Beyond Humour: Revolutionary Theatre of a Socialist Playwright, Aziz Nesin*

Mizahın Ötesi: Sosyalist Yazarın Devrimci Tiyatrosu, Aziz Nesin

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Abstract: 20th century Turkey experienced two world wars, the following harsh conditions, political upheavals, military coups and social changes. Aziz Nesin, as a character and writer, was, in full sense of the word, the product of these conditions; What he experienced from birth till his improvement processes as a writer, and all kinds of changes, developments, social or political crisis led him to leave aside Mehmet Nusret, his birth name, and made him become Aziz Nesin, which he chose for his writing career. With his impoverished background, he reacted against the injustice and dominance of minority; and evaluated all the things in terms of their utility for the society, especially, for the working class, which directed him to gain a socialist perspective naturally. He wrote a number of novels, poems, plays, stories, etc. from a socialist mindset. However, among genres, theatre was of greater importance for Nesin. In his plays, he handled the position of the individuals, their struggles and their conflicts with themselves, the others and with the society. They reflect his anger for public enemies who pose a disadvantage for the society, the democratish democratization and extreme recklessness of society. Nesin's aim is to prevent the ill operation of the system, raise awareness and instill the impulse in society towards a more enlightened individualistic and social life enabling personal and social change and improvement with his satirical humorous and non-violent language. Therefore, his is functional folk humour which constitutes the basic principle of his revolutionist theatre. The primary purpose of this paper is to shed light on Aziz Nesin as a socialist writer, his idea of theatre, his satirical humour and revolutionist theatre notion.

Structured Abstract: Mehmet Nusret Nesin was born into the harsh conditions of First World War and studied at home with a dervish who taught French, arithmetic, geometry, Islamic doctrines and philosophies of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, İbn Khaldun and Mevlana besides Koran. Following his education at state schools, he graduated as a military officer. Simultaneously, he was writing yet with a pseudonym, Aziz Nesin - his father's name. When he was removed from his duty in 1944 with the reason of misconduct, he earned

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his life by writing, sheepherding, grocery business, bookshop, etc. These conditions enabled him to observe the conditions of working class within society and their reasons, which he included in his theatre.

In his plays, the place of individual in society, the corrupt system, exploited society and exploiting powers as well as public enemies who pose disadvantages for the society are dealt with. An individual is to struggle to heal the conditions of the society and redress the balance between the social classes of the society in terms of economic, social, cultural and political levels. Therefore, at the background of plays, he delivers hidden messages for the audience to gain consciousness on the circumstances they *enjoy* and attempt to heal their conditions by changing both their perspectives as well as acts and changing the operation of the system; because all the problems in a society are subparts of the biggest problem, social structure. For the solution, proper democracy should be guaranteed, which ensures that without privileges each people will have the chance to attain from the richness or poverty and advantages or disadvantages of a country in a socially equal way to the extent they work and deserve.

To create the mentioned desired effect in his plays, Nesin benefits from a clear, sincere and witty language which he adorns with satire and humour. He uses his satirical humour as a weapon against tyranny, maladministration, authoritarian powers and unresponsiveness of the society to the abusing conditions. Therefore, his humour cause audience and the reader laugh with revolt until they burst into tears. As his humour aims the benefit of all people, especially working class, it is utilitarian folk humour like Nasreddin Hodja's.

In some periods, when people feel constraint, humour is recalled not only as a reaction mechanism but escape mechanism as well. The period Nesin wrote and published literary works was a period when Turkey experienced several radical changes such as military coups, social and political changes. Then, people feared and felt oppression. They tried to handle fear and oppression by acknowledging the current state. When one fits into the dominant powers, the fear disappears, which come to mean that fear causes acceptance and acceptance brings blindness with it. With his satirical humour he shows the real current state to the society who is not aware of the light as they live in dark. Thus, in his plays he narrates the society in binary oppositions just like dark/light, blindness/seeing or deafness/hearing. Accordingly, Nesin uses satirical humour as both a weapon and a relaxation mechanism. However, he was quite careful to set the balance of elements of his plays not to diminish people's desire or impulse of changing the system and their conditions; since his is the blend of delicate humour, satire and activism.

