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TITLE: An evaluation of the concept of crime in the nineteenth century's France
via Victor Hugo's classic: The Miserables

ABSTRACT

This study, which has a critical as much as a descriptive, aims at evaluating the crime and punishment concepts in the nineteenth century's France. The study is essentially related to literature, sociology and law in consideration of its subject; and with this concern, it takes into consideration by looking at (a social fact crime) a literary work (The Miserables).

In this study it has been tried to search 19 th century French law system and the perception of justice while carrying out a critical reading towards the period's practices. With this respect it was emphasized in this study that in 19 th century in French the punishment for a particular crime was much severe in practice. Thus, it was also emphasized that the period's law system was yet different from modern law's punishment practices.

This study si based on different perspectives. Historic and sociological critique methods derived from of reflection theory emphasize that the author is affected from the historical processes which he lives in and therefore it is necessary to understand this process.

The indication of that period's positive law and justice is shattered via the perspective of the author, for this reason a third viewpoint discussed. Autobiographical critique method that shaped with the expression theory emphasizes that there is a relation between the authors characters and his works and it is important to know the author's life to understand his work. Also, within the framework of this study, the main character's line of action was examined by going through the text and using the semiotics method which provided a chance to re-evaluate it.

KEYWORDS: Crime, Punishment, Positive Law, Ideal Law