the transcendental categories inseparable by equating one to the other. Upon finding out that none among the visitors has had an empirical encounter with the object of knowledge- the sense of feeling after such an experience- the Hodja refuses to answer their question, stating as well the reason. He points to the actual experience of the object of knowledge as a precondition for full attainment of it by conceptually uniting the empirical and the transcendental categories of knowledge. The set up of the anecdote is noteworthy in that this theoretical statement is brought about by the empirical incident, which also places the anecdote as a manifestation of this empirico-transcendental duality not only in terms of content but also in terms of structure and method.

Present in the following anecdote is the same idea, although more implicit compared to the previous anecdote which translated the formation of knowledge via

the empirico-transcendental duality explicit in the question and the reply. In this next anecdote, however, the concepts of knowledge and experience are less explicit due to the arrangement of action, dialogue and characters involved. What is more explicit however is the relationship Foucault elaborates on with regard to the “analytics of finitude” present in the examination of “the empirical and transcendental”. He had pointed out that, “At the foundation of all the empirical positivities, and of everything that can indicate itself as a concrete limitation of man’s existence, we discover a finitude” (1973, p. 315). Present in the following anecdote is a representation of this statement at an individual level. The knowing subject is depicted as being hindered by a ‘concrete limitation’ resulting from his empirical being. This empirical limitation serves to display the finite quality of the knowing subject in that his transcendental aspect bearing knowledge (which is man’s source of a claim to have access to an infinite realm) is overpowered by his empirical aspect.

With the purpose of building a house, the Hodja brings an architect to his premises. The architect walking around the land pointing and going on; ‘We can build a room here, a living area there, a pantry here’ somehow passes gas. The Hodja comments: ‘And a washroom right here.’ (Boratav, 1996, p.195, anec. 384)

The concern with knowledge as a transcendental category implicit in this anecdote is built into the character of the architect indicative of a locus of knowledge of a particular sort. Lacking the knowledge of architecture, the Hodja makes a request for an architect in the construction of a house. The Hodja intervenes right at a point where the architect’s exhibition of his knowledge is interrupted by his limitation, his own bodily need. The Hodja in his remark “and a washroom right here” links the transcendental quality of the architect’s knowledge (specifically, of where to build what, and representing at large, the authority which possession of access to knowledge-a transcendental realm- entails) with the empirical content of the bodily

need again expressed through the person of the architect, thus pointing to the “empirico-transcendental” duality. The subjective claim over the knowledge of construction is proposed to be realized through an empirical experience-that is the display of the knowledge of construction- which ironically at the same time impairs the claim of subjecthood, because it has equal status-as far as having an empirical quality is concerned- with the bodily need that makes manifest his finitude in being limited by it. The subjecthood- which can be considered an extension of the transcendental category- is impaired in being made an object of an empirical category. This leaves the washroom as a product of this tension, which signifies the “empirico-transcendental” exchange.

“The analytic of finitude”, “The retreat and return of the origin” and the anecdotes

Further, the following two anecdotes display ideas that can be traced in the next set of paradoxical relationships Foucault discusses in positioning man as a product of a shift in epistemes and as one of the consequences of his “analytic of finitude”. This set of dualities is the dynamics between the “Retreat” and the “Return of the Origin”. One other component and at the same time consequence of man’s finitude is that an “origin” which marks the ultimate beginning of his being cannot be assigned to him. Whenever man tries to locate an origin, the origin he comes across is one that marks the boundary between his being and an existence that preceded him. However, because this previous existence- this time span from which man is excluded- cannot have an existing status as far as man’s knowledge is concerned due to the fact that he’s simply not there to experience it, the idea of an origin makes a “retreat” as soon as man recognizes his non-being at the borderline that separates his origin and the

pre-existing historicity outside of him. Simultaneously, however, the same idea of origin “returns” because without man there-as the medium- to ‘know’ this pre-existence, the origin once again acquires an initiatory status, that is, its status as a point that marks the beginning of things. So here we have two moves. On the one hand, there is the “retreat” of the idea of origin for man, which involves his realization that if he were to locate a beginning for himself it would mean affirming an existence which didn’t include him. Such a point in history would not indicate an origin because it would only be a confrontation of the beginning of man and what was there before (which couldn’t have an existence for man who was non-existent). Therefore the idea of an origin, figuratively speaking, makes a “retreat” in Foucault’s terminology. On the other hand, there is the “return” of the idea of origin. The idea of origin figuratively returns because the absence of man, in this pre-existing history, renders this time non-existent as far as man’s knowledge of it is concerned. Therefore it can be considered a starting point after all. But because these two moves necessitate one another ever-mutually, the paradoxical status of man as both the subject and object of knowledge thus runs in an endless cycle of exchange.

The anecdote below has significance in terms of reflecting such an idea of man’s origin which actually negates itself as an origin in referring back to temporal existence preceding it, thusly positioning the status of man as a holder of knowledge in an ambiguous space.

One day the Hodja lies down to sleep by the river. He imagines himself being dead. A man comes up to him and says, ‘O man, from where does this river’s bridge cross over it. Do you know?’ The Hodja answers; ‘It went over the river when I was I alive, but I don’t know where now.’ (Boratav, 1996, p. 139, anec. 187)

The set up of the anecdote, with the Hodja present simultaneously as both living and dead, enables the exposure of the idea of an origin against the background of pre-

existence. He states that he knew where the bridge was when he was alive, while the content of knowledge as to the answer to the question is of a different quality than the one demanded by the questioner- one already knows that a bridge crosses “over” a river, the question is, from exactly “which” part of the river does it cross over. That the Hodja makes as if he’s communicating from a different realm under the pretence of death, in a way gives news from beyond the limits of this realm and negates all previous knowledge, rendering the content of that knowledge invalid for his present existence. The function of the double identity of voice in being both in the world and at the same time out of it, gives him an opportunity to make known to this world’s man what he cannot “know” in the true sense unless it goes beyond its origin and thus beyond his finite bounds. Rendering his previous knowledge invalid, he makes a retreat to a point of origin in which resides a possibility of knowledge to be gained afresh. The seemingly paradoxical double voice is what makes possible the retreat which allows for the return to the origin in unfolding new knowledge. A speaker simultaneously in and out of this world functions as a tool to mark this point of intersection.

The next anecdote also employs the theme of death as a medium to bring out the idea of the ambiguous status of man’s origin which is again embedded in the "analytics of finitude". The set up of the anecdote serves as a great expression of the unstable position of the idea of an origin for man which maintains the ambiguity of man’s knowing status, while at the same time showing to what extent a knowledge for man is possible. This final anecdote bears features which actually sum up the ideas inherent in all four categories of analysis we've examined; “the analytic of finitude”, "the empirical and the transcendental", “the cogito and the unthought” and the “the retreat and return of the origin” with respect to modern man's relationship to

knowledge. Let's take a look into how the anecdote accomplishes this in the said order.

An acquaintance asks: 'O Hodja, how many arşins [yard measure] is the world?' At the same time a funeral passes by, to which the Hodja points and says: 'Ask it [the corpse]! You see, he has measured, examined it and now it's going'. (Boratav, 1996, p. 232, anec. 493)

The Hodja, positioned once again as a "knower", is directed a question regarding the particular knowledge of the size of the world which he refuses to answer and forwards to another subject he regards to be in a position more fit than himself to 'know' the answer- a dead man. What is possible for us to see is that, firstly, access to the possibility of a specific knowledge content pertaining to the world is associated with going beyond the limits of man's world, his finitude. The juxtaposition of seeking a knowledge content belonging to man's finite world with the possibility of attaining its answer in a corpse- a being which is no longer a part of it- through the setting of a funeral- an outright manifestation of man's finitude, serves to bring out the contradiction in man's relationship to knowledge within the context of the "analytic of finitude". Second, the scene of a dead man being put in a position to answer a question requiring empirical knowledge of a world he no longer experiences provides a depiction of the ideas present in Foucault's next analysis featuring the "empirical and transcendental" duality in modern man's relationship to knowledge. The remark, "he has measured, examined it and now he's going", made to provide evidence that he is qualified to answer the question about a particular empirical knowledge content, serves to state that he has, in practice- that is empirically- experienced everything needed to answer that question. What is ironic is that included in these requirements among "measuring and examining" (the world- the substance under inquiry) is his exclusion from it- that "he is going". The transcendental quality of the possibility of acquiring knowledge is once again put in

the hands of an empirically limited being. Thirdly, for the analysis of the “the cogito and the unthought”, we find that the questioner functions as the 'cogito' who is asking a question with the hope of getting an answer which will reaffirm his thinking being. However, this thinking being is offered his object of knowledge against the background of the demise of his agency to “know” as a subject, which is represented through the funeral pointing to a no longer existing being which once used to bear the 'cogito' just like himself. At this point we can use the term 'cogito' to stand for the 'thinking man' in general and not necessarily for the person of the questioner. The irony in resolving the claim of a ‘cogito’ in having “measured and examined” the world yet beholding the answer "in the imminent time that prescribes [his] death" (Foucault, 1973, p. 325), at a point where "he's going", that is, leaving the domains in which his answer holds any validity and entering a domain which is a part of the "unthought" for man in that he is incapable of conceiving it unless he is consumed by it, serves to express once again the impossibility of assigning man an absolute and stable knowing status. It is possible to see how this analysis would lead to the idea of “the retreat and return of the origin”. If the answer to the question is sought in man’s knowledge which is situated at a borderline between being and non-being, then there’s reason to question the point that marks where man’s knowledge starts to come into play, - that is, its point of origin. The implication in the anecdote is that it begins where man’s “finite”, “empirical” and “thinking” being ends. This seems to point precisely to the paradoxical position of man’s status as a knowing subject caught between a “retreat and return of the origin” as well as between the mentioned three other categories of dualities which Foucault describes.

