

T.R.
YILDIZ TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES M.A. PROGRAM
M.A. THESIS

SUBALTERN VOICES IN
SABAHATTİN ALİ'S STORIES

ESMA NUR ÇETİNKAYA
12728005

THESIS SUPERVISOR
ASSOC. PROF. NALAN TURNA

ISTANBUL
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ÖZ

SABAHATTİN ALİ’NİN HİKÂYELERİNDE MÂDUN SESLER

Esma Nur Çetinkaya

Şubat 2016

Sabahattin Ali 20. Yüzyıl modern Türk edebiyatının önemli yazarlarından biridir. Sabahattin Ali’nin birçok eserinde esas karakterler toplumda çoğunluğun dışında kalmışlar ve sesleri çok duyulmamıştır. Bu tezde amacım, ezilen, isimsiz ya da alt tabaka karakterlerin mâdunlar olarak değerlendirilebileceğini göstermektir. Antonio Gramsci, mâdun ve mâduniyet kavramlarını ilk defa 1928’de *Hapishane Defterleri* eserinde kullanmıştır. Bu terimler Gramsci’den sonra post-kolonyal bilim insanları Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Ranajit Guha ve Dipesh Chakrabarty gibi önemli kişiler tarafından da benimsenip detaylı olarak çalışılmış ve Mâduniyet Çalışmaları adı altında bir ekole dönüşmüştür. Bu ekole göre, tarih ve edebi metinlerin yeniden okunması önem kazanmıştır çünkü bu metinler aracılığıyla kaybolan ya da kaybolduğunu var saydığımız öznelerin varlığını görebiliriz. Aslında bu özneler devlet dışı kaynak diyebileceğimiz bu metinlerde yaşamaya devam etmektedirler.

Antonio Gramsci’nin kavramsallaştırması ve diğer Mâduniyet Çalışmaları ekolünün öncüleri bu anlamda tarih yazımı için yeni bir yol da açmışlardır. Mesela Türkiye’de Necmi Erdoğan, Mahmut Mutman, Boğaç Ergene ve Umut Yıldırım mâdun kavramını alternatif tarih yazımı anlayışı için kullanmışlardır. Onların çalışmalarına referansta bulunarak ben de Sabahattin Ali’nin bazı hikâyelerinin mâduniyet çalışmaları kapsamında değerlendirilebileceğini göstermeyi amaçlıyorum. Mesela şehirli ve köylü arasındaki çatışmalar, bu karakterlerin baskı altına alınması, bazı entelektüel karakterlerin çoğunluğun içinde yabancılaşmasını mâduniyet perspektifinden analiz etmek mümkündür. Sabahattin Ali’nin ses kavramını hem gerçek hem de mecaz anlamıyla kullandığını düşünüyorum ve incelediğim eserlerdeki önemli unsurlardan biri de ses aslında daha çok sessizlik olacaktır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Sabahattin Ali, Mâdun, Entelektüel Mâdun, Mâduniyet, Otorite, Adsız, Sesi Olmamak, Yabancılaşma

ABSTRACT

SUBALTERN VOICES IN SABAHATTİN ALİ'S STORIES

Esma Nur Çetinkaya
February 2016

Sabahattin Ali is one of the most important writers of 20th century modern Turkish literature. Many protagonists in Sabahattin Ali's works are out of the majority and they are oppressed by the authority. In this thesis my aim is to show that these oppressed, nameless or lower class characters can be assessed as subalterns. It was first Antonio Gramsci who used the terms subaltern and subalternity in *Prison Notebooks* in 1928. These terms have been adopted and studied elaborately by post-colonial scholars such as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Ranajit Guha and Dipesh Chakrabarty after Gramsci and Subaltern Studies became a school since then. According to this school, it became important to revise the historical and literary texts because by means of these texts we can see the presence of those subjects who are lost or we regard as lost. In fact they continue to live in the texts which we can call as non-state sources.

Antonio Gramsci's conceptualization and the researches of pioneer scholars of Subaltern Studies also opened a new pathway for historiography. For example scholars such as Necmi Erdoğan, Mahmut Mutman, Boğaç Ergene, and Umut Yıldırım used the subaltern concept for alternative historiographical understanding in Turkey. With reference to those scholars I aim to show that some stories of Sabahattin Ali can also be assessed within the scope of subalternity. For example it is possible to analyze the clash between the peasants and city people, the oppression of those characters, alienation of some intellectual characters from the majority from the perspective of subalternity. I think that Sabahattin Ali uses the concept of voice both realistically and metaphorically and one of the most significant elements in the works I examined will be the concept of voice in fact the voicelessness.

Key words: Sabahattin Ali, Subaltern, Intellectual Subaltern, Subalternity, Authority, Nameless, Voicelessness, Alienation

FOREWORD

I visited the Historical Sinop Prison (Tarihi Sinop Cezaevi) in 2011 and I was shocked with the cells, extremely thick chains applied to prisoners, dungeons, huge and iron doors, and most importantly the texts written on the walls by the prisoners. It was such a dark and gloomy place that I felt the loneliness and hopelessness of the prisoners deeply for the first time in my life. I had already known that Historical Sinop Prison is also famous for its intellectual prisoners such as Sabahattin Ali, Refik Halit Karay, Zekeriya Sertel, Burhan Felek and many other Turkish intellectuals. It is obvious that Sabahattin Ali is by far the most prominent of them because of his poem "Prison Song V" (Hapishane Şarkısı V) which was written in Sinop Prison and then it was composed as a song with the name "Aldırma Gönül" and became one of the revolution songs in Turkey. After my visit to Historical Sinop Prison, I started to read Sabahattin Ali's all stories, novels and poems. I loved them a lot as I have seen many similarities between his characters' life stories and those of my parents who were born in Kastamonu. What led me to write a thesis on Sabahattin Ali was my visit to Historical Sinop Prison for the first time. However, writing a dissertation requires integrating theory and practice in the long run. Firstly, I really would like to thank to my supervisor Assoc. Prof. Nalan Turna who always supported me genuinely in each phase of my research and writing process. She was always with me with her encouraging and motivating speeches and academic contributions during the whole process. Without her help, patience and understanding I would not be able to write this thesis. I also owe thanks to Assist. Prof. Gülhan Balsoy and Assist. Prof. Kerem Karaosmanoğlu for their valuable remarks and comments. I am also thankful to my mom who has looked after my daughter Vera since her birth with a deep compassion and supported me all the time. Lastly, I am grateful to my father who has given me the enthusiasm of reading since my childhood.

Istanbul, February, 2016

Esma Nur Çetinkaya

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1. INTRODUCTION

"I could not find my voice in that room."¹

The above statement is from *Voice (Ses)*, which is one of Sabahattin Ali's stories. This statement is important since it gives us clues as to whether a subaltern speaks for him/herself or not in the 1930s Turkey.

Subaltern is a useful concept to analyze the works of the famous Turkish writer, Sabahattin Ali (1907-1948). Reflective of his experiences and observations from different parts of Turkey, his works are in the category of non-state documents. Thus, I find his works valuable to discover the voices of those who were inferior in rank and status or who were alienated, stigmatized or marginalized for a variety of reasons during the Early Republican Era. Writing in the years of 1920, 1930s and 1940s, Sabahattin Ali touched upon people who stuck between urban and rural life. Their ideals and the realities of the world or their illusions and disillusion are obvious in his works. His stories reflect not only the daily life in different parts of Turkey, especially the life at the rural areas, but also show the deficiencies of political and social systems; he criticizes the existing situation in Turkey realistically and sometimes ironically. For his critical writings, he was imprisoned several times.²

Briefly, by taking a subaltern approach, I study Sabahattin Ali's stories with the above issues, which cannot be discovered in the state documents from the Early Republican Turkey unless they are "read against the grain."

Following the introductory chapter, the present thesis is composed of three main chapters; "Male Subalterns: The Losers?", "Intellectual Subalterns: Strangers in Their Lands" and finally "Woman, Twice Subaltern?".

In "Male Subalterns: The Losers?", I will examine the following stories *A Sailor's Story (Bir Gemici Hikâyesi)*, *An Escape (Bir Firar)*, *Canal (Kanal)*, *Gendarme Bekir (Candarma Bekir)*, *Truck (Kamyon)*, *Apartment (Apartman)*, *Stallholder (Pazarıcı)*,

¹ "Ben o odada bir türlü sesimi bulamadım." Sabahattin Ali, *Sabahattin Ali Bütün Eserleri-Eleştirel Basım* 1. bs. (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, Ocak 2013), 1028.

² Sevgül Sönmez, *A'dan Z'ye Sabahattin Ali*. 1. bs. (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2009), 12.

Identification Card (Kafakâğıdı), *Wall (Duvar)*, *Voice (Ses)*, *Dog (Köpek)*, and *A Conference (Bir Konferans)*. By taking a subaltern approach, here I will intend to show whether or not the characters mentioned in these stories withstand against authority, escape from it or develop tactics to open up their own spaces. I will also explore their hopes, illusions and disillusion.

Like the preceding chapter, the emphasis in “Intellectual Subalterns: Stranger in Their Lands” is on the male subalterns. However, this chapter analyzes intellectual subalterns. I will examine the following stories: *For a Black Undershirt (Bir Siyah Fanila İçin)*, *That Friend of Mine (O Arkadaşım)*, *A Scandal (Bir Skandal)*, *Intellectual Friend (Fikir Arkadaşı)*, *Enemy (Düşman)*, *Asphalt Road (Asfalt Yol)* and *Decollement (Dekolman)*. I will analyze the relationship between the intellectual subalterns and the authority figures. Then I will focus on how and why these subalterns confronted the authority figures and why in the end, it is them who have to leave. Also, I pay attention to the intellectual subalterns’ friends, who have university education and pursue a normal life, which here means that he or she has a public job, earns regular salary, gets married at a reasonable age, and holds a good house. In other words, I argue that unlike the people who have a so-called normal life, intellectual subalterns are deviating from what is considered to be normal by the majority of the population. They are marginalized and thus they seek to escape from the externally imposed restraints. They do not want to negotiate their freedom with anybody and thus they escape.

In the last chapter, entitled “Woman, Twice Subaltern”, I will examine the following stories: *The Comic of the City (Komik-i Şehir)*, *Geese (Kazlar)*, *Oxcart (Kağnı)*, *Gramophone Woman (Gramofon Avrât)*, *Cars for Five Kuruş (Arabalar Beş Kuruş)*, *Hot Water (Sıcak Su)*, *New World (Yeni Dünya³)*, *Two Women (İki Kadın)*, *Freckled (Çilli)* and *Lifeguard (Cankurtaran)*. My aim here is to show how Sabahattin Ali’s female characters survive in a male dominated society where agha (ağa), headman (muhtar), imam, gendarmes, and caimacam are all power figures and tend to subjugate people for the sake of their interests. In this chapter, I will demonstrate how some women were nameless which means that they are given no

³ Yeni Dünya: 1. Japanese plum. 2. A glass ball which was made with enameled jar to make as an ornament to hang the trees and arbors. 3. A portable house in the square where a low comedy is practiced.

<http://www.kubbealtilugati.com/sonuclar.aspx?km=yeni%20d%C3%BCnya&mi=0> [29.06.2015].

importance. Thus, I will show their survival in a world where their voices are hardly heard or not really heard. Yet, they develop at least some tactics like other subalterns to overcome their constraints. These are the themes that are going to be discussed in this thesis.

1.1. Who is Sabahattin Ali?

Called Sabah Yıldızı (The Morning Star) by his friends, Sabahattin Ali has hazel eyes and fair skin. At the same time, his friends see him as shy, quiet and gentle.⁴ This famous writer was born in Gümülcine in 1907. His father was a lieutenant, Ali Selahattin, and his mother's name was Hüsniye. His writing career started in 1924 when he published his first articles in the school newspaper while at Balıkesir Teacher's Training School. In 1926, he also published his first poems in a magazine, *Çağlayan*.⁵

Following graduation, Sabahattin Ali worked as a teacher in different parts of Turkey. In 1928, he received a state scholarship to go to Germany. Upon his return, he taught German. In the 1930s, apart from teaching, he worked at the Publication Directorate of Ministry of Education (*Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Neşriyat Müdürlüğü*). He also worked for the State Conservatory (*Devlet Konservatuvarı*) as a translator of Carl Ebert, known for being a German actor and stage director.⁶

Sabahattin Ali published his first realistic story, *A Forest Story (Bir Orman Hikâyesi)*, in *Resimli Ay* journal. Soon, he became the target of the state elite during the One-Party period which lasted from 1925 to 1946. In the 1930s, he was imprisoned for three months at the Aydın Prison with the argument that he was making destructive propaganda among students. In 1932, he published his famous novel *Yusuf from Kuyucak (Kuyucaklı Yusuf)* as a series in *Yeni Anadolu* newspaper. He could not complete the novel since he was imprisoned for twelve months in Konya; he was said to insult Atatürk. Then he lost the job and in 1933 he was sent to the Sinop Prison. That same year, he was released thanks to an amnesty granted for

⁴ Sönmez, *ibid*, 158-159.

⁵ *ibid*, 11.

⁶ *ibid*, 11-12-13.

the tenth year of the Republic. After he got his freedom, he declared that he had changed his mind and got the job back.⁷

Sabahattin Ali continued to publish his works from then on. In 1934, he published a poem called “My Love” (“Benim Aşkım”) in *Varlık* magazine. The poem in fact praised Atatürk. In 1934 again, he published a poetry book, *Mountains and Wind* (*Dağlar ve Rüzgar*), and in 1935 a story book, *The Mill* (*Değirmen*). It was in 1936 when he finally completed his famous novel *Yusuf from Kuyucak* (*Kuyucaklı Yusuf*), which by then was published as a series in *Tan* newspaper. Finally in 1937, *Yusuf from Kuyucak* was published as a book but it was soon removed from the bookstores. It was accused of being too critical of two institutions: family and the military service. In 1939, another novel *Devil Inside* (*İçimizdeki Şeytan*) was published as a series in *Ulus* newspaper. In 1943 his last novel, *Madonna in Fur Coat* (*Kürk Mantolu Madonna*), which in fact is one of the best-selling novels in the present day Turkey, and a story book, *Yeni Dünya* (*New World*), were released.⁸

In 1945 with Câmî Baykurt⁹, he started to publish *Yeni Dünya* newspaper and in 1946 with Aziz Nesin he published a journal, *Markopaşa*. Due to some critical articles that he published in *Markopaşa* such as “Topunuzun Köküne Kibrit Suyu”, “Ali Baba ve Kırk Haramiler” and “Hasan Ali – Kenan Döner Komedi” he was imprisoned again. When *Markopaşa* was banned by the state in 1947, he did not give up and published *Merhumpaşa*, *Malumpaşa* and *Alibaba*, respectively.¹⁰

In September 1947, he was released from the prison but after a while he was arrested once more due to his article, “In the Corridors of Justice” (“Adalet Koridorlarında”), published in *Merhumpaşa*. He criticized the justice system in Turkey and thus he was sentenced to twelve days in prison. Like some of his other works, his story book *Glass House* (*Sırça Köşk*) was banned.¹¹

Before his tragic end, Sabahattin Ali did transport business in 1948 when it became too difficult to publish his works since *Markopaşa*, *Merhumpaşa* and *Malumpaşa*

⁷ *ibid*, 12-13.

⁸ *ibid*, 12-13.

⁹ Câmî Baykurt (1877-1949) was a Turkish soldier and politician who was politically and intellectually active in the late Ottoman period and the early Turkish Republic. Erdal Yılmaz, “Abdülkadir Câmî Baykurt’un Hayatı, Siyasi Faaliyetleri ve Düşünce Yapısı” (M.A Thesis, İstanbul University, Institute of Social Sciences, 2012), 2.