Nesin always felt the responsibility for and depth to the people, which encouraged him to challenge the system to improve the lives of people. These responsibilities along with his poverty-stricken background, and the struggles of the people - especially working class - he observed triggered him to have a socialist perspective instinctively. Thus, he was a natural socialist who, later having the chance to read on socialism became a socialist consciously. He struggled for the values of socialism and pluralist democracy to protect the rights of the minorities, which guaranteed different perspectives, opinions, language and religion. As a socialist writer handles his subject matters from a socialist perspective, Nesin, inevitably, looked over the conflicts of individuals with themselves, the others and with the society from a socialist angle.

Nesin's socialism calls for a revolution which will enable a drastic change of the political and social system. Thus, he believed that for Turkey and alike countries, socialist art should be revolutionist art since the system which protects the welfare of the ruling class can be diminished with socialist norms; in this way, exploitation will disappear automatically. To accelerate the revolution, Nesin benefitted from theatre as his theatre concept bore revolutionist core.

Revolutionist theatre with its aim to affect and direct people towards change is to show the reality that people are blinded or unable to see by attacking the injustice as well as inequality; and it should show or signal the corrections because this type of theatre is internal reflection of sufferers and exploited people. Therefore, written in a simple language, it should give strength to people to stop the system that works only for the welfare of a minority in the whole society.

In Nesin's plays, all the prerequisites of revolutionist theatre are included. All of his plays are connected, and they contribute to the revolutionist idea as parts of a whole. Moreover, all other works including articles, novels and poems support this idea. All the plays bear a purpose: attack to the ill operation of the system handling the conflicts and showing slices from the lives of people, thus, presenting the reality,

what is happening and what should be happening. So, they are tools of propaganda to trigger people to reshape the world.

To conclude, Aziz Nesin employs his satirical humorous language as a tool for his revolutionist theatre notion. His revolutionist theatre urges the reader and the audience to struggle for the democracy, improvement in all spheres of life and betterment of people's lives. At the target of it, there exist exploitive powers, capitalism and recklessness of people in questioning the system and asking for what they really deserve. Through his revolutionist idea of theatre, he aims to kill the blindness of the society and raise awareness in them. He advises a real democracy as a solution to the ills in the society, because a real democracy guarantees that everybody will benefit from the richness or poverty, advantageous or disadvantageous circumstances and beauties or ugliness in an equal way to the extent they work or deserve. This also brings about social, political, cultural and economic improvement. Therefore, his revolutionist theatre is an effective, utilitarian folk theatre which bears socialist purposes, the leading of which is to create a society based on equal rights, income and dignity as well as establishing a classless, unprivileged society.

Keywords: Aziz Nesin, Natural Socialist Playwright, Satirical Humour, Nesin's Revolutionist Theatre

Öz: 20. yüzyıl Türkiye'si, iki dünya savaşını, ardından gelen zor koşulları, siyasi dalgalanmaları, askeri darbeleri ve toplumsal değişimleri tecrübe etmiştir. Karakteri ve yazar kimliği ile Aziz Nesin, kelimenin tam manasıyla bu şartların bir ürünüdür; doğduğundan yazarlığının gelişim sürecine kadar yaşadıkları ve ülkedeki her türlü değişim, gelişim, sosyal veya siyasi kriz, onu Mehmet Nusret'ten yazar olarak kullanmayı seçtiği Aziz Nesin kimliğine büründürmüştür. Maddi olanağı kısıtlı geçmişiyile, Nesin azınlığın baskınlığına ve adaletsizliğine karşı tepki göstermiş olan biten her şeyi topluma, özellikle işçi sınıfına, yararlı olmasına göre değerlendirmiştir ki bu, onu doğal olarak sosyalist bakış açısı kazanmaya sevk etmiştir. Sosyalist perspektiften bir çok roman, şiir, oyun, öykü, vb. kaleme almıştır. Fakat, Nesin için türler arasında tiyatronun ayrı bir yeri vardır. Oyunlarında, bireylerin konumları, mücadeleleri, kendileriyle, başkalarıyla ve toplumla olan çatışmaları ele almıştır. Oyunları, topluma dezavantaj yaratan halk düşmanlarına, demokratiğimsi demokrasiye ve toplumun aşırı duyarsızlığına olan öfkesini yansıtır. Nesin'in amacı, şiddet içermeyen eleştirel mizah dili ile, sistemin kötü işleyişini engellemek ve farkındalığı arttırmak ve bireysel ve toplumsal değişim ile gelişim sağlayarak toplumda daha aydınlanmış bireysel ve sosyal yaşama dürtüsü uyandırmaktır. Bundan ötürü, onunki, devrimci tiyatrosunun temel prensibi olan işlevsel halk mizahıdır. Bu çalışmanın amacı sosyalist yazar olan Aziz Nesin'e, onun tiyatro anlayışına, eleştirel mizahına ve devrimci tiyatro anlayışına ışık tutmaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Aziz Nesin, Sosyalist Yazar, Eleştirel Mizah, Nesin'in Devrimci Tiyatrosu

