



ART IN STREET: THE SIGNIFICANT ROLE OF USING THE ART, LITERATURE AND HUMOR IN THE GEZI RESISTANCE

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In 2013 summer, Turkey experienced the most crowded and powerful resistance movement in almost all provinces which is generally named 'Gezi Resistance'. During this resistance, the collective language and the soul of the Gezi that were constructed by the resisters made themselves apparent from the beginning and put the distinctness from the other resistance experiences. The question "what was special in Gezi, what made it distinct from the other" has been frequently discussed. The aim of this paper is to emphasize an important dimension of this question's answer: the significant role of the usage of art, literature and humor in the resistance days. During the resistance, so many famous poets' verses were written to everywhere; many exhibitions were held; hundreds of songs were composed; many illustrations, graffiti, cartoons, paintings, sculptures were created. These artistic interventions have three main consequences. First, the Gezi resistance showed that the role of the art, literature and humor is effective to take the consent of the people in order to construct the counter-hegemony, especially in a time of resistance. Second, reproductions of artistic creations and their circulations especially in social media help to keep the consciousness alive. Moreover, finally, it ensures questioning of the legitimacy of the government efficiently.

Keywords: Gezi resistance, Hegemony, Art, Humor.

Introduction

The Gezi Park protests¹ which outcropped in June 2013 led the public opposition rapidly to go out in all over the country and turned into the anti-government demonstrations. The aggregation of eleventh years' anti-democratic policies of the Justice and Development Party (JDP) government is concluded a massive hitting the streets by citizens². However, this hitting was a peculiar hitting in Turkish history. Even hundreds of rebellion, resistances, fabric occupations, and struggles have occurred in the process of becoming a nation-state of Turkey until now, Gezi resistance shadowed forth from the beginning that we are witnessing to a different kind of struggle. In fact, protesters, who were tried to make themselves

¹The descriptions like "Gezi," "Gezi Resistance," "Gezi Protests," "Gezi rebellion" will be usually used to represent the protest done in whole Turkey; not just in Taksim Square, Istanbul. Gezi Park was symbol of the protests, like Tahrir, but it does not mean that the other parts of Turkey did not experience the same things. On the contrary, they contributed into resistance as much as Istanbul did.

² According to Ministry of Internal Affairs, protests were made in 79 provinces out of 81 with the contribution of 2,5 million citizens (Radikal, 2013), whereas these numbers were more according to Police Department, 80 provinces out of 81 with 3,6 million citizens' contribution (Şardan, 2013). If we consider that both of them are official numbers, we can easily guess that the real number was much more than these.

visible in the public sphere by occupying some public areas, were trying to give an answer to the concept of ‘nation’ which is usually referred by Erdogan. Moreover, the language of the resistance which is created by protesters threw the government into grave legitimacy crisis by not undertaking the discriminative and full of violence language of the government. Adoption of the word “çapulcu”(means looter, which is used by Erdogan to humiliate protesters) by the protesters rapidly, closeness of the different ideas which remain distant in the normal political climate and translation of the every maneuver of the government immediately to the language of humor cut the communication channels of the government.

How could the social movements starting point and evolution of which cannot be estimated create a peculiar and massively embraced language and character? Undoubtedly, in every social movement that developed a peculiar language, art and humor³ have serious impacts. Especially libertarian ambiance which has been on the rise since after Paris 68 and combination of art and resistance paved the way of the usage of art in anti-neoliberal protests. Before G-8, IMF, World Bank meetings, in Occupy movements, in indignations after the South Europe countries’ economic crisis and Arabic countries’ riots, every kind of artistic production were created and performed. According to Jacqueline Adams, the usage of art in a protest provides four main contributions to protest: it frames the protest, mobilizes the resources, provides communication between protesters and creates the symbol of protest(Adams, 2002). By similar attention but from the opposite perspective, Marjolein’ T. Hart investigates the effects of humor in a social movement and concludes that in order to survive a humor in a social movement, we need three main factors: the frame of the movement should be constructed; the movement should have a collective character and have a sentimental dimension(Hart, 2007). In a protest, we witness many locally useful art productions as well as universal artworks. Especially in the fields whose receptions are based on locality and collectiveness like humor and literature, cultural codes become very crucial. One more peculiarity of the Gezi resistance comes from the distinctness of the historical accumulations and cultural formats from the Europe and America’s protests and resistances, even they are in line of descents with Gezi in some aspects. The mother lode of this peculiarity consisted of by art, literature and humor which can exist only by idiosyncratic codes of the literature/ culture and were used very effectively during the resistance. The aim of this article is to discuss the capability of art and humor in orientation and enlargement of a resistance, focusing on Gezi case. After looking at the process of relationship between art and politics, we will mention briefly to Bakhtin’s concept of ‘carnival’. Then we will investigate the usage of art and humor in new social movements in terms of Scholl and discuss all of them by the outcomes of Gezi.