¹⁰ *ibid*, 14-15.

¹¹ *ibid*, 14-15.

were banned respectively. By doing transport business, he wanted to stay away from police oppression and possible arrests.¹²

Sabahattin Ali's life ended in a tragic way. He was killed on his way to Bulgaria by Ali Ertekin who hit Sabahattin Ali on the head with a stick several times. Sabahattin Ali died there. Several weeks later, his dead body was found near Sazara village in Kırklareli. Ali Ertekin said that he killed Sabahattin Ali under nationalist feelings.¹³

1.2. A Short History of the Early Republican Turkey

In the early years of Republic, compared to the cities, the villages were overpopulated. Taking this problem into consideration, the new Republican elite sought to improve the conditions of the villages and the peasants. The Republican elite was well aware of the fact that Turkey was not an industrial country and thus it put efforts in the industrialization, which was directly related to the transformation of the villages. Also, there was a trend all over the world that the peasant was the master of the nation that was also enunciated by Atatürk. Peasantism (*köycülük*) was encouraged to modernize the rural life and to provide a stable majority in public the political powers.¹⁴

To spread the ideology of peasantism, the Republican People's Party-RPP (*Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası*) under Mustafa Kemal Atatürk founded the People's Houses (*Halkevleri*) to introduce cultural, educational and sport activities to the villages: These houses also aimed at spreading the principles of RPP¹⁵ since those who supported its ideology (Kemalist ideology) were afraid of that the peasants would support the new party, the Free Republican Party (*Serbest Cumhuriyet Fırkası*) founded in 1930.¹⁶

The People's Houses organized short trips to the villages and it was claimed that such trips would close the gap between the intellectuals and the peasants and they would interact with each other; intellectuals would help the peasants to learn how to apply practical farming methods and husbandry or to commercialize their products.

¹² *ibid*, 288.

¹³ Ali Ertekin said that he murdered Sabahattin Ali with nationalist feelings. He was then imprisoned for four years but released after a general amnesty in 1950. Sönmez, *ibid*, 15.

¹⁴ Asım Karaömerlioğlu, *Orada Bir Köy Var Uzakta: Erken Cumhuriyet Döneminde Köycü Söylem* 3. bs. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2014), 54-55.

¹⁵ *ibid*, 56.

¹⁶ *ibid*, 58.

Furthermore, they would celebrate the national festivals together and in this way the intellectuals would learn more about the authentic and folkloric culture of the villages.¹⁷ In other words, they would learn from each other.

However, intellectuals went to the village like a tourist who was searching the dark sides of Africa. The intellectuals could only get some anthropological and cultural knowledge but they could not really transform the villages and the rural life.¹⁸

In his analysis of the early Republican Turkey, Asım Karaömerlioğlu focuses on three main principles of peasantism in Turkey; first, peasantism was against urbanization; because cities symbolized negative things such as cosmopolitanism, class conflicts, unemployment, economic depression, strikes, and a weak state control.¹⁹ Second, peasantism glorified the village life, peasants and also peasantists illustrated a utopic and unrealistic village life.²⁰ Third, peasantists had a skeptical attitude towards the Westernization because the Western countries exploited the agrarian countries. Thus, according to them, Turkey should find a “third way” different from liberalism and socialism.²¹

To apply the ideology of peasantism, the state elite was also aware of the fact that a successful education reform was necessary and it was carried to the rural side through the village teachers, who had to have a peasant background in order to bear the village conditions.²²

Karaömerlioğlu concludes that although peasantist activities failed to transform the Turkish villages, the peasantist discourse really affected intellectuals and power figures of the time.²³ The most vexing issue of the ideology of the peasantism was that the state could not provide a well-planned, systematic and coherent politics in terms of industrialization and transforming the rural life.²⁴ Briefly, the vague and the eclectic disposition of the official ideology during the early Republican period could not generate a stable movement of peasantism in Turkey.²⁵

¹⁷ *ibid*, 61-62.

¹⁸ *ibid*, 63.

¹⁹ *ibid*, 67.

²⁰ *ibid*, 69.

²¹ *ibid*, 74.

²² *ibid*, 76.

²³ *ibid*, 82.

²⁴ *ibid*, 84.

²⁵ *ibid*, 84-85.

When we look at the literary atmosphere of the early Republican period, we see that intellectuals fluctuated between the late Ottoman Empire and the newly founded Republic. This was also a period of the intellectual struggle to generate a new culture after the proclamation of the new Republic in 1923. The main principles of the new regime were modernity, nationalism, and populism. However, literary figures did not achieve major improvements in their writing. This was probably because of the pessimistic atmosphere that led literary figures to write with nationalistic feelings. Furthermore, the new generation of the Turkish Republic fed these nationalistic feelings because literary figures were weary of the war and the invasion of Istanbul. Therefore, instead of focusing on the social realities of that time, they preferred to write on romantic issues.²⁶

For example, Faruk Nafiz Çamlıbel (1898-1973), Yusuf Ziya Ortaç (1895-1967), Orhan Seyfi Orhon (1890-1972), Halit Fahri Ozansoy (1891-1949) and Enis Behiç Koryürek (1891-1949) who were also known as the Five Syllabic Poets (Beş Hececiler) concentrated on the nature and the beauties of Anatolia and aimed to give hope to the society. However, they ignored the social realities of the period. Thus they have been criticized for being unconscious of these social realities.²⁷

The group of Seven Torches (Yedi Meşaleciler): Ziya Osman Saba (1910-1957), Sabri Esat Sivayuşgil (1907-1968), Yaşar Nabi Nayır (1908-1981), Muammer Lütfi (1903-1947), Vasfi Mahir Kocatürk (1907-1961), Cevdet Kudret Solok (1907-1992), and Kenan Hulusi Kotay (1906-1943) aimed to broaden the horizons of Turkish poetry. Seven Torches (Yedi Meşale) was the name of their literary journal, which they published in 1928. However, their works were criticized to be bereft of liveliness, sincerity and novelty, which were the main principles of their group at first.²⁸

There were also other poets who adopted syllabic verse in literature. For example, Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar (1901-1962) adopted the syllabic verse in order to create a Turkish voice (our own voice); Necip Fazıl Kısakürek (1905-1983) dealt with the existentialist problems of human beings in a mystic way; Ahmet Muhip Dırans (1909-1980), who was highly affected by French symbolism, focused on human

²⁶ Atilla Özkırımlı, "Anahatlarıyla Edebiyat", *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türkiye Ansiklopedisi*, v. 3, 1983: 580-592.

²⁷ *ibid*, 582.

²⁸ *ibid*, 583.

feelings; Cahit Sıtkı Tarancı (1910-1956), who is well known for his poem “Otuzbeş Yaş” (“Age Thirty-five”), concentrated on death and the beauty of love in his works.²⁹

Nazım Hikmet (1902-1963), who was highly influenced by futurist and constructivist movements in Russian literature, introduced a novelty to poetry. He adopted free verse and he separated from the traditional line of poetry. In *Resimli Ay*³⁰, he introduced this new structure in his poetry after he returned to Turkey in 1921. Nazım Hikmet believed in the functionality of art and literature in society and he helped improve socialist literature in Turkey. Nazım Hikmet’s aim was to question the dominant literature understanding in Turkey and to improve the socialist realistic aspect of literature.³¹

The Turkish story and novel improved with understanding a National Literature (*Milli Edebiyat*) until the 1930s, but after 1930s it tended towards a socialist realistic style. Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu (1889-1974) handled the historical stages of Turkish society from Tanzimat to the Republican Period. He wrote on issues such as corruption in social institutions, generational conflicts and the conflicts between the intellectuals and the people. In *Yaban* (1923), Karaosmanoğlu described the conditions of the village and peasants in Anatolia, as well as showing the social distance between the intellectuals and the people.³²

Halide Edip Adıvar (1884-1964) was the female voice of the early Republican Turkey. In her early novels such as *Seviyye Talip* (1910) and *Handan* (1912) she dealt with individual feelings and she reflected the emotions of women. However, the War of Independence led her to write *Ateşten Gömlek* (*Shirt of Fire*-1922) and *Vurun Kahpeye* (*Hit the Whore*-1926) where she embraced the patriotism and the idealism of liberation. In her later novel *Sinekli Bakkal* (*The Flies’ Grocery*-1936) she expressed the union of the East and the West in order to metaphorically achieve a real liberation in the newly found Republican Turkey.³³

Reşat Nuri Güntekin (1889-1956), the writer of the iconic *Çalıkuşu* (*The Wren*-1922), reflected on Anatolian life, particularly, he wrote realistically on the sincerity

²⁹ *ibid*, 584.

³⁰ *Resimli Ay* (1924-1934), the magazine published by Zekeriya Sertel and his wife Sabiha Sertel, had major impact on the improvement of socialist literature in Turkey.

³¹ *ibid*, 585.

³² *ibid*, 586.

³³ *ibid*, 587.

and the simplicity of Anatolian people in his works. In *Çalıkuşu*, he dealt with the social and bureaucratic problems of Turkey from the perspective of a female teacher, Feride. The expression of colloquial language is also powerful in his later novels, such as *Yeşil Gece* (*The Green Night*-1928) and *Yaprak Dökümü* (*The Fall of Leaves*-1930).³⁴

Finally, Refik Halit Karay (1888-1965), Peyami Safa (1899-1961), Memduh Şevket Esendal (1883-1952) were the other pioneering novelists and short story writers of the early Republican Turkey.³⁵

Among all these names, Sabahattin Ali was also one of the prominent names. He began his writing career with poetry. After he met Nazım Hikmet in *Resimli Ay* in 1930, he concentrated on short stories and novels. Since his plots were very complex and his descriptions were quite elaborate, he became one of the pioneers of Turkish story writing. His works included a variety of topics, ranging from romantic love stories to corruption at state institutions, the self-serving nature of bureaucrats, and the clash between the city and the village. His novel *Kuyucaklı Yusuf* (*Yusuf from Kuyucak*) is seen as the first successful novel of social realistic Turkish literature.³⁶ By having a socialist background, Sabahattin Ali followed the same style as Nazım Hikmet. They both touched upon their societies from a socialist perspective. Reflected in his works, Sabahattin Ali was also critical of the impracticality of the peasantist ideology.

1.3. Existing Literature and Methodology

1.3.1. Subaltern Studies

Subaltern, meaning 'second rate rank', is a term that was first used by Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci³⁷ to refer to social groups who are socially, governmentally and physically out of the influence of the hegemonic structure. Subaltern classes include workers, specialists and different gatherings that have no access to the "hegemonic" authority.³⁸

³⁴ *ibid*, 587.

³⁵ *ibid*, 587.

³⁶ *ibid*, 588.

³⁷ Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) was an Italian Marxist theoretician who focused on the concept of 'hegemony' which is defined as cultural leadership exercised by ruling class (Ritzer, 2010, 281).

³⁸ Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (edited and translated by Quentin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (London: Elec Book, 1999), 202.

“Subaltern groups are always subject to the activity of ruling groups, even when they rebel and rise up: only “permanent” victory breaks their subordination, and that not immediately. In reality, even when they appear triumphant, the subaltern groups are merely anxious to defend themselves (a truth which can be demonstrated by the history of the French Revolution at least up to 1830). Every trace of independent initiative on the part of subaltern groups should therefore be of incalculable value for the integral historian.”³⁹

The above quote by Gramsci clearly shows the difficulties that subalterns face. He argues that it is not easy for subalterns to break their chains since they are bound by the activities of the ruling groups.

In his excerpt, *Notes on History of Italy*, Gramsci sketched out a six-point arrangement for mulling over the historical backdrop of the subaltern cluster. These points are that 1) their target development; 2) their dynamic or detached association to the predominant political development; 3) the conception of new gatherings; 4) the arrangements that the subaltern gatherings produce to press their case; 5) new developments inside the old system that the self-sufficiency of the subaltern classes and 6) the different focuses alluding to exchange unions and political gatherings.⁴⁰ By listing these features, Gramsci in fact predefined the domain of subaltern studies.

Later scholars who wrote on the term subaltern saw Gramsci as a pioneer, especially Ranajit Guha. Guha also influenced other scholars in this field. After Gramsci, subaltern studies found its expression as part of post-colonial studies. A number of scholars from South Asia, for example, employed a theory to evaluate the post-colonial society of India.

Focusing on the decade of the 80s, the below quote situates the subalterns in a more specific historical context and tells us how scholars have shown more interest to lower class people whose voices were not previously heard in history:

“The decade of the 80s assumes a special significance due to the fact caste, gender, and religion became important reference points in history writing, subaltern history in particular understood the need to document the lives of all the oppressed people, like peasants and workers, tribals and lower caste women and dalits, whose voices were seldom heard before in history.”⁴¹

The scholars such as Ranajit Guha, Dipesh Chakrabarty and Gyan Prakash studied post-colonial societies by using the term subaltern, which represents people who belong to the lower group or class. As it is in the collective works of Gramsci and of the scholars of the sub-continent, the focus of the subaltern studies was not on the

³⁹ *ibid*, 207.

⁴⁰ *ibid*, 202.

⁴¹ Amrita Biswas, “Research Note on Subaltern Studies”. *Journal of Literature, Culture and Media Studies*. v.1, i. 2, 2009: 203.

elites who were involved in arousing political change in society but rather on the people who belonged to the lower classes. The lower class people were at the center of their studies since they had undertaken the uprising against British rule.⁴²

Having the subaltern in mind, they also found an opportunity to analyze society in terms of gender, social status, ethnicity, etc. For example, another scholar, El Habib Louai concludes that the subaltern as an umbrella concept is important to give voice to the silent subjects. He explains this with the following passage:

"It becomes clear nowadays with the postmodern turn as conceived of in the Baudrillard's terms of the disappearance of the real and the death of originality that the subaltern becomes defined in descriptive terms according to a particular marginalized subject position in any given cultural or social context. Subalternity as a condition becomes an umbrella concept which gained an extended attractive fashion. People in the present time would willingly like to occupy the position of a subaltern whose silence is possibly voiced through the advocating representation of an intellectual."⁴³

The subaltern studies developed in the 1980s when a number of English and Indian writers published their essays in a journal entitled *Subaltern Studies: Writings on South Asian History and Society*. With the success of their works, subaltern studies gained more popularity around the world. The most notable articles were "Subaltern Studies: 'from Writing with (Socialist) Passion to Following the (Postmodern) Fashion'" by Hannah Altern, "Subaltern Studies and Postcolonial Historiography" by Dipesh Chakrabarty and "Selected Subaltern Studies" by Ranajit Guha. It was Ranajit Guha who was in charge of editing these essays that focused on the perspective of the subaltern, not the perspective of the colonizer, in his classic book, *The Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India*.⁴⁴

With Dipesh Chakrabarty, subaltern studies emerged as a discipline but only a small group of scholars contributed to this area. Chakrabarty used subaltern studies in his work and thereafter, it undoubtedly emerged as a prominent school of thought in 1982 after a series of debates, which mainly focused on the modern history of India, including the roles of common people or subalterns.⁴⁵

⁴² K. Sivaramakrishnan, "Situating the Subaltern: History and Anthropology in the Subaltern Studies Project", *Journal of Historical Sociology*, v. 8, i. 4, December 1995: 402- 403.

⁴³ El Habib Louai, "Retracing the Concept of the Subaltern from Gramsci to Spivak: Historical Developments and New Applications", *African Journal of History and Culture*. v. 4, i. 1, January 2012: 7

⁴⁴ Ranajit Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983.