Introduction

Coinciding with the battle of Gallipoli, Mehmet Nusret Nesin was born in 1915, in Heybeliada, İstanbul, as the son of an indigent family. He was home-educated by a progressivist and revolutionist dervish, Galip, until he was sent to a state school. Dervish taught him French, calligraphy, arithmetic, geometry and Arabic besides Greek and Islamic philosophies, the tenets of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, İbn Khaldun and Mevlana besides the Koran (Nesin, 2016:37-80).

Following his home education, Nesin attended the School of Kanuni Sultan Süleyman, Darüşşafaka High School, Kuleli Military High School and Military Academy; and graduated as military officer from the Academy of Military Science in 1939. He also studied at the Fine Arts Academy for two years (Nesin, 1973: 370). He began writing long before his graduation and as writing was not totally welcomed in army, he used Aziz as his pseudonym (Nesin, 2011a: 279-281), which substituted his own name, Mehmet Nusret.

Dismissed from the army in 1944 because of misconduct (Küçükcalay and Özmen, 2010: 10), he kept on writing for magazines such as *Yeniğün*, *Yeni Adam*, *Akbaba*, *Karagöz*, *Tan* and *Vatan*. With Sabahattin Ali, they published *Markopaşa*, a humour newspaper for the articles of which he was arrested and sentenced many times (Nesin, 1973: 370). Besides, he earned his life by

conducting sheepherding, painting, tutorship, grocery business, bookshop, etc. (Nesin, 2016: 9). The variety of occupation enhanced his consciousness and provided him a perspective aware of severe living conditions of the society. Moreover, various surroundings brought awareness, which enabled him to write about various topics in various forms and genres.

Nesin lived eighty years and bequeathed a number of novels, stories, poems, anecdotes, essays, memoirs, analyses, travel writing, letters, fables, interviews and plays. Among the others, theatre had a special place for Nesin because playwriting is long-running continuous process the preparation of which lasts a few years by taking notes and constructing the plot (Nesin, 2009: 99). Therefore, for a play composed of 50-70 pages, a playwright has 600-700 pages of that play's comments in his/her mind with a deeper meaning between the lines and at the background (Nesin, 2012a: 209). His plays are grouped in three categories; dramatic plays: *Will You Come Here, Please?*, *Do Something Met*, *Çiçu*, *Hold My Hand Rovni*, etc.; Dark humour plays: *The Monster of Toros*, *Come on and Kill Me My Dear*, etc.; Musical plays: *The War Between the Whistlemakers and Brushmakers*, *Three Karagoz Plays*, *Give Me My Rights Hakkı*, *Yaşar Neither Lives Nor Dies*, etc.

In his dramatic plays, the position of the individual in life is handled and it is concluded that when an individual struggles for the best for the society, then his/her acts gain meaning, and s/he will deserve to live and die¹ reaching the third dimension.² Dark humour plays, on the other hand, signals the corrupt system that prompts the people to isolate themselves from the rest of the society in a more concrete way. Besides, musical plays provide a kind of relaxation by the laughter it triggers; however, Nesin's musical plays combine laughter with a powerful core without frankly intending to give lessons (Nesin, 2013a: 7-8). Thus, they aim first to raise laughter in audience and then pointing at the reality beyond, contribute to their non-material being for long-lasting effect criticizing the each individual and the society as well as the institutions.

Nesin's aim in writing drama is to contribute positively to individuals from elites to illiterate stratum and the conditions they are exposed to (Nesin, 2011a: 163). For his contribution, he creates a formula: each audience is a different receiver and each is affected by the play according to their competencies and expectations. The total spiritual values of the audiences are marked as x. When an audience leaves the saloon, if s/he is still x, it means that the play has not influenced him/her. When s/he leaves with such a score as x-1, then, it is comprehended that the play negatively affected the audience. However, if an audience leaves the saloon as x + 1,2,3..., it translates into that the play has just given positive impression to the audience as expected (Nesin, 2011a: 14-18).

