



Representation of Individual Resistance Against Social Norms: A Comparative Analysis of the Fairy Tales *Anıtı Dikilen Sinek* (The Fly with a Monument) and *Il giovane gambero* (The Young Prawn)

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Submitted: 01.11.2024

Revision Requested: 10.02.2025

Last Revision Received: 14.02.2025

Accepted: 04.03.2025

Citation: Karail Nazlıcan, D. D. (2025).
Representation of individual resistance
against social norms: A comparative
analysis of the fairy tales *Anıtı Dikilen Sinek*
(The Fly with a Monument) and *Il giovane*
gambero (The Young Prawn). *Litera*, 35(1),
295-313.
<https://doi.org/10.26650/LITERA2024-1577450>

ABSTRACT

This study comparatively elaborates on the individual resistance against established social norms as portrayed in two distinct fairy tales, *The Fly with a Monument* and *The Young Prawn*. Exploring the narrative elements, characters, and underlying themes in the aforementioned works, this study sheds light on how both stories offer fruitful insights into the challenges and consequences faced by those who dare to challenge the ingrained societal conventions. As genres are intrinsic to cultural lore, fairy tales often reflect society's values, aspirations, and conventions. Thus, the characters and events within these tales can be interpreted as symbolic representations of the personal struggles that individuals experience when confronting established societal norms and conventions. Through a juxtaposition of the narratives and characters in these tales, we gain a deeper understanding of the different ways in which individual resistance is depicted and the broader implications of such resistance within the context of these fascinating fairy tales. This study not only enhances our understanding of these prominent tales but also makes a valuable contribution to the ongoing discussion regarding the influence of social norms on individual decision-making and societal transformation. Exploring the nuances of individual resistance within these narratives, this study aims to deepen our understanding of how resistance is perceived and conveyed in literary and cultural contexts. Ultimately, this study focuses on the perpetual relevance of classic tales in elucidating the intricacies of human conduct and societal systems. By re-examining the importance of individual agency, readers are encouraged to reflect on its impact on the course of events and shaping of history.

Keywords: Gianni Rodari, Aziz Nesin, social norms, resistance, fairy tales



Introduction

The fairy tales *Anıtı Dikilen Sinek*¹ (The Fly with a Monument) by Aziz Nesin and *Il Giovane Gambero* (The Young Prawn) by Gianni Rodari present a remarkable approach to the conflicts between society, family, and individuals from different perspectives. Attracting the reader's attention to the extensive surface of the relations, both tales portray the conflicts through different angles as well as laying an apparent emphasis on some themes such as societal values, family dynamics, and individual freedom.

In order to take a closer look at the human condition, the examination of societal interactions, familial structures, and the individual's battle against dominant conventions often provides a compelling perspective within the framework of literary analysis. Nesin's *The Fly with a Monument* and Rodari's *The Young Prawn* are fictional works that explore the multifaceted nature of human existence in detail. Through their impressive depictions of societal, familial, and individual struggles, these stories provide some original insights into the complicated dynamics of these relationships. The main themes of both narratives are centered on societal values, family dynamics, and the pursuit of individual liberation by illuminating the conflicts and resolutions that influence their interactions. Through their various insightful reflections, they provide valuable lessons on the complex dynamics of relationships in the context of the human condition.

This study aims to examine and compare the contexts according to which these two narratives present and address the sophisticated themes of human affairs within the cultural frameworks of the two distinct societies, underscoring the varied perspectives they provide concerning the multifaceted nature of relationships and challenges.

Two Authors from Italy and Turkey: Gianni Rodari and Aziz Nesin

It is widely acknowledged that Gianni Rodari (1920–1980) holds a prominent and special position in Italian literature both as a writer and an educator. He is particularly considered an indispensable figure in the realm of children's literature and is known for his original and innovative approaches to the field. "Rodari was an intellectual. And if an intellectual is someone capable of making sense of what lies beneath everyone's eyes, shattering the mirror of duplication, keeping the past and future in mind, then Gianni Rodari was a marvelous intellectual" (Roghi, 2020, p. 9).