Notes on Relationship of Art and Politics

The troubled and intensive relations of art and capitalism seem the main problem of the discussions over modern art which is compressed to space and time and exposed to great censorship. Primarily the reality and intimacy of the politic art at this age(Holmes, 2003), and later the capability of changing something by politic art(Emmelhainz, 2013) allow us to rethink on the politics of biennials/ politics in biennials which can be described as ‘showrooms’ of the modern art⁴. The efforts of state to give up from the

³ In this article, the term “art” will cover the verses on street walls, literature workshops and all literary works that are written during the resistance.

⁴ Biennials’ relationships with consumption culture in a globalized world and injury of autonomous art due to the extreme close contact between art and companies have been exceedingly discussed(Wu, 2002; Stallabross, 2004; Yardımcı, 2005). Coinciding with just after Gezi resistance, 13th Istanbul Biennial was opened by the title, “Anne Ben Barbar Mıyım?” (Mom, am I Barbarian?), and by “urban – public space” major axis. However, especially art that existed in resistance discussed more than the Biennial and kept it in the background. According to South African artist Kendel Geers, who came to Istanbul for Biennial, people made the biggest Biennial by protecting their public spheres and urban actively, and for this reason the Biennial should have been cancelled (Geers, 2013). Ali Artun also wrote that, on the one hand, the Biennial and its curator Fulya Erdemci denounced artists who protested the relationship between urban renewal policies and companies before Gezi, as ‘terrorist,’ on the other hand after

economic sphere by the neoliberal politics start to conclude to a transformation on the financing of art from the state to the private sector. As Yardımcı cited from Feyyaz Yaman, the director of Karşı Art Gallery: “If there is a central force which organizes the Biennial, if the usage of the resources and especially the money is arranged by this force, if organizations of exhibitions were organized collusively by curators and people chosen by curators, then behind this democracy platform image there is a very mediated power.”(Yardımcı, 2005, p. 135). The clashing point of art and society is also starting to be a clash with companies in the same time which limits the autonomy of art and consequently its political capability⁵. According to Virno post-Fordizm, which is the mode of production in these times, is based on gathering the language experience and communication as surplus. Intelligence and production of collaboration take the place of basic production paradigms. Continuity of exploitation is related to the development of this intelligence and collaboration, means a great many of autonomy to people(Lavaert & Gielen, 2009). Thus, spatial and financial partnership of art and companies indirectly becomes an obligation for sustaining the system. The money invested in biennials, cinemas, theatres, art students, panels, symposiums, academic studies need to be converted to brilliant ideas which will pave the way of brilliant, assessable, expendable goods. There is not any chance of post-Fordist economy to reproduce itself unless it produces surplus from these potentials. Thus, artistic (and all cultural) productions are so crucial in this reproduction.

In fact, the close relation of art and capital is immemorial. Art has two dimensions as everything in the capital age; it is both an activity and a commodity (Negri, 2011, p. 109). Especially since the 17th century art objects have been both a commodity and medium of exchange⁶. However starting from the first quarter of 20th century, art objects have needed public representations and publicity in order to exist. Before that art objects had mostly been produced, admired and commercially changed hands by a small elite, so art objects had existed out of public. After the rapid urbanization process due to development of industry forced people from different classes and origins to come into contact and this contact broke the elite hegemony over mainstream art production and strengthened the links between art and politics, even though art objects maintained their real estate feature⁷. Especially by technological improvements in mass communication, art objects began to lose their aura(Benjamin, 2007). People started to bring them (or their reproductions) to their residences or go to a particular collective place (like cinema-theatre hall, gallery, biennial...etc.) instead of the place of the original work. While Benjamin talks about possibility of constructing a counter-hegemony inside capitalist system via art, some thinkers who take sides with high art like Adorno point to the danger of ‘becoming commoners’ of art. According to this idea the only thing to sustain is the “ideal man” features in front of rapid changing and transformation of the production process should be the autonomous art, means high art(Zeytinoğlu, 2014). Since the popularization of art

Gezi they announced their support to existed creativity and public forms in Gezi; which were totally hypocrisy (Artun, 2013). Since life prioritized the Biennial art, so the 13. Istanbul Biennial came to naught.

⁵Kreft tells of that the relationship between art and politics has been discussing in two primary levels. First approach is developed over Plato’s effort to hold art off the ideal state, and it stresses the voltage between art and politics and second approach is constructed on the autonomy of art, thinks that art should have an edge with all politics. Thus “it became impossible to express the idea that the principal measurement of art should be the welfare of the public because this kind of assertion would pave the way of leaping to the spheres of art, philosophy or aesthetic, and people would attribute you some adjectives like uncivilized or authoritarian.”(Kreft, 2011).