As far as Foucault’s analysis is concerned, whether modern man is the subject or object of knowledge is ambiguous because he’s positioned in an intermediary

domain between the mentioned dualities. The Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes we've gone over point to a similar ambiguity with regards to the status of man's knowledge. The anecdotes provide an animation, so to speak, of Foucault's theoretical statements. The question of where each one stands in terms of providing a concluding remark as to man and his relationship to knowledge might comprise a fundamental difference between the two. It seems that for Foucault, this ambiguity is what marks the shift in epistemes and positions man as a product of the modern episteme. For the Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes on the other hand, it comprises a significant part of a global critique of how men perceive human nature at large. Looking into whether this critique offers an alternative perception of human nature and whether Foucault's use of the analysis of the term 'modern man' is limited only to an effort to demarcate epistemes for history of thought, would exceed the bounds of this study, yet might also provide an interesting topic for further inquiry.



## The Anecdotes as Fragments of Social Interaction

In Simmel's theoretical layout, the recognition of an ongoing exchange in object and subject roles found in the cultural critique in the Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes, emerges as the quality of reciprocity between the object and subject actors in the formation of the cultural process at large. According to Simmel, the investigation into the notion of culture requires that it is broken down to the components of objective and subjective cultures and how they continually affect one another. The philosophical inquiries he employs in his sociological analyses and those relevant for this study are based on the acknowledgement of this dynamic.

Similar to how only a certain segment of Foucault's theories was put under examination in its relationship to the critique in Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes, here also, in this part looking into the relevant correspondences in Simmel's cultural critique, particular fragments of his sociological analyses will constitute the points of reference in the animated theory section to follow. Indeed, his analyses are known for having a fragmentary structure overall. This particular feature has actually been an object of criticism regarding Simmel's scholarship. However, because his fragmentary style holds significance in understanding Simmel's approach to culture at large, the background section in this part will start out with an overview of the criticism directed at his work, followed by a review of how these very objects of criticism have actually contributed to the field of sociological theory. Next, relevant segments of his theories will first be discussed in the "Theory" section and then discovered in the "Animated Theory" section.

## Background

The works of Georg Simmel, who is often given the title of a “sociologist-philosopher” (Axelrod, 1979, p. 36), have met with contradictory responses. Coser (1958/1994) indicates that “[Contemporaries of Georg Simmel] stressed the dazzling brilliance of his writings and the brittle elegance, but they also noted the lack of systematic exposition and the almost studied disorderliness of his method” (p. 23). An example of a criticism featuring such irresolute approaches can be found in that of Weber:

[...] On the one hand, [...] crucial aspects of his methodology are unacceptable. His substantive results must with unusual frequency be regarded with reservations, and not seldom they must be rejected outright. In addition, his mode of exposition strikes one at times as strange, and often it is at the very least uncongenial. On the other hand, one finds oneself absolutely compelled to affirm that this mode of exposition is simply brilliant and what is more important, attains results that are intrinsic to it and not to be attained by any imitator. Indeed, nearly every one of his works abounds in important new theoretical ideas and the most subtle observations. (Weber 1908/1994, pp.77-78)

The common negative criticism directed at Simmel’s writing is that it is “unbounded, fragmented, unsystematic” (Axelrod 1979, p. 37). Yet, on the other hand, a common characteristic of the body of criticism directed at Simmel’s works is that “Simmel’s critics feel no obligation to formulate the standard by which they criticize his work” (Ibid). Weber also acknowledges that with regard to the criticism directed at Simmel’s works, ‘this rather widespread attitude, which at times verges on malice, has characteristically never been turned into a systematic, coherent critique of Simmel.’ (1908, p. 79).

About his sociological method in particular, Nedelmann (1985/1994) points out; “To be sure, he very often does not live up to the strict demands raised by

modern sociologists of having precise and unambiguous definitions” (p. 203). As a response to criticism of his inability to provide a scientifically accepted paradigm, Lukacs brings to attention his role as a “great stimulator” (p. 98), announcing that ““a sociology of culture, such as has been undertaken by Max Weber, Troeltsch, Sombart and others- however much they might all wish to distance themselves from him [Simmel] methodologically- has surely been made possible on the foundation created by him (as cited in Frisby 2002, p. 140). Axelrod (1979) agrees to this approach in that, according to Simmel, “method is the responsibility of the individual. Simmel does not supply others with method (other than encourage adventure which in itself is not method), nor does he attempt to perfect and consolidate a strong paradigm designed to subject other scientists [...]” (p. 48) and thus restrict them. It seems rather that he inspires ideas which others may elaborate on but through his own unique style, a style which does not seem to be meant to serve as a pre-established structure for their writings.

With regard to what Simmel’s work has contributed, we may start with his analysis of the notion of interaction which is definitely a marked trait of Simmel’s sociological inquiry acknowledged by his readers. According to Dahme (1988/1994), “the basic concept of Georg Simmel’s philosophy and sociology is interaction” (p. 6). Vromen (1987/1994) also agrees that, “It is the process and the forms of this interactive association that interested Simmel” (p. 393).

Another of his contributions is that, “unlike other sociologists, he analyzed emotions from a sociological perspective” (Gerhards 1986/1994, p. 113). He places the examination of emotions inside the sociological sphere within the “context of their reciprocal effects between individuals”. Considering that Simmel’s sociology is based upon the examination of forms of social interaction, emotions, in his analysis,

have two distinct sociological functions: “on the one hand, emotions are themselves forms of the creation of interactions, and, on the other hand, they are the outcome, the psychological effects, of experienced interactions” (Ibid, p. 114). Simmel employs his analysis of the function of emotions in his famous work The Philosophy of Money, wherein, with the introduction of money, goods lose their emotional content and are equalized by way of calculations which reduce qualitative values to quantitative ones (Ibid, p. 127). This finding enables him to make genuine sociological examination of the idea that the “direct relationship between man and objects, which in its immediacy is an emotional one, is replaced by a special communicable one determined by the intermediacy of a symbol” (Ibid, p. 126). This particular aspect of the work causes Frisby to call attention to Lukacs’s singling out of Simmel’s The Philosophy of Money as “one of the two works decisive for ‘the clarification of the sociology of culture’” (as cited in Frisby 2002, p. 140). It is through the insight provided by this observation that we can find an elucidation of the reciprocal relationship between the object and subject components of culture.

### Theory

Now let us see, on the one hand, the kind of a framework Simmel employs in formulating his sociological inquiries, and on the other, let us look into the subject matter of his examination.

A common aspect of Simmel’s sociological analyses is that they take as their reference point his approach to culture as a general framework. Simmel divides culture into objective and subjective culture. Here is how he describes the two terms:

Because culture, in a unique way, sets the contents of life at a point of intersection of subject and object, we may legitimately interpret the concept in two ways. The name of objective culture can be given to

things, extended, enhanced and perfected [...] so as to lead the soul to its own perfection, or to constitute a part of the road to higher life of the individual or the community. By subjective culture, on the other hand, I understand the degree of personal development thus attained (Simmel, 1908/1997, p. 45)

Simmel's understanding of culture seems to denote more of a continual reciprocal process between objective reality and the individuals who experience it (the subjects) than a phenomenon which inherently determines specified static roles for each (objective reality and the subject). The following remarks complement his distinction between objective and subjective culture in bringing out his fundamental approach to culture at large.

Culture exists only if man draws into his development something that is external to him [...] the perfection of the individual is routed through real and ideal spheres outside the self. The perfection does not remain a purely immanent process, but is consummated in a unique adjustment and teleological interweaving of subject and object. (Simmel, 1908/1971, p. 230)

This continual interaction between subject and object in the formation of culture can be found at the background in Simmel's sociological analyses concerning social patterns. In particular, his examination of Modernity and of certain categories of modern experience emerges within a recognition of this bilateral relationship and at the point where objective culture predominates over subjective culture due to the process of objectification that accompanies the rationalization tendency. This process will be dealt with in more detail throughout the specific examinations of the function of "money" and "adornment". Now, having thus stated the general framework of his approach, let us move to what constitutes the substance of these analyses and the specific categories of experience he evaluates under this light.

According to Dahme's summary;

Simmel's sociology is concerned with the forms of sociation [...] provid[ing] a more satisfactory account of the relational and dynamic character of social life. Irrespective of the volition and knowledge of

the actors, all processes of sociation display certain similarities in form. Thus, within the most diverse types of societies and within the most different social groups, one can find the same forms of sociation, such as super- and subordination, domination, competition, division of labor, or within the microsocial sphere, marriage and family. The task of Simmel's 'Formal Sociology' is to extract such forms from the diversity of life and subject them to analysis. (Dahme, 1988/1994, pp. 6-7)

Within the context of such of sociation, this study will deal with notions of "money" and "adornment" with regard to the role of each as a medium of social interaction. For Simmel, "money" arises as a medium of interaction as a result of the shift from subjective criteria- employed in the valuation of goods- to objective standards quantifying their qualities. "Adornment", inasmuch as it conceals the distinctly individual traits of a person, is considered to constitute an interplay of one's subjective qualities and their objectivization.

