

A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF SOME SELECTED POEMS BY HATIM ALTAI.

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Abstract

This paper explores the pre-Islamic Arab social values through the lens of Hatim Altai's poetry. This poetry reveals a code of ethics and virtues that people should abide by at that time if they wanted to be esteemed and held in high regards. The Arab society living during that era in The Arabian Peninsula, now the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, highly praised virtues and morals such as bravery, generosity, honesty and modesty etc. Hatim's poetry quintessentially reflects such virtues and morals in a fascinating way. Furthermore; this piece of study attempts to give a fresh glimpse into the life-styles, narratives and the constructs of pre-Islamic Arab society so as to enrich readers' understanding. The researcher adopts a modern sociological framework namely the sociology of literature so as to make this study more effective and reliable. It is an attempt to understand the role of each poem within its social and historical context. Each poem is viewed as a tool of communication and as a unique social phenomenon. Hatim established himself as the perfect example of generosity. His reputation was known in many different parts of the world and he is still remembered throughout ages as a proverbial icon of generosity. He belongs to Tae tribe which resided in a place between Salma and Ajaa Mountains, what is now known as Hail City, Saudi Arabia.

Key Words:

Sociology-Hatim-Poetry-Values-Society.

Introduction

Literature is the art form of any nation. The word was at the peak of its influence in Pre-Islamic era. Jahili literature which was mainly and solely poetry became central to the development of tribal identities and the formation of a specific type of culture. Moreover, it was an important vehicle for the exchange of ideas. Thus, this study explores the social values and life of Hatim's society through the lens of his poetry. His poetry is considered one of the most sources for people's life and their stories. Poetry embodies the daily life of people in detail. In Hatim's poetry social relations and activities, values and traditions are vigorously incarnated and such values contribute in constituting the collective as well as individual's behavior and identity. Moreover, it reveals the salient positive traditions and values which Arabs used to adhere to and implicitly the salient negative traditions which were abhorred. Having adopting a theoretical framework called the sociology of literature, this paper will shed a light on the sociology of literature as a theory, pre-Islamic poetry and society and Hatim's personal and social life in interaction with his society.

The investigation of art relationships, specially literature and society is not a new area. During the 19th and 20th centuries, coinciding with the development of social sciences, it has changed to a specific and systematic field of study. The sociology of literature as a new branch of sociology attempts to answer the following questions: is literature the result of a social process or is it a totally personal matter which has no relationship with the society in which the artist lives? What is the nature of relationship between sociology and literature?

The nature of the relationship between sociology and literature is organic and complementary. The customs, traditions, values and norms of any society in a certain period of time are clearly reflected in the different genres of literature written during that period. The function of the sociology of literature is to underscore the connection between the social contexts and the social factors and determinants of literature. As it is concerned with the domain of literary study, the sociology of literature investigates the relationship between a work of literature and the social structure where it is produced. It further examines literary works from social, cultural, political and economic perspectives and explores the symbiosis between society and the author.

It is known that the surrounding ambience of the Arab poets imposed its effective presence and influence on their poetry. Poets draw their poetic images from such environment and these images are primarily visual or auditory so as to imitate the real world. Yet, ancient Arab poets did not rely on the use of only visual and auditory images, rather they employed conceptual images for the sake of convincing, logical debate, stating a social reality and engaging the reader or the listener in a self-discovery process. Therefore, Hatim's poetry is a perfect site for exploration the symbiotic relationships between his poetry and society.

Research Methodology.

The research method adopted in this paper is based on analysis, description and discussion.

Discussion and Analysis.

1. Sociology and Literature.

1.1. Definition.

The word sociology comes from Greek and Latin which means friendship or community. Abdul Syani states that "sociology can mean the science of society" (1994, p. 29). Generally speaking sociology can be defined as the scientific and systematic

study of human society. Shankar Rao calls it “the science of society” (2012, p. 17). It is mainly concerned with the scientific study and investigation of lifestyles and activities of human beings. It meticulously explores the structure, origin, developments, functions and motives of human communities. Alan Swingewood states:

“[s]ociology is essentially the scientific, objective study of man in society, the study of social institutions and of social processes; it seeks to answer the question how society is possible, how it works, why it persists” (11).

Thus all the previous definitions highlight that sociology is a scientific study of man as a social being at the center of his society. It is also a study of man’s social actions and interactions, social processes and institutions, and the structure and system of society. Human beings are greatly influenced and conditioned by the institutions, structure and system of society and they are assigned roles to play according to the imperatives of the social system.

Literature provides an appropriate channel to study social institutions as they are contextualized in it. Literature is a work of fiction which is the result of social construction and interactions combined with additional natural emotion. In the words of W. H. Hudson,

Literature is a vital record of what men have seen in life, what they have experienced of it, what they have thought and felt about those aspects of it which have the most immediate and enduring interest for all of us. It is thus fundamentally an expression of life through the medium of language (1913, p. 10).

The definition of literature has been changing throughout history starting from Plato up to the present time. Most definitions, however, state explicitly or implicitly that literature is a reflection of life and an outcome of the interactions of many factors; social, political, economic and cultural to name a few. Wellek and Warren, in *Theory of Literature*, comes with the following definition:

Literature is a social institution, using as its medium language, a social creation Literature represents life; and ‘life’ is, in large measure, a social reality, even though natural world and inner or subjective world of the individual have also been objects of literary imitation (1963, p. 94).

Thus there is a strong connection and reciprocal relationship between sociology and literature. The sociology of literature has become a recognized scientific and systematic method for analyzing different genres of literature as they are originated in social contexts.

1.2. Historical Development.

The middle of the eighteenth century marked the beginning of sociology as a new discipline of social science on its own right. Before this time, sociology was subsumed under social philosophy rather than social science. It was August Comte (1798-1857), a French philosopher, who attempted a systematic study in his work *Positive Philosophy* (1839) to make sociology as the scientific study of society.