⁶ For the process of rise of Dutch commercial capital and correspondingly the capitalization of art in the 17th century, see (North, 1997).

⁷ According to Kreft, three models can be asserted for the modernity’s art-politics relations. These models appear as an art regime, related with political regimes of that period. First of them is the critic role of art that played in the process of unionization during nation-building. Second period can be described as autonomy of art, in which art tried to disconnect with real politics and art foundations wanted to create their rules. Finally, there occurred the avant-garde regime. Avant-garde art blamed modern art and aesthetic politics as being detached from life and offered to “return to life again”. However, avant-garde stressed politics more than art. “Avant-garde obsessed itself about shattering the institutionalized art and revolutionizing the life.” (Kreft, 2011, p. 37). This feature helps us to recognize how today’s social movement’s artistic interventions be nourished from avant-garde.

harms the 'ideal man' of high art and has the potential to use the masses politically, it is not so supported by these thinkers.

“Since the high-art proceeds as an ideal for human and is seen as a subject which resists to insisting of hegemony to the autonomous individual, it was ignoring the possibility of involving the infrastructure to its practice actively. High-art was both constructing the counter-hegemony targeting the government-hegemony and by a great contradiction, putting itself to an upper-ideology's subject, disconnected from the infrastructure; so a possible connection between the changes in infrastructure and superstructure was gotten out of hand.”(Zeytinoğlu, 2014, p. 2)

It can be asserted that the easiness of reaching the masses via reproduction of art strengths two tendencies in terms of the contiguity between art and politics. First of those is (as also high-art's significant concern) the instrumentalist usage of art in the political propaganda. Especially in the times of totalitarian regimes (initially Nazis Germany and Stalin period of Soviets) choosing the art objects by the hand of the state and popularizing them via communication channels can be read as efforts to sustain the continuation of the created regime and its legitimacy. However, people who were using the art as an instrumentalist way over their political arguments were not only totalitarian politician. American Abstract Expressionism *ecole* which was pumped to all over the world as pure and libertarian in 1950s was in the same propaganda base while placing the art to non-figurative and apolitical sphere. It is shown up that the abstract expressionism *ecole*'s art objects' market values were burned up speculatively and financed by CIA in 1970s (Clark, 1997) which stress that any usage of art by hegemony blocks aims to control the public sphere in a way. The second tendency is the strengthening an understanding of art which develops by individually or socially political activism and as directly targeting the basis of the system and creating (at least trying) alternatives. Only this understanding paves the way of breaking the established culture and perception order and only then becomes a real art with gaining its creativity feature (Marcuse, 1972; Emmelhainz, 2013). Theoretically following in Benjamin's wake about the possibility of constructing a counter-hegemony, Brecht's interventions for wakening and involving the audiences critically, Dadaism, Paris 68 movement's posters and especially the Situationist Internationals, in short all components of avant-garde art gave very harsh response to all controlling powers. According to Virno, even it has no any political content, any art objects which critics the existence conditions and tries to find new forms construct a lodestar formation for politics to go out from its mangle, and for this reason the question that how the society and power be shaped can be directly addressed to them (Lavaert & Gielen, 2009).

New Social Movements and Carnival

New social movement's collective structure which involves different cultures and classes and keeps violence at arm's length ultimately articulated a multilingualism and fun to movements. While making sense of these collectivity's constituent elements, means collective language and being politically disrupted, the first concept that social scientists usually agree on is 'carnival.' After the translation of Bakhtin's path-breaking work *Rabelais and His World* into English in 1968, carnivals started to be read systematically in social and political contexts. While Bakhtin investigates the codes and their meanings of medieval carnivals, he treats the transformation of power relations, grotesqueness of body and maelstrom of laugh during the carnival. Carnival is just like a second world; it creates an unmediated world which is free of power relations: “One might say that it [laughter] builds its own world versus the official world, its own church versus the official church, its own state versus the official state.”(Bakhtin, 1984, p. 88). Hence it does not have to undertake the other world's (real world, world of power) codes. Carnival, which does not only remain at bay with moral, religious or political pressure but also act to show their absurdity and criticize harshly, also transforms the body itself as a component of this acting. Built as “(...) a second world and a second life outside officialdom” (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 6), carnival has some common features. First, the laugh of carnival is not an individual but a collective action, and for this reason, secondly, it is universal; it involves everybody who is inside or outside of carnival. Third, this laugh is shadowy and

two-dimensional: it both recreates and vilifies itself (Bakhtin, 1984, pp. 11-12). In this context according to Bakhtin carnival is an appearing of enthusiasm and festival (Grindon, 2004, p. 149).