Below is a detailing of each of the concepts Simmel has examined, followed by the "Animated Theory" section featuring an examination of how the approach to these concepts is present in the cultural critique embodied in the Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes in the form of social interaction.

### "Money"

One of Simmel's much acknowledged achievements has been his examination of the influence of money in modern social interaction. Gerhards's (1986/1994) article dealing with Simmel's contribution to a theory of emotions provides useful insight into Simmel's idea of the function of money as a medium which structures forms of interaction within society and thus replaces valuation based on subjective emotions with valuation based on objectivization resulting from rationalization.

Consequentially, money begins to determine the culture in modernism. Though this

particular quality of money emphasized here is more salient to Simmel's discussion of modernity, his examination of the function of money gives insight into the characteristics of money and its impact on forms of sociation at large. Gerhards initiates his investigation of Simmel's approach to money within the context of emotions, through an analysis of exchange along with the question of value and how its appraisal has taken the form of rationalized assessment after the introduction of money whereas it used be based on emotionally determined judgments. He further explains by citing Simmel:

The importance of money lies in its power of mediation between partners willing to transact an exchange [...] According to Simmel, money makes possible an objectivization, quantification, and equalization of goods produced. Goods which were produced by the various individuals have a subjective value placed on them. If they are to be exchanged through the medium of money, they must be liberated from their subjective valuations and brought to a level of comparability, i.e. they must be objectivized. In this way, what were originally subjectively differently valued units are equalized by reference to a common reference point. Since the monetary system allocates value to goods on the basis of the decimal system, a precise determination of value by parcellation is possible and subjectively different qualities become convertible (quantification) (Simmel, 1977, pp. 205ff.). According to Simmel, money becomes the principle structuring everything in modernism and affects life styles, social interactions and culture. (Gerhards, 1986/1994, p.126)

According to Simmel, the use of money is one of the indicators of the process by which the determination of value transfers from a system employing subjective criteria to one which utilizes objective standards. It is at the point where objective standards dominate over the subjective in the exchange between the two that modernity is shaped.

Money represents the moment of objectivity in exchange activities, as it were, in pure isolation and independent embodiment, since it is free of all the specific qualities of the individual things exchanged and thus per se has no biased relationship to any subjective economic element. (Simmel, 1900/2004, p.436)

Gerhards further draws attention to how a money economy is thusly formed. He then specifies Simmel's idea of "the spiritual energy" (Simmel, 1977, p. 480) which produces this money economy with its special characteristics, as reason" (Gerhards 1986/1994, p. 127), pointing to rationalization as the standard by which value judgments are made. He also points out that such reign of rational judgment over emotion sourced judgment is not limited to the economic field and holds true for all other areas including the legal system as well. We will see in the "Animated Theory" section below, how the Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes provide a practical critique of the concept of value both in the economic and the legal systems as theorized in Simmel's "Philosophy of Money".

#### "Adornment"

Another of Simmel's acute sociological analyses relates to the issue of fashion and style as among the constituents of modern society. Although this is the scope of the concern in particular, Simmel has much more fundamental things to say about the issue under the broader concept of adornment. It is possible to see, in the below detailing of his idea of adornment, that this is yet another aspect of social interaction which is deeply rooted in the motive to conceal knowledge from others. In the case of adornment, what is concealed is one's distinct individuality. This act of hiding one's distinct personality and thus forming a distanced, more general image of the individual has another quite unrelated consequence.

Inasmuch as adornment usually is also an object of considerable value, it is a synthesis of the individual's having and being; it thus transforms mere possession into the sensuous and emphatic perceivability of the individual himself. This is not true of ordinary dress, and above all, jewels, which gather the personality's value and significance of radiation as if in a focal point, allow the mere having



of the person to become a visible quality of its being [...] What is really elegant avoids pointing to the specifically individual; it always lays a more general, stylized, almost abstract sphere around man-which, of course, prevents no finesse from connecting the general with the personality. That new clothes are particularly elegant is due to their being still 'stiff'; they have not yet adjusted to the modifications of the individual body as fully as older clothes have, which have been worn, and are pulled and pinched by the peculiar movements of their wearer-thus completely revealing his peculiarity. (Simmel, 1906/1964, pp. 340-41)

The concealment of the particularly personal is accomplished at the price of transforming the individual's "being" into "having". Anyone would agree that such a transformation applies not only to the trend of fashion in association with modernity, but equally to any type of practice of adornment at large. The Nasrettin Hodja Anecdote which brilliantly illustrates this transformation will be detailed in the "Animated Theory" section.

### Animated Theory

Now we will look into how Simmel's understanding of the reciprocal relationship between objective and subjective cultures found in his fragmentary analyses treating the notions of "money" and "adornment" are found in the Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes which depict a critique of interaction within the legal, economic and social contexts, in a way that corresponds to the common critical outlook in all the anecdotes which highlight the dynamic quality of object and subject roles in a given relationship.

### "Money" and the question of value and the anecdotes

In the "Theory" section there was given Gerhards's overview of Simmel's analysis of money and its role in objectivizing the society's understanding of value allotment.

With the introduction of money, goods would need to be valued through the objective reference point of the decimal system employed in the use of money as an indicator of worth. Consequently goods are deprived of their emotional content. Thus, the formerly subjective form of value allotment is replaced by objectivized valuation. In this way, quality is transformed into quantity in order to enable comparability. As a result, goods are compared and valued, not on their subjective values derived from their emotional content, but rather on objective criteria determined as a result of the endeavor to make their value correspond to the relevant decimal point in the money economy. It is exactly such valuation through the medium of money that is criticized in the following anecdote. This is held to be true not only for economic life but other areas as well, such as the legal system. This next anecdote concerns the economic system.

One day, during shopping, a man trying to sell a bird with colorful feathers attracts the Hodja's attention. The man yells out to the crowd: 'Come on, I'm selling it for ten akçes, isn't there anyone to buy this parrot?' Startled with the amount of money, the Hodja asks the seller: 'That is such a small bird, how can you ask for ten akçes for it?' Wanting to sell the parrot, the man gets mad at the Hodja and tells him; 'O Hodja, this is a very skillful bird. They call it a parrot. It talks just like a person.' The seller then has his parrot repeat the words he had previously taught him. Having listened to him in bafflement, the Hodja heads for his house. He goes to the cage and catches one of the most well-fed turkeys and goes back to the marketplace. Seeing the turkey in his hands, someone asks if the turkey is for sale. The Hodja replies: 'It is on sale for twenty akçes.' Surprised at such a high price for a turkey the person says: 'O Hodja, have you ever heard of such a thing. Could a turkey ever be worth twenty akçes?' The Hodja says, 'They're asking for ten akçes for a bird the size of just a fist' pointing to the parrot on sale, 'why shouldn't my well-fed turkey be worth twenty akçes?' The buyer responds: 'O Hodja, the bird you call fist-size talks like you and me. They call him a parrot. It isn't any ordinary bird. Does your turkey have any special skill like it does?' The Hodja says boasting, 'If that bird you call a parrot can talk, our turkey can think like a philosopher. Do you consider this worth less?' (Boratav, 1996, p. 233, anec. 494)

Here it is possible to find the idea of the replacement of subjective valuation with an objective valuation quantified through the use of a monetary unit, which in this case is the “akçe” (an old monetary unit). The Hodja questions the way in which the two birds are compared and valued. At first it is made to seem as if the Hodja is basing his valuation on objective criteria in bringing up the comparison of the sizes of the two birds where the parrot is only “the size of a fist” and the turkey “well-fed” implying that the larger one deserves more value. However, this line of thinking functions only to bring out a counter questioning regarding value appraisal. The Hodja’s comment on the size of the bird is followed by the counter argument involving the bird’s special quality of being talented in its ability to talk. The clash of the two arguments entails the Hodja’s criticism of the standard by which value is allotted to a given object. He questions the validity of a value appraisal based on a bird’s ability to talk by comparing it to a turkey’s ability to think. The reference to the highly questionable criterion of a turkey’s thinking ability points to a questioning of the quality and thus the value of a bird’s talking ability. Just as the turkey’s thinking quality in reality is not equivalent to our understanding of the word, the parrot’s speech quality does not correspond to our understanding of the speaking ability. Thus the buyer’s valuation based on the bird’s ability to “talk like you and me” is annulled.

The anecdote can be considered as an illustration of a critique of the concept of value and the standards by which valuation is carried out. It opens a critique of the objectivization of the standards of valuation in order to accommodate the use of money as a medium for economic transaction. Based on the dialogue in this anecdote one could say that the Hodja is questioning the objectivity of the parrot seller’s standpoint and not necessarily the use of objective standards in valuation.

However it is equally possible to say, based on the underlying difference in each character's source of motivation- food consumption for one and entertainment for the other- the practice of value appraisal with reference to the medium of money is questioned. Meanwhile the use of money does necessitate quantification which necessitates objectivization of standards. Thus through opening a questioning of the preference of the sources of motivation for valuation, the anecdote consequentially questions the validity of the practice of objectivizing standards in order to enable the functioning of money as a medium.