Similarly, Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) added many significant contribution into the march of sociology as an independent and systematic discipline. *Principles of Sociology* (1877), Spencer’s influential book, reveals the major fields of sociology and puts a tremendous stress on the sociological study of community, politics, industry, social control and family. In addition to that he laid emphasis on the sociological study of

aesthetics and art. The emphasis on interrelations of the different factors and elements of the society is of a paramount importance.

Karl Marx (1818-1883), Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) and Max Weber (1864-1920) also consolidated the foundations and establishment of sociology as a systematic and scientific branch of knowledge. Karl Marx was interested in the economic aspect and class struggle as the catalysis of any social action. He thinks that the economic factor influences the general character of all other aspects of culture and social structure. Emile Durkheim saw social life as a set of social facts and stated that these facts are nothing more than collective ways of thinking and feeling about society. According to Max Weber, the underlying basic unit of society is the individual. Much of his work has been devoted to explain a new method of understanding processes, actions and reactions of social phenomena.

These are the founding fathers of sociology, however, a great deal of modern thinkers and sociologists also contribute significantly to expound the methodology, nature and scope of sociology. In addition to these founders and thinkers, many factors have a tremendous influence on the progress of sociology as an independent and significant branch of human science. These influencing factors are the French Revolution, the Industrial Revolution and the intellectual ideologies such as socialism, individualism, humanitarianism, positivism, colonialism, and the mushroom growth and developments in modern natural sciences. Notwithstanding, the credit for founding and systematizing sociology as an independent scientific discipline indisputably goes to August Comte, Herbert Spencer, Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim and Max Weber who were the pioneers in their leading role in establishing sociology a scientific discipline of social science.

Put in a historical perspective, one can say that the first one who attempted to study sociology as an approach to analyzing literature in a scientific and systematic way was H. A. Taine. His work entitled *History of English Literature* (1886) constituted a turning point in the history of the sociology of literature. Many critics who significantly contributed to the progressive wheel of the sociology of literature came later such as Karl Marx and Frederic Engels who gave it a new turn. However, the sociology of literature occupied an important place among critical theories only in the late twentieth century at the hands of such prolific social critics and thinkers like Lucien Goldman, Leo Lowenthal, Robert Escarpit, Alan Swingewood, Diana Laurenson and John Hall. To particularize, Rene Wellek, Austin Warren, Swingewood and Diana Laurenson profoundly carried out their studies on the sociology of literature.

2. Pre-Islamic Society and Poetry.

Pre-Islamic period is also called Jāhiliyah. It is a time when paganism prevailed prior to the advent of Islam. The word Jāhiliyah comes from the root Jahala which means to be ignorant. Ignac Goldziher defines the term as 'barbarism' implying that the pre-Islamic Arab society was lacking in a higher moral and religious order (1966, p. 7). Jāhiliyah is an era "during which Arabs did not know Islam and the Divine Law" (Lewis, Pellat & Schacht 1991, p. 19). Jahili poets are those Arab poets who wrote poetry before the rise of Islam. This period approximately spanned the time from the second half of the fourth century A. D. to the migration of Prophet Muhammed from Mecca to Medina in 622 A.D. During this period the Arabs did not have a central state. They were groups of different tribal and bedouin communities which scattered all over the deserts of the Arabian Peninsula. Thus most if not all pre-Islamic poets belonged to a nomadic tribal society.

However, there were three recognized Arab kingdoms; the kingdom of Lakhmid at al-Ḥīrah in Iraq, the kingdom of Ghassānid in Syria and the kingdom of Kindah that

ruled the central and northern Arabian tribes, which played major roles during this epoch. So poets used to praise the kings of these three kingdoms (Goldziher, 1966, p. 12-13). The Lakhmid kingdom of a Yemeni origin played the role of a buffer zone between Sassanid Empire and the raiding Arab tribes. According to Hitti, Al-Nu'mān ibn al-Mundhir was the last well-known king of this dynasty and he was captured and killed by the Sassanid Emperor for an unclear conflict. Al-Nu'mān was profoundly celebrated in Jahili poetry (1968, p. 81-84).

Ghassānid kingdom was another major political and social power in the pre-Islamic Arab world. It was also of a Yemeni origin inhabited Syria and served as a buffer zone between Byzantine Empire and Lakhmid and Bedouin Arab marauders. Ghassānids converted into Christianity and adopted the Byzantine and Greek culture and life styles. It was a highly developed and sophisticated kingdom. Ghassānid kings patronized some pre-Islamic poets such as Hassan Ibn Thabit who used to praise the Ghassānid kings even during the reign of Islam. This kingdom was completely toppled by the Muslim army at Yarmouk battle (Hitti, 1968, p. 48). The third kingdom of the Arab region was the tribe of Kindah which was established around 480 A. D. It was a great kingdom and it invaded al-Hirah but lost it soon. The most famous king was al-Harith whose grandson was the well-known pre-Islamic poet, Imru' al-Qays (Nicholson, 1969, p. 42). With the exclusion of these kingdoms, the remaining Arabs were desert nomads.

Nomadism as a social phenomenon was not new in the Arabian Peninsula. It was rather deeply rooted in the history of humanity. Two kinds of communities dwelled in the Arabian Peninsula during the pre-Islamic era. The sedentary community called Hadirah and the desert nomads called Badiyah. Relationships among the community members are decided on the blood bonds issuing from the paternal side. Arab society at that time was mainly Bedouin and tribal. It consisted of many tribes scattered throughout the Arabian Desert. Bedouins were people on a constant move in search of pasture for grazing their animals and sources of water. They are to the opposition of the sedimentary people who reside in a fixed and specific location. Al-Saddi and Al-Gharaibi state:

Nomadism applies to a type of life of a specific group of population characterized with salient features and behavior dictated by their ambience which does not allow for permanent settlement. It means constant movement and unstable settlement in a specific place throughout the whole year. Thus, some bedouin groups are forced to change their residence from time to time depending on the season in search of food and pasture (2010, p. 368).¹

The Universal Arabic Encyclopedia defines bedouins as:

A group of unsettled people who move from one place to another and live a primitive and traditional life on the desert in an unceasing search for water and pasture for their camels and cattle. They live in tents made of animals' hair and hides and they often rely on dairy products and dates for food. They trade meat and dairy products with the population of nearby villages in return for daggers, utensils and other made things. Bedouins are very proud of their dignity and honor and they are totally dependent upon themselves in all matters of life. They live a life committed to moralities, values of bravery and generosity, allegiance to

¹ . Translated by the researcher from Arabic into English.

the tribe and catering to guests and strangers. Scorning generosity sometimes leads to bloody conflicts between tribes (248).²

Ibn Khaldoun describes the character of the bedouin as more benevolent and braver than the sedentary people (2004, p. 131). The character of the bedouin is, however, an eccentric bundle of contrasts and paradoxes since the values and morals which he defends and for which he lives seem to be paradoxical. The bedouin plunders and sees pillage as a source of income and at the same time he is extremely generous, he abuses woman and simultaneously is ready to die to defend her honor and dignity. Ali Alwardi states that the bedouin always wants to see himself as the victor not the victim, the plunderer not the plundered, the commander not the commanded, the aggressor not the aggressed, the giver not the receiver, the helper not the helped, the protector not the protected, the defender not the defended and the implored not the implorer (2002, p. 34-5).³ Bedouins got their food such as meat and milk from animals, clad themselves from their hair and wool and made their tents from their skins and hides. These people led a very simple and Spartan life due to the dearth of sources of livelihood. They, however, boasted of their heroism, horsemanship, lineage and generosity.

Despite the fact that they are primitive people, the bedouin life was an organic system which has its own rules, laws and culture. This culture was characterized by austerity, cruelty, stoicism and sometimes brutality. Bedouins' life was not easy. It was rather tough due to their constant movement on the cruel desert. Furthermore, this culture was patriarchal because man was the dominant factor in the constitution and activities of such a culture. The unwelcome environment dictated that the only powerful ones could dominate it. There is no place for the weak such as women to have a voice or role in such a belligerent tribal society despite the fact that there were a few exceptions. Arab Bedouins, however, had no political system whatsoever or any kind of central government whose rules and regulations typically organize and control people's life. Instead, these people followed a special form of tribal system based on strict rules and laws that all the members of the tribes should abide by.

The structure and organization of the Arabic nomadic society started with a single tent which held the chieftain and his family. This tent must be erected at the center of the tribe. A camp of tents surrounded the leader's tent constituting what it is called clan or tribe. The solidarity and togetherness of the clan is the key factor to the preservation and protection of the tribe from outside onslaughts. A dispute with another clan over pastures or water resources may result in a fierce conflict. Thus small clans enter into alliance (hilf) with other powerful tribes for the sake of protection (Hitti, 1968, p. 26-28). The tribe was the pivotal unit on which Bedouins' life revolved and secured as they lived in a place where incursions, inroads, invasions and pillage were normal phenomena of their life. In fact, looting and pillage was one of the main sources for sustenance. The tribal society was rigorously controlled by one influential person called master who was the paragon of the tribe in all virtues and traits that Arabs pursued. This master played all the roles within the tribe. He was the bravest, wisest, the most generous, chivalrous, judicious and honorable. He acted also as the judge of the tribe and the arbitrator of any conflict among its members.

Each member should abide by the tribe's system of laws, obligations, duties, rights and traditions. Strict loyalty and complete obedience to the leader of the community is beyond questioning. It is supposed that the leader should be a model of all the values

² . Translated by the researcher from Arabic into English. All the subsequent quotations taken from this source have been translated by the researcher.

³ . Translated by the researcher from Arabic into English.

and traditions that the tribe adhere to. He must be generous, powerful, chivalrous, honest and trustworthy. These qualities along with others became major themes in the Jahili poetry especially in *fakhr* (boasting or being proud) and *madīḥ* (panegyric.) These qualities and virtues are sought by every member in the Arab community not only the leaders or the chieftains. It was known among the bedouin Arabs that they ought to choose leaders who had “six traits: generosity, helping others, patience, meekness, humbleness and rhetoric” (Albaghdadi, 1967, p. 90).⁴ In addition to that many Arab poets emphasized bravery and wisdom as two basic and principal traits that a tribe chieftain had to possess.

These values are transferred from older generation to the younger one by means of inherited wills in the form of poetry to be observed by sons. Fathers have already accumulated a variety of life experiences and these experiences should be transmitted to their sons and daughters. Poetry was the only vehicle to transmit and maintain such experiences and traditions. Traditions are a set of collective social behaviors agreed upon and practiced by a specific group of people regardless whether these traditions are good or bad. Pre-Islamic Arab societies did not preserve their literary contributions in the written word due to the fact that this literature, mainly poetry, was transferred from one generation to the next by the word of mouth. Umayyad and Abbasid philologists and scholars began to compile classical Arabic poetry into the written form. According to Ignac Goldziher, classical Arabic poetry originated in rhymed prose called *Saj*, and later developed into a highly sophisticated and systematic meter and rhyme. Goldziher states that pre-Islamic society used the *Saj* (rhymed prose) to cast a spell or to do any other kind of magic, and similarly they believed that poetry possessed supernatural power especially the *hijā'*, lampoon, and the *rithā'*, elegy (1966, p. 8-9).

The scholars of the orally-transmitted poetry believe that this kind of poetry is highly formulaic and highly patterned in order to be easy for memorization. Pre-Islamic poetry falls into this category. It is highly patterned and formulaic so that the reciters can be able to transmit it from one generation to another. Classical Arabic poetry seems to share similar characteristics such as repeated motifs and images particularly in long poems, odes. The classical Arabic ode consists of three sections or parts. The first one is a kind of prelude in which the poet expresses his nostalgia for his departed beloved and dwelling. The poem develops to the motif of travelling and how the poet takes this journey through the dry, vast, dangerous and scorching desert. The final part is allocated for boasting or praising. Such poems are saturated with values, virtues, customs, traditions, cares, ambitions, sorrows and the surrounding ambiance of the poet speaker who belongs to a nomadic clan. In fact he is the mouthpiece of his tribe.