1 Throughout the paper, all translations from Italian and Turkish are mine unless otherwise stated.

Gianni Rodari, a seminal figure in the field of children's literature, was awarded the esteemed Andersen Award during the XII Congresso dell'International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) held in Bologna in April 1970. His exceptional literary skills are properly demonstrated through his meticulously crafted narrative style, specifically designed to encourage, stimulate and brighten the imaginative capacities of young readers. Rodari's oeuvre, distinguished by its ability to fascinate and inspire young readers, serves as an emblem of authorship that is actively committed to fostering and promoting the actualization of their imaginative potential. In this sense, the dramatic inclusion of absurd elements, humorous tone, and imaginative fictional worlds in his works has a captivating and charming effect on children, encouraging them to discover their creative capacities. In the introduction to Pietro Greco's work titled *L'universo a dondolo La scienza nell'opera di Gianni Rodari*, Gianni Rodari himself provides authentic insights into his writing process:

I believe that fairy tales, both old and new, can contribute to educating the mind. The fairy tale is a realm of all hypotheses; it can provide us with keys to entering reality through new paths, help a child understand the world, and furnish images for critiquing the world. For this reason, I believe that writing fairy tales is a worthwhile endeavor. I must also say that it is an enjoyable pursuit, and from a certain perspective, it is peculiar that one engages in work that amuses them and, moreover, gets paid for it, and perhaps even rewarded. (2010, p. IX)

Indeed, he creates a spectacular humorous dimension in his works by employing literary techniques such as wordplays and language games that contribute to rendering the text more appealing and entertaining for children while simultaneously enhancing their language skills. It should also be noted that Rodari's works not only serve the purpose of entertainment, but also address societal issues and human relations in general.

Rodari keeps the two realms of writing separate for years: that of the journalist addressing the readers of *Unità* and that of the writer crafting stories for their children (or for the readers themselves, but as parents). However, through a peculiar evolution of purposes, Rodari constructs a new kind of literary figure, unique in the Italian landscape, capable of speaking simultaneously to both adults and children. (Roghi, 2020, p. 76)

It is clear that Rodari's multifaceted contributions to children's literature demonstrate his perpetual commitment to fostering imaginative and inclined young minds. He viewed today's children as "the astronauts of the future" (Greco, 2010, p. 3) and labored tirelessly to cultivate their capacity for liberated thought and expression. It is generally accepted that his legacy comprises a wide range of different progressive measures aimed at creating an atmosphere that promotes free and creative thinking.

In fact, the thematic scope of Rodari's literary endeavors is broad and diverse, as can easily be seen in his works. The subject matter under scrutiny in this study constitutes an integral segment of a broader narrative canvas in the realm of children's literature on which the theme of social justice, along with the values of tolerance and equality, is drawn with a particular focus on the intention of promoting awareness of these issues among young readers. Furthermore, Rodari's artistic creations are characterized in such a way that they reflect the thoughts and perspectives of children, which facilitates children's easy engagement with the stories and enables them to empathize with the multidimensional characters. In other words, his distinct narrative style and intriguing tales captivate young readers and inspire a love for literature. One of the most significant features of his oeuvre is his innovative and unique contribution to the realm of children's literature. By departing from conventional fairy tale forms, he crafted an entirely new collection of stories that haunted the imagination of young readers. Eventually, his seminal works allowed children to get in touch with unique and original storylines that expanded their horizons and sparked their creativity.

Gianni Rodari is a writer who belongs to high literature, deserving a place among the great figures of Italian literature in the 20th century, even though his name may not appear in some renowned narratives of this literature. Gianni Rodari unequivocally belongs to those eminent poets and writers, who represent the deepest essence of Italian literature, weaving continuously the threads of the fabric that binds together literature, philosophy, and science, from Dante to Galileo, from Leopardi to Calvino. (Greco, 2010, p. X)

Gianni Rodari's viewpoint on children's literature is rooted in a method that smoothly integrates enjoyment and educational goals into the creative narrative framework, which augments the imaginative domain of children and fosters the development of their cognitive abilities. Consequently, his literary works generates substantial

contributions that significantly extended the horizons of children's literature, facilitating a deeper and more profound connection between young readers and the world of books.

Aziz Nesin (1915–1995), a prominent figure in Turkish literature, is the writer in focus for this study's Turkish example, whose significant contributions to the field of children's literature are widely respected in the literary world.

Nesin did not merely utilize children's literature to convey entertaining and innocent tales; he also incorporated social commentaries. Through his writing, he addresses inequities, injustices, and societal issues, inspiring children to contemplate these matters. In light of these remarks, before elaborating on his unique narratives in the field of children's literature, I would like to include an excerpt from the book titled *Aziz Nesin Aydınlığı* (Intellectualism of Aziz Nesin) written by his friend Öner Yağcı. This excerpt provides an insight into Nesin's arduous journey as a writer, accentuating his significance to Turkish literature as one of the foremost authors of the Republican era, renowned for his tenacity:

It does not omit anything. I believe I wouldn't be exaggerating if I said he writes about everything related to our lives. However, I should add this: it addresses everything concerning life as understood by individuals who love their homeland deeply, its people and nature, and who, with conscious intent, aspire for their homeland to achieve a contemporary way of life, aligned with its people and nature. It touches upon every current issue relevant to this life with a critical, cautionary, guiding, insistent, pioneering, and bold hand. Some of the hives it dares to stir include the following. Atatürk and Kemalism; Reactionism, Fanaticism, Bigotry, and Fundamentalism; Society, Democracy, State, and the Bourgeoisie; Thinking; Big Capital and the Press; The "Satanic Verses", the "Sivas Events"; Military and Weapons; the Kurdish Issue; Our Deceptions; Shame; Enlightenment... (Yağcı, 1999, p. 41)

While simultaneously addressing the societal implications of national realities and displaying a pronounced dedication to children, whom he held in the highest regard, he authored an array of influential works. Throughout his life, the well-being and development of children have been of great importance to him, and he has dedicated a considerable portion of his time and energy to creating and producing contents that

are suitable for them. In this context, the fundamental reason behind his lifelong efforts lies in the narrative of his own life. Despite all the economic and political challenges, he established the "Nesin Foundation," alias "Children's Paradise," in 1972, which continued to stand strong. Under the umbrella of the foundation, numerous initiatives, projects, and activities have been carried out on subjects such as "children's freedoms and rights," "education for children," and "sustainability and permaculture." These efforts are ongoing to date.² For him, children mean the future itself. In his correspondence³ with his son Ali Nesin, a prominent mathematician who was awarded the prestigious Leelavati Prize and the founder of Maths Village in İzmir, he penned his wish for children: "I wish for all sons and daughters, who will be the mothers and fathers of tomorrow, to experience beauty in better days and not endure the hardships we have faced" (Yağcı, 1999, p. 52).

In the context of his contributions to children's literature, it is pertinent to reiterate that Nesin's literary oeuvre distinguishes itself through the versed utilization of a humorous tone and articulate linguistic approach. The comedic narrative style in his stories not only entertains children but also facilitates a better understanding of contemporary issues. His work focuses on character development and human values.

For him, fairy tales are a tool that directs the mind towards a profound intellectual engagement with the social reality through their intrinsic symbols, situations, and allegories:

In a fairy tale, there exists a state of abstraction, altering the meaning. However, within this abstraction lies a profound reality: Thus, we discover the power to narrate many things, influencing the public... the public employs abstraction and the absurd not as fantasies but as effective means to express realities and their own resistance... whether to escape oppression or to move towards generalization. (Alangu, 1983, p. 310)

Through the characters, he portrays the grounds of values such as honesty, solidarity, and tolerance to the children. Nesin frequently incorporated local motifs and cultural

2 For more detailed information, the foundation's website can be visited at: <https://www.nesinvakfi.org/>

3 Nesin stated that he saw his son Ali Nesin as a close friend since early childhood. In the books titled *Aziz Nesin and Ali Nesin Correspondence*, we read the letters exchanged between Aziz Nesin and his son Ali Nesin, portraying the communications of "two close friends" throughout the years. In these letters, the first of which dates back to 1965 and the last to 1985, we observe the flow of emotions and thoughts over this 20-year period (Yağcı, 1999, p. 50).

elements into his story that enables children to have closer engagement with their cultural heritage. His stories were written with the aim of nourishing children's imagination and enhancing their creativity.

His literary journey began with poetry (Kudret, 1990, s. 310). As a writer who faced numerous trials throughout Turkey's turbulent political history due to his thoughts, he published his writings under various pseudonyms to continue his literary career. Cevdet Kudret provides the following insights into Aziz Nesin's work entitled *Vatan Sağolsun* (May the Homeland Endure, 1968): During those days, he wrote under more than two hundred pseudonyms in various newspapers and magazines. These writings spanned all genres, including editorials, opinion columns, interviews, analyses, detective novels, and stories. Whenever newspaper owners discovered his pseudonyms, he would create new ones. (1990, p. 310)

Categorizing Nesin's literary journey into three distinct phases, Kudret (1990) articulates as follows:

1. These stories depict the social topography of contemporary Turkey. In them, the realities of Turkey are reflected through humor, with people from all classes and layers of society portrayed in both their positive and negative, base and noble aspects. Such stories serve as valuable sources for the social history of Turkey.
2. The tales grouped under the general title "Tales for Adults," although inspired by folk tales, have a contemporary essence, with a strong emphasis on political satire.
3. These stories often times transcend the boundaries of humor and provide a deeper understanding of the human experience. (pp. 315–316)

It is important to note the significant impact of the writer's contributions to children's literature in Turkey, particularly with regard to the use of voice and language in his stories. This aspect of his work has had a lasting impact on the field and serves as a valuable example for others to follow. Engaging in sound plays and a rich vocabulary that captures children's attention contributes to the development of language skills. Moreover, it is pertinent to assert that the diversity of characters in Nesin's literary works promotes the cultivation of children's capacity to empathize with an array of life experiences and emotional contexts.