The Theory section had featured another aspect of the objectivized and thus rationalized judgment in determining values. Gerhards draws attention to how the replacement of emotional judgment by rational judgment is not confined to economic issues but to many others including jurisprudence. The following anecdote provides a corresponding illustration of the critique of valuation through the medium of money within the legal system.

A man comes behind the Hodja and slaps him on the back of his neck. The Hodja goes straight to court. The kadi says: 'The compensation for one slap is one akçe.' The man who had slapped the Hodja was the kadi's acquaintance from before. He goes to find money but hours pass and the man doesn't show up. The Hodja gets up and slaps the kadi and says: 'O kadi, since one slap is worth one akçe, you can have the one akçe when it's brought.' (Özcan, p. 48)

The anecdote is quite clear in providing a critique of the standards by which jurisprudence is practiced. The Hodja shows the inconsistency of equating the compensation of a crime with a monetary value (the *akçe*) by practically presenting- through the act of the slap- the claimed equivalent of the compensation. In terms of the common theme of a recognition of the dynamism in object and subject roles present in the Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes, here in this anecdote, there is a role exchange in the subject and object parties involved in the judicial relationship. As a

way of carrying out the criticism of the system, the parties are made to switch roles and the Hodja takes on the role of the Kadı by taking the law into his own hands and practically showing the injustice. With regard to this exchange's extension in Simmel's critique as the reciprocity between objective and subjective cultures, in this anecdote, the equation of a crime - requiring evaluation through subjective standards - with the objective reference point of a monetary unit is clearly questioned and criticized. It is interesting to find that Simmel's analysis of the function of money both in the economic and legal systems in his examination of social interaction converging with his critique of Modernity, is depicted in the Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes. The possible implications of such an overlap between the examination of the concept of Modernity and the Anecdotes originating from the thirteenth century will be discussed in the Conclusion.

#### "Adornment" and the anecdotes

It is possible to find corresponding elements of Simmel's analysis of adornment in the next three Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes which also reflect the object subject role exchange common in the cultural critique present.

The following anecdote is one of the most famous among the collection of Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes having become the common expression "*ye kürküm ye/help yourself and eat, my fur coat*" articulated under social circumstances putting the wealthy or appearance of wealth in a benefiting position. This anecdote can be considered as an exact illustration of the point made by Simmel about how "having" turns into "being" under the practice of adornment.

One day the Hodja goes to a wedding. They offer those who are in elegant attire to come to the table to eat. No one offers him to come.

But because he's hungry he eats anyway and leaves. Another day, he's invited again to a wedding. This time he borrows very fancy and expensive garments from different people. When he arrives at the wedding, everyone rises and offers the Hodja to enjoy the food and none them start before he does. In response to the great attention he gets in his new looks, addresses his fur coat about the food and offers it to, 'Eat the food!' Everyone is surprised and they say, 'How can an object eat food?' The Hodja says, 'Nowadays high esteem goes to those who have, not to those who lack.' (Boratav, 1996, p. 137, anec. 180)

The exchange between object and subject roles seen in this anecdote was analyzed in the first part of the chapter with reference to Marx's critique. More specifically here, being offered the food when adorned and not in his plain self, it is as if the Hodja translates, from theory to practice, this idea of transformation from "having" into "being" found in Simmel's analysis. The anecdote first presents a tension in the situation where the Hodja, despite "being" there in person and yet receiving no attention as if he wasn't there, does receive attention in a way that acknowledges his being when he comes back with an appearance displaying material wealth. The Hodja displays the social view of the fur coat as a valuable possession to have exceeded its due credit and thus acquiring a being, by offering the coat food just as if it were a living being. The coat is shown to have lost its quality as a possession, gaining a being independent of its holder. It is interesting to note, at this point, that a synonym for the Turkish word meaning "wealthy" (*zengin*) is the word *varlıkl* which translates into English literally as "having existence". A very similar idea is seen in its inverse in the anecdote below depicting an encounter between Nasrettin Hodja and Timur.

One day, Timur takes Nasrettin Hodja along with him to go to a hamam. They both put on their *peştemal* and start a conversation while they bathe. Timur ask the Hodja, 'Oh Hodja, you are so knowledgeable, you would know how to appraise something's value. Tell me, how much would I be worth?' The Hodja answers: 'sixty *akçes*.' Hearing such a low amount, Timur gets mad and shouts: 'How could you? The *peştemal* I'm wearing would be worth that

much'. The Hodja replies: 'I had taken that into account'. (Boratav, 1996, p. 137, anec. 181)

The *hamam* is a Turkish bath. This type of bath has a structure similar to today's spa where a number of people, at the same time can take a bath, steam bath or get a massage done. However here there usually aren't private divisions for a single person. For this reason, it was customary in Turkish baths for men to wear a *peştemal*, which is a thin wrap worn below the waist to cover themselves. The *peştemal* could be of varying qualities just as any other garment. Here in the anecdote, Timur being a ruler has a very good quality *peştemal* on him as his possession. The Hodja once more lends being to a valuable possession.

Whereas in the previous anecdote, the shift from having into being was shown through a move symbolically elevating the possession into a separate being, in this anecdote, the same function is achieved through reducing the being into a mere having. Timur's possession of the fancy *peştemal* is presented to compose the whole of his being instead. He no longer simply has a *peştemal* but is nothing but the *peştemal*. These two anecdotes show that precious garments-specifically- and valued possessions- generally speaking- can be elevated within society to the level of a being independent of their holders. Among other Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes this theme can be found in a variety of extensions. It is not always the material worth of a garment, but sometimes its value as a sign of status that is treated in the anecdotes.

The following is an example of one of these.

One of the tradesmen from Akşehir, upon receiving a letter in Persian from Persia, hands it over to the Hodja and says, 'Read this for me, it came from Persia'. The Hodja looks at the letter and says, 'This doesn't speak to me. Have someone who speaks Persian well, read it to you' and returns the letter. The man says: 'How shameful, Hodja. You wear that huge kavuk and can't even read a letter.' The Hodja takes off his kavuk and puts it on the man's head saying, 'If it's the kavuk that bears the keramet [spiritual wonder], then you go ahead and read it.' (Boratav, 1996, p. 259, anec. 549)

Here the tradition of wearing the *kavuk* (turban), a large head piece, among the scholarly serves as a sign of being educated and wise. During the time of Nasrettin Hodja, the holding of knowledge and religious piety were inseparable. Thus scholarly status also included its corresponding level of piousness. Upon being criticized because of his lack of Persian, the Hodja hits back by criticizing the idea of equating the status with the status symbol where scholarship is reduced to a certain garment in implying that the *kavuk* doesn't bear the *keramet* which refers to the ability to employ supernatural powers due to spiritual elevation.

In all three anecdotes it is possible to see the exchange between objective and subjective cultures conveyed in the form of social interaction. In each, the idea of adornment, represented through a type of garment pertaining to the occasion, is depicted to point to the change a given role undergoes. Here objects assume a value to the point of dominating its holder and going beyond their roles as symbols.



## CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION

This study has tried to discover certain points of intersection between Eastern and Western systems of thought as a global aim. In the effort to achieve this, Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes as well as the theories of Marx, Foucault and Simmel being the principle source of motivation, Eastern sourced thought has been narrowed down to Islamic and thus divine sourced knowledge (with regards to the overall heritage which has led to the formation of the approach in the Anecdotes) while Western thought was narrowed down to the epistemological endeavors after the Enlightenment, employed in understanding man and his relationship to culture and its components. Therefore it has been the specific aim of this study to excavate the points of overlap between the critique of culture in the Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes and that present in the writings of Marx, Foucault and Simmel. Despite the fundamental difference between the two sources of knowledge- partly divine (in terms of background and inspiration) in the former and epistemological (in terms of taking as reference point self attained knowledge) in the latter- with regard to both undertakings, it has been possible to find convergent approaches to similar- if not identical, considering historical differences- subject matter. Discovery of these overlaps has also provided insight into how they could be employed in formulating further studies regarding a comparative look into the respective cultures. Before discussing how these common approaches to cultural critique can have implications for further investigations, we will take a brief look at what theoretical perspective comprises a common denominator for the Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes internally and in relation to the said theorists by going over the theoretical contexts in which these

overlaps were examined and how they found their animated version, so to speak, in the Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes.

Regarding the common cultural critique present in all of the Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes examined in this study, the study came across the overarching theme of recognition of the continual exchange between subject and object roles in a given cultural relationship. Situations or incidents resulting from the assumption that such roles are static versus the comprehension of their dynamic quality seem to have constituted the object of criticism in the anecdotes. This exchange was found in different forms in the three theories examined. Let us take a look at the summary of these theories and in what ways they conveyed the object subject role exchange.