If poetry is considered as a vehicle for conveying feelings, experiences and revealing values, customs and traditions, Pre-Islamic poetry is a good example for keeping and transferring most of the social, economic and cultural Arab aspects in effective and intimate ways. So poetry is deemed as the main source for studying and exploring the Arab Bedouin society in detail due to the fact that poetry was the only means of expression at that time. Ali Alwardi says “The word in the bedouin society has a greater effect on the souls of the people than the devastating effect of the sharply-bladed sword” (1994, p. 211).⁵

⁴. Translated by the researcher from Arabic into English.

⁵. Translated by the researcher from Arabic into English.

3. Hatim Altai: A Short Biography.

He is Hatim Ibn Abdullah Ibn Saad Ibn Al-Hasharj Al-Tai whose father died while he was still an infant. His mother brought him up and she had a huge wealth which she spent in charity. He suckled the milk of generosity from his mother and she instilled generosity in the heart of Hatim who strictly followed her example in giving charity. His mother was prevented by her brothers from spending any wealth and was quarantined for one year to experience the life of misery and destitution. When she was released and given a portion of her wealth, a woman from Hawazan came to her and asked her for charity. Hatim's mother told the woman that she has undergone a time of hunger and misery herself, then she cannot deny any destitute. So she gave all her wealth to this woman.

When Hatim was living with his grandfather, he used to grant his food for the hungry and the needy people. The grandfather became upset with him due to his extravagance and sent him to graze and take care of camels. One day while Hatim was grazing the camels, Obaid Ibn Al-Abrus, Bishr Ibn Abi Khazim and Alnabaghaa Al-Dhobyani, three great classical Arab poets, passed him during their journey to Al-Nu'mān ibn al-Mundhir. He slaughtered for them three camels despite the fact that he did not know them. On their departure, Hatim distributed the camels amongst them; one hundred for each one. When he returned home, he narrated the story to his grandfather and told him that he has wrapped him [grandfather] in glory as a pigeon's collar. His grandfather became angry and decided not to live with him any longer. So he exiled him.

Exile was a popular form of punishment exercised by Arabs against relatives, members of the tribe or against another tribe due to a flagrant mistake done by them. To ostracize a relative is to end one's responsibility and obligations on him. Sometimes a person is banished because he has done a shameful act and the tribe can wash that shame only through stopping claiming responsibility on that person via exile. In the case of Hatim, it is different because he did an honorable and generous act. He willingly accepted his isolation and he expressed this event in the following lines from a poem entitled "Abandon Poverty with Richness."

1. I abandon poverty with richness

And leave a design not mine
.....
.....

2. And make wealth a shield of honor

For me and relinquish what is mine
.....

3. And no harm if happiness prevails

When I am isolated with no kin and kith

(Divan 2002, p.

40).⁶

In the same poem, he further blames his grandfather for his stinginess by writing:

1. Let my grandfather lives with his stinginess

His figure is not mine and I never resemble him

(Divan 40).

Hatim becomes a legend in generosity, tolerance, bravery and meekness. Stories were accumulated around his extraordinary exploits of chivalry and benevolence. It is

⁶. Translated by the researcher from Arabic into English. All the subsequent poems in this research have been translated by the researcher.

narrated that Hatim was victorious; if he fights, he wins and if he takes part in a race, he wins. Critics claim that Hatim's poetry is rich in language and images and it is like the richness and generosity of Hatim himself. When the sacred month of Rajab, 7th month in Hegira calendar, came, Hatim slaughtered ten camels every day and people came from different parts to eat and feast.

Hatim married Mawayaa Bint Afzer, a king's daughter from Yemen. She gave birth to Abdullah, Saffanna and Oddei. Saffanna and Oddei witnessed the Prophet Muhammed and converted into Islam (Azzyyat, n. d., p. 73).⁷ Hatim was a man of high principles and morals. He was well-natured, contemplative, kind-hearted and benevolent. He never killed or oppressed any one. When Hatim's daughter, Saffanna, was captured by the Islamic army, she pleaded to the Prophet to release her by saying:

My father was releasing the captives, protecting the honor (women), taking care of guests, easing off the afflicted, giving food, disseminating words of peace and never rejecting a person's request. The Prophet said: 'O maid, these are the traits of a believer. If your father were a Muslim, we might blessed his soul. [Ordering his soldiers) Leave her alone since her father was a man of virtues' (Ibid.).

Hatim continued to feed people and give charity until he passed away in 605 A. D. (Ibid.).

Hatim's poetry belongs to the pre-Islamic poetry which is characterized by its descriptive mode. Objects, scenes, places and people are minutely described to create a real visual or auditory pictures in the minds of the readers or listeners. This poetry portrays traditions, values, journeys, hunting, animals and places that remind the poet of his childhood and his love with his beloved. It, moreover, depicts natural objects such as the desert, mountains, rain, wind, lightening and stars. The life of the Bedouin society is described in a detailed and illustrative way in this poetry.

4. Virtues and Values in Hatim's poetry.

Traditions and values occupied a very important place in the life of the Arabian people. They directed their life and guided their actions according to these traditions and values as they served as an unwritten constitution or law. When Islam came, it approved some of these values and traditions such as generosity, modesty, bravery and help. It is said that such values and morals are what remained from Ibrahim's creed. The Prophet Muhammed said that he has been sent (by Allah to people) only to complement good morals.

Pre-Islamic poetry is replete with and celebrating these values and positive traditions. Due to the lack of time and space, this paper focusses only on some virtues namely generosity, bravery and honesty and modesty with reference to some selected poems from Hatim's poetry.