Nesin's approach to children's literature is underpinned by a perspective that seamlessly combines entertainment and educational objectives, resulting in an enrichment of children's cognitive landscapes and fostering alignment with societal and humanitarian values.

Given the significance of the analysis of the stories *The Fly with a Monument* and *The Young Prawn* in the context of this study, it is crucial to consider their implications in the light of the information gathered about the authors from two neighboring cultures, each with their own unique socio-cultural backgrounds.

A Socio-Cultural Analysis: *The Young Prawn* and *The Fly with a Monument*

From the viewpoint of a socio-cultural analysis, one of the initial topics that requires consideration is the interplay between an individual's experiences, thoughts, emotions, and societal norms. Societal norms refer to the accepted behavioral patterns that are formed by a society's specific values, established norms, and intrinsic expectations. Within this framework, subjectivity is grounded in both personal and societal factors that shape an individual's own experiences and thoughts. To what extent has the theme of [topic] been addressed in the works of literature intended for children, and how is it exemplified in a concise manner?

To find answers to these questions, it is essential to delve into the narrative structures and genres in children's literature. It is a widely acknowledged fact that literary genres are vast and diverse, ranging from fairy tales and biographical narratives to science fiction and detective stories. This broad scope of genres encompasses traditional literary works such as fables, folk tales, myths, legends, heroic stories, and folk epics. When translated into the realm of fantasy literature, children's literature reveals an array of elements, such as the imagination of fictional worlds, fantasy narratives, and science fiction genres. In contemporary literature, which covers various works that take place in modern times, there are several subgenres including mysteries, novels that explore the human experience within the animal kingdom, novels with central problems to be solved, and coming-of-age stories (Lukens, Smith, & Coffel, 2021, p. 88).

Within the framework of this study, it is necessary to drill down the ground of the definition of "Animal Stories" in which the adventures of animal characters that behave,

think, and feel like humans incorporate fantastical elements (2021, p. 89). Using animal characters instead of human beings in educational content can be beneficial for young children as it may allow them to effectively process and understand complex topics. This is because young children may be more likely to identify with and relate to animal characters, which can make the content more engaging and accessible for them (2021, p. 89). Utilizing depictions of actual animal behavior, realistic fiction, enables children to connect with the narrative and form emotional attachments, thereby facilitating the examination and analysis of the story:

Some fiction written for children focuses directly on real animal life: Farley Mowat is a master of animal-centered realistic fiction; *Owls in the Family* offer an enjoyable reading experience for both children and adults. Reading works in this subgenre of realistic fiction can empathize with animals, bear witness to the challenging experiences of humans coexisting with animals, and make difficult decisions. (2021, p. 89) Another genre that needs to be conveyed through the comparative analysis of the tales in the study is undoubtedly "Issue-Centered Children's Literature Narratives." In these narratives, it is possible to address the personal and unique issues that children may face, as well as broader societal issues such as social injustice and human relations in general (2021, p. 92).

In these stories, plot and source of conflict are issues that concern the main character. This issue can be personal or it may involve the character's relationship with society or someone else. In the finest examples of realistic fiction, character and conflict are both well-developed and intricately intertwined. (2021, p. 92)

In a realistic animal adventure story, readers, when they identify themselves with characters who value animals as much as animals deserve to be valued, can freely oscillate between aesthetic and efferent reading, that is, between immersive reading within the story and reading solely for informational purposes. On the one hand, these readers can scrutinize the story more closely while making discoveries about animals and their relationships with humans (2021, p. 88).

It is evident that there are numerous examples of "Problem-Centered Children's Literature Narratives," particularly those focusing on the individual's resistance to societal structures. It would not be incorrect to state that this form of resistance is presented through the conflict created within the plot. "Conflict occurs when the protagonist engages in a struggle against an antagonist, that is, an opposing force" (2021, p. 146).

In the two narratives under discussion, this conflict is presented in the context of the individual's confrontation with society. Without a doubt, the conflicts individuals face with society are present in many children's books (2021, p. 149).