In Marx's critique the study looked into his approach to emancipation of humanity and particularly into his formulation of "revolutionary practical-critical activity". Within the historical context of the socio-political turmoil of his times, nineteenth century Germany, this prescription required the "proletariat class" to accomplish a "revolution" through a comprehension of the task foreseen for them within the understanding of "historical dialectic" in order for a "classless society" to prevail for the sake of emancipation of all men. These were the specific terms Marx employed in his manifesto relating to the socio-political circumstances of his time. Examining the body of his writing at large however reveals that the use of these terms is a product of a formulation at a much more theoretical level. This study has interpreted these components of Marx's critique to have corresponded to the more neutral terms of the necessity for the "conscious subject" to accomplish "action" overcoming the conflict of "contradicting elements", in whatever form they may appear at under different circumstances, in order for all subjects to attain the realization of their human potential. Thus the terms "revolutionary practical-critical

activity” have been examined to stand in for conscious action taken by the subject through an evaluation as well as a result of contradicting elements to realize human potential. The historical terms of “the proletariat class”, “historical dialectic” and “classless society” have been brought up in order only to provide a background to the conceptual ramifications of the formulation of “revolutionary practical-critical activity”. According to this approach, man recognizes the turn taking quality of object and subject roles within the context of historical dialectic which necessitates the exchange.

Here the selected Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes have been presented to illustrate an animation of the components of the theory in that the criticism inherent in the anecdotes converged with the notions comprising “revolutionary practical-critical activity” with recognition of the dynamism in object and subject roles. The foremost characteristic of the anecdotes in this context was that the criticism in each anecdote was expressed through a particular action carried out within the set up of the anecdote. This is actually necessitated by the fact that the structure of the criticism is in the form of an anecdote where everything is ‘experienced’. However, this practical quality of the anecdotes is further reinforced by the majority of the anecdotes featuring the Nasrettin Hodja figure making his point through some ‘practical’ gesture at times accompanied by a verbal critique and at times standing alone. Secondly, the criticisms in the anecdotes are obviously ‘critical’ in that they would emerge as a resolution of a tension caused by conflicting elements within the set up of the anecdote. This criticism would either target a particular approach or attitude or simply serve to bring attention to a dilemma between contradicting elements and not necessarily imply any judgment. Finally, the critiques in the anecdotes are ‘revolutionary’ because they offer a completely unique approach to the

issue at hand- one that is unconventional to those who witness it-and thus propose a radical change in the way it is culturally perceived, namely in taking for granted that the dialogical roles in any given relationship are static.

This relationship between Marx's writings and the Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes implies that the cultural criticism coming from fundamentally different sources and at quite distant time periods carries common traits. The main features of a theory proposed by Marx, as a part of his criticism- that is, the "revolutionary practical-critical activity"- at a socio-political level is found to be applied in the criticism present in the Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes on an individual basis for each encounter with an object of cultural criticism.

Next, with Foucault, the study has examined his critique of the human sciences with respect to his understanding of the concept of "man" and his relationship to knowledge revolving around the question of whether he is subject or object of it. We have seen that he situates the idea of "man" as a mode of thinking which has emerged as a consequence of the transition between the Classical and Modern epistemes. According to Foucault, "man", in his endeavor, as a subject, to comprehend existence via the human sciences- particularly those involving the study of life, labor and language- has come to the realization and is put in the position of becoming the object of these studies through their transformation into disciplines of biology, economics and philology. Through the perspective in which these sciences treat "man", his status seems to be that of the object. It is not possible to say categorically however, that "man" has become object and no longer preserves any subject status. On the contrary, Foucault maintains that in the Modern episteme, "man" holds an intermediary position between the subject and object of knowledge due to the four dualities in which he is caught. These are treated under the titles, "the

analytic of finitude” which deals with man’s finite being with a cross reference to his recognition of an idea of infinity; “the empirical and the transcendental” which draws attention to the transcendental quality of man’s capability for knowledge which is administered ultimately by his empirical being and consequently by the empirical contents of knowledge; “the cogito and the unthought” which undermines the necessary equation of the “I think” to the “I am” through bringing into consideration the contents of knowledge which are inaccessible to man despite his ability to recognize the possibility of their existence; and finally “the retreat and return of the origin” which calls attention to the impossibility for man to assign himself an origin because of his realization that as soon as he identifies a point of origin, he is confronted with a preexisting historicity which invalidates the ultimately initiatory status of the point he has discovered as an origin, causing a vicious circle in the assigning of an origin for man. Among these, the “analytics of finitude” comprises a backbone for the remaining three dualities, because each refers back to his finite being despite recognition of infinity.

The study has discovered that the critique in Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes makes visible similar traits in man’s relationship to knowledge. Looking at a common theme present in the anecdotes which this study features, the Nasrettin Hodja figure himself is generally sought after with reference to his fame as a “knowledgeable” person. The dual status of man both as a subject and an object of knowledge can be seen in how the Hodja figure responds to such regard shown towards him through making manifest, either in a statement or a practical act in the anecdote, or through the totality of the composition of the anecdote, the “analytics of finitude” outlined in Foucault’s analysis featuring man’s paradoxical position explained under the analyses of the “empirical and transcendental”, “the cogito and the unthought” and

“the retreat and return of the origin”.

Looking at the insight the convergence between the Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes and Foucault’s critique offers, it is important to note that Foucault’s treatment of the respective concepts fits within the context of his analysis of the emergence of man with a dual status of both subject and object in the realm of knowledge as spelled out under the general topic of an archeology of the human sciences. Analyzing their manifestation in the anecdotes is not meant to refer to this specific issue of the human sciences but to how man is perceived at large, as a being that recognizes himself as both a subject and an object of knowledge in what Foucault names the “modern episteme”. This effort does however provide introductory insight into a comparison between Eastern and Western systems of thought and whether they have undergone similar phases or not, as well as into a questioning of which time period in history marks the modern age, or “episteme” since we’re dealing with a chronology enlisting the phases of approach to human knowledge. The presence of these ideas in the anecdotes belonging to a thirteenth century Turkish folk figure carrying out a cultural critique could be interpreted as providing evidence to question whether the critique Foucault restricts to Western culture with regards to man’s relationship to knowledge might apply for Eastern Pre-modern culture as well. After all, the Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes are a form of criticism. They make a critique of how people perceive reality. Although the age he lived in is considered “pre-modern” in terms of our conventional understanding of modernity, it was nevertheless a time period carrying traits characteristic of the cultural dilemmas of modernity.

Referring back to Başgöz’s analogy resulting from his analysis of the sociological and cultural consequences of fundamental changes taking place in the

lives of people (namely, thirteenth century Anatolian Turks experiencing the transition to settled life), he had pointed out that such a major change causes inconsistency and confusion in the people's personal relationships and in their approach to pre-existing values and beliefs, "just like the chaos and complications experienced today in the transition from the village community to the industrial community" (p. 122). Similar to the necessity of man to utilize new knowledge in order to survive this transition of modernity, man was in need of that "special knowledge to manage nature" (Ibid) during the transition to settled life. It must be by way of such similarity that we are able to find the dilemmas pertaining to modernity and all the efforts towards its critique in the anecdotes of Nasrettin Hodja.

Lastly, it is also the overlap between Simmel's sociological analyses and critiques about Modern culture and the critique conveyed in the Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes which work to question whether or not the dynamics discussed in describing Modernity are restricted to the Western denotation of the term which relegates it to a certain segment of history.

Specifically with Simmel, the study has examined how his analysis of "forms of social interaction" at large, and in particular the notions of "money" along with the question of value and the practice of "adornment" function in his social critique and how he implements them in defining his understanding of Modernity. Here, the object subject exchange was found in his description of culture as a process involving a reciprocity between objective and subjective cultures. His criticism comes in at the point where objective culture dominates over subjective culture- as seen in the analyses of the social function of money and adornment- and thus introduces a description of outlook prevailing in Modernity. It was interesting to find that this approach was visible at the practical level in the Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes involving

a criticism of the individual's roles in legal, economic and more general social contexts. This gives us reason to question the conventional descriptions of modernity in that, although Simmel's sociological analysis mostly revolves around the theme of modernity and the question of how certain fragmentary forms of interaction function within the scope of Modernity, the concepts dealt with in this study prove to offer more far-reaching implications as to the content of the analyses, considering the correspondence of Simmel's analyses of these categories of experience with anecdotes dating back to the thirteenth century. Once again, such overlap may open the possibility of questioning the content as well as historical progress of the notion of Modernity.

As a concluding analysis, the points of convergence between the ideas of nineteenth and twentieth century theorists of Western origin and the anecdotes of Nasrettin Hodja, a thirteenth century Anatolian folk figure, give us reason to recognize, explore into and build on the shared concerns within the humanities and the common articulation of the approach to such concerns arising from fundamentally distinct cultural heritages of the East and West.

One specific issue to concentrate on which the study has yielded is a reevaluation of the concept of Modernity and the intellectual tools employed in marking its boundaries. What opens the door to such a reevaluation in the study can be found at two levels. First, at a general level which covers all three theory analyses in the study, in virtue of the fact that, although each were products of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries- periods considered modern and/or post-modern- the cultural criticism they offered bore many common traits with that of the anecdotes of the thirteenth century folk figure Nasrettin Hodja. Second, at a more particular level which covers the theories of Foucault and Simmel, in that the common traits with the



anecdotes discovered here were based on their content which dealt exclusively with the theme of modernity. Namely with Foucault, whereas the simultaneity of man's object and subject positions in relation to knowledge is said to be revealed through the shift in epistemes from classicism to modernity, in the anecdotes the same recognition presents itself in a pre-modern setting and outlook. Also with Simmel, signs of or the parameters which made possible the description of modernity were sought at the point where objective culture dominated over subjective culture, within the reciprocal relationship between the two. The implications of his examinations of the function of "money" and "adornment" with reference to modernity seem to extend further than the observations he makes based on nineteenth century Europe and this is affirmed in the discovery of a similar approach in practical form in the Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes dating back to thirteenth century Anatolia.