⁴⁵ Dipesh Chakrabarty, "A Small History of Subaltern Studies." *Habitations of Modernity*. New York: Orient Blackswan, (2004): 9-28.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak also contributed to this field. Spivak came up with a very critical yet intellectual point of view. She questioned how western white men exported their ideologies to people from the underdeveloped world and how those people shared the words that have been provided to them by British rule. Her contribution to the field is questioning whether or not subalterns speak for themselves.⁴⁶

Several scholars from Turkey also have studied subalterns who were not represented in official documents. They have used a variety of state and non-state sources, such as folk stories. In other words, they study people who did not have voices in official documents. They are usually women, children, the disabled and so on. Necmi Erdoğan, Mahmut Mutman, Boğaç Ergene and Umut Yıldırım are the prominent scholars from Turkey who have written on this subject.

Necmi Erdoğan uses the terms “mâdun” and “mâduniyet” to refer to subaltern and subalternity respectively, in his article “Devleti ‘İdare Etmek’: Mâduniyet ve Düzenbazlık” (“Making Do with the State: Subalternity and Metis”). He sees the concept of popular metis as an intermediary space between the state and subalterns. According to him, subaltern people act within the borders of this space and if they find an opportunity, they employ tactics, simulations, and methods that help them to hide themselves. Thanks to their tactics and methods, subalterns can escape from the eyes of the state. Nevertheless, similar to Gramsci, it is difficult for them to break their subordination. Erdoğan argues that although they are subject to the activities of the state, they can at least manage state practices by means of creative tactics.⁴⁷

Mahmut Mutman is in the same line with Spivak. In his article “Özne: Bir Başka Arşiv” (“Subject: Another Archive”), he argues that the subaltern represents someone who does not find a space in the public realm. Neither is his voice heard nor is he able to be represented officially, just like disenfranchised groups. Mutman argues that the subaltern does not have voice for himself unless he acts individually.

⁴⁶ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. London: Macmillan Education. From Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (eds.) (1988): 271-313.

⁴⁷ Necmi Erdoğan, “Devleti İdare Etmek: Mâduniyet ve Düzenbazlık”, *Toplum ve Bilim Dergisi*, v. 83 (1999-2000): 9-10.

In order to have his voice heard, he has to talk to other subalterns and act collectively.⁴⁸

Boğaç Ergene is another scholar who has written on the concept of the subaltern. In his article, “Mâduniyet Okulu, Post-Kolonyal Eleştiri ve Tarihte Bilgi-Özne Sorunu: Osmanlı Tarihçiliği İçin Yeni Dersler Mi?” (“Subaltern School, Postcolonial Critique, and the Relationship between Knowledge and Subject: New Lessons for Ottoman History Writing?”), he makes a post-colonial critique of subaltern studies. According to him, homogenous subaltern groups can also be thought of as equivocal, hybrid or fluid. Here he is in line with Necmi Erdoğan as they both see subaltern studies as an alternative to understanding the Ottoman peasantry, in other words the heterogeneous and contradictory relationship between the sultan and the people. In that sense, the absence of historical documents is as important as their presence because we can perceive the dynamics between the elite and the peasants by means of the absence of these historical documents.⁴⁹

Another scholar, Umut Yıldırım tells in his article, “Tarihyazımına Farklı Bir Öneri: Mâduniyet Çalışmaları Projesi” (“Alternative Proposal to Historiography: Project of Subaltern Studies”), that the historiographical development of subaltern studies from Gramsci to post-colonial scholars and include the works of Mutman and Ergene. In Yıldırım’s view, the term subaltern is useful to analyze the groups who cannot represent themselves in non-Western societies. Yıldırım argues that with the modernization and nation-building projects of the Republic in Turkey; the groups and classes are silenced by the official ideology. Thus, a subaltern approach helps us analyze the people who were silenced. The subaltern studies provide a fresh perspective in this regard.⁵⁰ In general, I agree with Yıldırım and the other scholars on the use of this concept.

Bülent Somay also uses the term subaltern in his article “Madunların Küstahlığı.”⁵¹ Somay first focuses on difficulties in using the term ‘subaltern.’ He thinks that there is a problem to translate the term subaltern in Turkish as ‘madûn’. Here there is a

⁴⁸ Mahmut Mutman, “Özne: Bir Başka Arşiv”, **Toplum ve Bilim Dergisi**, v. 73 (1997): 23.

⁴⁹ Boğaç Ergene, “Mâduniyet Okulu, Post-Kolonyal Eleştiri ve Bilgi-Özne Sorunu”, **Toplum ve Bilim Dergisi**, v. 83 (1999-2000): 32-44.

⁵⁰ Umut Yıldırım, “Tarihyazımına Farklı Bir Öneri: Mâduniyet Çalışmaları Projesi”, **Toplum ve Bilim Dergisi**, v. 91 (2002): 334-343.

⁵¹ This article is included in Bülent Somay’s book *Çokbilmiş Özne* published by Metis Publications in 2008 and this article was not translated into English.

language limit and thus the subaltern cannot exactly mean ‘mâdun.’ Second, Somay insists that each lower group cannot be regarded as subaltern. He also points out that the language as the tool of the Western, white, bourgeoisie, heterosexual and nation-building man is a barrier to understand the conditions of the voiceless subaltern. Furthermore, subalternity is not a one-dimensional concept like the lower vs. the elite; but it has got multi dimensions such as a bourgeoisie woman vs. a proletariat man, a male child vs. an adult woman, a white woman vs. a black man.⁵² In this thesis, I will also show how it is multi-dimensional in terms of employees vs. employers, male peasants vs. gendarmes, female peasants vs. aghas or caimacams, intellectuals vs. the majority of people or the authority, women of official marriage vs. women of unofficial ones, and finally poor people vs. wealthy people.

One of the most recent studies on subalternity in Turkey was also done by İsmail Çağlar. In his article “Taşradaki Madunlar: Erken Cumhuriyet Döneminde Muhafazakâr Muhalefet”,⁵³ Çağlar states that there were actors who resisted to the Republican modernization especially in rural parts of Turkey and he relies on the memories of some religious men from Rize. He points out that although the early Republican regime banned the religious education, traditional schools called *medrese* continued to give education in an unofficial way.

In addition to the subaltern studies discussed above, I additionally rely on James C. Scott to understand the disguise mechanisms of some peasants in Sabahattin Ali’s stories. To make my point clearer here, I give the below quote from Scott:

“Like prudent opposition newspaper editors under strict censorship, subordinate groups must find ways of getting their message across, while staying somehow within the law. This requires an experimental spirit and a capacity to test and exploit all the loopholes, ambiguities, silences, and lapses available to them. It means somehow setting a course at the very perimeter of what authorities are obliged to permit or unable to prevent. It means carving out a tenuous public political life for themselves in a political order that, in principle forbids such a life unless fully orchestrated from above.”⁵⁴

I also employ Michel de Certeau’s approach on subalterns’ “clever tricks, knowing to get away things, ‘hunter’s cunning’, maneuvers, polymorphic simulations, joyful discoveries, poetic as well as warlike.” The full quote by de Certeau well explains what I mean by the above statement:

⁵² Bülent Somay, “Madunların Küstahlığı”, *Çokbilmiş Özne*. 2. bs. (İstanbul: Metis Yayıncılık, 2011), 155-190.

⁵³ İsmail Çağlar, “Taşradaki Madunlar: Erken Cumhuriyet Dönemi’nde Muhafazakâr Muhalefet”, *Akademik İncelemeler Dergisi (Journal of Academic Inquiries)*, v.10 i.1 (2015):109-134.

⁵⁴ James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance* (New Haven and London, Yale University, 1990), 138-139.

"Many everyday practices (talking, reading, moving about, shopping, cooking, etc.) are tactical in character. And so are, more generally, many "ways of operating": victories of the "weak" over the "strong" (whether the strength be that of powerful people or the violence of things or of an imposed order, etc.), clever tricks, knowing to get away things, "hunter's cunning," maneuvers, polymorphic simulations, joyful discoveries, poetic as well as warlike."⁵⁵

In brief, both Scott and de Certeau are important figures to comprehend the tactics and the reasons behind the peasants' different behaviors at different times.

Furthermore, I will also refer to Michel Foucault in the third chapter "Intellectual Subalterns: Strangers in Their Lands" in order to understand the underlying reasons behind the division between the so-called normal and the so-called abnormal people of society. Foucault uses the word *leper*⁵⁶ in his book *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of Prison* to specify the ones who are excluded from the society and he says that:

"On the one hand, the lepers are treated as plague victims; the tactics of individualizing disciplines are imposed on the excluded; and, on the other hand, the universality of disciplinary controls makes it possible to brand the 'leper' and to bring into play against him the dualistic mechanisms of exclusion. The constant division between the normal and the abnormal, to which every individual is subjected, brings us back to our own time, by applying the binary branding and exile of the leper to quite different objects; the existence of a whole set of techniques and institutions for measuring, supervising and correcting the abnormal brings into play the disciplinary mechanisms to which the fear of the plague gave rise. All the mechanisms of power which, even today, are disposed around the abnormal individual, to brand him and to alter him, are composed of those two forms from which they distantly derive."⁵⁷

Herein, the term 'leper' also has a metaphorical meaning that refers to the so-called abnormal people who think and act differently from the majority in society and therefore they should be supervised in disciplinary places such as hospitals or prisons.

In a similar vein, I will also use a similar approach to catch the voices of the subalterns. I will focus on Sabahattin Ali's stories since his works have not been studied from this perspective. For example, academic studies on Sabahattin Ali and his works have mostly been done by the departments of Turkish Language and Literature and Comparative Literature. The first and the most detailed academic research on Sabahattin Ali's works was done by Ramazan Korkmaz in 1991, titled "Sabahattin Ali: Human and Work" (Sabahattin Ali: İnsan ve Eser").⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1984), 20.

⁵⁶ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (Translated from the French by Alan Sheridan, New York, Vintage Books, A Division of Random House, 1995), 199.

⁵⁷ *ibid*, 199-200.

⁵⁸ Ramazan Korkmaz, "Sabahattin Ali: İnsan ve Eser" (Ph.D. Thesis, Firat University, Institute of Social Sciences, 1991).

Another study on Sabahattin Ali was made by Zübeyde Şenderin.⁵⁹ Like Korkmaz, Şenderin focuses on social realism, which is obvious in the works of Sabahattin Ali. Moreover, Mine Şengül emphasizes on Sabahattin Ali's female characters and their education in her thesis, "Women and Women Education in Sabahattin Ali's Stories and Novels".⁶⁰ Şengül firstly compares Sabahattin Ali's female characters as being literate or illiterate. She implies that Sabahattin Ali gives importance to the education of women since it is in this way that they can gain more freedom and power in their societies.

A'dan Z'ye Sabahattin Ali (Sabahattin Ali from A to Z) by Sevengül Sönmez is the most detailed study on Sabahattin Ali.⁶¹ It was published with the help of Filiz Ali, Sabahattin Ali's daughter. Sönmez elaborately refers to people, events, and works that affected Sabahattin Ali during his life. She also provides the reader with photographs of Sabahattin Ali and presents a visual archive on him. There is also a documentary film called *Sabah Yıldızı: Sabahattin Ali* and it was directed by Metin Avdaç. Inspired by Sabahattin Ali's life, the film is in fact a critique of unsolved murders in Turkey.⁶²

1.3.2. Methodology

Unlike most of the existing literature on Sabahattin Ali and his works, I take a subaltern approach in this thesis in order to analyze the people who were silenced during early Republican Turkey. In other words, my aim is to discover the voices of subalterns in Sabahattin Ali's stories.

Although I have read all of the author's works, such as his novels, stories, poems, published newspaper and journal articles as well as his pleadings in the courts, I have limited my research to his stories. I have divided my thesis into three main chapters: "Male Subalterns: The Losers?", "Intellectual Subalterns: Strangers in Their Lands" and "Woman, Twice Subaltern?".

The present first/introductory chapter will be followed by three other chapters. In the second chapter, "Male Subalterns: The Losers?" I take a subaltern perspective to

⁵⁹ Zübeyde Şenderin, "Sabahattin Ali'nin Eserlerinde Toplumsal Gerçeklik" (M.A. Thesis, Kırıkkale University, Institute of Social Sciences, 1996).

⁶⁰ Mine Şengül, "Sabahattin Ali'nin Roman ve Hikâyelerinde Kadın ve Kadın Eğitimi" (M.A. Thesis, Dokuz Eylül University, Institute of Education, 2011).

⁶¹ Sönmez, *A'dan Z'ye Sabahattin Ali*.

⁶² <http://sabahyildizi-sabahattinali.blogspot.com.tr/> [19.10.2015].

interpret some of Sabahattin Ali's stories; *A Sailor's Story* (*Bir Gemici Hikâyesi*), *An Escape* (*Bir Firar*), *Canal* (*Kanal*), *Gendarme Bekir* (*Candarma Bekir*), *Truck* (*Kamyon*), *Apartment* (*Apartman*), *Stallholder* (*Pazarcı*), *Identification Card* (*Kafakâğıdı*), *Wall* (*Duvar*), *Voice* (*Ses*), *Dog* (*Köpek*), and *A Conference* (*Bir Konferans*). In general, the protagonists in these stories are all peasants, who face difficulties in their lives and were exploited by the men of power.

In the third chapter, "Intellectual Subalterns: Strangers in Their Lands?", I will examine the stories entitled *For a Black Undershirt* (*Bir Siyah Fanila İçin*), *That Friend of Mine* (*O Arkadaşım*), *A Scandal* (*Bir Skandal*), *Intellectual Friend* (*Fikir Arkadaşı*), *Enemy* (*Düşman*), *Asphalt Road* (*Asfalt Yol*) and *Decollement* (*Dekolman*). The protagonists examined for this chapter are educated and intellectual male characters. They are in pursuit of change and progress. They are very sensitive about the problems of the society in which they live. They feel responsible and thus struggle to make changes. However, they fail in their struggle to enlighten people around them. They are seen as 'lepers' and thus they are stigmatized by the authority figures as well as by the majority of the society. In addition to point such a struggle, I aim to show their clash with the authority figures and their desire for individual freedom; in other words their dilemma.

In the fourth chapter, "Woman, Twice Subaltern?", I will address the stories, *The Comic of the City* (*Komik-i Şehir*), *Geese* (*Kazlar*), *Oxcart* (*Kağnı*), *Gramophone Woman* (*Gramofon Avrat*), *Cars for Five Kuruş* (*Arabalar Beş Kuruşa*), *Hot Water* (*Sıcak Su*), *New World* (*Yeni Dünya*⁶³), *Two Women* (*İki Kadın*), *Freckled* (*Çilli*) and *Lifeguard* (*Cankurtaran*). In these stories, I see that the female protagonists are not only oppressed by the same reasons as the males, but they are still weaker and more vulnerable in society because they are female. I will show how female protagonists in these stories are vulnerable. Compared to men, women are more voiceless. Indeed, they are officially less represented. Briefly, the aim of this chapter is to question how women in Sabahattin Ali's stories are twice subalterns.

⁶³ I have explained the name 'Yeni Dünya' with reference to kubbealtilugati.com online dictionary in page 2.

2. MALE SUBALTERNS: THE LOSERS?

“Death comes and wanders at our door,
Dark news reaches to the village,
Two brides sing out as lambs,
Wash hodjha wash, to our blood to be pour out,
To our friends to cry, our enemies to watch...”⁶⁴

The folk song above gives us clues about the rural areas the Early Republican Turkey. In this chapter, I will focus on Sabahattin Ali's male characters who are subalterns living in both rural and urban areas. However, most of the characters analyzed here are generally peasants and they are always subordinate to authority. The authority figures in general oppress them and they rarely find an opportunity to change their existing situation. Some of them are too fatalistic which makes them so passive they fail to change their circumstances.