It would be appropriate to emphasize that at the core of the individual's conflict with the norms and rules established by societal life lies the concept of "freedom." While individuals desire to possess free thinking and determine their own way of life, they are subject to restrictions and limitations imposed by society, serving as the source of this conflict. Thus, within social psychology, conflict is often defined as a sort of incompatibility of goals, beliefs, attitudes, and/or behavior (Jussim, Ashmore, & Wilder, 2001, p. 6). Individuals often choose nonconformity over adhering to the norms imposed by society, engaging in a struggle with the belief that conformity is impossible. When we consider the concept of "civilized life," another aspect of societal existence, it becomes evident that it is essentially perceived as a state of unrest stemming from the limitations imposed on individual freedom. In this sense, the emphasis on individual freedom highlights the importance of each person's capability to uphold their own beliefs and lifestyle. Indeed, this perspective is one of the cornerstones of a democratic society, which is a widely accepted notion suggesting that social norms and regulations can, at times, impede the freedoms of individuals within a societal context. Undoubtedly, the justification for societal limitations on individual freedom can be attributed to the establishment of social order and the promotion of a secure environment for all members of society. However, it should not be forgotten that the greater the attachment and solidarity within the ingroup, the greater the hostility and contempt directed toward outgroups (Brewer, 2001, p. 18).

In the light of the foregoing analysis, it can be said that children's literature frequently examines the tensions between individual freedom and thought within the confines of the family and the broader established societal norms. Such works contribute to children's understanding of fundamental moral values, ethical norms, and social relationships, while also helping individuals examine their complex relationships with society more closely. While aiming to emphasize the distinction between good and evil, and right and wrong, these works also provide children with examples of individuals who are capable of adhering to societal norms and freely expressing their thoughts, encouraging open discussions. In this context, introducing a comparative analysis of the two examined tales will contribute to a deeper understanding of the existing viewpoints.

The Young Prawn (1980) from the book *Telephone Tales* and Nesin's collection of 16 tales, including the titular tale *The Fly with a Monument* (1979), are narratives published in two distinct Mediterranean countries with a one-year distance. Although coinciding temporally, these tales diverge significantly in terms of their historical and sociocultural contexts. They provide different examples of "individual resistance against society-imposed norms" to the children of the two countries, which, although sharing the same historical frame, exhibit various contrasts in their respective sociopolitical landscapes.

The Young Prawn possesses a distinct attribute tied to its setting that is specific to Italy. The protagonist of the tale is a prawn dwelling at sea. Conversely, *The Fly with a Monument* narrates an account of a fly trapped within the confines of a mundane study room in a Turkish household. The contrast between the protagonists—a prawn struggling against its biological fate and a fly seeking recognition in an environment that deems it insignificant—reinforces the overarching theme of individual defiance against societal expectations. While Rodari's prawn attempts to reshape its nature as a metaphor for progress and resistance to tradition, Nesin's fly exists within a rigidly structured and decaying system, symbolizing the futility of resistance in an environment defined by political turmoil and authoritarianism.

In Rodari's tale, the young prawn undertakes a task that is far-reaching and more challenging than expected by society. The prawn defies society's expectations and attempts to overcome great dangers by relying on its own abilities. Although it is a prawn capable of walking backwards by its nature, it now desires to change this situation and walk forward.

"One day, a little prawn thought, 'Why is my whole family and I walk backward?' Like frogs, I want to learn to walk forward. If I cannot succeed, let my tail fall off" (Rodari, 2021, p. 6).

The 1970s in Italy were marked by a period of intense sociopolitical transformation, characterized by economic crises, social movements, and political violence. The country faced the consequences of the post-war economic boom, which led to rapid industrialization and urbanization but also exacerbated inequalities between the industrialized North and the agrarian South. This decade was also defined by the rise of left-wing and right-wing extremist groups, culminating in what is historically referred

to as the Years of Lead (*Anni di piombo*), a period of political terrorism and social unrest⁴. Within this context, Gianni Rodari's tale of the young prawn challenging the constraints imposed by nature and tradition can be interpreted as an allegory of Italy's struggles for social change and progress. The prawn's desire to walk forward despite societal expectations echoes the aspirations of youth movements, feminist groups, and labor unions that sought to break free from conservative norms and authoritarian structures. Furthermore, the protagonist's willingness to risk everything for change reflects the broader ideological conflicts of the time, as radical groups on both ends of the political spectrum attempted to redefine Italy's future. Rodari, a committed leftist and advocate for progressive education, subtly critiques the rigidity of societal norms and encourages individual agency and resistance to predetermined roles.