4.1. Generosity.

Generosity is deemed one of the most important values that distinguished the bedouin society. It was a highly esteemed virtue and to be generous with one's guest was unsurpassable deed of charity and benevolence. This value was acquired by the bedouins because of the harsh environment, the desert, where they lived. This environment was characterized by dearth, scarcity, aridity, hunger and starvation which the bedouin society bitterly experienced. So this society highly appreciated and praised those people who offered food and water to the hungry and needy people in the tribe and outside the

⁷. Translated by the researcher from Arabic into English. All the subsequent quotations taken from this source have been translated by the researcher.

tribe. Al-Aradhaa says that at the time of drought and hunger the rich bedouins usually slaughtered their camels to feed their tribes (2012, p. 112).⁸

The common feeling among Arabs that they were weak in front of the unmerciful and cruel conditions of their habitation instinctually prompted them to help each other and to live in solidarity and unity. They sanctified generosity as a sacred rite that was celebrated in public by means of poetry. The drive for survival in the fruitless and cruel desert imposes its urge on people to be generous, charitable and benevolent so as to prevent starvation among their tribe members. The value of generosity was one of the paramount ones inherited by sons from their fathers. Many Jahili poems reveal how such people used to give advice to their sons and grandsons to proceed in their fathers' practice of generosity and charity. There was no laws or rules which state that the rich should give the poor. Rather, giving the poor and catering for the needs of the guest sprang out of a complex set of ethics and value system the Arab bedouins used to boast of. Omar Addasogi believes that "If the generous people would not help and rescue those who have run out of provisions or those who have lost their way with no redemption, life on the desert might stop" (n. d., p. 60).⁹

When the Arab bedouin poet wanted to panegyryze someone, he typically associated generosity with his character as an inherent trait and conversely when he desired to shatter a person's reputation, he ascribes to him the trait of miserliness and stinginess. This is clear evidence that Arabs paid a great homage to the value of generosity. Bedouin society hold those generous people in high esteem and reverence. They were seen as the pinnacle of honor and virility and as good models to be followed by next generations. Generosity upgraded the social rank and position of the person practicing it and it reflects his high rank and noble mien. The host, furthermore, should show cordial, warm and welcome facial expressions to the guest. He should engage in hilarious social conversations and chit chat that provide the guest with comfort, enjoyment and peace.

Hatim's poetry is a good example in disclosing the value of generosity by employing highly effective concrete images. He was known as the generosity poet whose poetry reveals his notions of the Arab virtues pursued by people at that time. Hatim made use of different literary devices to highlight his themes and ideas. He was a poet of original talent and who had a repertoire of varied poetic tools and moreover he was a poet of deep and sincere feelings. The theme of generosity and benevolence takes the bulky part of his poetry. This is not strange as Hatim established himself as the Arab icon of generosity. He exercised generosity and charity in real life and preserved such experiences in numerous poems. In one of his poems, "I Will not Eat it Alone," he addresses his wife:

1. O, Daughter of Abdullah and Daughter of Malik
O, Daughter of Dhu Albordain and the pinkish horse
2. When you make food, for it find
An eater for I will not eat it alone
3. A passerby or a neighbor for
I am afraid of bad talk of me (after death)
4. I am the guest's servant as long as he stays
It is only this trait of a servant that I have

(Divan 19)

⁸. Translated by the researcher.

⁹. Translated by the researcher.

In the previous lines, it is clear that generosity and charity are inherent in Hatim's personality. The speaker commences his poem by addressing his wife by reminding her of the great lineage to which she belongs. Her family is reputed in upholding Arab values and morals such as generosity, benevolence and bravery. Arabs boasted of their genealogy and roots. This is clear in their poetry when poets express their pride of their pure lineage and their utmost care in protecting and maintaining their pure blood through marrying cousins. Then, he addresses his wife to find out a guest to share their food. A passerby or a neighbor or any kind of guest because the poet is used to take his meals with guests. It is unusual for the speaker to have his food alone. The food becomes prohibited for him if his wife cannot bring him a guest. He wants to live up to the Arabian image and value of generosity. He is afraid of people's gossip and invective against him after his death. People may say that Hatim was a miser and stingy and he cannot bear such an untruthful accusation. The poet affirms that he will be the servant of his guest as long as this guest is staying in the house. He has not the spirit or the character of a servant except in such an occasion; serving his guests. He is honored, respected and held in a high position among his tribesmen. That is why he negates all the traits of servants except when he is in service of his guests to emphasize his innate and untrammelled generosity and charity.

In another poem entitled "The Coward Dog", he highlights his deeds of generosity and benevolence by means of comparison with other people. He writes:

1. When the stingiest of people let his dogs
Harm and hurt the weak guest
2. My abode becomes a lair of coward dogs
I give even if the soul is devoid of conscience.
3. My dogs get quieted and accustomed
Little is their barking on those visiting me
4. Never complains my cauldron when people become stingy
Sometimes I fix it and add food other times
5. I always expose my cauldron to the open air
To be seen whether it is little or full
6. My best she-camels are at the behest
To be slaughtered on the spot with a din
7. I hold a counsel with the benevolent soul till it obeys
And abandon the miser's soul and never take its urge
8. Never veil my cooking fire
But light it at night for passersby

(Divan 30-31).

In these lines, the poet distinguishes himself by comparing his generous ways with other people. While people rebuff to offer guests and the needy any kind of provision, the speaker is willing to give all things he has. People keep fierce dogs to guard off guests and visitors and sometimes these people let their dogs chase off passersby and visiting guests so as to keep them away from houses. The poet has established a horrible image of stinginess and miserliness by calling to attention a group of fierce and hostile dogs which constantly bark at seeing foreigners. In contrast, the speaker's dogs get quieted and accustomed when they see strangers coming to the master's house. These dogs

become familiar with strange faces because they almost see guests and visitors come to dine on a daily basis.

The poet provides the reader with another concrete image to prove his incomparable generosity. The cauldron which is used for cooking food never complains of over-usage. The vessel has been personified and made to speak and feel as if it were a human being. It never grumbles especially when other people's cauldrons are most of the time silent. The poet says that he never conceals the cauldron from passersby and travelers. He rather puts it on a place where it is easily spotted. He, moreover, does not cover the cooking fire at night from being caught by the needy, the hungry and the travelers. His most valuable camels are at his behest to be butchered on the spot in front of his house for the sake of his guests. He will not hesitate to slaughter the best she-camels he has in order to satisfy the needs of different people whether they are poor, hungry, needy, passersby, travelers or neighbors. The poet employs another personification to get his ideas across. The soul is depicted as a person with whom the speaker takes a counsel. It seems that there is an ongoing debate and argument between the poet and his two-sided soul. The poet listens to the good side of his soul which commands and encourages him to do acts of benevolence and charity so he disobeys the evil part of the soul which tries to prevent him from carrying out good deeds of generosity.