Carnival is the coexistence place of grotesque images. While grotesque images and grotesquery of body start to appear as incomplete, deficient, abnormal (and hence caricaturist and ridiculous), they are not just seen as a liberty against the power which represents the orderly, regular and serious flow of life, but in the same time, even limited by time and space, they amplify an experience sphere and envisage a new fantasy for the future (Tylor, 1995; McKay, 1996). Grotesque images contribute to capacity of this alternative imagination by three manners. First of all, grotesque images become an alternative to religious images. Second, due to the fact that grotesque bodies are incomplete and in motion, they have to take a position just in front of stability of the state and its official institutions. Every kind of hierarchical power systems have to read the stability of the order as an existence problematic and for this reason the social touches and changes are always trying to be controlled by system. However grotesquery of body is out of control, always in the process of being and destruction of itself, it always changes itself and creates alternative positions for future. Finally, grotesque images have a transformative power of fear, which is promoted by official imaginary (Tylor, 1995, p. 21).

This point is one of the most important points of carnival conceptualization which is called in understanding the new social movements. By reproducing the grotesque images, these protests might be putting the system in a legitimacy crisis and existing a forward-looking envisagement for common life. In the equalizer and emancipator place of carnival, indubitable, one of the main roles in abolishing the fearful force of power is humor, but carnival is not the place that is created only humor. In the same time, since the grotesque situation and grotesquery body represents some disengagement from any power forms, it does not attack only to the moral, but the whole spheres that are controlled by sovereigns. In a time of carnival, art which is improved out of public and has to replace itself due to the commercial conditions is stolen from the sovereigns and articulated to liberated (produced without any moral or commercial rule) art. Hence, any artistic production exists itself in this liberated space and contributes to it. Moreover, in carnival there is not any obligation to create a humoristic art object. Artistic photographs, theatre and dance performances, installations, which commemorate people who were killed or injured by police violence and try to keep the memory of resistance, should also be seen in the creative capacity of resistance.

So, how can we read the new social movements in terms of concept of carnival? Keeping together of opposed images is seen in every carnival, because carnival always constructs an anti-power front while resisting to all pressures coming from ruler ship. Many symbols of Gezi show the togetherness of figures that never come side by side in daily life (for example, running of two people hand in hand from the police violence with PDP, Peace and Democracy Party, which is the party of Kurdish political movement, and Turkish flags or uniting the opponent football teams of Istanbul's fans under "Istanbul United" etc.). These images are absurd, grotesque for the real world; however, they are totally normal for an individual who is inside of carnival. Carnival world is a world of equity; nobody can exclude others due to his or her political, moral or religious placement. If it occurs, then we could not say that they are inside the carnival world.

One more important point is that in carnival, power and its relation is exposed and weakened without a power grab. The Gezi Commune, which is established in Gezi Park, was not targeting to take the power but promoting the abolishment of any hierarchy and power relations discovering the horizontal style of life and administration by grounding on solidarity. So, by the Commune, this way of life was experienced and proposed to the government and all power relations. This point also shows a part of the difference from the traditional left struggle: constructing a new living space without toppling collapsing the power.

Language of Resistance and Using Art in Resistance

In his interesting article named "Bakunin's Poor Cousins: Engaging Art for Tactical Interventions" Christian Scholl divides the forms of usage of art in social movements into two: disruption and

confrontation (Scholl, 2010, p. 158). Although many movements use both of them while existing themselves, this categorical separation helps us to understand the artistic interventions. In his investigation Scholl asserts that there are four important premises of disruption: “the temporality of a rupture, the importance of participatory self-production, the orientation toward confusion and subversion and, finally, the will to provide an exemplary gesture.” (Scholl, 2010, p. 159). In fact, it is possible to find all the epistemological premises of disruption in the anarchist thesis of Hakim Bey (Peter Lamborn Wilson), which are theorized as “Temporary Autonomous Zones”. According to Hakim Bey, the network of intelligence which are constructed by sea-rovers and corsairs of the 18th century connected the conquered lands and islands and established a ‘state’ whose lands are spatially far away from each other (Bey, 1991, p. 97). When we think today’s technological level of development, temporal zones and formations which will organize in different places and inflict a heavy blow to the system in unexpected time can be created by the help of internet. Bey speaks of a temporariness created without facing with state, a movement which is faster and suddenly powerful than the state; however rapidly disentangled and normalized when state intervenes in:

“Absolutely nothing but a futile martyrdom could possibly result now from a head- on collision with the terminal State, the mega corporate information State, the empire of Spectacle and Simulation. Its guns are all pointed at us, while our meager weaponry finds nothing to aim at but a hysteresis, a rigid vacuity, a Spook capable of smothering every spark in an ectoplasm of information, a society of capitulation ruled by the image of the Cop and the absorbent eye of the TV screen.” (Bey, 1991, pp. 100-101).