2.1. A Sailor's Story (Bir Gemici Hikâyesi), 1930⁶⁵

This story is published in *Resimli Ay* journal in 1930. The protagonist of the story is a nineteen-year old man. Both the sudden death of his lieutenant father and his speech disorder -stammering- prevent him from continuing his education. Still, he learns to read. When growing older, he, a silent man, starts to work as a ship stoker. Initially, he has a difficult time adapting himself to his new conditions. He is a dutiful man and does his job carefully. As time goes by, however, he feels unhappy since he spends most of his time on the ship. This is too boring for him.

There are some other things that make him feel depressed. He finds the job too difficult and the food not good. Further, like the others, he hates the ship captain since he swears the whole day. The captain drinks a lot, which earned him the nickname, “The Barrel” (*Fıçıl*). Sabahattin Ali tells us why he is given this nickname:

⁶⁴ “Ecel gelir kapımızı dolaşır,
Kara haberimiz köye ulaşır,
Çifte gelin kuzu gibi meleşir,
Yuma hocam, yuma, kanımız aksın,
Dostumuz ağlasın, düşmanlar baksın...”

Ali, Sabahattin Ali Bütün Eserleri - Eleştirel Basım, 835.

⁶⁵ Sabahattin Ali published this story fourteen years before Sartre's *No Exit*, but I think it is noteworthy to see the existentialist side of Sabahattin Ali and some surprising similarities between their works.

“Once upon a time this man was a cavalry in a steamy and clipper ship. There was a powder keg with a wick in his cabin. When he stole the money of the crew or did something wrong, the men rioted and tried to throw him overboard. At that moment he got closer to the powder keg with his cigarette and told them: If you come closer, we all blow up!” and the crew run off in all directions. Then, one night a smart cabin boy spy on the captain and saw that he was drinking wine from this barrel. Since then he has been called as the Barrel Captain.”⁶⁶

On the ship, it is the captain that represents authority. He follows some strategies to keep up his authority as the above statement describes.

As I have previously stated, although the protagonist does not speak well, his being literate makes him different from the others on the ship. One day while he is doing his job, he starts thinking about his future after questioning his working conditions and his job in general. He knows that doing such a hard job would lead to his death in the end. Indeed, even a stronger man doing this job would die in a short time.⁶⁷

He used to think that his life was predestined so he did not have much choice until that moment. In other words, he had a belief that all events that occur have already been determined by powerful ones and these events are naturally coincidental. With such a belief, he had already accepted what was offered to him. But now he questions if he has a freedom of choice and thinks to find the reasons behind his submission to authority or his vulnerability to outside influences like Captain Barrel. Sabahattin Ali writes: “for him or his friends and even for the ones who are like him, this “coincidence” is a cause preventing them from an action and a resistance.”⁶⁸

As it is stated in the above sentence, such a way of thinking prevents them from changing their circumstances, which requires challenging authority to at the very least get better food. The young man also questions his life as follows:

“Whereas, it is the same, sooner or later it does not matter and it is not possible to be worse than now. So why don’t they engage in coincidence? Why do they hesitate? Yeah, everything is a coincidence... He does not have anything to wear while the owner can rug up. It is just a coincidence... But if the owner gives each of them a twenty liras more, - and this doesn’t make his financial accounts worse- than they would have many clothes and the ‘coincidence’ would be different.”⁶⁹

⁶⁶ “Bu adam vaktiyle gene böyle buharlı, hem yelkenli bir gemide süvariye, kamarasında fitilli bir barut fiçisi durmuş. Tayfanın yarı aylıklarını iç ettiği yahut başka bir münasebetsizlik yaptığı zaman, millet ayaklanır herifi denize atmak isterlermiş. O zaman kaptan, dudağından hiç düşmeyen sigara ile fiçiyä yaklaşır: “Eğer yanıma sokulursanız, hep beraber uçarız!” der, tabii tayfa da sokulamaz, dağılmış, sonra açığöz bir miço, geceleyin herifi gözetleyerek, fiçinin arka tarafındaki musluktan bardak bardak şarap doldurup içtiğini görmüş ve iş meydana çıkmış. Kendisine o zamandan beri fiçi kaptan diyorlarmış.” *ibid*, 809.

⁶⁷ *ibid*, 810.

⁶⁸ “O zaman birdenbire farkına vardı ki, kendisini ve arkadaşlarını, hatta bütün kendisine benzeyenleri bir hareketten, bir kabarıştan men eden bu “tesadüfe inanma”dır.” *ibid*, 810

⁶⁹ “Hâlbuki mademki eninde sonunda hep birdi ve hiçbir zaman şimdi olduklarından daha fena olmaları mümkün değildi, niçin “tesadüf”e de hücum etmekten çekinmeliydi? Evet, hep tesadüf...

Under the light of those thoughts, the young stoker mobilizes his fellow crewmen to take action against the captain. He says: "Come on! What are you waiting for? Let's go to the captain and want some meat. If he does not give, we will take by force. We cannot make a fire by eating only broad bean!"⁷⁰

When the young stoker takes the risk to rebel, he as a subaltern starts to speak for himself. Sabahattin Ali implies that taking such an action break their silence. The dialogue between the young man and the other crewmen shows this well:

"Why does this drunkard eat meat?"

"Because he is a captain!"

"But he is fooler than an ox!"

"But he is more literate than you."

"If they had given me a chance, I also would have been educated..."

"What can we do? Your father died early, you couldn't have your disability treated and not attend to school... It is the irony of coincidence."⁷¹

The crewmen act courageously and rebel to get better food. The captain gets really frightened and he then gives good food to the crewmen. But at the end, it is the captain that takes the control. He throws the young stoker at the Port-Sait and the other crewmen in Istanbul. In other words, they lose their jobs. It appears that the captain gets rid of the stoker first in order to break the solidarity among the rebels.

In this story, Sabahattin Ali tells us how a stoker becomes aware of his rights. We can analyze what happens throughout the story in two phases. In the first phase, we learn that the young stoker is stammering. People make fun of him because of this impediment. Also, this young man cannot attend school after the death of his lieutenant father. Later, as he lives near a coastal region where there are few job opportunities besides a job on a ship, he starts to work as a stoker.

Since the captain represents the authority on the ship, the stoker initially feels that he has to obey his rules. It is only the captain who determines the amount of money and type of food which is given to the crewmen. For example, the captain eats meat but

Onun sırtına giyeceği yoktu ve mal sahibi seksen kat üst üste giyebilirdi. Bu tesadüftü... Fakat eğer mal sahibi bunlara ayda yirmişer lira fazla verse, -bunu yapmak onu hiç de sarsmazdı- o zaman bunların da birer kat, ikişer kat elbiseleri, çamaşırları olur ve "tesadüf" böyle olmazdı..." *ibid*, 811.

⁷⁰ "Hadi be, ne duruyorsunuz, kaptana gidip et isteyeceğiz. Vermezse zorla alacağız... Kuru baklayla ateş yakamayız biz!..." *ibid*, 811.

⁷¹ "O neden et yiyor, o sarhoş?"

"Çünkü o kaptan!"

"Fakat o, bir öküzden daha budaladır!"

"Fakat senden çok okumuştur!"

"Beni de okutsalar ben de okurdum..."

"Ne yapalım, senin baban çabuk öldü, senin diline baktırılmadı ve sen okuyamadın... Tesadüfün cilvesi bu!" *ibid*, 811.

the crew only eats broad beans. The captain owns a considerable number of clothes but they have only a few to wear. In other words, Sabahattin Ali shows the reader the class differences between the captain and the lower class people like the stoker and the crewmen. By the end of the story, they become aware of their rights and try to bring some equality to their life, at least to get better food.

In the second phase, the young stoker thinks deeply about his situation and he compares his own life to that of the captain. He gets stressed whenever he thinks of his future on the ship. Sabahattin Ali explains this as follows:

“He bit the left side of his lower lip and moved his head. He does it when he does not want to think anything. This time, he did not want to think about those things. And suddenly he got angry about himself for he did not want to think. Actually, this suffered him like a physical pain but thinking was the only that he had. They took everything, except his mind. Therefore, he had to benefit from it; otherwise it was a shame.”⁷²

The above paragraph shows that thinking itself is something painful. It is like a physical pain, which in fact makes the protagonist take action to light the fire for a riot.

To me, Sabahattin Ali's focus on the relationship between thinking and suffering is important to note here. Coincidence is another issue that deserves attention. Coincidence and one's suffering mind can be related to existentialism, which is the twentieth century philosophical movement, arguing that people are entirely free and thus responsible for what they make of themselves. Jean Paul Sartre is the pioneer of this philosophy.

To elaborate more, the above quotation is quite similar to the words of Garcin, the protagonist of *No Exit*⁷³, a play by Sartre. Garcin tells his suffering of mind as such: “I will take it all; tongs, molten lead, prongs, garrotes, all that burns, all that tears, I want to truly suffer. Better one hundred bites, better the whip, vitriol, than this suffering in the head, this ghost of suffering which grazes and caresses and never hurts enough.”⁷⁴

Just like Sartre's Garcin, Sabahattin Ali's young stoker is trying to avoid thinking deeply because it hurts him. However, he cannot help himself since thinking gives

⁷² “Alt dudağının sol tarafını dişlerinin arasına alarak başıyla kısa bir hareket yaptı. Bir şey düşünmek istemediği zaman böyle yapardı. Ve bu sefer bunları düşünmek istemediği için kendi kendine kızdı. Gerçi, bu ona bir yaranın üstünde parmakla oynuyormuş gibi bir ıstırap veriyordu, fakat mademki elinde olan bir tek imkân buydu; kendisinden her şeyi almışlar, bir bunu alamamışlardı, artık bundan da istifade edemezse ayıptı.” *ibid*, 810.

⁷³ *No Exit* is an existentialist play by Jean Paul Sartre written in 1944.

⁷⁴ *No Exit*, Act 1, Scene 5. http://quotes.yourdictionary.com/slug_whip/quote/185237/ [21.08.2015].

him a chance to change his condition. This painful process indeed makes him miraculously speak fluently and convince the rest of crewmen to start the riot. That is to say, he and the other crewmen discover their inner strength by rebelling. The fire of the riot breaks their silence and it brings equality so that they can eat the same food as the captain.

Through this story, Sabahattin Ali shows us how being literate helps one have authority, in other words power. To the writer, coincidence does not exist. His protagonist, in the beginning believes that his life was determined by coincidence, just like the rest of the crewmen. When he starts to think and question, he becomes enlightened which leads him to reject the idea that coincidences dictate our life. They are primarily the result of unfair practices by authority in everyday life. Sabahattin Ali writes this to explain how it is not so difficult take responsibility for one's life. He states: "Yet, it was not so long and hard as they expected."⁷⁵

It is obvious that this story also has some Marxist elements. For example, the stoker frees himself from his false-consciousness since being literate increases his level of consciousness. Once he has changed his perception of life and leaves no place to coincidence, he finds an opportunity to end his submissiveness. In other words, by getting the same food as the captain, he can bring equality to himself and the others. Sabahattin Ali shows that lower class people have hopes to live better lives even though they can lose their jobs.

In my opinion, Sabahattin Ali implies that the crewmen unlike the ship captain, do not have the means of production. Subsequently, they become successful in bringing equality only for a short time. Here, the young sailor's resistance to authority is not fruitless but it does not end their subordination as stated by Gramsci at the beginning of the introductory chapter.

2.2. An Escape (Bir Firar), 1933

"At last he admitted that he raided the İmamköy Mosque and he robbed the ones performing the prayer. However he was not even aware of such thing. I can't be

⁷⁵ "Mamafih, iş korktukları kadar uzun ve güç olmadı." Ali, *ibid*, 812.

helped?...This is beating... Makes you say anything.”⁷⁶ This quote is from one of Sabahattin Ali’s shortest stories, *An Escape*. In this story, İdris is the protagonist who is blamed for a mosque robbery in his village, known as İmamköy. Therefore, the gendarmes bring him to a police station where they severely beat him. İdris cannot bear the beating anymore and thus he accepts the accusations.

In fact, İdris is a weak man. In his village, there are not many people who stand behind him and even the important figures of the village blame him for the robbery. The headman (*muhtar*) and the grocer of the village have testified against him by arguing that they saw him on the way to İmamköy just one day before the robbery. Their testimony makes İdris the number one suspect. There are also other reasons that make people believe that İdris did it. Sabahattin Ali describes this with the following quote:

“After all İdris is wandering around here like a rascal, he entered into many skullduggeries. He was also caught while selling cigarette paper and flint stone a couple of times. What was important was that villagers were complaining about him. The ones who were being respective to his father (village’s imam) at first, started to want him to disappear when they saw him. While İdris was at the village gendarmes were not to be gone from the village...”⁷⁷

The quote shows a hidden negotiation between the gendarmes and the peasants. Together, they seek to get rid of İdris since he has wandered around and gotten involved with smuggling.

Still, the gendarmes are not satisfied with İdris’ confession and torture him more because they are expected to find the stolen items. In order to avoid the beating, İdris tells another lie that he had someone help him during the robbery. However, his so-called accomplice is a coffeehouse holder, Süleyman. In fact, this man is the only person who has looked after İdris and given him good advice following the death of his father.

After İdris’s confession, the gendarmes decide to go to İmamköy to arrest Süleyman, too. İdris soon regrets giving Süleyman’s name to the gendarmes. His psychology is detailed below:

⁷⁶ “Bayram namazında İmamköy Camii’ni bastığını ve orada namaz kılanları soyduğunu en nihayet itiraf etmişti. Hâlbuki böyle bir şeyden haberi bile yoktu... Ne çare?... Dayak bu... Her şeyi söyler.” *ibid*, 827.

⁷⁷ “İdris de zaten kaç senedir buralarda serseri serseri dolaşıyor, binbir türlü dalaverelere girip çıkıyordu. Birkaç kere de sigara kâğıdı ve çakmaktaşı satarken yakalanmıştı. Asıl mühimi, köylü kendisinden şikâyetçiydi. İlk zamanlarda rahmetli babasının –babası köyün imamıydı- hatırını sayanlar bile onun bu hallerini görünce kaybolmasını istemeye başladılar. İdris köyde kaldıkça candarmanın ayağı kesilmeyecekti.” *ibid*, 827.

“Where did this poor man’s name come to mind in the first place? Now gendarmes were going to lay down the old man and beat him. Beat him until he was dead. He would tell them he did not know anything about it, he would be swearing lots of vows, but he was going to be beating anyway. He is going to beg with his trembling, he will want to tell, he will squirm and squirm but he was going to be beaten anyway.”⁷⁸

Since he feels so sad about what would happen to Süleyman, İdris attempts to escape for a moment but the gendarmes are quick to shoot him. Before he dies, he tells the gendarmes that neither he nor Süleyman knows anything about the mosque robbery.

In this story, İdris is a subaltern who does not challenge authority and fails to escape. Too much pressure is placed on him by the peasants and the gendarmes, and he is beaten violently. Under such circumstances, he remains silent. When he sees that the gendarmes will never believe in him, he has no choice but to accept the accusations. Under the physical torture, he cannot speak for himself and is forced to lie.

This poor man does not challenge the gendarmes since he thinks that they are just doing their jobs. Indeed, they are not bad guys in his eyes because beating him is part of their job. Sabahattin Ali writes: “They were not such bad guys. But what can they do? It’s their duty... While they are going to find the convict, their lieutenant says ‘If you cannot find the convict, don’t come back!’ This one who commits the robbery can be dangerous, thus it was a must to find him.”⁷⁹

This story has other noteworthy aspects. The gendarmes are forced by the lieutenant to find the convict. Thus, they search for any convict and find İdris suitable to blame for the robbery. Finally, as the title of the story implies, İdris’ attempt to escape from the gendarmes is a failure. He thus becomes a victim like some other subalterns.