In another occasion, he addresses his wife or perhaps his servant in his poem, "Never Veil my Cauldron:"

1. Never veil my cauldron as it is cooking
If so, the cooked food for me is prohibited
2. Fire it on a vantage point
Fire it with thick logs, no sticks

(Divan 48).

Here the poet employs visual images to emphasize his generosity and benevolence. He addresses his wife to expose the cooking cauldron by placing it on a high mound so that passersby can see the fire and come to be served. The poet orders the cook to throw into fire thick logs rather than thin sticks in order to make a big bonfire so that travelers can spot it easily. The speaker threatens that if the cook does not do what she is ordered, the cooked food, then, becomes prohibited for him. The images used are full of connotations and implications.

Hatim's poetry encourages people to be generous and spend their money in charity and benevolent deeds. Hatim considers money and wealth as a means rather than an end towards fame and immortality. Those who favor spending their possessions in charity and acts of philanthropy will be remembered and immortalized in the narrative of consecutive generations. Many poems celebrate this phenomenon of giving one's own belongings to the needy, hungry and guests. People worship money but money for Hatim means nothing if it is not distributed in charity and good deeds. He writes in "I Never Walk to the Privacy of my Female Neighbor:"

1. When money is people's master
It is with God's blessing my slave
2. It is to release captives, offer food,
Given when the banished miser grumbles

(Divan 14).

In these lines two groups of people are portrayed. The first one is those who make money their master to obey and god to worship. These people become slaves to their money. Money guides and directs them to a dark and abysmal end. The second type

of people to whom the poet belongs is those who regards money as a means rather than an end. The poet is the master of his money. Money is a slave and subservient to the orders and commands of the speaker. This contrast is employed to make the point clear that money is deemed good and useful only if it is used in philanthropic acts. The poet gives some examples of how money should be spent in charity works. It should be used to help release prisoners; people who cannot pay money in return for their release and freedom. It is, furthermore, used to buy food and offer it to the needy and hungry and money should be given in charity and alms. The poet states that he uses his money and wealth in doing such good deeds and he brings out the image of the miser who is banished by society because he hoards money and he does not spend it in charity. Even when such a miser spends a little of his money in benevolence, he is habituated to grumble and he keeps telling people about his good deeds.

In another poem entitled “My Money Rather Than My Honor,” he writes:

1. Surly I give my requester, perhaps
I take such an overburden when I cannot (but I do)
2. I might be rebuked, if it is said that Hatim
Abandons (good deeds), the generous might be berated.
3. I won't allow that, nor my magnificent lineage
True ancestors honored with kindness and modesty

(Divan 37).

Here the poet boasts of his generosity. He spends his money even if it is beyond his ability and this may lead to poverty. He does so because he is afraid of reprimanding him that he has rebuffed the needy and his guests. He considers people's blaming him as a great fault of a generous person. He says that this exploit of generosity is an inherent characteristic of his forefathers known for their honor, truth and kindness. He inherited such a good virtue from his ancestors. The poet emphasizes his recurrent deeds of generosity by using verbs in the present simple such as “give” and “take”. Hatim is preoccupied with the idea that people may accuse him of miserliness and stinginess if he only once does not fulfil his promise of being the most generous person in the Arabian Peninsula. People perhaps gossip that Hatim has skewed from his generous nature and good virtues. The speaker cannot bear such a groundless accusation. He affirms that he will live up to the image that people has created about him regarding generosity and other virtues because he belongs to a generous and chivalrous lineage.

In one of his poems, Hatim asseverates that he will grant his money and spend it in good deeds so as to protect his fame, name, honor and social position. He hopes that the whole world may hear about his exploits of generosity and benevolence through the stories of travelers. In his poem, “Hatim is Loitering,” Hatim writes:

1. I will grant my money to whomever comes to me
And keep it (money) for the sake of lending and duty
2. Protecting the honor of the generous and chivalrous
A wicked showered in generosity, may defend my honor
3. This is the act of the benevolent in every occasion
The earth is full of news of his generosity

(Divan 44)

Hatim's philosophy of spending is unique. In the previous lines, he says that he grants his money to two types of people: the generous and the wicked. He gives his wealth to the generous in order to protect their honor and fame; while he gives it to the wicked to shun their villainy, rumors and bad talk. These wicked people might defend the poet because of his benevolence and kindness to them.

Hatim believes that he should enjoy money and wealth which he has by giving alms and charity and by being generous to his guests. He says that money will be bequeathed to other people the moment a person dies. "Hatim is Loitering," he states:

1. Shower with charity those whom you love

If you die, wealth is plundered and divided

2. You toil, successors rejoice with it

When you are crammed in a dark hole.

(Divan 44).

In these lines, the poet discloses a tragic reality of life: death. A person toils throughout his life to gather money and wealth and if he does not give it in charity, heirs are the only people who will enjoy the wealth. The word 'crammed' is used to intensify the sad feelings of the poet when he is left alone in a grey and dark hole, the grave, and his successors are coming back to enjoy the wealth he has left. The argument raised by the poet is logical and philosophical.

In another poem entitled "Money Comes, Money Goes," the poet raises the same argument; when one is dead, nothing will avail him. The poet speaks to his wife.

1. O Mawayaa, what wealth may avail the lad

When the soul gurgling and the chest choked

2. Those whom I love are my layers

Into a slippery-sided and gray grave

3. And they back hurried up cleaning hands

Saying: digging has blooded our fingertips

(Divan 23).

The poet says that those people whom he loves very much are the ones who are going to dig his grave and put him in such a slippery ditch. They will put his dead body very quickly as if they wanted to get rid of it and return home to take care of what the deceased has left. They shake and clean their hands in an irritating way due to the remaining mud saying that the digging work of the grave has destroyed their fingertips. The images are horrible and harrowing but the poet arrives at his purpose. His message is to make use of one's wealth in giving charity and doing other good deeds while still alive. Death seals up all human activities and a person's inheritors turn out to be cruel and heedless.