Accepting these kinds of temporary zones itself as “peak experience” Bey claims that the revolution will become a state to the degree that it stabilizes, so what will make a difference are just the rebellions (Bey, 1991, p. 100). However since disruption theoretically accepts the invincibility of system (Scholl, 2010), it has a contradiction with its practice. On the one hand it is asserted that the possibility of liberty zones hinges upon if and only if the constructions of autonomous zones affirming the rebellion and experience, on the other hand, it is highly known that this kind of experiences’ limits will not pave the way of radical change but an intra systemic- social democratic change⁸.

Artistic interventions which are named as confrontation by Scholl, target to damage the public symbols and properties and reverse the situation. Scholl explains this category by giving the “Reclaim the Streets” movement’s street party done in 1996 as an example. A huge puppet attracts attentions of people while it is circulating between protesters and after the group disbanded it is seen that the road of the street had been dug through a line and sunflowers had been planted. According to Scholl, confrontation also has four epistemological premises: “the negation of representation, instrumental reckoning, an antagonistic conception of the world and, finally, the pedagogical dialectics” (Scholl, 2010, p. 167). Artistic interventions’ confrontation part mostly focuses on revealing the weakness, inability and anti-legitimacy of the target of protest more than being a massive movement. By this way, it calculates how many people’s minds are converted. Thus, these interventions which excessively include civil disobedience and creativity in itself close to the consequences of disruption by having an aim to mold public opinion, because artistic interventions in the new social movements strive to display the power and its relations, not to grab the power. Scholl also tacitly accepts this contradictory situation and concludes that “This, the only consequential continuation of confrontational art interventions is a revolution.” (Scholl, 2010, p. 174).

When we think art with its production possibilities and places, we can see that production forms of art and meanings of art as a production change in the time of protests and resistances. Reading from Negrian perspective, art is transforming collaterally with labor transformations. “The fact that art is completely immersed in the world of the commodity (...), since labor is also immersed in it, and it cannot be otherwise.” (Negri, 2011, p. xi). Well, couldn’t be there any artistic value of productions created in this commodity world? According to Negri, even under the despotism there is an art stood erect as a

⁸ For more detailed analysis about Hakim Bey, see (Greer, 2013).

monument and this art keeps resistance, liberty, love and hope (Negri, 2011, p. 51). Then new social movements, which create an oasis even to some extent, in spirit an art produced by collective labor insofar as possible to embody the resistance, liberty, love and hope:

“Today, in our existence, the fact of creating has nothing to do with nature anymore; and, if we abandon our habitual ways of thinking, we have to recognize that it is not even a sublimation any more. Creating is, rather, a hugeness, an excedence, something which unleashes a surplus of productivity. Now, precisely at a time when labour power is cognitive, the desire for artistic expression presents itself in all places; when the mass of workers transforms itself into a multitude of singular workers, the artistic act invests the forms of life, and these forms of life become the flesh of the world.” (Negri, 2011, pp. 113-114).

In the same time this is a language and has a function to construct what Virno conceptualizes as ‘general intellect’ or ‘comune’ as basing upon multitude and reproduce it:

“If language is the key to creating surplus value, it becomes our mission to free our linguistic competence of this role of production power by turning it into the foundation of another public sphere. It is important to cast that which is presently ‘production power’ in the role of ‘foundation of a new politics’. Realizing a ‘general intellect’ is, I repeat, using language that way and transforming it into ‘general intellect’. The key words are ‘to transform’ or ‘to translate’ from a key role in post-Fordist production into a pivot of a political, non-state constitution.” (Lavaert & Gielen, 2009)⁹.

Naturally, one of the most effective ways of transforming language is humor. Humor makes it dominant and acts a play in any crash in power language and form by grotesquery of body. However, Negri neglects the illumination capacity and effect in weakening of ruler ship of laugh:

“(...) and laugh, while it remains a precious ally in life, is not, for all that, a key of knowledge. Laughter is no longer an instrument which makes it possible to discover, through new, fantastic figures, a new ontological reality – the nature of the latter is too difficult, problematic and ferocious.” (Negri, 2011, pp. 59-60).