The desired impression is for the audience to gain or regain consciousness of their own lives, life styles, acts, aims, circumstances and unfair operation of the system in order to stop the fear of death and lead a happy life (Nesin, 2011a: 204) as well as to break the blindness and acceptance of the society. To manage this, Nesin follows a method of bewildering the world first and then fixing and making it more beautiful (Kabacalı, 2007: 33). Therefore, the naked truth and

¹ A school teacher at Darüşşafaka Boarding School, Rıfki Bey impressed Nesin in a way that would shape all his life and works. He asked his students to look over their good and evil deeds every night to become a better person and to "whether or not [they] deserve to live" and to remember "what [they] have done and how much [they] have worked to deserve to live in this beautiful world." (Nesin, 2016: 401).

² For Nesin, life is a three-dimensional phase. All the phases are kinds of fight against death. The first dimension - lengthwise living - involves the actions to maintain the life such as eating, breathing, protecting from nature, etc, which are common to all living creatures. The second dimension - breadthwise living - is the desire and instinct of living creatures to continue their lineage. The third dimension - in-depth living - is the mark people leave behind their material beings which is consciously or unconsciously valid for all people that some people engrave their names on trees and some creates works to maintain their spiritual beings. Third dimension is an opportunity for people to go beyond their physical existence, thus, helps them overcome the fear of death (Nesin, 2011a: 202-203).

the spiritual reality of people within their reciprocal conflicts are to be comprehended; so observing and experiencing the unfair structure, Nesin narrates human beings as:

to find a person in a novel or play means to find the reasons of human behavior [...] [which are] to find out and reveal when, where, and the circumstances and factors under which the utterances, actions and behaviors take shape (Nesin, 2009: 76-77).

Moreover, he handles the conflicts of an individual with himself, with the others and the society but not directly; instead, he struggles to transmit the conflicts making people realize the material and spiritual structure by the help of the smallest details. He gives the details in his plays benefitting from the tools such as "abstractions, assumptions, symbols, images and imageries, analyses and irregularities" (Nesin, 2001a: 161). In this sense, he does not draw his characters fully with their physical appearances or reflect their immaterial world totally; instead, he shows the world in which that character lives, and let the audience deduce and comprehend the details from the acts of the characters (Özdemir, 2015: 28). Hence, touching on social topography, he deals with the "most humanitarian situations in daily life, [...] ridiculousness of world of rules, stupidity of [...] "hegemony", the weird [...] state of "intellectual" in society, [and] [...] "society" partly with their pure attitude, and partly with their "pragmatist" attitude [...]" under the frame of a certain social ground (Abacı, 2015: 47). Moreover, he denounces, in his plays, the public enemies who pose a disadvantage for the society, and the obstacles that decelerate social welfare and improvement. (İpşiroğlu, 1998: 106-107). To comprehend them, the audience or the reader should endeavor to contemplate on his words after reading and understanding his works instead of striving to comprehend what is written in his/her reading process (Nesin, 2014: 107). For this reason, avoiding many different places or various time transitions in his works, he refrains from drawing complex plots or language (Sütçü, 2016: 517). In this sense, Charles Dickens emphasizes "is a man wishes to write for all, he must know how to use the speech of all" (qtd. in Crystal, 2004: 86).

Despite categorization of his plays and the variety of his subject matters, the stability and integrity of all his works are worth mentioning that each of his plays is a single interrelated part of a whole, and they bear internal consistency to serve for the good, the democracy and improvement of the people. Therefore, each play's message serves to Nesin's aim separately, and when messages are brought together, just like completing a crossword puzzle, his aim in writing plays is revealed.

His plays challenge the minds of the reader dealing with the ever current and universal de factos so vividly that the referents can be seen anywhere and the language, civilization, behavior codes and norms can be easily observed and understood due to his persuasive and sincere language and narration technique which are combined with humorous and deeply satirical language (Nesin, 2013b: 137).