4.2. Bravery.

It is found that courage and boldness combined with adventure and risk were other important values that Arabs hold in a high regard. Jahili poetry is prevalent with this highly appraised value; the value of courage. Poets composed many poems in praise of their bravery, boldness and horsemanship. Sometimes this panegyric was directed towards their patrons or eminent brave figures. The Arab bedouins were not always ready to go to war and they preferred peace but when fighting was the last resort, they showed unprecedented exploits of bravery and daring. They tried to shun war in many cases not because they were coward or timid. They, rather, knew that war was

destructive and innocent people were caught in its net. They proverbially used to say that war is unjust.

Courage is usually entwined with generosity as it is evident in the case of Hatim. And this is one of the highly praised and pursued virtues among Arabs. Arab tribes admired and highly held brave men in high position as they were seen as the defenders of the land, property and honor. Pre-Islamic poetry is teemed with an assortment of images depicting men's bravery in the battlefields. Hatim's poetry is no exception. It is, however, a praise-worthy record of his own personal bravery. Most of Hatim's poems revolve on the theme of generosity, yet, one can find some poems portraying his bravery and chivalry. In one of his poems entitled "My Pillow is my Sword Sheath," he writes:

1. Chivalrous as sword's blade, he aimed to rebuff me
Unthinkingly, I stabbed him with spear and people witness
2. With a swift strike, he plummets on his forehead
Cutting entrails to fall barely upon the ground
3. Being gored, soon he becomes a corpse
As a dirty hide, wallowing and scratching earth
4. I made his kith and kin (women) mourning him
Crying, shouting: 'do not leave'. I said 'go to hell'
5. They took and shouldered him, then they walk
Somberly to a dark hole, laid alone

(Divan 15).

Generally speaking, Hatim states his ideals and principles in his poetry. He affirms that he never transgresses or attacks any person without grounds. He is a peaceful and pacifist person. However, when he is attacked, rebuffed or scorned, he has to take his revenge by fighting that person, group or tribe so as to teach them a lesson that Hatim is never coward or miser. In these lines, the poet portrays a cruel and horrible scene replete with death, blood, sorrow and decay. He says that he engages himself in a battle with a man who tries to rebuff and deride him. In self-defense, the speaker immediately takes his spear and pierces it into the guts of such an arrogant man. The poet declares that his enemy is also brave and chivalrous as he compares him to the sharp blade of a sword. This implies that the speaker has found his own equal in fighting which will be fair and justifiable. The speaker's adversary turns out to be a remnant of a dirty piece of animal hide due to the deep dent left by the spear. The enemy cannot bear the stab so he immediately falls down upon his forehead and his guts wiggle back and forth to earth. This picture is horrible and brutal but it highlights the extraordinary bravery and valor of the speaker when he seriously commits himself into action.

In another provoking image, the poet delineates how the kin and kith, particularly women, of the killed enemy are crying, weeping and shouting at him, begging him not to die and leave them alone. But the poet's piercing strike turns out to be fatal as the man dies on the spot. These women and relatives, perhaps his family, solemnly and somberly mourn him and they take him upon their shoulders to his everlasting dwelling; the grave. The grave is depicted as a dark and awesome hole where the defeated and killed enemy will reside forever.

In another poem, Hatim addresses Mawayaa Bint Afzer, a queen of her tribe. Mawayaa sent her guards to find her a handsome, brave and generous husband, so they

brought her three prospective husbands including Hatim. In revealing his character and virtues to Mawayaa, Hatim shows in his poem titled “I Am not One of your Beloved” how brave he is:

1. I am like the rags of a bridle, you will see
As the brother of war, a grim and fierce face
2. As the brother of war, when it bites, I bite it.
If war drums beat, I muster myself ready for it
3. And even if death is imminent to me
Just a distance of an inch, I will defend honor

(Divan 22).

These lines reveal the courageous and valorous character of Hatim. He compares himself in the battlefield to a horse’s bridle or curb which becomes tattered and ragged. The significance of the simile is that the speaker gets furious and ferocious in the face of enemies. His facial expressions drastically change from mild and benevolent to grim and fierce to scare his enemies. It is not vitalizing to look at the tattered bridle because it is ugly and disgusting. Similarly, to look at the face of the poet warrior is to be overwhelmed with awe and fear. This is a completely different picture of Hatim who is known for his generosity, benevolence, magnificence and kindness.

He also associates himself with war by confirming that he and war are twins and brothers and never separated. In the first half of the second line, the poet repeats the idea that he and war are close brothers and war is personified as it is given the quality of biting as if it is an animal or human being. The speaker states that if war is biting, he will ferociously bite it. This personification implies that war has biting and destructive effects, yet the poet is ready for it. When he hears the drums beating for war, he instantaneously musters himself up and gets ready for it. He never hesitates or lags behind. Despite the fact that the speaker knows for sure that killing and death are natural consequences of war, however; he valiantly goes to war in defense of his honor, dignity and glory. He says that he will take part in war even if death is lurking for him within a distance of an inch because defending honor and dignity is worth-sacrificing.

4.3. Honesty and Modesty.

One of the virtues of ancient Arabs is how to be honest and trustworthy with others and particularly one’s neighbors. The Arab bedouins were very cautious of the dignity and honor of their neighbors. Not only this, they were ready to sacrifice themselves for the sake of protecting the honor of women in their neighborhood. In their poetry, one can find many instances in which the poet highlights the sacredness and holiness of the relationship between him and his neighbors’ women. It is no exaggeration to say that there is no nation or literature that uplifted and sanctified the neighbors’ women as Arabs and their poetry did. Hatim exposes this virtue in his poetry bringing out his code of ethics regarding treating his neighbors kindly particularly women. Hatim boasts of his morality and behavior with the women of his neighborhood and this is deemed as an inherent part of his overall chivalrous and gentleman-like character. In one of his poems entitled “Upgrading Oneself from Little Things,” he states:

1. Generous, never sleep at night crouching
Enumerating with fingers calamities
2. When I drink, I never excess
Liquor is full of intoxication, yet I am unquenched
3. Never I betray my neighbor’s bride

Under the canopy of darkness, never

4. Should I dishonor her and betray my neighbor?
God forbid to do so as long as I breathe.

(Divan 10).