2.3. Canal (Kanal), 1934

Canal tells a usual but tragic story in a village located in Konya. In the 1930s when this story was written, Konya which was located in Central Anatolia, did not have plentiful water resources. Water was provided through canals. Without a central government to build canals and distribute water equally among the peasants, quarrels

⁷⁸ “Nereden aklına evvela bu zavallının ismi gelmişti? Şimdi candarmalar, hiçbir şeyden haberi olmayan ihtiyarı yatıracaklar ve döveceklerdi. Geberinceye kadar döveceklerdi. Süleyman Ağa “Bilmiyorum!” diyecek, binbir türlü yemin edecek, fakat dayağı yiyecekti. Titrek sesiyle yalvaracak, anlatmak isteyecek, kıvrım kıvrım kıvrınacak, fakat dayağı yiyecekti.” *ibid*, 829.

⁷⁹ “Bunlar da aslında fena adamlar değillerdi... Fakat ne yapsınlar, vazife... Takibe çıkarken, “Faili bulmadan gelirsiniz gözüme görünmeyin!” diye yüzbaşı sıkı sıkı emirler vermişti. Köyü soyan çoktan kırışi kırmış olacağı için, ne yapıp edip faili bulmak lazımdı.” *ibid*, 827.

become a routine of the day. From this background, Sabahattin Ali points out the water dispute in a Konya village where two peasants compete over the scarce water.

The protagonists of the story are Mehmet from Dedemköy and Zağar Mehmet, who are two childhood friends. Their friendship, however, ends when they get married and have kids, and thus need to work harder than ever. The arduous village life is explained by Sabahattin Ali with the following sentence: "The life started proceeding like it continued for hundreds of years as a silence war to root a morsel out of hard soil."⁸⁰

A problem arises when Zağar Mehmet realizes that there is a decrease in the water level of the canal that was through his field. This happens because Mehmet from Dedemköy directs the water to his land. To solve the problem, Zağar Mehmet sends his six year-old son to his childhood friend to release the water as soon as possible, but he receives no reply. Zağar Mehmet's crop dries up day by day while that of Mehmet from Dedemköy remains wet and fertile. Even contacting The Water Directorate in Çumra does not solve his water problem.

Sabahattin Ali narrates Zağar Mehmet's desperation as follows: "Zağar Mehmet sees that as his crop gets more yellow, his wife, his sixty-year-old mother who works in the field with a mattock in her hands, and his six-year-old son get paler and paler and he thinks and waits. No one knows what a country man living in a steppe thinks or waits for."⁸¹

In a state of utter desperation, Zağar Mehmet shoots his childhood friend, Mehmet from Dedemköy and his brother. Just after he killed them, Zağar Mehmet tells his wife to open the canal to water his land. He kills for his family, for whom he needs to provide a livelihood. As stated at the following quotation, he does not want his son to suffer from starvation. Sabahattin Ali shows this to the readers with the following quote: "He called after his wife while she was going to open the canal and advised him to not to make his son suffer, bring him to the jail for some time and not to insult his mother. Later he sat beneath the field. He looked at his wife who was opening the

⁸⁰ "Hayat, yüzyıllardan beri devam ettiği gibi, katı topraktan bir lokma bir şey sökmek için, sessiz bir dövüş halinde ilerlemeye başladı." *ibid*, 833.

⁸¹ "Zağar Mehmet, bir karışken sararan ekinlerle beraber karısının, akşamlar kadar elinde çapa ile iki kat çalışan altmışlık anasının ve altı yaşındaki oğlunun da sarardıklarını görüyor, düşünüyor ve bekliyordu. Bozkır köylüsünün ne düşündüğünü ve ne beklediğini kimse bilmez." *ibid*, 834.

canal and waited for the village headman and gendarmes who were coming from a long way.”⁸²

Sabahattin Ali tells a tragic story of two peasants who struggle to survive in harsh village conditions. Zağar Mehmet, in particular does not have many choices. He is the only male in his family and therefore needs to work hard to finance his family. When his crops dry, he becomes desperate. His anger grows so much that he kills Mehmet from Dedemköy and his brother. Water is extremely important because it must water the soil and can lead one man to kill another. The author writes about this situation as follows: “On this dead soil, nothing is easier that to kill or to be killed.”⁸³

A shepherd from Dedemköy in the same ward with Zağar Mehmet turns this tragic story into a folk song, which is also stated at the beginning of this chapter:

“Death comes and wanders at our door,
Dark news reaches to the village,
Two brides sing out as lambs,
Wash hodjha wash, to our blood to be pour out,
To our friends to cry, our enemies to watch...”⁸⁴

In *Canal*, I see both Zağar Mehmet and Mehmet from Dedemköy as subalterns. Zağar Mehmet who does not get enough water finds himself in a situation which is economically bad. He stays silent since he is the only male in his family. In order to finance his family’s needs, he kills both Mehmet from Dedemköy and his brother to avoid a possible problem while he is in prison. Mehmet from Dedemköy becomes a subaltern too since he is the one who is killed. Although we never hear his voice in the story, his death is turned into a folk song.

As it is some of his other works, Sabahattin Ali criticizes the state, here the Water Directorate. He portrays these people as ignorant since they are reluctant to solve the water problem Zağar Mehmet faces. In this case, it is informal justice common at the local level that solves the problem. In other words; Sabahattin Ali shows how formal justice fails to permeate into the rural areas.

⁸² “Karısı kanalı açmaya giderken arkasından seslendi, oğlunu zebil etmemesini, ara sıra hapishaneye getirmesini, kocakarıya da hakaret etmemelerini tembih etti. Sonra tarlanın kenarına oturdu. Kanalı açan karısına baktı, baktı ve uzaktan doğru gelen muhtarla candarmayı bekledi.” *ibid*, 835.

⁸³ “Bu ölü toprakların üstünde hiçbir şey ölmek ve öldürmek kadar kolay değildir.” *ibid*, 835.

⁸⁴ “Ecel gelir kapımızı dolaşır,
Kara haberimiz köye ulaşır,
Çifte gelin kuzu gibi meleşir,
Yuma hocam, yuma, kanımız aksın,
Dostumuz ağlasın, düşmanlar baksın...” *ibid*, 835.

2.4. Gendarme Bekir (Candarma Bekir), 1934

Gendarme Bekir tells a story of Halil Efe⁸⁵ from Çal, a small town in Denizli. Halil Efe is imprisoned for 101 years after shooting Süleyman, over a woman. Thus, Halil is sent to a prison at the center of Denizli. While he is waiting for his trial day, the public prosecutor of Çal calls him back to complete the investigation. Halil has to go to Çal from Denizli on foot, which is a difficult journey, especially in summer time.

Before they go to Denizli, Halil asks the guard to handcuff him from the front side. The guard does not like Halil so he handcuffs him from the backside. Halil thinks that the reason behind the guard's attitude is that he is poor and he is an Efe, which is indeed a symbol of a rebel. On the way to Çal, the gendarmes do not treat him well. They do not let him rest and they do not even give him water.

On the third day of the journey to Çal, they stop at a police station located in a village near Çal. At this police station, Halil sees Bekir who is a gendarme and in a close friend of the dead Süleyman. In other words, Halil and Bekir know each other from the day Halil murdered Süleyman. After the murder, Halil runs into the mountains and becomes a bandit. Bekir is a young boy at that time and he reports Halil's location to the gendarmes a few times, which really exacerbates Halil. So Halil threatens Bekir that he would kill him if he reported him once more. Upon this threat, Bekir silences himself but he also thinks of ways to punish Halil. Now he is a gendarme and thus has power. He can take his revenge easily. Furthermore, he will escort Halil to Çal, as the gendarmes have changed their shift.

Before the morning time, Bekir wakes Halil at the police station. He comes there with other people who also hate Halil. In front of everybody, Bekir swears and severely beats Halil. Although he has been beaten harshly, Halil remains silent to maintain his pride as a male and an Efe.

Bekir later takes Halil to the police station in Çal. While they are on the way to the Çal police station, the metal loop from Halil's handcuff drops. Bekir thinks that Halil is physically weak due to the beating, so he cannot pose any threat on him. He lets Halil take the handcuffs out. Then they start talking and Halil even offers a cigarette

⁸⁵ Efe: 1. The name given to the masters of zeibek (*zeybek*), village brave men at West Anatolia at Aydın and İzmir. 2. Addressing word being used for men at villages and towns. <http://www.kubbealtilugati.com/sonuclar.aspx?km=efe&mi=0> [20.08.2015].

to Bekir and reminds him that both of them are from Çal. So at that point they seem to forget what have happened at the police station.

After a while, when Bekir lays down his gun to light his cigarette, Halil takes the gun promptly. Bekir implores desperately but Halil does not forgive him and shoots him on the spot. Here, Halil explains that “It’s not that my heart did not hurt, there was countryman ship even we were not close. We were young men of a quarter. But the insult he made was only to be cleaned by blood. I could not go show my face among people while Bekir is alive.”⁸⁶

This story focuses on a feud between Halil and Bekir, but, there are other sub-stories. For example, at the beginning of the story, Halil explains why he is condemned to 101 years: “State asks of me two *bashbozüks* (free headed), a gendarme, a mauser⁸⁷, two horses.”⁸⁸

The power struggle between Halil and Bekir represents the one between an *Efe* and a gendarme, which is common in rural areas. Efe represents the local power figure while gendarme is the state power. One is an official; the other one is nonofficial. Their struggle is a struggle between the state and the local power holders who do not obey the official rules. Sabahattin Ali seeks to exemplify how the state tended to infiltrate into the rural areas through gendarmes. He also shows how gendarmes who are expected to represent the state may seek to take their own revenge.

Here, the author points out the fallacies of state justice. Or, how official justice rests in the hands of those who do not really maintain their objectivity. For example, with the official power that he has, Bekir seeks to take his revenge. But he is shot by Halil and it is he who dies. According to Halil, Bekir died not due to shooting but due to his extreme fear: “But should I tell you something masters, don’t believe me anyway if you want to. The falling down of Bekir and my touch to the trigger was

⁸⁶ “Yüreğim acımadı değil, ne kadar aramız açık olsa, yine hemşerilik vardı. Bir mahalle delikanlısıydık. Ama onun ettiği hakareti kandan başka bir şey temizlemezdi. Bekir sağ kaldıkça insan içine çıkamazdım.” Ali, *ibid*, 841.

⁸⁷ Mauser: 1. A high-velocity magazine rifle. 2. A type of automatic pistol
<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/mauser> [20.08.2015].

⁸⁸ “Devlet benden iki başıbozuk, bir candarma, bir mavzer, iki at soruyor.” Ali, *ibid*, 837.

synchronous. God knows, the poor boy was not dead because of the lead but fear. My lead did not hit him while he was alive but while he was dead on the ground.”⁸⁹

Both men are powerful in different ways. Bekir is powerful when he beats and tortures Halil; Halil is powerful when he is in the mountainous area. Both have their own justice system.

Moreover, Halil, as an Efe that already has a prestigious position in the local society while Bekir’s prestige comes from his official status. When Halil explains how he feels about the beating, he says the beating something normal, but Bekir decides to beat him in front of other people and make fun of him. This is what bothers Halil. It is a problem of honor. He does not want people see him as helpless. The following passage explains what he thinks and feels:

“A man does not bother to be beaten when he is a prisoner. If Bekir beats me when we are alone, it would not be a problem. He is a gendarme and it is natural for him to beat me; however doing this before people, and his swearing, ashamed me too much.”⁹⁰

“Our Bekir made fun with me for an hour; he addled every inch of my body, made the insults that would be done to a scabby dog. But I did not open my mouth to say one ugh. His purpose was to make me helpless and make me beg. I could not do that in front of that many men even if it meant death; could not do it again.”⁹¹

In this story, although powerful in certain ways, Halil can be considered as subaltern. He is an Efe and he lives in the mountains. When the state extends its power over to the local areas, he attempts to escape from its rules and authority. But he is caught by the state authority after he committed a crime. He does not seem to have much space anymore even in the mountains. In a way, he loses his freedom. To open up a space for himself, he must kill the Gendarme Bekir.

As stated above, Bekir represents the official justice of the state while Halil represents an unofficial one at the periphery. The relationship between people from rural areas and the state is a problematic one. In his article, “The Peasants in Early Turkish Literature,” Asım Karaömerlioğlu, points out the relationship between a peasant and the gendarme in the following quotation:

⁸⁹ “Ama sana bir şey söyleyeyim mi efendi, sen istersen gene bana inanma. Benim tetiğe dokunmamla, Bekir’in yere düşmesi bir oldu. Allah bilir ya, garip oğlan kurşundan değil, korkudan öldü. Benim kurşun ona diriye değil, ölüp yere yıkılırken değdi.” *ibid*, 841.

⁹⁰ “Mahpuslukta adam dayak yemekten yılmaz. Eğer Bekir yalnız dayak atsa, bunu da تنها bir yerde yapsa, hiç ağırına gitmezdi. Candarma değil mi, helbet dövecek; ama böyle yedi köyün muhtarını başına toplayıp da envai türlü hakaret etmesi, bana pek dokundu.” *ibid*, 839-840.

⁹¹ “Bizim Bekir bir saatten ziyade benimle eğlendi, her yanıma dayaktan çürüttü, uyuz ite yapılmayacak hakareti yaptı... Ama ben de ağzımı açıp bir of demedim. Onun meramı beni zebun edip yalvartmaktı. O kadar adamın karşısında ölüm serilse bile bunu yapamazdım; yine de yapmadım.” *ibid*, 840.

“Despite the gendarmes’ ruthlessness and inhumane attitudes, it is interesting to note that the peasants consider it ‘natural’ that the gendarmes behave the way they do. In the story ‘Candarma Bekir’ (The Gendarme Bekir), for example, a peasant detainee mumbles to himself: ‘Of course he will beat me; he’s a gendarme, isn’t he?’. It is as if the gendarmes are perceived to have the right to do whatever they please. Thus, in Ali’s novels and stories the image of state power as embodied in the gendarmes indicates the deep-rooted fear of the state which was a legacy of the Ottoman state tradition, resembling what Max Weber call the arbitrariness of the state power.”⁹²

In conclusion, some of Sabahattin Ali’s protagonists try to escape from the state power which they see as violent. Here Halil experiences a violent side of state power through his relationship with the gendarmes. The beatings by the Gendarme Bekir more specifically represent the cruelty and inhumane side of the state as argued by Karaömerlioğlu.

2.5. Truck (Kamyon), 1935

Truck is the story of a young man who wants to travel from Beyşehir to İzmir in order to find a job. This seventeen year-old young man seeks to find five liras to finance his travel expenses. Although he sells his shotgun, he does not make enough money.

One day, when he is too desperate because he has not yet solved his money problem , he sees an old friend. The old friend shows him how to go to İzmir. He tells him to give only half of the fare to the truck driver when they arrive at a point close to İzmir. At that point, he is supposed to run away without making any noise that may be heard by the driver. The old friend warns him that he needs to make sure to get off the truck before the driver stops in order to collect the fares. The driver does this just before arriving at İzmir. If he fails to jump off the truck or if the driver catches him up, it is most likely that he will be beaten and robbed of his clothes. The young man listens to the old friend and decides to go to İzmir with such a plan in mind.