Humour as a Form of Satire

Simon Wiesenthal defines humour as "the weapon of unarmed people" and highlights that "humour succeeds where wisdom fails" (Gul and Javed, 2012: 178). Likewise, Hardy M. Griffin regards his pen as the most powerful revolver the bullet of which is his/her anger:

Before a man of letters, there should be a target which s/he will get angry. [...]S/he cannot reveal his/her anger directly, physically or with a reaction equal to the impact of anger; cannot fight explicitly because s/he cannot cope with it alone. Then, s/he exalts himself/herself by relieving his/her feelings which are overwhelmed under oppression into a work of literature. They say, for him/her, pen is stronger than the sword (qtd. in Özdemir, 2015: 26).

In that vein, Nesin's pen is his weapon that wages war against the tyranny and maladministration as well as authoritarian powers in a peaceful way (Nesin, 2011a: 311-326). At his target, there exist the weaknesses of capitalism and capitalist management that is incompatible

with common sense, religious fundamentalism and exploitation as well as the democracy based on the illiterate society (Kabacalı, 2007: 111). In his fight, he benefitted from the ridiculing power as a tool for positive demolition for the good of the people (Griffin, 2015: 109-110).

Nesin's witty but sharp, satirical but humorous language gives rise to a worldwide popularity of his works which hinders the smile on the humour writer's face and shelters his anger as well as deep thought, (Yıldız and Korat, 1994: 8) causing the audience laugh with revolt until they burst into tears (Çiftçi, 2004: 13). With his satirical humour, his works portray slices of daily life of the society, handling the circumstances with national detailed characters addressing to universal perspectives (Ercan, 2007) primarily concentrating on the oppressed masses with their happiness, weakness, emotions, reasons, morality besides emphasizing the oppression of the governments. With his social realism in dealing with the circumstances in a humorous tone, he is resembled to Nasreddin Hodja³ (Kabacalı, 2007: 112) and is called "Nasreddin Hodja of our age" (Ertop, 1995: 35). This is because, as Hodja, Nesin suggests practical solutions for always current problems that people encounter every day in his works (Nesin, 2013b: 48-49) without causing alienation among the classes. Thus, it is not wrong to say that Nesin's humour is also a kind of utilitarian folk humour that can be reused whenever needed just like Nasreddin Hodja's.

In some periods, the need for utilitarian folk humour goes up, and then, the function of humour becomes more apparent (Nesin, 2013b: 90). People sometimes revolt against oppressive governments with arms in their hands, or they handle the oppressiveness of the government by the help of the humour. For instance, *Markopaşa* journal⁴ was a product of functional humour and a reaction mechanism for the poor society against the oppressive power following the Second World War (Nesin, 2013b: 93-95).

At the most productive years of his authorship, Turkey experienced several radical changes. Nesin witnessed military coups and many political as well as social changes. His period was a time that recalled humour since that time was a *fear period* where ordinary people, as well as writers and philosophers, were under great oppression, and where one could not easily find opportunity to go after his/her rights. As people felt the constraint, a kind of inner criticism aroused, and the need to express this anxiety made a broad repercussion in the works of many writers as in Nesin (Kabacalı, 2007: 113).

Fear is a sense people feel before the oppressive powers they have once tried to resist but later they dare not to take action. Ridiculing the oppressive powers, the oppressed people find strength to overcome their fear. As a result, a kind of relief appears that some statesmen allow such humour to prevent rebellions. Bülent Ecevit stated that Ottoman sultans provided a free zone as they were "clever enough to realize that if they tolerated the people's freedom of speech, the people, in turn, could suffer the regime's despotism more easily" (Ecevit, 1993: 159), which supports Hegel's idea that "freedom of speech is far less dangerous than silence imposed by force [...] [with which] men have to swallow everything, while if they are permitted to argue, they have an outlet as well as some satisfaction; and in this way, a thing may be pushed ahead more easily" (Popper, 1994: 672). However, the balance in the level of relief is of great importance not to

³ Nesin states that "Nasreddin Hodja is not a historical identity [but] a social identity [...] a period [or] the identity of the society" who "is the collective consciousness [and] reaction of the society, reflecting social pain and joy with humour"; thus his humour is social just like himself. (Nesin, 2010: 185)

