

NE'MAT AMINOV'S ART OF SATIRE IN REVEALING SOCIETAL ILLS

*Husanova Mohim Muzaffar kizi**Master's Student, Uzbek Language and
Literature University named after Alisher Navoi*

Abstract: This article discusses the historical origins of satire and humor, their significance in literature, and the art of presenting societal ills through satirical means, as exemplified by Ne'mat Aminov's works. It examines how Aminov's humorous writings depict social problems, moral shortcomings, and the spiritual poverty of humanity, exploring their psychological and aesthetic dimensions. The study also analyzes the author's humorous language and style in his satirical stories.

Keywords: satire, humor, satirical character, satirical writing, Ne'mat Aminov, satirical language, story, tale, critique, satirical type.

INTRODUCTION

One of the spiritual needs of humans is laughter, which plays an important aesthetic role in art and literature. Therefore, examining the unique features of laughter—especially humorous and satirical laughter—and the skill of satirical writers in creating laughter is of great importance. Today, both in world literary studies and Uzbek literature, satire and humor are acknowledged as artistic modes that maintain moral–ethical functions in personal and social relations.

Historically, the roots of satire and literary humor date back to ancient times. For example, in ancient Greek festivals, peasant singers mocked the rich and officials, which evolved into the “Old Athenian Comedy” tradition with figures like Cratinus, Eupolis, and Aristophanes. Aristotle noted that a comic situation often contains a trace of ugliness—humor is the harmless exposure of a flaw that hurts no one's feelings.

World literature has seen this reflective mirror effect in the works of Dante, Cervantes, Gogol, Zoshchenko, and Chekhov. Similarly, in Uzbek literature, laughter has served as a means of truth. Initially present in oral forms such as jokes and anecdotes, satire later entered written literature. In classical Uzbek literature, satirical voices appeared in Ahmad Yasawi, Alisher Navoi, Muhammad Solih, and Mashrab. By the late 18th and early 19th centuries, writers like Maxmur, Gulxaniy, Muqimiy, and Zavqiy used humor as an educational and deeply influential technique.

At that time, literature used satire and humor to criticize societal vices such as oppression, suppression of freedom, and authoritarianism, more effectively than any other genre. Abdullah Qodiriy described satire as “making one laugh yet cry, and cry yet laugh”—saying satirical critique translates the feelings people sense but cannot express themselves.

In general, literature uses humor and satire to reveal “invisible tears” beneath the surface of laughter, as Gogol phrased it. Understanding the socio-ideological significance of laughter reveals its powerful role in literature. The emergence of new forms of satirical and humorous prose in contemporary literary-aesthetic thought underlines the need to reinterpret the objectives and features of satirical art. In this context, studying the multifaceted work of the renowned Uzbek writer and

National Writer of Uzbekistan, Ne'mat Aminov, is a key factor in deepening our understanding of satire and humor, as expressed in Uzbek satirical literature.

As Shukur Kholmiraev observed, "Ne'mat Aminov derives ninety percent of his laughter from character and the deep nature of his protagonists. As is known, this path is difficult but the most effective; he brought people—not just situations—into literature... Through him, our satirical writing took a step forward." Studying Aminov's works is important not only because they elevated the Uzbek satirical prose to a higher level, but also because his masterful satire addressed state flaws, socially unconscious "values," and everyday vices with a fresh style. Moreover, the faults he revealed and the bitter laughter he used are still relevant today.

MAIN PART

Every literary work, regardless of genre, depends on its genre characteristics: a unique set of compositional attributes and a particular textual form. Satirical genres, in particular, stand out with distinctive linguistic, compositional, and social traits. Short satirical genres provide writers with the most convenient means of delivering their thoughts to readers. Aminov's satirical output primarily consists of short stories, yet he also contributed significantly through sketches, feuilletons, and satirical prose.

As Abdulla Oripov remarked, "A famous writer Ne'mat Aminov had laughter in one eye, and sorrow in the other." Indeed, his worldview is reflected in his writings: with one eye, he observed the amusing daily events, and with the other, he saw and exposed the underlying social flaws. His works—such as "Two-priced Reputation," "The Forty-third Post," "Labihevuz's Laughter," "Golden Smiles," "The Wrestler Without Shoulders," "Laughter," "Story of One Century," and "False Angels"—all use humor to reveal real-life truths. Jonathan Swift once said, "Satire is a kind of mirror in which the reader usually sees everyone's, especially his own, face," and so in Aminov's stories, each reader can see reflections of themselves in the characters—because the author crafts satirical types and portraits drawn from real life.

Aminov does not portray societal ills abstractly; instead, he anchors them in specific historical and social contexts. This is crucial, because even timeless vices like bribery, cronyism, arrogance, envy, and boastfulness manifest uniquely in each era, and Aminov understands this deeply. Therefore, his readers perceive these faults anew.

We can group the social and human flaws he portrays into three categories:

Political and systemic flaws;

Misinterpretations of religion among the public;

Social failings in everyday life.

Across all his satirical works, Aminov humorously exposes societal blemishes and absurdities. For instance, in "Nervous People," a hospital janitress's rudeness leads to numerous complaints, yet managers are replaced instead of addressing the real culprit. This highlights official negligence and mismanagement.

In "Moral Education Class," a technical school teacher likens students to dogs in a psychological development session—critiquing an education system that remains troubled even decades later.

In “Will,” Aminov subtly exposes the Soviet-era cotton policy in Uzbekistan through the memory of Sano Bobo: “Which day I watched ‘Cinema Journey’ on TV, and thought of that silkworm forest. Now it’s planted with cotton...”—a portrayal still resonant with the modern “white gold” issue. A shepherd’s lamb’s death results in bureaucratic trouble, underscoring how human dignity is often neglected.

Religion plays a central role in many postsoviet Uzbek families, yet Aminov satirizes shallow disregard for true faith. In “Will,” Sano Bobo “knew the shahada and al-hamdu only a little, had never prayed in lifetime, yet never walked out without ritual cleanliness”—highlighting superficial observance over true belief. He also quips about “mullahs”: “They’re like defense lawyers requesting forgiveness before God for the sins of the dead,” critiquing religious hypocrisy.

In “Al-Fatiha,” the character Arabjon, despite his Muslim name, uses piety for disguise rather than sincerity—awakening readers’ disdain for such hypocrisy.

Aminov also satirizes societal issues in “The Congratulations,” mocking over-ceremonious officials; “Don’t Call Me Brother!” ridicules flippant leaders and reckless women; and “The Star with a Tail” targets braggarts. In “Obi Mahrama,” he laments commercialization of mourning ceremonies and funeral profiteering—still relevant today.

A key strength of Aminov’s style is that he avoids didactic moralizing. Instead, he leaves the conclusions to the reader, depicting events plainly. His talent lies in packing broad societal critique into compact narratives with just one or two satirical characters. Though the plots may appear simple at first glance, on closer inspection they deliver merciless judgments on social norms and systems.

CONCLUSION

In summary, Ne’mat Aminov’s satire brought new satirical types, a fresh style, and distinctive language into Uzbek literary tradition. Practically, his satire served to expose persistent social flaws and hinderances to progress—which remain with us today. The writer’s aim was to diminish those destructive traits in our people through humor and critique—and indeed his works continue to fulfill that purpose.

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