Nothing unusual happens on the first day of travel. On the second day, however, the young man feels uneasy since he does not really know how close they are to İzmir and when is the right time to jump. Sabahattin Ali tells his situation as follows:

“He understands from the talking of the other passengers that they are close to İzmir. But how far they are close to İzmir? Is it time to jump off and escape? If they are far from İzmir, how can he find his way in the dark? How can he stay for the night among these mountains? What if

⁹² Asım Karaömerlioğlu, “The Peasants in Early Turkish Literature”, *East European Quarterly*, v. 36, i. 2, (June 2002): 142.

the gendarmes catch him? What if the driver reports him to the gendarmes? Then won't the gendarmes beat him? Which one is worse; to be beaten by the gendarmes or by the drivers?"⁹³

After a while, since the road is not in good condition, the driver stops the engine and asks the passengers to walk. The young man does not understand what the driver asks them to do. Since the driver stops the engine, he then thinks that they are close to İzmir and thus the fares are going to be collected. He jumps off the truck but loses his balance and falls down, hitting his head on the rocks.

Truck is an important story because it shows us under which circumstances people migrate from rural to urban areas. This nameless young man migrates to the city with the hope of finding a job. He has some tactics developed by other subalterns. With such a tactic, he can go to the city which is the place where he can find an opportunity to change his destiny. It is not easy to change his life. He has some handicaps. He does not have enough money. He needs to trick the driver and thus there is a possibility of a beating. Also, he is not sure whether this new place will meet his expectations. All sorts of things make him feel uneasy about his future.

During the whole story Sabahattin Ali tells his psychology. His journey to İzmir is in fact a journey to an unknown end, to his death. Sabahattin Ali tells his death with the below passage:

"The young man has thrown himself out, to the road, as being blinded by anger, trembling with fear. However this reverse jump from the moving car, has made him to lose his balance; after turning around himself a few times, he was caught in tangle and could not get back to his feet and started to take a tumble down cliff, while trying to use the bushes as a brake, yet bumping his head into the jagged rocks by causing a wind sifting the dust and pebbles from the soil tumultuously as he tumbled hurriedly towards the creek of which swishing sound could be heard more and more."⁹⁴

His death scene is the death scene of a subaltern. Death in Sabahattin Ali's stories represents how subalterns are not able to escape from the burdens in their lives. Death sometimes means to end the suffering. Still, his characters do not have many choices. They either lose their job, die, or are imprisoned. Even if they are able to

⁹³ "İzmir'e yaklaştıklarını yolcuların konuşmalarından anlamıştı. Fakat ne kadar yaklaştılar? Atlayacak, kaçacak zaman geldi mi? Eğer daha çok varsa bu Allah'ın dağlarında gece yarısı yolu nasıl bulacak, buralarda nasıl geceleyecek? Ya candarmanın eline düşerse?.. Ya şoför parayı vermeden atlayıp kaçtığını karakola haber verirse?.. O zaman candarmalar kendisini dövmezler miydi? Acaba candarmaların dayağı mı daha kötü idi, şoförün dayağı mı?" Ali, *ibid*, 891.

⁹⁴ "Delikanlı gözleri dönmüş, korkudan titreyerek, kendini dışarıya, yolun üstüne fırlattı. Fakat daha durmamış olan otomobilden bu tersine atlayış ona muvazenesini kaybettirdi; olduğu yerde birkaç kere döndükten sonra ayağı boşa gitti ve eliyle çalılara tutunmaya çabalayarak, kafası sivri taşlara çarpa çarpa ve arkasından acı bir hışırtı ile akan topraklar ve ufak taşlarla birlikte, yardan aşağıya, şimdi hırıltısı daha çok duyulan dereye doğru yuvarlandı." *ibid*, 893.

develop some tactics to open up spaces for themselves, they are subject to the activities of authority or those who hold power.

2.6. Apartment (Apartman), 1935

In *Apartment*, the protagonist is a poor man working at the top of a high apartment building. While doing his job, he watches his son carry food with a large basket on his back to another apartment which is opposite to the apartment where he works. With his heavy basket, he cannot move easily. On one occasion the house owner does not want to pay him since a few bottles in the basket were already broken. The child asks for his money but gets no result and then he starts crying and shouting, which does not work.

As in some of Sabahattin Ali's stories, the protagonist, the child's father, remains silent. He watches what happens but does nothing since he would lose his job if he says anything. The father witnesses how the house owner who stays out of the window tells the child to go away. In addition to insulting him, the house servant of the house moves him away by force.

The father witnesses all the insults but he does nothing because his employer is watching him closely. Also, he does not really know that this child is the employee's son. He feels that in order to keep his job, he has no choice but to stay silent.

"His father looked from above as he was frozen and did not tell anything. If he was involved and revealed that the kid was his son, he thought that the owner would fire him. You made the child cry, didn't you? Or give the child's money! If he tried to say, they would fire him immediately. He would not also give up his job and go down."⁹⁵

The man fails to defend his son's rights and he cannot overcome the psychological trauma of seeing his child beaten. Sabahattin Ali tells us what happens when he collapses:

"The man on the roof felt his eyes darkening completely and saw images in his brain as he got sunstroke. His feet near roof trembled. He noticed that his knees started to become loose and bend and, he wanted to hold on to the woods on his head. But his fingers were loose too and he was not able to hold on tight to anything. His body slipped on unseasoned woods slowly, making a light creak sound. After coming to the edge of the roof he stopped for a second at the

⁹⁵ "Babası yukarıdan donmuş gibi bakıyor, bir şey söyleyemiyordu. İşe karışır ve çocuğun kendi oğlu olduğu anlaşılırsa mal sahibinin kendisini kovacağını zannediyordu. Öyle ya, "Çocuğu niçin ağlattınız?" yahut "Çocuğun parasını verin!" demeye kalksa derhal defedilirdi. İşinden ayrılıp aşağıya da gidemezdi." *ibid*, 941-942.

edge, and then fell down like a sack filled with earth, making a hoarse sound. He wanted to go home, lie flat and yell at her wife and daughter raising his chest!.."96

The man keeps quiet because of his extreme fear of the power figure, even though he is just an employer or apartment owner. He feels defenseless. I see that he is in a state of learned helplessness.

In this story, there are two subalterns: the father and the son. It is as though that subalternity passes from father to son. These two subalterns have some similarities and differences. They are from the lower class and have to work to earn their livelihood. The child, unlike the father, does not stay silent. He cries and shouts in order to get his money. However, there is a reason why the father must remain silent. He has family responsibilities and needs to keep his job. The child who is not really aware of these constraints at least cries and shouts but, like the father, he gets nothing in the end. There is a class difference between the employer and the employee, between the house owner and the servant and the child. The servant has to do what his employer has asked of him. The child is insulted and thrown out of the house.

Another important point in the story is that the child's father is an authority figure, but only in his family. Sabahattin Ali tells his inner world: "He wanted to go home, lie flat and yell at her wife and daughter raising his chest!.."97 He stays silent at work but at home he feels that he is all powerful. It is likely that a victim who internalizes his or her perpetrator becomes a perpetrator himself. As an authority figure, the family members obey him at home, but he finds the need to obey the others from the outside. This is a vicious circle that lower class people find difficult to break from to free themselves. That is to say, subalternity continues in a variety of forms.

2.7. Stallholder (Pazarcı), 1935

In *Stallholder*, Sabahattin Ali tells the story of a former soldier who later becomes a stallholder to earn his livelihood. One day, while he and other stallholders are returning from the village bazaar to their homes, they are robbed by bandits. The

⁹⁶ "Çatıdaki adam gözlerinin büsbütün karardığını ve güneş vurmuş gibi beyninin içinde gürültüler olduğunu hissetti. Çatının kenarına dayanan ayakları titriyordu. Yavaş yavaş dizlerinin gevşemeye ve bükülmeye başladığını fark ederek elleriyle başının üst tarafındaki tahtalara tutunmak istedi. Fakat parmakları gevşemişti ve hiçbir şeye sıkıca yapışmıyordu. Vücudu yaş tahtaların üstünde hafif bir gıcirtı çıkarak ağır ağır kaydı. Çatının kenarına kadar gelip orada bir an takılır gibi olduktan sonra, aşağıya, sokağın ortasına içi toprak dolu bir çuval gibi boğuk bir ses çıkarak düştü." *ibid*, 942-943.

⁹⁷ "Bir akşam olsa, bir eve gitse, bir arka üstü yatsa ve karısı ile küçük kızına şöyle göğsünü kabarta kabarta bir bağırıp çağırtsa!.." *ibid*, 943.

bandits let them go. Just by then, the chief bandit stops the protagonist and asks where he knows him from. The stallholder, looking carefully at the chief bandit's face, remembers that; he knows him from Çanakkale, where he was a soldier too. The stallholder remembers that one night he escaped but came back the next day. By then, the stallholder had saved him from being killed by the firing squad. Just after, he worked under him. Now, he finds that it is time to pay him.

As a result of their common past, the chief bandit treats the stallholder better than the others and gives him everything back. Seeing this, the other stallholders think that the protagonist is collaborating with the bandits. One of them decides to go to the police station to tell the gendarmes that the chief bandit and the stallholder must have been collaborators. In order to prove his argument, he says they had a long conversation. The gendarmes arrest the protagonist and sent him to prison where he later dies, on the twentieth day of the investigation.

In this story, the stallholder is a subaltern who ends up in prison because he is accused of being the bandits' ally. Sabahattin Ali tells his story with the following quote:

"They took him into the custody to take his statement while he was going to the city. When they searched him, the money they found and his miserable eyes increased the suspicions completely. He was arrested with the claim for being close to bandits and carrying information for them. It was obvious that the matter would be revealed sooner or after when the arrestment progressed; but he died not being able to resist all this at the jail on the twentieth day of his arrestment leaving no time for such wait."⁹⁸

There are too many misunderstandings and prejudices that lead to his imprisonment. His silence makes him the target of those who lost everything to the bandits. We can also consider them subalterns as they are defenseless in front of the bandits.

2.8. Identification Card (Kafakâğıdı), 1937

Identification Card is about an eighty year-old man who is put in prison because he is blamed for not paying his taxes. The story tells that an important figure of the rural area where this old man lives, an agha (ağa)⁹⁹, claims part of his land that he inherits

⁹⁸ "Şehre girerken yakalayıp ifadesini almaya götürdüler. Üzeri arandığı zaman çıkan paralar ve biraz perişan gözleri, şüpheleri büsbütün artırdı. Eşkıyalarla sözlü olduğu, onlara habercilik ettiği iddiasıyla tevkif edildi. Tahkikat ilerleyince meselenin meydana çıkacağı muhakkaktı; fakat buna vakit kalmadan o, tevkifinin yirminci günü, ömrünün o belki en geniş gününü kovalayan bu dar günlere tahammül edemeyerek hapisnede öldü." *ibid*, 935.

⁹⁹ Agha: Influential rich person who is bossy at villages and towns.

<http://www.kubbealtilugati.com/sonuclar.aspx?km=a%C4%9Fa%20&mi=0> [20.08.2015].

from the grandfather. Since the old man does not have an official land certificate to stand against the agha, the case is brought to the court. At that point, the old man's identification card is needed to start the official procedure. Since he cannot find his identification card, he decides to use his dead grandson's identification card. The case starts, but the agha wins the court case with a false witness. As a result, the old man loses part of his land and is expected to pay the road tax on the rest of it.

After months pass, the tax collectors demand the road tax from the old man, even though the old man is exempt from this particular tax because he is more than sixty years old. However, the official documents say he is twenty nine since he provided his grandson's identification card during the court case. To solve the problem, the old man goes to the census administration and tries to prove that he is not twenty nine years old, yet the census administration tells him that it has to consider the official record and therefore he is expected to pay the road tax. As the old man does not have enough money to pay it, he is put in prison. Sabahattin Ali here criticizes the state and its institutions that do not work for the benefit of the 'citizens', or the subalterns.

Sabahattin Ali not only questions the Turkish justice system but also inattentive official procedures and the weak relationship between the state and its citizens. He questions to what extent a peasant knows the state. For example, the old man only knew about the state when he was in the army, when he needed to pay the road tax, and get his identification card, or when he went to the court with the agha. Sabahattin Ali tells how he sees the state as follows:

"We were obliged to go to government's door. Our court lasted two years. We had no deeds but the entire village knew that the field inherited to us from our grandfather. No one asked about that, the agha made them listen false witness and won the case. While the case continued, they asked for my identity card, how was I supposed to find that? I have had no business with government door since the military; I searched and searched and could not find it."¹⁰⁰

The old man thinks that everyone has the same identification card given by the state and thus does not see any problem to give his grandson's identification card to start the official procedure for the court case. He assumes that they both have the same name and all identification cards must be the same: "Later I found the identification card of our crippled dead son's identity card inside the Koran. His name was Mehmet

¹⁰⁰ "Mecbur olduk hükümet kapısına düşmeye. İki sene mahkememiz sürdü. Bizim tapumuz filan yoktu ama bütün köylü o tarlanın bize dededen kaldığını bilirdi. Bunu soran olmadı, ağa yalancı şahit dinletti, mahkemeyi kazandı. Mahkeme sürerken benden kafakâğıdımı istediler, nereden bulayım? Askerden döneli devlet kapısına işim düşmemişti; aradım aradım yok..." Ali, *ibid*, 897.

too. Isn't it just an identity card, all must be the same, I said, and took it to the province, and gave a new address again."¹⁰¹

On the one hand there is an old man who is apparently old and cannot be in his late twenties; on the other hand there are official records that show the old man is in his twenties and, for this reason, appears to be a tax dodger.¹⁰² The state officials do not find his personal claims reliable. His words do not make any sense to the state and its representatives, and as a result he ends up prison. This is an inhumane side of the state, which is stated over and over in Sabahattin Ali's stories.

The old man does not speak for himself like other subalterns. He is an illiterate man who unfortunately fails to protect his rights and stays silent when the taxmen come to the village with the gendarmes:

"This time taxmen came together with gendarmes. They took me together with the ones did not paid the road tax; I said I was eighty years old but no one listened to me. We came to Census Administration, they looked through books and they said you are still twenty nine years old. I said please don't do this, look at me; they said here is your birth date, your address is also expressed and continue to impose it. I pulled out the identity card in my pocket and gave it to them; it also showed twenty nine years old. Then it occurred to me but what to do? They told me to not to tamper with it anymore or I would get into trouble so I did not say anything. If I could compensate six liras, I would get rid of this situation but where to find six liras at this time? So we said it was written in our destiny and we came here..."¹⁰³

From his expression, we also see that the old man is obviously afraid of the state. He remains silent since he does not have enough power to confront it and its representatives. It is also difficult for him to confront the agha who is another powerful figure that claims part of his land.

In this story, class difference between him and the agha is clearly stated. The agha wins the case as he is a powerful man who can make use of the justice system and provide a false witness. The trial is superficial as no details are provided to show that the old man inherited the land from his grandfather. While the state and its representatives act superficially, the local powers continue to hold power. Such

¹⁰¹ "Sonra mushafın arasında bizim topalın ölen oğlunun kafakâğıdını buldum. Onun da adı Mehmet'ti. Kafakâğıdı değil mi, hep bir, dedim, vilayete kaydını götürdüm, yeniden adres verdim." *ibid*, 897.

¹⁰² Tax dodger: (informal). A person who practices tax avoidance or tax evasion. <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/tax-dodger> [20.08.2015].