⁴ First issue of *Marko Paşa* Journal was published in 25.11.1946. The journal ended in 1947 with its 23rd volumes. When it was banned, again, along with Sabahattin Ali, Aziz Nesin issued *Merhumpuşa* Journal in 26.05.1947 and it maintained for just four volumes. Following, in 08.09.1947, they published *Ali Baba* just for two volumes. (İnanç, 2011: 56-57) Tarık Dursun K. expresses that they bought the *Marko Paşa* Journals - which was published with other names many of which ending with Paşa such as "*Malûmpaş, Merhumpuş, Bizim Paşa, Yedi-Sekiz Paşa, Hür Markopaşa, Öküz Mehmet Paşa, Ali Baba, Geveze, Medet, Baştan, Yeni Baştan*" (Taş, 2017) - however they were not able to get a laugh because of the prohibition by İnönü as the 'National Chief, and Ahmet Demir as the General Director of Public Security "who did want them neither to be read nor to be laughed". (Kakinç, 1995: 33)

diminish the people's desire to struggle (Nesin, 2012b: 190-191). Thus, as the basic principle of humour, realism should be included in literary works because people tend to handle fear and oppression by acknowledging the current state; when one fits into the dominant powers, the fear disappears. Then, fear causes acceptance and acceptance brings blindness with it. To make people become aware of the blindness and realize the positive equivalents of them, Nesin handles the society in binary oppositions just like light/dark, blindness/seeing, deafness/hearing, etc... In this way, a society which "is not aware of the light and enlightenment as they live in dark," will be able to realize the circumstances they are exposed to (Yüksel, 1997: 34). Therefore, Nesin prefers to shelter laughter and activism in such a delicate equipoise that humorous activism will be able to prevent the burnout and blindness by "bringing balance, inspiration and sustainability to activism" (Branagan, 2007: 480).

Aziz Nesin as a Natural Socialist Writer

It was just the way it was; yet not the way it is going to be...

Aziz Nesin was always a strong opponent against the government and opportunist people, especially opportunist writers. With the declaration of the Republic, the artists were on the side of the government which seemed to be populist winning the independence war, because all progressivist artists collaborated with the government to a certain extent. However,

[...] as the government swerved from populism, as it retrogressed instead of making progress, these old litterateurs and artists who got used to make use of the benefits of the government, did not find it necessary to change their attitudes. [...] Whereas all of the positive, valuable, progressivist, and socialist writers, my contemporaries, took their sides against the government; this case was not because of the deficiency of the artists but because the government alienated from the society, moreover, deceiving the society, it was against them. (Nesin, 2016: 267)⁵.

Zehra İpşiroğlu suggests the above mentioned environment as undemocratic, and adds that in countries where neither liberal democratic environment - based on enlightened thought - nor the shadow of totalitarian government is dominant, there appears a twilight. Twilight creates such a chaos that dark can be seen as light or light can be seen as dark, which supplies writers wide frame to work on. Thus, "maybe, the most suitable environment for humour and satire to arise can be said to be the twilight which Nesin complained about" (İpşiroğlu, 1998: 102), and without any doubt, they are the circumstances under the twilight which transformed Mehmet Nusret into Aziz Nesin.

As the result of the deception and the conditions of twilight, two feelings shine out in Nesin: honor for his people and disappointment for the politicians setting back the social and economical improvement of Turkey (Kabacalı, 2007: 111), and for the bureaucrats who are to work for the benefit of people but become the source of the problem preventing the operation of the system (Sütçü, 2016: 518). This is because the state is besieged by "reactionariness, bigotry, fanaticism and fundamentalism. [...] [and] ministries are filled with them" (Yazın, 2014: 15). However, something must be done to improve the lives of the people. This concern triggered Nesin to direct people towards a more enlightened individualistic and social life enabling personal and social change and improvement (Nesin, 2012b: 188-189). It is a time when "those who are conscious are now responsible for those who are unaware;" (Griffin, 2015: 101), and, the conscious people, particularly the intelligentsia, ought to have two characteristics: responsibility and debt to the society and the whole world. To discharge this responsibility and pay this debt, he/she has to

⁵ He adds that it was not quite possible for him and his contemporaries to find place with their works in the school books, television or radio programmes and theatres unlike the ones who supported the government all the time, and while their books were published by the government, the works of Nesin and his contemporary progressivist and socialist writers were recalled and banned by the government (Nesin, 2016: 267).

protect his/her culture, freedom, honor, value judgment and his/her awareness (Nesin, 2013b: 8-12).