Nesin's narrative transports us to the year preceding Turkey's 1980 coup, at a time when society was grappling with political upheaval. Unlike Italy's Years of Lead, which were marked by radical ideological clashes, late 1970s Turkey was on the brink of military intervention, with escalating violence between leftist and rightist factions. Nesin's choice of a fly as a protagonist—an entity often dismissed as insignificant or bothersome—mirrored the pervasive sense of dehumanization and suppression prevalent in Turkish society during this period. The working-class household in which the narrative unfolds further highlights the economic struggles and political anxieties shaping everyday life. The utilization of an insect as the protagonist of a story for children, penned by an author struggling against the sociopolitical constraints of their environment, may be viewed as repugnant by some. However, this can be justified due to the various challenges faced by the writer in question. The construction of a memorial to a pest, which is consistently endeavored to be removed from our surroundings, serves as the initial captivating feature of the story. The author leads us into the most desolate and decrepit apartment situated within a multi-story building in a neighboring district of a large city. This apartment, where it is impossible for daylight to enter, resides in a nuclear family of three: a working mother, a working father, and their studying son. The narrative exhibits a highly realistic portrayal of the Turkish political and historical context.

4 Paul Ginsborg offers a detailed account of this period, highlighting the escalating political violence and social unrest in Italy during the mid-1970s: "On 28 May 1974, little more than a fortnight after the divorce referendum, a bomb exploded in the main square at Brescia, during the course of an anti-Fascist demonstration. Eight people were killed. That same summer, on 4 August, another bomb exploded on a train travelling between Florence and Bologna. This time there were twelve victims. Street violence escalated in the first months of 1975. First, a Greek student, Giorgio Mantekas, a sympathizer of the MSI, was killed in the course of clashes in Rome between the neo-Fascists and the left groups. Then, in Milan, on 15 April 1975, a neo-Fascist killed Claudio Varalli of the student movement. A day later, during the course of the demonstration called in pretest at Varalli's murder, a police lorry ran down and killed Giannino Zibecchi, of the anti-Fascist committees" (1990, p. 371).

Both narratives, despite emerging from distinct sociopolitical environments, reflect the authors' engagement with issues of autonomy, resistance, and systemic constraints. Rodari's hopeful vision, embedded in the young prawn's perseverance, contrasts with Nesin's more cynical portrayal of a world where even the most basic recognition—a monument for a fly—becomes an absurd and unattainable aspiration. These differences underscore the ways in which children's literature serves as a vehicle for sociopolitical critique, shaping young readers' understanding of justice, conformity, and change within their respective cultural contexts.

Following the spatial description, Nesin provides the reader with encyclopedic information about the main character, and then introduces the protagonist:

It is known that flies cannot fly in darkness. They remain where they are until the weather clears or a light is turned on. Because the inside of the house was semi-dark, the flies were not flying. There was only one young fly who kept flying towards the outside light, but it kept hitting the window pane and staying there. (Nesin, 2022, pp. 11–12)

In this tale, we are presented with the adventure of a fly that defies the behaviors of its own kind in pursuit of freedom. Just as we often witness in our daily lives, there is a fly that repeatedly flies towards the light, repeatedly hitting the window, yet behind this action lies a determined, inquisitive, and even daring fly, willing to risk its life. Like the young prawn in the previous story, it is also thwarted by society.

The remaining flies were elderly, knowledgeable, and experienced. They said to the fly that kept flying into the window repeatedly, "Don't bother, you can't get out...". The young fly replied, "But I cannot stay trapped in this dark place. Looking beyond is light. I want to go to the light." One elderly fly said, 'have not you figured out what the thing you keep hitting every now and then is yet? It's called glass. Glass is transparent. It sees the other side from the other side. Because it shows the other side from one side, young flies like you think it doesn't exist and keep hitting it all the time.' (Nesin, 2022, p. 12)

In light of the emerging signs of resistance to prevailing societal norms in the opening passage, it is imperative to consider Pierre Bourdieu's views on an individual's place

within the broader social structure. According to him, *habitus* confers upon an individual's actions a sense of "regularity, unity, and systematicity." Nonetheless, this systematic unity does not encompass an "intentional meaning" (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 79). Additionally, Brewer states that:

Social identification represents the extent to which the ingroup has been incorporated into the sense of self, and at the same time, that the self is experienced as an integral part of the ingroup. With high levels of social identification, the group's outcomes and welfare become closely connected to one's own sense of well-being. (Brewer, 2001, p. 21)

Both protagonists exhibit a striking defiance towards the very essence of *habitus*, encompassing the notions of habitual regularity, intrinsic unity and systematic structure. At this point, it would be appropriate to briefly address the concept of identification:

Identification implies some motivation to define oneself in terms of that group membership and to achieve and maintain inclusion in the ingroup category. Since identification entails some sacrifice of an autonomous self-concept, the question arises as to why individuals would attach some measure of their self-worth and well-being to the fate of a collective. (2001, p. 21)

In this context, it is imperative that the young prawn adhere to societal norms, despite his growing awareness of the challenges he confronts due to his physical makeup, which is at odds with his deep-seated aspirations:

"He bumped on the left and right sides. It hurt a lot. The shell is left with bruises. His legs were tangled up. However, everything slowly started to fall into place. If you want it, you can learn everything" (Rodari, 2021, p. 8).