In this point, Negri’s perspective is falsified by new social movements and protests themselves. Either named as disruption or confrontation, most of the artistic interventions are finally based on a metamorphosis: a parody of the real. It is asserted that laugh could not be able to discover a new ontological reality, because today discovering a cruel ontological reality is all but impossible. If the transformations in daily life that are always tried to be explained by different conceptualizations provide people, who feel the exploitation mechanism on their bodies somehow, to come together and struggle, this ‘togetherness’ language also enables to sustain and enlarge the solidarity of people. In other words, language does not pursue the materials that will discover a totally new ontological reality, but investigates possibilities of combinations of art, literature and humor which will lead people to participate. Moreover, for the very point, by using all development of technology, laugh shows up itself with informing and captivating capacity. Graffiti, comic clothes, an incredible amount of cartoons, Caps, videos, parodies are mostly seen as correct information source better than mainstream media during resistances.

Art in Street: Case of Gezi Resistance

While the ‘disproportionate intelligence’ (referring to disproportionate violence used by police) used in Gezi resistance boomed the artistic and humoristic production, it also articulated Gezi to the other anti-

⁹ This part of the interview is abridged and not published in the magazine OPEN #17 and the link given for accessing the complete version is, unfortunately, broken. Check the link for complete text of the interview from https://docs.google.com/document/d/1eM20vIaFVdnZMHngNHF14Q1y4pXBcUdECEVqlbXpznY/edit?hl=en_US

globalization movements somehow. Typical characteristic of anti-globalization movements is creation of a carnivalesque situation by combining protests with art to raise awareness and sustain legitimacy¹⁰. Using intensive humor and art against intensive tear gas and pressurized water used by police is widely acclaimed.

Let's start with humor which existed from the first day and made the resistance sympathetic. According to Sorensen humor contains three basic features in non-violence movements: it facilitates to mobilize the outsiders, constructs the culture of resistance and reverses the oppression (Sorensen, 2008, p. 175). In the case of Gezi, we can easily say that these three features are verified. Humor became the most inclusive tool by the giant usage of internet during the resistance. While graffiti, Caps, cartoons were forcing the limits of creativity (Figure 1), it also enables to create a pluralist spheres, as one of street writing explains very well: "direniřçokgüzel, gelsene!" (very good resistance, come in!).

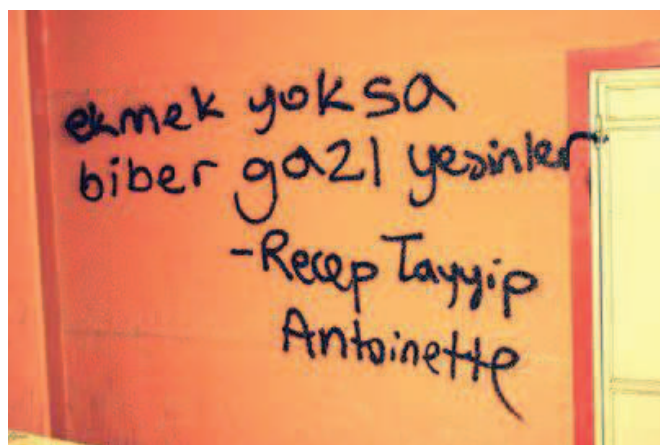


Figure 1. "if there is no bread, let them eat pepper gas."

No doubt, the most shared humoristic productions were the street writings. In fact, it is possible to mention street writings' pre-resistance roots. Besides the powerful humor magazine tradition in Turkey, recent popular humoristic websites like ekşisözlük, Zaytung have been also highly affecting especially the young generation (which is commonly discussed as 'Y' generation). Whole accumulated by young generation was directly canalized to their first grand rebellion and changed the gray tone of the public sphere. From government policies and police violence to compulsory military duty, from classic slogans of the left to media everybody had their share. For this reason, street walls should be read both as a criticism and self-criticism. Although being in the opposite side of government made many different parties, political organizations and protesters, in general, familiar with each other, we should assert that possibility of this togetherness should be linked to capacity of self-criticism and humor of Gezi soul. Thus, besides the demand of liberation for future, a hic et nunc liberated sphere was able to be created.

One more point that should be mentioned about humor of Gezi is cartoons and Caps' that are very efficiently used to keep the resistance alive (Figure 2). Humor mostly shared on the internet made a major contribution in sustaining the resistance in peace and realm of freedom. The carnivalesque atmosphere of Gezi and grotesquery bodies disallowed to any types of hierarchy while collapsing the relations of

¹⁰ Of course, there are many differences between today's protests and medieval carnivals as Bakhtin investigated. According to Bogad, contrary to medieval carnivals which were limited and remained loyal to religious schedule, today's protests have more political tone. The relationship that consisted with space and the concept of occupation could not be also seen in medieval carnivals. For these reasons, Bogad conceptualizes today's carnivalesque as 'tactical carnival' (Bogad, 2006). As for St John, today's protests can be conceptualized as 'protestival' (St John, 2008).

hegemonic power. As Avcı's felicitous determination, "What become prominent in Gezi is as Bakhtin and Freud conceptualized, the form of humorous laugh in which individuality achieved mental superiority against fear"(Avcı, 2013). The exceeded fear was not just related with government and its policies. As one of a shop owner wrote to shop window ("Direnmeyegittim, döneceğim" – I have gone to resist, coming soon) and summarized very well, fear of husband at home, neighbor in the neighborhood, professor in the university, chief in office, boss in factory were all overcome during the resistance.