Nesin had two chief aims in his struggle for his responsibilities; to narrate the social conditions and social topography of Turkish society; to call for a change with his motto: "it was just the way it was [...] yet not the way it is going to be" (Nesin, 2016: 271-272). The responsibility he felt was one of the underlying reasons for his becoming a socialist:

My socialism is an indispensable struggle of paying a debt; the debt to my mother, to Uncle Galip, to Rıfıkı Bey, to all of the people I received help. I owe the society for every cell of my material and spiritual being (Nesin, 2016: 500).

The mainstays of his social fight are the values of socialism and pluralist democracy to protect the rights of the minorities, which guarantees different perspectives, opinions, language and religion (Ertop, 1995: 35). The seeds of socialism appear in him and many other intelligentsias as a sentimental impact throughout social struggle (Nesin, 2012b: 186-189). Concerning this, Nesin explains his being leftist as following:

[For me and alike] there exist two ways: Either to change class, move up to an upper class, compromise with and be satisfied by the benefits of the upper class; or to become a socialist and fight for the people behind him not to suffer from what he suffered. That is the reason why I became a socialist, a leftist" (Nesin, 2013b: 152).

His suffering directed him to be a natural socialist. With a poor family background, he reacted against injustice and the dominance of minority in a society. He evaluated all the things in terms of their utility for the society. However, he did not have the chance of reading on socialism as there was scarcity of books on it and had no time to read such books as he had to work hard to look after his family. He could only have the chance to read theoretical books while he was in prison in which he became a socialist consciously. He always fought against capitalism which works much closer to human nature as it offers gimcrack trickeries but behind hides exploitation and imperialism - which is the God of era - however when capitalism is managed, he expresses, then the people will appreciate the value of socialism. Besides, socialism can never be wiped off the face of the earth as long as exploitation prevails throughout the world (Kabacalı, 2007: 83-87).

Once a writer is socialist, s/he deals with any subject from socialist perspective; thus, it will be more probable to reveal a socialist work which proves that as theatre, just like all forms of art, is determined by class. As a natural socialist, Nesin composed literary works from a socialist's perspective and dealt with the problems he observed in Turkey (Nesin, 2011a: 187), and expressed that various separate problems - education, relationships, communication etc - are sub-problems of the social structure; therefore, the struggle to improve a single problem for the benefit of the society is not totally in vain; however, it is not quite possible to alter a single issue without attempting to the biggest one (Bahçekapı, 1982: 20-21). The solution is that the productive powers ought to take the control from exploiter powers and proper democracy should be attained. Without privileges, all people should have to benefit from material and spiritual wealth and national presence because social, political and cultural improvement can only be achieved by financial independence. It is only then people can be restored to a condition of economic and cultural level, which enables them to attend the management (Nesin, 2013b: 15, 59, 115). Moreover, in this way, the core of the democracy will be ensured, which means that each people is to attain from the "richness - poverty, positiveness - negativeness, advantages - disadvantages, receivables - payables, benefactions - burdens, beauties - uglinesses, in short wealth and scarcity" of a country in a socially equal way to the extent they work and deserve (Nesin, 2013c: 84-96). Moreover, for the continuity of the healing in the structure, the process should be supported with the "popular or critical education" both of which "aim for grassroots change of individuals and communities [...] [and] seek to influence change both in behavior and consciousness to create deep-seated 'emancipatory' learning" (Branagan, 2007: 473).

With his naturally shaped socialism directed Nesin to contribute positively to the people with his works, especially plays. To manage a long lasting influence and succeed a positive change impulse, he shaped his theatre with revolutionary core.

Nesin's Revolutionist Theatre Notion

Revolution, lexically, has two meanings: "a complete or drastic change of any kind" and "the overthrow of one form of government or social system and the setting up of another" (Zeigler, 1973: 1). Nesin's idea of revolution is parallel with these two definitions; to get rid of the system which only protects the rights and welfare of the ruling class in power; and to prevent exploitation by socialism the rules of which can be updated according to the requirements of the age and the state of the country. For Turkey, and alike countries, revolutionist art is socialist art (Nesin, 2013b: 61-63).