A similar behavior was observed in the protagonist of Nesin's tale, as the young fly, in spite of the advice and protestations of his fellow flies, remained resolute in his endeavors to attain liberation. He responds to their concerns with statements like, "What I'm doing is far better than loafing around. Don't interfere with me" (Nesin, 2022, p. 13). He perseveres through injuries and heals, and persists in his attempts as the other flies think of him as "stupid and crazy." He has been marginalized by society.

The individual who defies the conventional norms and expectations imposed by society and perseveres in their pursuits is not solely the fly. The young prawn, who overcame the physical limitations of its body through diligent effort, stands before its immediate kin—the minuscule core of the social order—and exhibits its accomplishments. This progressive action, which is beneficial for itself, has caused great sadness in the family. That the children have deviated from the accustomed order and are perceived as rebellious is a source of regret. “My son,” the mother burst into tears, “Have you lost your mind? Come back to yourself, walk as your father and mother have taught you, walk like your brothers who care so much about you” (Rodari, 2021, p. 12).

His behavior is not accepted by his family, and he is expelled from his home by the family he loves dearly.

His brothers, however, could only snicker. The father looked at him sternly for a while, then said, “That’s enough. If you want to stay with us, walk like the other prawns. If you want to go your own way, the stream is wide: go away and never come back.” (2021, pp. 12–13)

As the narrative unfolds, we follow the exploits of a young prawn who embarks on a journey of exploration and discovery. Despite the excitement of this journey, we cannot escape the fact that he is shunned and isolated by his own community. The frogs, upon seeing him walking forward, claim that “the world has turned upside down.” (2021, p. 18). In fact, they label his effort as disrespect: “There is no more respect, –said another frog. - Oh dear, oh dear, said a third one” (2021, p. 18). At this point, Habermas’s concept of “I-identity,” which emerges as a combination of individual and social identity, comes to mind. Indeed, Habermas analyzes these two forms of identity as the dual dimensions of a balancing “I-identity:”

Individual identity, the vertical dimension, provides connections through a person’s history. Social identity, the horizontal dimension, helps meet the requirements of all role systems, which include a person. To maintain this balance, a person uses different techniques of interaction, demonstrating his or her identity and trying to meet the role expectations of a partner. (Korostelina, 2007, p. 37)

In contrast to Breakwell and Habermas, Tajfel and Turner (1979) view the relationship between social and individual identity as inherently conflictual:

In 1974, Tajfel emphasized the existence of two opposite poles in a person's behavior. On the one end of the continuum (which is ideal and probably cannot be found in society) is the interaction between two or more individuals, whose behavior is completely determined by their interpersonal relations and individual characteristics; it has no impact from groups and other social categories. On the other end of the continuum are the interrelations between two individuals that are totally determined by their membership in different social groups and social categories and are not influenced by their interpersonal relations. (2007, p. 37)

During the young prawn's journey, he encounters an elder prawn who embodies the societal norms that the youth seeks to defy. This encounter serves as a harbinger of the consequences that may arise from the innovative behavior that the young prawn is pursuing and eventually achieving.

What do you think you are doing? Even when I was young, I thought about teaching me prawns to walk forward. And here's what I gained from it: I live all alone, and people would sooner bite their tongues than talk to me. While you still have time, listen to me: resign yourself to doing as the others do, and one day you will thank me for the advice. (Rodari, 2021, pp. 22–24)

Tajfel and Turner's notion of identity conflict, where individuals are caught between the influences of personal characteristics and social group memberships, finds a striking parallel in the young prawn's journey. The elder prawn, representing societal norms, mirrors the societal pressures that often shape an individual's behavior within the boundaries of collective expectations. As the young prawn seeks to challenge these norms, his encounter with the elder serves as a reminder of the inherent tension between individual aspirations and the roles imposed by social groups. This reflects Tajfel's continuum, where the young prawn's defiance symbolizes the shift from social conformity towards personal identity actualization, despite the conflict it may provoke.

The young prawn, hesitating how to respond to the old prawn, thinks to himself: "I am right. I will not turn back to my path. I will walk forward" (Rodari, 2021, p. 24). Nesin depicts the protagonist of his narrative as a "daring and hopeful" (Nesin, 2022, p. 13) individual, likening him to a resilient fly that remains undaunted by despair. A resilient fly that remains

undeterred by despair and a protagonist with an insatiable thirst for exploration and knowledge. The fly, undeterred by despair, alights on an open book on the child's desk and discovers the concept of the "speed of light" by perusing the informative page about light. Thus, he attempts to fly at a faster speed. Having greatly increased his speed, the young fly crashed into the window one last time with the force of his body sticking to the glass, which is now lifeless. "His whole body was crushed, his skin torn and punctured. His blood was splattered on glass. The young fly had finally died..." (2022, p. 17).