Figure 2. A Caps, which was commonly shared during resistance.

We do not want to assert that Gezi resistance's humor did not have any problem. On the contrary we witnessed many sexist, discriminative expressions. However, we should note that social movements are not created on a desk; everybody shares their sensibilities and experiences. The problematic writings, Caps, cartoons, videos, and of course acts, swears, were mostly ceased and corrected again by protesters in Gezi:

"(...) aggrandizing humor and intelligence without violating 'gentle man likeness' should not raise a young narcissism, a townsman elitism. Do we want to reproduce cultural racism known by some phrases like "belly-scratching man", "jerry-can head", etc. over a contrario by "polyglot scholars"? However, be careful... The will that endea vours to detain people who swear and incline to ugliness and erase these kinds of street writings was always dominant."(Bora, 2013, p. 22).

As Bora pointed out, there was a possibility to be inclined to "a young narcissism, a townsman elitism" over humor. However, it should be reminded that Gezi Resistance mainly consisted of working class¹¹ whose people came from the different group of age and have so many different identities. Moreover, the carnivalesque situation and grotesquery of body itself promote the direction lessness. Hence, thinking about the sudden disappearance of cultural racism and patriarchal-sexist discourses that integrated to daily life in carnivalesque situation was only a dream. For this reason, essentially while we

¹¹ Here, the term 'working class' is used to describe the people who have to sell their labor to survive, not specifically for the 'blue-collar' workers.

praise the intelligence of protesters and the well-created language, we should also appreciate their will of protecting of this language and purging it from all ugliness. These kinds of efforts, which construct a relationality and consciousness between protesters, were very effective in converting Gezi Resistance to a liberation space.

The artistic productions in Gezi were also multifarious and effective. Many videos, documentaries, exhibitions, artistic performances, concerts were created collectively. Here, the emphasis over 'collective' is important, because we can assert that one of the main features of Gezi was to enable the anonymous and collectively produced art against the artists who endeavor to come into prominence. Almost nobody signed under the street writings and graffiti. Many photographers shared their works (even fictional ones) via internet and illustrators and cartoonists held street exhibitions. Countless of concert were organized in Gezi Park and all the other protest spaces of Turkey. Minimum 372 songs were composed about Gezi until now¹². Memorizing and singalong of these compositions by masses can be described as 'materialization of collectiveness.' Besides the motivation dimension in the times of resistance, as remembering Goldman, music also carries out a paramount function: the aliveness of carnival and dancing.

Verses that were written on walls deserve a particular paragraph. In fact, reading poems or –even if just a pinch writing them on walls- are not a new action in protests in Turkey. However, we can also say that the number of poems that have been used in Turkish leftist movement's protests can be counted on the fingers of two hands. Reason is not related with the remaining distant with poem, but acting by some pragmatic concerns (such as being comprehensible, exhilarant, and social). In this context, Nazım Hikmet's "Güneşi İçenlerin Türküsü" (The Ballad of Those Who Drink the Sun) poem may be pointed as the most popular and used one. Ece Ayhan's "Meçhul Öğrenci Anıtı" poem is also so within live memory especially after mooning about murdered young. The horizontality and liberation status of Gezi Resistance enlarged the verse archive of protests. A remarkable point was an increase in verses of 'Second New' movement¹³ in street walls. Opposite to Kayıran¹⁴, we can assert that even we also witnessed with many examples of socialist realist of 'Garip' movement, parallel to growing of the new generation, verses of the 'Second New' movement were rife. When it is considered through a street writing, "We are the verses of Turgut Uyar," from naming a broken bus station as "Station to Watch Sky" to verse "In brief, they beat we grew bro!", the existence of 'Second New' has been perceived (Figure 3). Organized in facebook under the name of 'Second New' page in September, #şirsokakta (poems in street) movement which was based on writing verses to every place touching upon life can be read as the follow-up of these poetic interventions existed in Gezi.