As mentioned before, social improvement is the transformation of social structure. As a superstructure institution, literature has to contribute to this transformation by infusing people with the desire to change their own, their surrounding, nature, the system and social structure. In order literature to contribute this, it has to be progressive and revolutionist. This kind of literature facilitates the awareness of individuals via action-reaction function; thus, triggers people's drive for societal transformation (Nesin, 2013b: 61-63).

Nesin has the ability to reach the masses with his words, works and especially with theatre by which he intends to enhance the audience in a positive way to trigger the stimulation to change. With the mentioned intension, he points at revolutionary literature and primarily revolutionary theatre.

Revolutionary theatre, as Robert Leach utters, is an "effective theatre" which "can only be true to itself when it is yoked to a purpose" (Leach, 1994: xiv). In that vein, Leroi Jones highlights the basic principles of revolutionary theatre: it should "force change"; it has to "expose" the hidden or unseen reality; it has to "stagger through our universe correcting, insulting, preaching, spitting craziness"; it is to "accuse and attack anything that can be accused and attacked" because "it is the theatre of victims" which can make the victims or sufferers see their circumstances and realize the "strength in their minds and their bodies", and become aware of their potentials and power to stop the irregular operation of the system; it must "give [...] reality" and include "propaganda for the beauty of the Human Mind"; its language must be "anybody's" language but "tightened by the poet's backbone" to be easily understood by anyone in the society; it is "shaped by the world, and moves to reshape the world"; it should "show victims so that their brothers in the audience will be better able to understand that they are brothers of victims, and that they themselves are victims", which will make the audience take action (Jones, 1965: 4-6).

Nesin's revolutionist theatre perception is identical to Leach's and Jones's approaches. He lays the emphasis on the importance of the controversy in a revolution: "every revolution is to be against something, has to oppose something in order to gain strength, and maintain its strength. [...] If it objects to something weak, then it gets weak" (Nesin, 2016: 294). Nesin's is in controversy with the government, the system, the exploitive powers and the extreme impassivity and recklessness of the exploited society. Thus, he struggles to encourage another system that works for the welfare and benefit of the society with his revolutionary theatre which has a purpose to react against oppression, tyranny and despotism and transform the society and reform it. This will be possible by teaching class consciousness - by its very nature, touching on socialism and Marxist roots and goals - to the exploited societies and classes (Nesin, 2011b: 179).

In order a work to be revolutionist, the writer must be revolutionist first because socialist art does not stem from the subject matters the artists prefer to narrate; rather, every subject matter might be socialist but it depends on the attitude and perception of the writer towards that subject matter. Regardless of their nationality, a writer should create his/her work for propaganda to motive

or direct individuals to the change towards the better; it is only then, art becomes revolutionist. Otherwise, it stands up for bigotry. Therefore, an art work is, meanwhile, a tool of propaganda. Thus, an artist, if feels himself responsible himself for his/her society – s/he is supposed to – then s/he has to benefit the art's revolutionary power (Nesin, 2013b: 126-128).

Conclusion

Aziz Nesin experienced and observed the harsh conditions in Turkey from birth till his death. He monitored the people from all strata; and saw the unjust, unequal treatment towards especially working class and their life struggles; besides the ruling class society and the conditions they enjoy; in other words, he had the chance to observe the circumstances of the exploiting and exploited classes. Hence, he wrote plays with revolutionary core to cause an awakening in audience about the conditions they have right to possess. In this way, people are triggered for struggling change the social system that neglects them. To enable this, Aziz Nesin employs his satirical humorous language as the weapon of unarmed people and as a tool for his revolutionist theatre notion. His revolutionist theatre urges the reader and the audience to strive for the democracy, improvement in all spheres of life and betterment of people's lives. At the target of it, there exist exploitive powers, capitalism and recklessness of people in questioning the system and asking for what they really deserve. Through his revolutionist idea of theatre, he aims to kill the blindness of the society and raise awareness in them. He advises a real democracy as a solution to the ills in the society, because it has the power to guarantee that everybody benefits from the richness or poverty, advantageous or disadvantageous circumstances and beauties or ugliness in an equal way to the extent they work or deserve. This will also bring about social, political, cultural and economic improvement. Moreover, this form of theatre is the part of a continuous transformation process to trigger people to ask for better conditions without privileges. In short, Nesin's revolutionist theatre is an effective utilitarian folk theatre and shelters positive propaganda bearing socialist purposes, the primary of which is to create a classless society based on equal rights, income and dignity.

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