Concluding with a general interpretation of the presence of points of intersection between the cultural critique found in the Nasrettin Hodja anecdotes and those found in the theories of Marx, Foucault and Simmel, it is my overall opinion that this convergence is a natural outcome of the fact that although originating from different sources, both have one significant factor in common, that is, the fact that both are human endeavors involving a discovery of a human being's status before the objective contents of existence, that is, the contents external to him. Both forms of criticism strive towards a description of the hindrances humans confront in living up to the human potential- the only difference being that this effort is carried out by a sense of agency in recognition of its prescription by divine knowledge, in the former type of critique, while for the latter, it is done through a rejection thereof, based on the idea of human beings' autonomous agency. Despite their sources, both are nonetheless products of human critical practice.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Previous Work Done On Nasrettin Hodja Anecdotes

Before going into a listing of the examples of other work done on Nasrettin Hoca Anecdotes, let us make a few notes about the text of the Anecdotes. In the previous Part, we had mentioned that the earliest manuscripts of the anecdotes dated back to the fifteenth century (Başgöz, 1999, p.118). Since then, many other manuscripts, and later on printed versions and now books compiled of Nasrettin Hoca Anecdotes and Stories can be found from all around the world. The works listed in this appendix has been taken from the bibliographic work on Nasrettin Hodja by Bozyiğit (1987), Bekki (1996) and Duman (2005). Titles of the works written in Turkish are translated here into English.

Locations in which the manuscripts of the Nasrettin Hoca Anecdotes can be found actually reflect the international attention directed towards them. There are 12 in the Paris Bibliotheque Nationale Supplement Turc/ Ancien Fonds, 7 in Oxford Bodleian Library, 4 in Berlin Deutsche Staatsbibliothek, 2 in Vienna Osterreichische National-Bibliothek and others in the Leiden Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit-Netherlands, Groningen Bibliotheek RIjksuniversiteit, London British Museum, the Cambridge University Library and Prof. Hadi Zarif Özel Book Archive in Uzbekistan. In Turkey some can be found in the microfilm archive in the Turkish National Library, others in the Antalya-Elmalı Public Book Archive (Halk Kitaplığı), Ankara University, Faculty of Language, History and Geography- İsmail Saip Sencer Book Archive, Afyon-Gedik Ahmet Paşa Book Archive.

Printed versions of the anecdotes dating back as early as 1850 are found at the Turkish National Library under the name of Molla Nasruddin (Akayım, 1914; Shah,

1975; Ahmet,1987). As for now, books compiled of Nasrettin Hoca Anecdotes include, but are definitely not limited to the following: Necat Akdemir (1943-1961); Gems of Oriental Wit and Humor; the sayings of Molla Nasreddin (Arratoon, 1894); The Turkish Jester or the pleasantries of Cogia Nasreddin Efendi (Barrow, 1884); L'humour Philosophique (Batu, 1974); Ho Nasredin Chotzas Byzanttinon Hemerotogion (Valavani, 1888); Watermelons, Walnuts and the Wisdom of Allah and other tales of the Hoca (Walker, 1967); Nasreddin Chodja. Ein Osmanischer Eulenspiegel (Murad Efendi [Werner], 1878) - Murat Efendi's real name is Franz Xavier von Werner; Les Anecdotes de Nasreddin Hodja (Birand); Dilbal (1968-1980)- anecdotes both in prose and poetry form; Karabıyık (1983); Ülkü (1964-84); Nasrettin Hoca Children's Series (Göçmen, 1981); Şafak (1979-1981). In novel form are Nasreddin Hoca's Young Years (Sivri, 1979) and Nasreddin Hoca and Tamburlaine (Orbay, 1930).

There are also children's books featuring the anecdotes organized in different ways. Among these are; Nasreddin Hoca (Salman, 1963-83); Nasrettin Hoca Learns the Alphabet (Akddemir, 1963) which features the anecdotes told in a series to form a story; Stories on Nasrettin Hoga (Yusuf, 1983); Funny Disobedience (Alkan, 1995); Traditional Folktales for Children (Trans. Uysal, 1986) ; Plaisanteries de Nasr-Eddin (Mallouf, 1854) ; Nasreddin Konağatari (Masao, 1961); Nasreddin et son épouse (Miller, 1910); Contes Choisis de Nasreddin Hodja (Morer, 1975).

Ergün (1950); Köprülü (1980); Sarıyüce (1978); The Various Correspondences of a Single Act (Dağlarca, 1977); Nasrettin Hoca's Childhood (Dağlarca, 1976); Nasrettins (Güner, 1974); Nasreddin Hoca (Özer, 1980) are among the many books featuring the anecdotes in poetry form.

We will now provide an overview of selections of textual work done on the Nasrettin Hoca Anecdotes. These include -in the form of books, articles, papers and essays- folkloric studies, literary studies dealing with the interpretation of the anecdotes either as they are or in relation with other disciplines, studies introducing the anecdotes at an international level as well as those featuring what could be referred to as Nasrettin Hoca's international counterparts and reference books of the anecdotes. Finally selections of audio/visual works on Nasrettin Hoca and the Anecdotes will be mentioned.

Folkloric Studies on Nasrettin Hoca include many articles such as: On Nasrettin Hoca's Wife (Alp, 1965); Nasrettin Hoca as a Significant Turkish Teacher (Ariburun, 1974); Nasrettin Hoca and the Transformation to Humanism (Arısoy, 1965); Nasrettin Hoca and Typhon the god (Arısoy, 1973); Psycho-social and Socio-economic Phenomena and Structure in Nasrettin Hoca (Arısoy, 1973); On Some Efforts to Identify the Real Personality of Nasrettin Hoca (Boratav, 1963); Nasrettin Hoca and Social Mental Health (Coşturoğlu, 1977); Nasrettin Hoca as the Symbol of Turkish Humor (Derinöz, 1963); Humanness in Nasrettin Hoca (Dizdaroğlu, 1940); If Nasrettin Hoca were Alive (Erdoğan, 1980); Three Approaches to Nasrettin Hoca (Ergenel, 1945) Long Live the Hoca (Flanagan, 1964); 21<sup>st</sup> of June- Nasrettin Hoca Day (Gilgisel, 1959); Mevlana-Nasrettin Hoca (Gölpınarlı, 1965); Nasrettin Hoca is the Public who Cries, Hopes and Wants (Gölpınarlı, 1974); Nasrettin Hoca's System of Thought (Gürsoy, 1977); Nasrettin Hoca Today (Hacıhasanoğlu, 1970); and Nasrettin Hoca in Evliya Celebi (Kansu, 1975).

Among others are, a huge series of works by Ismail Karaahmetoğlu including the articles "Educational Value of Nasreddin Hoca" (1964); "Nasreddin Hoca's Humor Organization" (1970); "Uniqueness in Nasreddin Hoca" (1974); "Freedom in

Nasreddin Hoca” (1967); “The Symbol of Nasreddin Hoca” (1966); The Nasreddin Hoca Turkish (1973); the seminar paper, “How Should the Future Nasreddin Hoca Studies be conducted?” (Kurgan, 1979a); the articles, Reasons Behind the Failure in Nasreddin Studies (Kurgan, 1979b); Nasreddin Hoca-Yunus Emre-Mevlana (Kurgan, 1969); Crying Nasreddin Hoca (Makal, 1979); The Real Nasreddin Hoca (Önder, 1965); New Information on Nasreddin Hoca (Terzibaşı, 1972); an undergraduate thesis “Turkish Idioms Compiled from Nasreddin Hoca Anecdotes” (Oktay, 1954); an unpublished doctoral thesis “Nasreddin Hodzina Metamorfoze” (Şop, 1979); the seminar paper “Turkish Idioms and Proverbs Derived from Nasrettin Hoca Anecdotes” (Tan, 1979).

Essays on attempts to clarify the history of Nasrettin Hoca Anecdotes include: The Social Environment Nasreddin Hoca Lived in (Ocak, 1990); Two Grave Stones Belonging to Nasreddin Hoca’s Daughters in Akşehir Museum (Önder, 1990); Miniatures on Nasreddin Hoca (Yakuboğlu, 1995); Nasreddin Hoca and his Appearance (Yıldırım, 1989); The Reciprocal Influence of Nasreddin Hoca Anecdotes and Tales on One Another (Şimsek, 1996); Nasreddin Hoca- Past and Present (Başgöz, 999).

Looking at work done on interpreting the anecdotes we come across the abstract, “Contemporary Elements in the Interpretation of Some Motives in Anecdotes about Nasrettin Hoca” (Jak’oski, 1979) in the 4<sup>th</sup> International Southeast Europe Conference Papers; the article “On the Mystical Meanings of Our Nasrettin’s Anecdotes” (Ünver, 1979); the books, Nasreddin Hoca- His Historical Personality and the Meaning of his Stories (Erginer, 1969), Poet Burhaneddin’s Commentary on the Nasreddin Hoca Anecdotes (Halıcı, 1994) and a paper presented for a philosophy

course providing philosophical interpretations of four of Nasreddin Hoca anecdotes, “A Question of Teaching and learning” (Hilmi,1997).