After stressing the collectiveness of art and humor in Gezi, it will be nice to mention some examples of artistic productions performed by artists and rapidly adopted by masses and collectivized. Most remained on the agenda and adopted by many people example was probably the performance artist Erdem Gündüz's "Duran Adam" (Standing Man) performance (Figure 4). Staying a long time by looking at Atatürk Culture Center (AKM) in Taksim Square doing nothing, Gündüz was keeping alive the memory of Gezi and this performance had been repeated in every part of Turkey by an immense number of people, in front of Lady Justice in court halls, in malls, in front of the TV channels and newspapers, etc. Showing how the power can be catch off guard by an artistic protest, Gündüz took into custody, but since he just 'stood' in a legal space, he was released. As long as not penetrating into the legitimacy level that is created by resistance's language, ruling alliance knows that the possibility of constructing hegemony is almost impossible and for this reason, it has to try to respond this existed language by 'art.' However, the antagonistic relation between art and power is no of use except useless efforts. One example of this

¹² Whole the compositions are available at this website: <http://gezimusic.tumblr.com/list>. There may be more compositions which are not added to the list.

¹³ Second New movement is the most important movement in Turkish poem literature, appeared in 1950s by some poet as Cemal Süreya, Edip Cansever, Turgut Uyar, Ece Ayhan, İlhan Berk, etc. For further, see (Kocak, 2003; Bekcioglu, 1998).

¹⁴ According to Kayıran, although the new generation grew up and adopted by the 'Second New' culture, they had referred more to 'Socialist Realist' poets in street writings during the resistance (Kayıran, 2013).

understanding distinguished itself in the “Duran Adama Karşı Duran Adam” (Man Who Confront to Standing Man) performance (Figure 5). Eight people who got dressed t-shirt written “Duran Adama Karşı Duran Adam” on them, stood half an hour in front of ‘Standing Men’ and gone. This protest had no aesthetic or intellectual bases, no any massive support which points at that ‘sudden and unexpected’ act could not construct hegemony in artistic interventions.



Figure 3. “Our protest is black, bro.” (Referring to Ece Ayhan’s verse “Our poetry is black, bro.”).



Figure 4. "Standing Man" Performance – Erdem Gündüz.



Figure 5. “Man Who Confront to Standing Man” Performance.

One more symbolic example was “Dervish with Gas Mask” performance (Figure 6). After the beginning of Gezi Resistance, artist Ziya Azazi performed a dance show with his red dervish skirt and gas mask in Taksim Square and many other places. The name of the project was also attractive and was referring to mobilization power of art: “Come with us.” In an interview, while Azazi points at the anonymous character of his performance, adds that by this way art is made accessible and adopted by people. Thus, Erdem Gündüz’s “Standing Man” performance has also been adopted by many protesters (Acar, 2013). When art becomes accessible and reproducible, the artistic interventions enhance effective and peculiar resistance practices and the power apparatus is invalidated and is disarmed.



Figure 6. “Dervish with Gas Mask” Performance, ZiyaAzazi

Conclusion

How do we explain the meaning of artistic and humoristic interventions done in Gezi resistance? No doubt, we can relate Gezi’s artistic and humoristic interventions with the other anti-neoliberal movements’ ones; however, we should stress the points that are peculiar and particular to Gezi. For example, usage of art and humor in Gezi resistance was for the production and reproduction of both liberation space which is created collectively, and protesters itself, rather “tactical” (Bogad, 2006).

Although there were many different usages of art and humor which can be categorized both as disruption and confrontation (Scholl, 2010), Gezi protesters were not a group which comes together to protest a meeting. For this reason, Gezi's art and humor should be pointed as a form of art and humor production which existed naturally and its own dynamics in the resistance and is embraced and reproduced by many people.

Artistic and humoristic interventions become a functional tool to take consents of people for constructing the counter-hegemony by providing to internalize the protests as their own. Moreover, the sun side of the picture is that gaining people's consent is not led by a party, bloc or political organization but rather by a "consented community." In this point, we should not deny the effects of new communication technologies. Especially the main platforms that reproduce the artistic and humoristic productions were social media platforms. Protection of aliveness and soul of resistance occurred by shared pictures, videos, artistic creations, etc. and people found a chance to intervene in the situation via these shared things over social media. One more effect of usage of art and humor in resistance was that it interrogated the legitimacy of government policies; means paved the way of delegitimation of power. Discourse that evolved from "embracing whole nation" to "we are hardly keeping 50% in their homes" provoked the other 50% people's creativity and pointed to break the JDP's hegemonic discourse.

Almost nobody asserts that art and humor can change the system radically. After all is said and done, actual resistances in streets, barricades and struggles result in some changes or revolutions. What is the role of artistic, literary and humoristic interventions in this picture is that they help to construct the communication lines and languages of resistance and sustain the legitimacy of protesters (and illegitimacy of government). The "disproportional intelligence" that existed in Gezi resistance realized all the outcomes that we mentioned above and left its mark to Turkish (and world) resistance history.

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