¹⁰³ "Bu sefer tahsildarlar candarmayla beraber geldiler. Yol parası vermeyenlerle beni de aldılar; ben seksen yaşındayım dedim ama dinleyen olmadı. Nüfusa geldik, defteri açıp baktılar, daha yirmi dokuz yaşındasın dediler. Amanın etmeyin, halime bakın dedim, olmaz, tevellüdün işte burada, adresin de belli diye dayattılar. Cebimde ki nüfusu çıkarıp verdim, orada da yirmi dokuz gösteriyormuş, o zaman aklım erdi ama neyleyeyim? Daha çok kurcalarsan başına iş açılır, dediler. Ben de sesimi çıkaramadım. Altı lirayı bir denkleştirebilsem verir kurtulurdum ama bu zamanda altı liranın yolu nerde? Kaderde yazılıymış dedik, geldik buraya..." Ali, *ibid*, 897-898.

neglect does not in fact help break the power of the local elite like that of the agha. Here, Sabahattin Ali criticizes the state for not being just as he finds it neglectful, not showing sufficient interest to the problems of the lower class people, the subalterns.

2.9. Wall (Duvar), 1936

Sabahattin Ali wrote *Wall* when he was in the Sinop Prison. He was transferred to the Sinop Prison from the Konya Prison in 1933 to complete his sentence as it was argued that he had insulted Atatürk.¹⁰⁴ At the Sinop Prison, Sabahattin Ali wrote *Wall* as well as *Geese (Kazlar)*, *Teapot (Çaydanlık)* and *Osman the Murderer (Katil Osman)*; poems “Prison Song V” (*Hapishane Şarkısı V*; also known as *Aldırma Gönül* and finally “*Gurbet Hapishanesi*” (Foreign Land Prison).

In *Wall*, Sabahattin Ali writes about an escape that is a complete failure. The story is told to Sabahattin Ali by a friend from the same prison. The story is about two prisoners who are in their twenties and work in the shop in the Sinop Prison. They earn money by selling wooden products made by the prisoners themselves. Sabahattin Ali explains this in the following passage:

“Nine years ago, in the first year of my imprisonment, there were wooden shops in front of these walls. Some prisoners used to work as carpenter, engraver or jeweler in these shops and they used to make some middlemen outside sell their craftworks on the ships which came into the port.”¹⁰⁵

One afternoon, while they are working in the shop, one of the prisoners accidentally hits wood to the wall and sees that the brick on the wall can easily be moved. The below quote details what happens:

“One day, we were boiling glue in a pan over the fire in a corner of the shop. The wood I added to the fire to flare up, hit the stones of the wall. It sounded like one of the stones came loose. Immediately I changed the place of the pan and fire and without waiting for the stone to cool down, I started to look at it. After descaling a bit, the stone, which was as big as griddle bread, fell down on the floor and a hole appeared. I bent over and looked from the hole. I could not believe my eyes: since there was a poor light at the end of the hole.”¹⁰⁶

He calls to his friend and shows him the hole in the wall. They suppose that they may escape from the prison via this hole if they enlarge it. One of them tells his plan:

¹⁰⁴ Sönmez, *ibid*, 430.

¹⁰⁵ “Dokuz sene evvel, yeni hapse düştüğümün birinci senesinde bu duvarların dibinde ahşap dükkânlar vardı. Bazı mahpuslar orada marangozluk, oymacılık, kuyumculuk yapar ve çıkardıkları işleri dışarıdaki komisyonculara vererek limana gelen vapurlarda sattırırlardı.” Ali, *ibid*, 922.

¹⁰⁶ “Bir gün dükkânın bir köşesinde tutkal kaynatıyorduk. Çanağın altına sürdüğüm odun, duvarın taşına çarptı. Bana taş yerinden oynar gibi geldi. Hemen ateşi ve çanağı oradan kaldırdım, taşın soğumasını beklemeden yapıştım. Azıcık kireç döküldükten sonra, koca bir tepsi ekmeği kadar büyük olan taş yer düştü. Eğilerek içeri baktım. Gözlerime inanamayacaktım: Uzakta, ta ilerde dar bir ışık görünüyordu.” *ibid*, 922.

"Some nights, if there were a lot of work to do, it was possible to stay at the shop by giving the guard a few pennies. The guard reckoned us as present in the ward in roll calls. That night we gave the Arabian guard twenty five pennies and some joint weed to be able to stay there when the guard blew the whistle in order the all others to go their own wards."¹⁰⁷

The whole night, they work hard to broaden the hole. It is almost the daylight when they open it, and he suggests to his friend that they escape another night because the gendarmes might see them during the daylight, but his friend decides to go through the hole regardless while he stays. The day after, during the roll call, it is noticed that one of the prisoners is missing. The gendarmes find the hole in the prison shop and beat the one who failed to escape. He deeply regrets that he did not follow his friend that day. He is jealous of his friend and often puts blames on his cowardice:

"Ah ... how I became such a fool!" he said. "I was such a fool! Was a gendarme bullet worse than fifteen years? I destroyed my youth because of a fear. "However... who knows where he is now? He was not seen here anymore. Probably he is now in a distant country, he may settle down between people who does not know him and became a decent man... He may be married with children now. If I wish, I could be with him. But because of a fear for a second... Because of that damn fear..."¹⁰⁸

As time goes by, there is a construction of new cells for the prisoners. The workers who construct the cells see the hole opened by the two prisoners years ago. Inside, there is a squashed human skeleton. The other prisoner begins to shake as he realizes that he, in fact, escaped from death. His friend had died there as he was squashed by the walls and probably suffocated due to the lack of air.

In *Wall*, the escape plan of these nameless prisoners does not work well. Though, the one who is thought to escape dies silently, the case is officially recorded differently. The official records do not reflect what actually happened to this character. In other words, there are many nameless characters that do not find space in the official documents. If they find a space, their stories may be subverted.

In *Wall*, Sabahattin Ali questions the conditions of the prisons as well as the psychology of the prisoners:

"The ultimate good for a prisoner is to be put into a dungeon where there is nothing from the outside. The worst thing for a prisoner is to be very close to the freedom physically but

¹⁰⁷ "Bazı geceler, iş çok olursa, gardiyana beş on kuruş vererek dükkânda kalmak mümkündü. Gardiyan, koğuş yoklamasında bizi mevcut gösterirdi. O akşam düdük çalıp herkes koğuşlarına giderken Arap gardiyanın eline bir yirmi beş kuruşlukla bir tutam esrar sıkıştırdık." *ibid*, 922.

¹⁰⁸ "Ah... ne enayilik ettim!" dedi. "Ne enayilik ettim! Bir candarma kurşunu on beş seneden daha mı kötü sanki? Bir korku yüzünden gençliğimi yok ettim. "Hâlbuki o... kimbilir şimdi nerelerdedir? Bir daha buralarda görünmedi. Herhalde uzak bir memlekette, kendisini tanımayanlar arasında yerleşti, akıllı uslu adam oldu... Belki çoluk çocuğa karışmıştır. İstesem ben de onunla beraber olabilirdim. Fakat bir dakikalık korku... O kahrolası korku..." *ibid*, 925-926.

knowing that it is far away. You listen to the sea which can take you away but you cannot see. You see it but only in your dreams... Isn't that too much?"¹⁰⁹

Sabahattin Ali also portrays the relationship between the prison director and the prisoners. The following passage explains this well: "We, I mean me and my prisoner friend started to work by bringing a little money from our homes in a shop in front of this broken demolished wall. We were silent people so the director protected us. And we were keeping some of our profit for him."¹¹⁰

Their silence helps them out they appear as if they would not do anything wrong, and so they are protected and allowed to run the shop. The prisoner's statement shows that negotiation is possible in the prisons. For example, prisoners give money or marijuana to the guardians who then ignore their absence in the roll call. Namely, there is a secret contract between them. Although they have physical limitations, they may find space to get something, even if it is small. Silence as a subaltern tactic does not change their real circumstances however. They have no freedom.

2.10. Voice (Ses), 1937

Voice, is a story of a peasant bard, a writer, and the writer's friend who is a music teacher. The writer and the music teacher are travelling from Beyşehir to Konya by bus. Suddenly, the bus stops working and stops. While the driver and his assistants repair the car, the passengers wait on the road. By the evening time, they hear a man singing a folk song. The writer and his friend who are impressed by the voice of the man see that he is singing in front of five or six people in the tent. When he finishes the song, the music teacher who is a curious man, asks him about his name, age and the hometown. He also asks him where he learned to play the *saz*¹¹¹ and to sing that well. The young bard introduces himself as Ali from Sivas and states that he learned to play the *saz* by himself.

¹⁰⁹ "Bir mahpusu dünya ile hiç alakası olmayan bir zindana kapatmak ona en büyük iyiliği yapmaktır. Onu en çok yere vuran şey, hürriyetin elle tutulacak kadar uzak olduğunu bilmektir. On adım ötede en büyük hürriyetlere götüren denizi dinlemek ve sonra aradaki kalın kale duvarlarına gözleri dikerek bakmaya, denizi yalnız muhayyilede görmeye mecbur kalmak az azap mıdır?" *ibid*, 921.

¹¹⁰ "Biz de cürüm arkadaşım ile birlikte, evimizden beş on kuruş getirerek şu şimdi yıkılan duvarın önündeki bir dükkânda çalışmaya başladık. Sessiz insanlar olduğumuz için müdür bizi koruyordu." *ibid*, 922.

¹¹¹ Saz: In our folks music, body made by carving, long handled stringed instrument mostly used by minstrels.

<http://www.kubbealtilugati.com/sonuclar.aspx?km=saz&mi=0> [20.08.2015]

The music teacher asks Ali to come to Ankara as he wants to give him a job. In this way, he believes that Ali's voice can improve his ability of playing saz and singing professionally. Ali accepts his offer and goes to Ankara with a new saz, which he buys because he does not want to sing with an old and broken saz in front of people who he thinks of as *efendi*, meaning an upper classmen. With such a statement, Sabahattin Ali intends to illustrate a class difference as well as the existing gap between peasants and city people.

The music teacher enrolls Ali in an audition to study at a music school. During the audition, Ali is too nervous and thus he cannot control his voice while singing. Sabahattin Ali describes Ali's anxiousness, "Ali sat down on the white iron chair as he was sitting on a fire. His hand holding saz was shaking and he was covered in condensation from his forehead to eyelashes and then to his flossy cheeks."¹¹²

Another musician asks Ali to try his voice with a piano but Ali cannot do that either. The jury ignores him and chooses the second applicant who seems to have a real music education. After the audition, the writer and the music teacher take Ali and go to a restaurant. There Ali apologizes for embarrassing them in front of the jury. He says, "I could not find my voice in that room."¹¹³ Feeling disappointed, Ali decides to go back to his village without saying anything.

In *Voice*, Ali feels like a stranger in the music room where the audition takes place. He cannot pay attention because he sees a music room and many different musical instruments for the first time in his life. It is obvious that Ali is not familiar with such places or a jury. That is why he says, "I could not find my voice in that room."¹¹⁴

From the very beginning, he feels as though he does not belong there and in fact he is one of those subalterns who outside of big cities does not have enough opportunities, even if they are talented. Therefore, he shows us that a peasant in the city does not have a voice. In that sense Ali's voice symbolically represents those who are not heard or who are lost in cities.

The gap between the city and the village is obvious in this story. In the city, music is found valuable if it is taught professionally. However, in the village, music is not

¹¹² "Ali, beyaz demir iskemleye, ateş üstüne oturuyormuş gibi ilişti. Sazı tutan eli titriyor ve kırışan alnından kirpiklerine ve ayva tüylü yanaklarına terler süzülüyordu." Ali, *ibid*, 1025.

¹¹³ "Ben o odada bir türlü sesimi bulamadım." *ibid*, 1028.

¹¹⁴ *ibid*, 1028.

taught at the schools. It is an improvised talent. Because music represents the gap between the elite and the commoners, it loses its genuine side in the city. It becomes standardized. Also, it seems to have value in the eyes of the city people as long as it belongs to the elites. In other words, Sabahattin Ali shows us why a subaltern is a subaltern.

2.11. *Dog (Köpek)*, 1937

The main character of *Dog* is a shepherd who lives in a village located in Konya. At the beginning of the story, the writer narrates the shepherd's inner voice. The shepherd works for an agha, a stingy man. The agha who never gives him money humiliates him in many ways. The shepherd thus decides to go to the city where he may find work.

He has some handicaps. One is his mother whom he has to take care of. He is also very confused because there are many people who have gone to the city and come back to the village with no hope. Indeed, those who come back are still poor. With such deep thoughts and confusions, he suddenly notices a car coming by. The car stops near the shepherd. There is a young man in the car, a rich engineer who comes to Konya to visit one of his friends. The engineer gets out of the car as they want to take a short break. His fiancée wants to talk to the shepherd and look at his sheep closely.

When the young man asks questions, the shepherd cannot answer him since he is shocked at seeing such a rich and well-dressed man with a luxury car. The engineer gets very angry when he cannot get any answers from him. He thinks that the shepherd is a really backward person. In his opinion, the shepherd needs to benefit from him, an engineer with a good education and a high standard of living. The following passage explains the engineer's point of view about the shepherd: "You are very backward. Look! We come here to talk to you; you should benefit from us very carefully and willingly instead of staring. What are your needs? I want to learn them. You should open your heart to me. I am your brother."¹¹⁵ He also says: "I am

¹¹⁵ "Siz daha çok gerisiniz. Bak! Biz, yerimizden yurdumuzdan kalkıp sizinle konuşmak, derdinizi dinlemek için buralara geliyoruz; siz gözünüzü, kulağınızı dört açıp istifade edeceğiniz yerde, etrafınıza bakıyorsunuz. Senin ihtiyaçların nelerdir? Sıkıntılarının nelerdir? Bunları öğrenmek istiyorum, bana bütün kalbini açmalısın. Ben senin kardeşimim." *ibid*, 1037.

an engineer, I work for you; and you are a peasant, you work for me. So, it is not good if we don't understand each other."¹¹⁶

The engineer goes back to the car then. After a while his fiancée screams when she sees the shepherd's dogs surround the car. The engineer takes his gun and shoots one of the dogs. The engineer is full of anger and hates the shepherd, who he sees as inferior in status. In fact, he does not like the shepherd having confidence and power since he is in his own place. He sees this as a challenge to his authority that stems from his different life style and education. He kills the shepherd's faithful company and guide because he sees him as a challenge to his authority. He thus seeks to embrace the shepherd with his speech. Sabahattin Ali states this as follows:

"The engineer who sees that most of his questions are not answered yet, by feeling an empathy towards 'the public, the peasants' or just by getting angry because of the confident and powerful position of the shepherd and therefore wants to make the shepherd embarrassed, but also by trying to control himself..."¹¹⁷

The engineer's approach to the shepherd is insincere and factitious. Karaömerlioğlu also sees the engineer's deliberate killing of the shepherd's dog as a behavior that is full of hatred. He says: "The killing of the shepherd's dog symbolizes the irreconcilable gap between the intellectuals and the peasants."¹¹⁸

2.12. A Conference (Bir Konferans), 1941

In *A Conference*, Sabahattin Ali again focuses on the gap between the state and the citizens. This story was first published in *Country and The World (Yurt ve Dünya)* in 1941 under the name, *A Well Understood Conference (İyi Anlaşılan Bir Konferans)*, and it is based on the real-life experience of Sabahattin Ali. He writes the story by adding some details and dialogues.

Public officials representing the state go to a village for a school opening ceremony. After the opening ceremony, the public officials take a tour around the village and talk to the peasants. Among the public officials is an economist who specializes in agriculture; he received his education in Paraguay, a South American country. He wants to organize a conference on the cooperative system, which he thinks is useful

¹¹⁶ "Ben mühendisim, senin için çalışıyorum; sen köylüsün, benim için çalışıyorsun. Birbirimizle anlaşmazsak olur mu ya?" *ibid*, 1038.