Articles concentrating on the interpretations of the anecdotes and/or the Nasrettin Hoca figure under various disciplines include: Nasrettin Hoca in Our Contemporary Turkish (Kurgan, 1983); Nasrettin Hoca in Our Language Accumulation (Aksoy, 1977); Philosophy and National Culture (Yavuz, 1977); Nasrettin Hoca and Psychoanalysis (Amato, 1972); Nasrettin Hoca and Cybernetics (Amato, 1971); Nasrettin Hoca and Politics (Hacıhasanoğlu, 1979); Cultural Chaos and Nasrettin Hoca (Ivgin, 1981); The Function of the Nasrettin Hoca Phenomenon in Turkish Society (1981); The Literary and Scholarly Value of Nasreddin Hoca Anecdotes (Göçgün, 1984); Nasreddin Hoca as Religious Scholar (Kırımhan, 1990); Nasreddin Hoca and the Collective Subconscious (Songar, 1995); Intellect Literature for Children (Şirin, 1988); Educational Messages in Nasreddin Hoca Anecdotes (Tor, 1990); and Contributions to the Turkish Language of the Educational Messages in Nasreddin Hoca Anecdotes (Tor, 1991).

Studies providing examples of international attention paid to Nasrettin Hoca Anecdotes are the books The Universal Personality of Nasrettin Hoca (Alpan); Turkey in Europe (Eliot, 1967); Les paroles remarquables, les bons mots, et les maxims des orientaux/ Noteworthy Maxims and Proverbs of Easterners (Galland, 1965); (The first Nasrettin Hoca resource book published in a foreign language); An Eastern Chequer Board (Luke, 1934); Goethe’s Interest for Nasrettin Hoca (Bajraktarevic, 1958); Nasrettin Hoca-The Turk Who Made the World Laugh (Now Turkey Today, 1974); Nasrettin Hoca Reaching Out to the West (Önder, 1982); Nasrettin Hoca in European Travel Writing (Sakaoğlu, 1981); a conference Paper-The Presence of Nasrettin Hoca in the Greek Written and Oral Literary Tradition

(Loukatos, 1979); 2<sup>nd</sup> International Turkish Folklore Congress Papers Handbook(1982); 1<sup>st</sup> International Nasrettin Hoca Symposium- Abstract of Papers (1989); Newspaper Article “An International Turk” (Ulunay, 1964); Humour and the Persona of Nasreddin Hoca (Burril, 1989); Nasrettin Hoca in Foreign Lands (Can, 1989); Nasreddin Hoca Books in German (Duman, 1991); Nasreddin Hoca Books in French (Duman, 1994); Nareddin Hoca Books in English (Duman, 1994); Nasreddin Hoca Manuscripts (Duman, 1990); Nasreddin Hoca in Southern Slav Proverbs and Idioms (Eren, 1986); Publications on Nasreddin Hoca in Yugoslavia (Hafiz, 1990); Hodja Nasreddin, the Timeless Oriental Cosmopolitan in Finland (Holthoer, 1989); Nasrettin Hoca in Japan (Kocar, 1991); Nasruddin-Khoja in Bosnia (Maglajlic, 1986); Findings on Nasreddin Hoca in the Peoples Republic of China and USSR (Nasrattinoglu, 1989); Nasrettin Hoca in Macedonia (Nasteva, 1990); Nasreddin in Thailand (Sinsoongsud, 1990); Traces of Nasreddin Hoca Anecdotes in Old Hungarian Literature (Tasnadi, 1987); Hoca Nasreddin in Cyprus or Aslani Hoca (Fedai, 1996); Nasreddin Hoca in Armenian Letters II (Koz, 1996).

Work featuring the international counterparts of Nasrettin Hoca include: the papers, Irish Analogies to the Tales Hoca Nasr-ed-din (Danachair, 1982); Nasrettin Hoca, Santa Claus, etc. (Özerdim, 1956); Comparing the Japanese Humor Hero Kicchomu and the Turkish Humor Hero Nasreddin Hoca (Kojima, 1992); Nasreddin Hoca and its Counterpart in Roman Folklore: Pacala (Letiza, 1985); La Fontaine and Nasreddin Hoca (Marzolph, 1996); the book, The Joe Miller of the Near East (Roda, 1909) and the articles, A Comparative Study of a Near Eastern Trickster Cycle (Quandil, 1970); From Till Eulenspiegel to Nasretin Hoca (Duman, 1990); Nasreddin Hodscha in Deutschland (Glade, 1987).

Examples of reference books of Nasrettin Hoca Anecdotes are: The Hidden Harmony. Discourses on the Fragments of Heraclitus (Rajnees, 1976); Motif- Index of Folk Literature (Thompson, 1989).; 100 Famous Turks (Newspaper Hurriyet, 1971); Encyclopedia of Literature (Birge); Encyclopedie de l' Islam (Bajrakterevic, 1934); Enstsiklopediceski slovar Brokgaus-Efron (Krimski, 1897).

Among works prepared for educational purposes are: Ministry of Education, Basic Reading Writing and Culture Education Supplement Reading Books (Özgüç, 1963); Stories of the Hodja for Learners of English in Simple English and Turkish (Sak,1969); Series of Nasreddin Hoca Coloring Books (1985).

Examples of audio/visual work done on Nasrettin Hoca are: Anecdotes from Nasrettin Hoca (Audio Tape); Nasrettin Hoca (Cartoons); Nasrettin Hoca (Operatic); Nasrettin Hoca (TV Program); Nasrettin Hoca and His Donkey (Musical Play); Nasrettin Hoca (Puppet Film); Nasrettin Hoca at a Wedding (Film); Nasrettin Hoca (Play); Nasrettin Hoca (Newspaper); Nasrettin Hoca (Humor Newspaper); Nasrettin Hoca (Independent Political Newspaper); Nasrettin Hoca (Political Humor Newspaper); Mask and Soul- A Fantasy Play (Adıvar, 1945).



Appendix B: Original Texts of the Nasratin Hodja Anecdotes

Original Texts of the Anecdotes from Boratav (1996, pp. 94-260)

11

Nasraddin Hoca günlerden bir gün gerü va'zu nasihat ederken ayıtmış: "Müslimanlar! Hiç ben size ne diyeceğüm, bilür misiniz?" demiş. Bunlar dahı: "Yok, bilmezüz." Demişler. Hoca ayıtmış: "Çünkü bilmezsiniz, ya ben size ne diyeyin?" demiş. İnmiş, yürüyü vermiş.

12

Gelecek hafta gerü va'za, nasihata çıkmış. Ayıtmış: "Müslimanlar! Hiç ben size ne diyeceğüm, bilür misiniz?" demiş. Bu kerre bunlar: "Bilürüz." Demişler. Nasraddin Hoca ayıtmış ki: "Çünkü bilürsünüz, ya ben size ne diyeyim baş ağrıdayım? deyüp gimiş.

13.

İttifak gelecek hafta gerü menbere çıkmış: "Müslümanlar! Hiç bilür misiniz, ne desem gerkür?" demiş. Bunlar dahı, ba'zısı: "Bilürüz", ba'zısı: "Bilmezüz." demişler. Hoca ayıtmış: "Bileniniz bilmezünüze öğretsün." deyüp aşğa inüp gider.—Sohbet dahı bunda tamam olur.

55.

Nasraddin Hoca ders etmiş. Danışmandları önüne düşüp evine giderken danışmandları ardınca yörümüş de kendü de eğere ters binmiş. Bunlar: "Hay Efendi! N'eyledün?" demişler. Hoca ayıtmış: "Eğer siz önümce yörürseniz sizin ensenüz benüm yüzüme gelür. Eğer ardımca yörürseniz sizin yüzünüz benüm enseme gelür. Bana yegdür ki avurt urarak gidevüz." demiş.

180.

Bir gün Nasraddin Hoca düğüne varur. Düğüne gelen kibarı serire teklif ederler. Nasraddin Hoca'ya kimse teklif eylemez. Karnı da aç. Hele ne hal ise yiyüp kalkar gider. Bir gün yine Nasraddin Hoca'yı düğüne çağırurlar. Bu kez varur, kiminden kürk, kiminden kavuk, kiminden kaftan, kiminden kuşak, kiminden at, pusat, eğerli, sim rah tile ve atınun yanında bir sarraç (?) hele kalkup süvar olur. Ba'dehu düğüne vardukda halk ayağ üzere dururlar ve Hoca'yı serire teklif ederler ve istikbal ederler, ve "Buyurun!" deyüp ta'ama sunmaz ta Hoca ta'ama sunmayınca. Hoca da bu ta'zim ve tekrimi group kürkinün yenlerine: "Ta'amı ye!" deyü hitab eder. Halk aydur: "Behey Efendi. Hiç esbab ta'am yer mi?" derler. Hoca aydur: "Şimdiki zamanda rağbet ağıniyadur, fukaraya değıldür." deyü cevap verir.

181.