The poet here is satisfied with his code of ethics. He is praising his conduct and virtues especially his honesty and modesty. He has completely submitted himself into the hands of God and destiny. He is never awake in the middle of the night counting miseries, losses and calamities that he is encountering in his life. He is a believer in the good arrangements and the good plan of God for him. So he totally surrenders himself to the will of God. In the second line, the poet, then, moves to a new theme; the theme of wine. He says that he is not a heavy drinker or an irresistible addict. He is, rather, a moderate one in his drinking habits. He is never excessive in his drinking even if the wine is thrilling and intoxicating. He keeps some wine for his guests.

The next two lines reveal the speaker's philosophy of relationship with one's neighbors. For him this relationship is sacred and should be based on trust, honesty and respect. He has not violated such a hallowed relationship by disgracing or dishonoring his neighbor's women. His is not like other people who go out under the cover of darkness to do horrible things in the neighborhood. He knows that neighborhood has rights on him. One of these rights is to protect the honor and dignity of women in his neighborhood. He makes a rhetorical question to throw vices and misconduct away of his behavior: 'Should I dishonor her and betray my neighbor? / God forbid to do so as long as I breathe.'

He will never betray his neighbor or seduce women of his neighborhood as long as he lives. God is his witness. This is another image of Hatim which complements his good character.

In "I Never Walk to the Privacy of my Female Neighbor," he writes:

1. I will never walk to my female neighbor
At night, to greet her as a distant relative
2. If you see us joking together, sure you will be
That I mean no harm, for I'm the most generous

(Divan 13).

In these lines, the poet reiterates the idea that he is boasting of high values and principles that are estimated by Arab tribes such as modesty and protecting the honor of one's neighbor's women. He states that he never goes to his neighbor's house in darkness to greet them or ask them if they need something in his capacity as a neighbor. The time of night and darkness imply ugly things especially as he is regarded as a distant relative. People may doubt that the speaker walks to his neighbor's house to court women there or disgrace their honor. Thus the poet understands that going to greet his female neighbors under the cover of darkness is suspicious and a bad behavior. In the second line, the poet provides the reader with a positive image with his female neighbor. He says that even when he is joking with the women of his neighborhood, his jokes are modest and have no love or sexual insinuation. He addresses the reader/listener to be ascertained that the intentions of the poet are harmless and innocent. The poet behaves in such a way because he considers himself a highly principled man and the most generous person in his tribe if not in the Arabian Peninsula.

In another poem titled "We Never Clap Neighbors", he tackles the same theme:

1. We clap not at the doors of neighbors in the stillness
Of night only when a gift is carried to them
2. Never a cousin (a neighbor) is slapped in our abodes
Nor allure his bride when he is ignorant or away

(Divan 41).

In the previous lines, the poet presents illustrative images that reveal a good and positive side of the poet's character. In the first image which is auditory and kinesthetic, the poet expresses a virtuous principle. This principle states that the speaker never clap at the door of his neighbors at night for moral reasons. It is suspicious to knock at the doors of neighbors under the cover of darkness at night. The poet, however, makes an exception. That is when a gift which means in this context food is intended to be given to the neighbors. Hunger and starvation were common phenomena among bedouin people because of drought and the nature of desert. So the poet finds it urgent to go at night and knock at the doors of neighbors to provide them with necessary food.

In the second line, the speaker shows another positive trait or virtue of his character. These are his gentleman-like deportment with his cousins and neighbors. He never slaps a cousin or a neighbor because such an act is disgracing and shameful. Most importantly, he keeps the honor and dignity of his cousins, neighbors and tribesmen by protecting women from any kind of violation or harassment. He never betrays the bride of his cousin or neighbor when he is absent away from the tribe.

From the previous discussion and analysis, it turns out that Hatim's poetry reveals a highly developed code of ethics followed by him and other tribesmen. Many poems explore the theme of morality and virtues which characterize Hatim's personality and his bedouin society. This bedouin society highly praised virtuous people and pursued and practiced the values of generosity, bravery, honesty and modesty despite the fact that this society was primitive, cruel and sometimes brutal.

Conclusion

Sociology of literature is a new type of analysis and study which highlights the symbiotic connection and relationship between a work of literature and the social environment in which it is created. It emphasizes the fact that any literary creation is the ultimate outcome of social situations and circumstances. Given the proof that a literary phenomenon and social structure has a reciprocal relationship, sociological study of literature turns out to be very useful to investigate and understand the socio-economic situations, the world view, political issues, creativity of the writers, the social and political system of society and the relations between certain thoughts and cultural manifestations in which they take place.

The sociological structure of the Arab bedouin society is regarded as an important key in deciphering its poetry which played a vital and eminent role in expressing the aspirations, heroic deeds, ideals and taboos of its people. The tribe and its associations served as the millstone and the catalyst which prompted the inner being of poets to respond to its imperatives, needs, activities and traditions. Bedouin society was characterized with some traditions and values such as self-reliance, patience, generosity, rectitude, modesty, trustworthiness, help, guardianship, altruism, bravery and forgiveness.

Hatim's poetry was a means to reveal his ideas and conception of his surrounding environment. His poetry is simple and straightforward full of gripping images and rich in music. Generosity and benevolence are ones of highly praised traits which upgrade the position of a person in the Arabic society. These grand values were embodied in the

character of Hatim whose stories of generosity turned him out to be a legendary person. Throughout history Arabs used to compare exploits of generosity with Hatim. It is said that Generosity is Hatim and Hatim is Generosity.

He also entertains a set of ethics and values such as bravery, honesty and modesty. He is an epitome of high morals and sets himself as a good example for his people and the generations to come to emulate. His poetry is a mouthpiece of the aspirations, traditions and values of his bedouin clan. Each poem is a perfect portrait which faithfully and honestly reflects and embodies the social, cultural and natural processes of his environment and society.

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