The demise of this particular fly caused a profound sense of sadness among his peers that were present during his ordeal. Despite having witnessed the passing of many of their brethren before, the tragic end of this young insect has elicited a distinctive grief that is difficult to ignore. His valiant struggle, even in the face of certain death, serves as a testament to his unwavering determination to not only survive but also protect the lives of his fellow flies: - He was the leader of flies! He sought a way out for us all. He is a symbol of hope. He instilled hope in all of us. - What a great sacrifice... He gave his life for us. - He died to make even the most impossible possible. - We will never forget you! - You will go down in history as a golden page in the history of us flies, and your struggle will be written in golden letters in history. (Nesin, 2022, p. 17)

The narrative then proceeds with the words of the wisest and most aged fly present. This erudite insect proposes that the residue of the deceased fly should be consecrated as a memorial, an idea that is met with unanimous approval from the other flies. Until the homeowners return to their residence, the precautionary measures will remain in place. Upon entering the room, the woman observes a dead fly on the window and promptly removes it using a clean cloth. According to the flies, the monument of the young flies was believed to have endured forever. It is at this juncture that Nesin includes the following observations regarding the perception of eternity in his account:

In the light of the limitations imposed by mortal beings, the concept of infinity is indeed relative. For some, such as the butterfly, the duration of three hours may seem infinite, while for others, such as the human, the span of thirty thousand years may be considered so. Even the brief existence of a fly, in the grand scheme of things, may still be considered infinite in its own right... (Nesin, 2022, p. 18)

Another noteworthy element in these tales is that while the eldest member of the society in the story tries to deter the young prawn from its path, the oldest and wisest member of the fly community, albeit belatedly, comes to appreciate the efforts of the young fly who displayed similar behavior.

Unlike Nesin, Rodari concludes the fable without providing a specific resolution, leaving the conclusion to the reader, or more specifically, to the children. The fate of the prawn is not disclosed, and no further information is given regarding its subsequent events or destiny. He notes with poise that the prawn persisted on its trajectory with unwavering resolve, reminding the reader to offer well-wishes by saying, "May your path be clear" (Rodari, 2021, p. 26).

These two narratives, which consider the attempt to achieve the unattainable, criticize the social class distinctions and the obligatory acceptance of pre-determined roles. The fly's pursuit of freedom through the pursuit of the impossible, and the young prawn's deviation from the typical path to bring about change for society, serve as a testament to the innate right of every individual to release their potential.

Conclusion

In conclusion, *The Fly with a Monument* by Aziz Nesin and *The Young Prawn* by Gianni Rodari offer profound reflections on individual resistance against societal norms, framed within the genre of children's literature. Both narratives employ anthropomorphized characters to depict the inherent tensions between personal autonomy and the rigid frameworks imposed by societal conventions. Through these stories, the authors examine the conflicts that arise when individuals challenge established norms, shedding light on the broader implications of such resistance.

While grounded in distinct cultural and historical contexts, these tales share a universal thematic focus on the struggle for personal liberation in the face of societal conformity. Nesin's "fly" and Rodari's "prawn" serve as powerful allegories for the human condition, highlighting the complexities of defying entrenched social structures. Both stories emphasize the transformative potential of individual agency, illustrating how acts of defiance, even in seemingly insignificant forms, can initiate meaningful change and inspire others.

By examining these tales through a socio-cultural lens, we gain valuable insights into how literature can be a powerful vehicle for social commentary and a tool for nurturing critical thinking in young readers. Both Nesin and Rodari emphasize the resilience of the human spirit, showing that individual acts of defiance, no matter how small or seemingly futile, can inspire broader societal transformation. Thus, their works continue to resonate with contemporary readers, offering lessons in courage, perseverance, and the enduring quest for freedom.

In this regard, the works of Nesin and Rodari remain pertinent to contemporary discussions about the role of literature in shaping social consciousness. By illustrating the consequences of resisting oppressive norms, these stories encourage readers to reflect on the importance of questioning authority and envisioning alternative possibilities for societal organization. Ultimately, the enduring relevance of *The Fly with a Monument* and *The Young Prawn* lies in their capacity to evoke critical engagement with the values and structures that govern human behavior, reinforcing the importance of personal agency in the pursuit of social progress.

Peer-review: Externally peer-reviewed.

Conflict of Interest: The author has no conflict of interest to declare.

Grant Support: The author declared that this study has received no financial support.

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