Bir gün Temürülenk hammama girer. Hacı'yi da'vet eder. Hacı dahı hammama varup buluşur. Temür Şah Hacı'ye vafir ta'zim eder. "Hay Hacı! Beni satsalar ne kadar akça ederüm? Der. Hacı dahı: "Kalk, karşumda yörü bakayım." der. Temür kalkup ilerü gidüp gelür. "Ay Hacı! Söyle." der. Hacı dahı: "Almış akça edersin." der. Temür Şah: "Be Hacı! Benüm petimalum dahı ziyade eder." der. Hacı: "Ben dahı anı derim." demiş.

187.

Bir gün Hoca bir su kenarında uyumağa yatur. Kendüni ölmüş tasavvur eder. Bir herif dahı gelür: “Hay kişi! Bu suyun geçidi neredendür, bilir misin? dedikde Hoca aydur: “Ben sağ iken yukarıdan idi, amma şimdi bilmezim, kandadır?” demiş.

250.

Bir gün Hoca damdan düşüp ayağın ağrıtdı. Amma yaranları gelüp Hoca'nın hal-hatırından sordılar. Hoca ayıtdı: “İçinizde hiç damdan düşmişiniz var mıdır?” Anlar ayıdılar: “Hayır, yokdur.” dediler. Hoca ayıtdı: “İmdi, siz benim halimden bilmezsiniz.” demiş.

384.

Hoca, hane yaptırmak için bir mi'mar getirüp herif: “Şuraya bir oda, şuraya bir sofa, buraya da bir kilar yapmalı.” diye aşağı yukarı gezerken nasılsa yellenmiş. Hoca: “Buracığa da bir abdestahane yapmalı.” demiş.

431.

Hoca, gem almaz bir katıra binmiş. Başı pek sert olduğundan mümkün değil gideceği cihete çevirememiş. Bu sırada ahbabından biri rast gelüp: “Hoca! Nereye gidiyorsun?” dedikte: “Katırım istediği yere” demiş.

493.

Bir güne Hoca'ya: “Yahu! Sen oldukça 'alimsin. Şu bizim müşkilimizi hall ediver: 'Aceba dünya kaç arşındır?’ derler. O esnada bir cenaze götürüyorlarmış. Hoca merhum tabutu göstererek demiş ki: “Bu su'alin erbabı şu gidendir. Ona sorunuz. Bakınız, daha o şimdi ölçmüş, gidiyor.”

494.

Hoca merhum bir gün pazarda göğercin kadar bir kuşun on iki altuna stıldığıını group kendi kendine: “Demekki piyasada tuyur enva'ının revacı var. Tam sırası... Ben de şu bizim baba-hindiyi yarın satılığa çıkarayım.” Diye tasavvur eyledi. Ertesi gün kocaman baba-hindiyi koltuğuna aldı. Hayvan, gerdanındaki kallade-i mercan ile bil-ifthihar burnunu şişirüp kendisin koltuğa gelir takımından olduğunu pek izhar ediyordu. Hoca merhum bu vaz' ile Pazar yerine geldi. Hay-lice bir para elde etmek sevdasıyla neticeye muntair iken bir de, harac-mezad baba-hindi, o da Hoca'nın hususi beselemesi I'tibarıyla, gaayet-ül gaaye on iki akçada dayandı, kaldı. Fazla bir para daha diyen olmadı. Hoca merhum hiddetlenüp dellallara, çaşıdakilerine hitaben: “Bu nasıl iş, Allah'ı severseniz? Daha dün, gözümün önünde, göğercin kadar boyalı bir kuşu tam on iki altuna sattınız. Hem hepiniz de yüksek yüksek peyler sürdürünüz. O boyanmışsa, bakınız, bunun da boyunda la'l ü mercan renginde kudretten zinetler var; sırtının tüyü buklamun, yanar döner, renginde olup güneşe karşı durduğu vakıt parıl parıl yanar. 'Alel husus ıslık çalınup da kabardığı zaman hortumunu şişirir; kanadını kuyruğunu çadır gibi açar; bir kuzu kadar cüsse peyda eder. O halde havlıda nazan nazan, tavus- Hindistan gibi hıraman olunca temaşasına doyumaz. İhtiyac sevkıyla satmağa mecbur oluyorum. Yoksa, evden ayrılırken karı, ben, hindi öyle bir ye's etmemiz vardı ki o hal-i hazinimize dağlar taşlar dayanamaz. Biz 'öhü, öhö!...' diye gıryan oldukça o da bizi: 'kul kul, kul!' diye teşvik ederdi. Ah!... İhtiyacın gözü kör olsun!...' diye Hoca'nın kemal-I hararetle çıkışması çarşıları bir müddet eğlendirdikten sonar içlerinden biri: “Hoca Efendi! Biraz müsterih ol! Sen hakikattan

gaafilisin. Bir kerre o kuş ‘adi, boyalı bir mahluk değil; nakkaaş-I kudretin rengarenk donattığı meşhur tuti kuşudur.” demişse de para cihetinden ümidi münkesir olmaktan neş’et eden bir hiddetle göklere uçurulsa dahı o anda Hoca’nın gözüne görünmediğinden: “Ey, a canım! Anladık. Tuti kuşu... Ne olacak? Gaayesi yine kuş değil mi? Bunun hüneri ne?” demekle, muhatabı hasmini ilzam etmek hissini verdiği bir şatretle: “Hah! İşte bunun hüneri var da ondan: Çünkü bu gaayet iyi lakırdı söyler.” Diyince Hoca da koltuğu altında bir hamuşi-i feylesofane ile nazar-ı teveccühünü kapamış olan baba-yı Hindistan’ı işaret eyleyerek: “O iyi lakırdı söylerse bud a gaayet iyi düşünür.” demiş.

538.

Bir gün Akşehir’e mubaheseyi sever bir suhte gelüp: “Şehrinizin en ‘alimi kimdir? Diye sormakla Hoca merhumu ta’rif ederler. Arar, bulur: “Hoca Efendi! Sana kırk su’alim var. Kırk su’alime senden bir cevap isterim.” der. Hoca kayıdsızca: “Söyle bakalım su’allerini” diyüp kırkını da can kulağıyla dinledikten sonra: “La edri külliha” ya’ni hepsine birden: “Bilmem!” kelimesiyle bir cevap verüp mu’arızını susturmuştur.

549.

Azerbaycan ‘avamından bir İranlıya Farisi olarka bir mektub gelmiş. Hoca’ya tesadüf edüp: “Şu mekbubu bana oku, hem anlat.” demiş. Hoca eline alup da şikest ta’lik ile farisi-i ‘ibare olduğunu görünce: “Sen bunu başkasına okut!” diyüp i’ade etmek istemiş. Fakat İranlı ısrar edince Hoca bil-mecburiye: “Benim, Farisi ile o kdar başım hoş değil. Hususen onların bu yazılarıyla Türkçe bile yazılsa ben çıkararm.” Diyince İranlı hiddet edüp: “Be adam! Farisi bilmezsin; okuma bilmezsin; o surette hocayım diye bugur dbeği kadar kavuğunla, değirmen taşı gibi sarıgınla kendini neye meydana atıyorsun? Demekle Hoca kızarup heman kavuğu başından, bişini sırtından çıkararak önüne koyup: “Eğer kavukla, binişle okunursa, haydi! Sen giy de mektubun iki satırını oku, bakalım!” demiştir.

Original Texts of the Anecdotes from Özcan (2000, pp. 24, 48)

p.24

Bir gün komşusu Hoca’ya:

- Hoca sen herşeyi bilirsin. Söyler misin bana dünyann merkezi neresidir?

Hoca:

- Tam bulunduğun yerdir, diye cevap vermiş.

- Aman Hoca, nasıl olur?

Behey adam! Sordun, söyledik. İnanmazsan alır arşını ölçersin.

p.48

Bir gün bir adam Hoca’nın arkasına gelir ve ensesine bir tokat vurmuş. Hoca doğru mahkemeye gitmiş. Kadı “bir tokatın bedeli bir akçedir” der. Hoca’ya tokatı vuran kişi kadının tanıdığıymış. Adam para bulmak için gitmiş ve saatler geçmiş halen gelmemiş. Hoca kalkıp kadıyı tokatlamış ve demiş: “Kadı, madem bir tokat bir akçe eder, geldiğinde bir akçeyi ondan alırsın”.

p. 30

Bir gün Akşehirde Kör Kadı ile Subaşı aralarına Hoca'yı alıp Hidirliğe doğru gidiyorlarmış. Yolda Kör Kadı Hoca'yı alaya alarak "Hoca, senin dilin hiç sürçmesi yaptın mı?" diye sormuş. Hoca da niyetini bilerek "Tam biraz önce yapacaktım ama vazgeçtim" demiş. Kör Kadı sormuş: "Kime karşıydı, neydi?" Hoca cevap vermiş: "Biraz önce sen öyle hoydur hoydur yürürken seni 'heey, Kör Kadı' diye çağıracaktım, dilimin ucuna geldi ama geri çektim." Kör Kadı demiş: "Ne adamsın be Hoca. Bazen sana bakıyorum ve tam bir cambaz görüyorum, ama bazen de öküz gibi görünüyorsun." Kör Kadı ile Subaşı arasında yürümeye devam eden Hoca demiş: "Bunda anlamayacak ne var? Şu gördüğünüz tuhaf adam o bahsettiğiniz iki şeyin arasında biridir."

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