¹¹⁷ "Suallerinin birçoğunun cevapsız kaldığını gören ve içini yavaş yavaş, 'halkla, köylü ile temas' cazibesi saran, daha doğrusu, çobanın kendinden emin tavrından ve ağırlığından sinirlendiği için, onu sıkıştırmak isteyen mühendis, kendisine hâkim olmaya çalışan bir eda ile, fakat aşîkar sitemle karşısındakine: "Ne diye cevap vermiyorsun?" dedi." *ibid*, 1036-1037.

¹¹⁸ Karaömerlioğlu, *ibid*, 139.

for the peasants. The peasants come together at the school to listen to the economist. Before he starts his talk, the economist tells them that they can ask questions anytime they want. During the conference, the peasants applaud at whatever he says, but they do not ask any questions.

At the end of the conference, a village teacher becomes curious about why they have not asked anything: "Come on, what did you understand from the words of that senior? Even I did not understand anything from his speech..."¹¹⁹ and they respond that they did not actually understand anything. Sabahattin Ali explains this as such: "Peasant said this with a serious face as if he wanted to suppress the laugh inside of him, 'If we said we did not understand anything, then he would start over and over again!'"¹²⁰

A Conference is one of Sabahattin Ali's more ironic stories. He describes the guests coming from city as *peasantist* (*köycü*).¹²¹ He means to show public officials are superficial in their way of enlightening illiterate peasants. He explains that the main purpose of these guests is that they know what is best for the peasants.

"The 'peasantist' (*köycü*) attempted to talk to the villagers they come across on the road or in the coffee house. Among them there was a man who had been in Paraguay for years for an education on "peasantism" (*köycülük*). He was asking something to the peasants with a smoothened tone and receiving short meaningless answers. In spite of his all efforts, the dialogues did not progress. The one who asked questions thought why these people were so indifferent and the ones who answered thought why these people asked such meaningless questions."¹²²

While the economist speaks with academic language, the peasants become silent because it is probably the first time they hear words like "production cooperatives for agriculture",¹²³ "consumption cooperatives for agriculture"¹²⁴ or the importance of cooperative system in Turkey. In fact, the education that the economist had in Paraguay has no practical use in Turkey. I see that Sabahattin Ali points out that

¹¹⁹ "Hadi canım, doğrusunu söyleyin... Ben bile bir şey anlamadım da, siz ne anlayacaksınız?" Ali, *ibid*, 1152.

¹²⁰ "Köylü içinden gelen bir gülüşü zapt etmek istiyormuş sandırarak kadar ciddi bir çehre ile: "Aman beyim!" dedi, "Anlamadık diyelim de bir daha baştan mı anlatsın?" *ibid*, 1153.

¹²¹ Asım Karaömerlioğlu uses "peasantist" for "köycü" and "peasantism" for "köycülük" in his article "The Peasants in Early Turkish Literature" published in *East European Quarterly*, v. 36, i. 2, in June, 2002. I use these terms in the same way with Karaömerlioğlu in my study.

¹²² "Köycü"ler yolda ve kahvede rastladıkları bazı köylülerle lafa girişmek teşebbüsünde bulundular. Aralarında köycülük tahsili için Paraguay'a gidip senelerce kalmış biri vardı, sesini tatlılaştırıp yumuşatarak türlü şeyler soruyor, hiçbir şey ifade etmeyen kısa cevaplar alıyordu. Bütün gayretlere rağmen, konuşmalar birkaç soru ve cevaptan ileri gidemedi. Soran karşısındakinin acaba ne diye bu kadar her şeyden habersiz, vurdumduymaz olduğunu, sorulan ise ötekinin neden böyle ipe sapa gelmez şeyler sorduğunu düşünerek birbirlerinden ayrıldılar." *ibid*, 1151.

¹²³ İstihsal kooperatifleri. *ibid*, 1152.

¹²⁴ İstihlak kooperatifleri. *ibid*, 1152.

there is a real gap between the literate and illiterate people. The literate ones do not really understand the needs of the illiterate peasants, as illustrated by this story. Although the peasants are bored with the conference they pretend that they have understood everything in order to avoid unnecessary repetitions. Those peasants have acted according to the norms of a hidden transcript which James C. Scott analyzed in his book. He writes:

"I shall use the term *hidden transcript* to characterize discourse that takes place 'offstage,' beyond direct observation by power holders. The hidden transcript is thus derivative in the sense that it consists of those offstage speeches, gestures, and practices that confirm, contradict, or inflect what appears in the public transcript."¹²⁵

I can say that the difference between the peasants' onstage and offstage behavior are a kind of tactic. They fully comprehend the public norm of going to listen to the economist but they disguise their real thoughts. Scott also states:

"Nothing conveys the public transcript more as the dominant would like it to seem than the formal ceremonies they organize to celebrate and dramatize their rule. Parades, inaugurations, processions, coronations, funerals provide ruling groups with the occasion to make a spectacle of themselves in a manner largely of their own choosing. The examination of the structure of such ceremonies is something of a privileged pathway to the 'official mind.'"¹²⁶

Public officials show off inside of village and they also pretend to be interested in the problems of village life. Their ideas are utopical and inapplicable, as argued by Asım Karaömerlioğlu. He writes: "The urban intellectuals and bureaucrats, without any organic relation to or deep understanding of the countryside, want to impose their utopian and inapplicable ideas in an arrogant, supercilious, and patronizing style."¹²⁷

In this story, Sabahattin Ali also shows his reader a different perspective of the peasants besides them being frightened by authority or being in a state of hopelessness. Instead, the peasants can be capable of using tactics. I see a connection with what Michel de Certeau tells us about the usage of tactics by the ordinary man. He states that:

"I am not concerned directly here with the constitution of such a semiotics, but rather with suggesting some ways of thinking about everyday practices of consumers, supposing from the start that they are of a tactical nature. Dwelling, moving about, speaking, reading, shopping, and cooking are activities that seems to correspond to the characteristics of tactical ruses and surprises: clever tricks of the "weak" within the order established by the "strong" an art of putting one over on the adversary on his own turf, hunter's tricks, maneuverable, polymorph mobilities, jubilant, poetic, and warlike discoveries."¹²⁸

De Certeau's statements on the tactics of the weak within the border line of the strong are similar to the experience of those peasants in *A Conference*. The peasants

¹²⁵ Scott, *ibid*, 4.

¹²⁶ *ibid*, 58.

¹²⁷ Karaömerlioğlu, *ibid*, 141.

¹²⁸ De Certeau, *ibid*, 56-57.

are weak people, who fulfill the expectations of the strong by nodding throughout the conference. However, their clever trick worked well so that they escape confronting the powerful figures. Staying silent is certainly a subaltern tactic.

2.13. Conclusion

Sabahattin Ali's protagonists have typical features. First, all the male characters are originally from the small villages of Central and Western Anatolia, which Sabahattin Ali knew very well.

Second, the protagonists are generally frightened by the authority and they cannot communicate easily with the city people who they encounter for a variety of reasons.

Third, some of the main characters witness violence. Beatings and killings are other major themes analyzed above. The violence used by authority and power figures often appears in Sabahattin Ali's stories. For example, İdris in *An Escape* and Halil in *Gendarme Bekir* are the victims of gendarmes. İdris cannot make the gendarmes believe that he is not responsible for the theft in the village. Yet he had to accept the accusations, to avoid a beating. In *Gendarme Bekir*, Bekir is the perpetrator at first, but ends up a victim. There are also some other examples. The child in *Apartment* is exposed to the violence of a household servant. Finally, killing is a common solution to solve the problem at the local level in *Canal*.

All of his characters are desperate about their life and their future. His stories show the difficulties, problems and poverty that hit people in the villages. For example, the water problem between Mehmet from Dedemköy and Zağar Mehmet in *Canal* brings a tragic end to both of them. The state authorities show no interests to the water problem and thus they are forced to employ their own methods which leads to Zağar Mehmet killing Mehmet from Dedemköy. He saves the family's future but ends up in prison. The young man in *Truck* does not really want go to the city if he has better opportunities in the village.

Furthermore, most of the protagonists fail to express themselves in front of authority figures. For example, İdris in *An Escape* cannot make the gendarmes believe him. İdris fits well in the category of a criminal, so they do not go further in their investigation. In short, the gendarmes in Sabahattin Ali's stories do not really serve to bring justice in the local areas. The gap between the state and its citizens grows

more and more. Thus, these characters remain subalterns and are subject to the activity of the authority figures at both the center and the periphery.

Another important point is that the subalterns usually fail to have their voice heard by the authority. For example, the old man in *Identification Card* cannot prove that he is not as young as his card says. The official records contradict his statement. The man in *Stallholder* is blamed for cooperating with bandits. The prisoner who tried to escape from prison fifteen years ago in *Wall* is later revealed that he died in the tunnel.

It is clear that Sabahattin Ali describes the gap between urban and rural areas. In his view, the city people most of the time despise peasants and their lives. In these stories, although they sometimes use tactics, peasants remain subalterns. Most characters do not have a happy end, although some use tactics to survive in a society full of constraints.

3. INTELLECTUAL SUBALTERNS: STRANGERS IN THEIR LANDS

"A slender, go to the hole... Well actually he is not totally innocent, he didn't hold his mouth shut and jabbered about everything. I said many times: Son, times have changed, do you believe that you will change the world? Receive your pittance of a salary, go aside... Isn't that true? We also gain insight about these things... On my own behalf, I am a more intellectual person than him... It's right, this world system doesn't work like that, but first things first... Look at me, do I open my mouth? You should cover up your tracks... But this ignorant child never listens to the others... He always stuck his arse. As if he will change the world."¹²⁹

The above passage from *Intellectual Friend (Fikir Arkadaşı)* written by Sabahattin Ali in 1935 tells us the existing gap between two intellectuals, particularly the real dilemma that intellectuals of the early Republican period face and how intellectual subalterns are strangers in their lands.

Here, we need to introduce the historical development of the concept of the intellectual in the West as well as in the late Ottoman and early Republican periods in Turkey.

With the secularization of knowledge and scientific discoveries by Nikolai Kopernik and Galileo Galilei, the importance of practical knowledge, and the separation from the hegemony of the Church in the Renaissance period revealed a struggle between secular intellectuals and the ecclesiastics. This struggle would define the formation of the intellectuals later on.¹³⁰

Intellectuals of course contributed a lot to the French Revolution in 1789 and the Industrial Revolution in the 19th century because society was believed to be ordered by reason and ideas at that time. The scientific changes led to the production and application of knowledge in the 20th century that produced intellectuals, a very important and specific category.¹³¹

Moreover, Antonio Gramsci, who was the first to use the term subaltern, wrote a section on the intellectuals. A section entitled "The Formation of the Intellectuals" in

¹²⁹ "Bir iftira, haydi kodese... Hani hiç kabahati de yok değildi, çenesini tutmaz ileri söylenirdi. Kaç kere dedim: Oğlum, devir o devir değil, dünyayı sen mi ıslah edeceksin? Al üç buçuk kuruş maaşını, otur bir köşede... Değil mi efendim? Biz de fikir sahibiyiz... Ben kendi nefsimde ondan çok daha ileriyim... Evet, bu dünya böyle yürümez, fakat her şeyin bir sırası var... Bak, ben ağzımı açıyor muyum? İnsan karda yürüyüp izini belli etmemeli... Fakat cahil çocuk hiç dinlemezdi ki... Hep burnunun doğrusuna giderdi. Sanki tek başına dünyanın mihverini değiştirecek..." Ali, *ibid*, 951.

¹³⁰ Murat Belge, "Tarihsel Gelişimi Süreci İçinde Aydınlar", *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türkiye Ansiklopedisi*, v. 1, s. 122.

¹³¹ *ibid*, 123.

his book, *Prison Notebooks*, questions whether intellectuals constitute a homogenous social group in society or they depend upon the existing system as a specialized category.¹³² He defines these two aspects in the following quotation:

"Every social group, coining into existence on the original terrain of an essential function in the world of economic production, creates together with itself, organically, one or more strata of intellectuals which give it homogeneity and an awareness of its function not only in the economic but also in the social and political fields."¹³³

"However, every 'essential' social group which emerges into history out of the preceding economic structure, and as an expression of a development of this structure, has found (at least in all of history up to the present) categories of intellectuals already in existence even by the most complicated and radical changes in political and social forms."¹³⁴

According to Gramsci there are two types of intellectual groups in society: organic and traditional intellectuals. Organic intellectuals are those who are created within the class system and they support the interests of a special group, while traditional intellectuals are those who depend on the existing hegemonic system.¹³⁵

In a modern sense, the formation of intellectuals in Turkey dates back to the 19th century Ottoman Empire. Beforehand, knowledge and ideology was monopolized by the "ulema" class, and the artists, and writers who are out of this class could only exist with the support of the Ottoman palace similar to that the Western practices.¹³⁶

Furthermore, the usage of the word intellectual (*aydın*) was introduced after the Republic; in the late Ottoman period "*münevver*" was used to refer to intellectuals.¹³⁷

In the Republican period, there were different types of intellectuals. First, there were bureaucratic intellectuals who were highly affected by positivism and saw the new Turkish society be transformed into a Western one with one-party reforms. They were elitist and played a major role in carrying out the Republican reforms throughout the entire Turkish society.¹³⁸

Second, non-bureaucratic intellectuals criticized the one-party period. They supported decentralization, which they saw important for the development of a capitalist economy. They tried to combine the traditional roots of Turkey and private

¹³² Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, 49.

¹³³ *ibid*, 49.

¹³⁴ *ibid*, 50.

¹³⁵ *ibid*, 50.

¹³⁶ Belge, *ibid*, 123.

¹³⁷ *ibid*, 124.

¹³⁸ *ibid*, 126.

entrepreneurship with the power of the Democrat Party that emerged in the mid-1940s and was in power throughout the 1950s.¹³⁹

Third, intellectuals with rural backgrounds had the opportunity to study at university and then most of them went back to the villages to be teachers. Being a village teacher was one of the priorities of the Republican regime, because the enlightenment of the rural regions with Republican ideology depended on these teachers. So, the village teachers were in fact the representatives of the new Republican state in rural regions.¹⁴⁰

Lastly, the intellectuals were formed within the process of urbanization and capitalization in the 1950s. The intellectuals who gained their economic freedom focused more on intellectual activities rather than bureaucratic issues. In other words, their mentality changed at that time.¹⁴¹

In this chapter, I will use a new term, “intellectual subaltern.” I use this term to analyze those who have university education and are more familiar with urban life. I believe that through the term ‘intellectual subaltern,’ Sabahattin Ali’s educated characters can be contextualized in a better way. My aim is also to show how through education, modernization from above did not produce a group composed of homogenous intellectuals. Unlike those in villages or in the cities, intellectual subalterns have a critical thinking, which the authorities do not appreciate. I will consider intellectual subalterns and their relationship to authority figures in Sabahattin Ali’s works. For example, the minister of education, the school principal, the public servant, etc., and they serve in a village, town or city. Briefly, I will analyze the relationship between intellectual subalterns and authority figures. Then I will focus on how and why the subalterns confronted authority figures and at the end, it is them to leave. I will also pay attention to the intellectual subalterns’ friends, who have university education and pursue a normal life, indicating that he or she works mostly in the public sector, earns regular money, gets married, and owns private property. In this way, I argue that unlike the people who have a “normal life”, intellectual subalterns are deviating from what is considered to be the usual.

¹³⁹ *ibid.*, 126.

¹⁴⁰ *ibid.*, 126.

¹⁴¹ *ibid.*, 127.

I will often refer to Michel Foucault and his work *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of Prison* in my argument to interpret and exemplify the experience of Sabahattin Ali's characters. Foucault is an important name in describing the functions of prisons in social life, as well as hospitals or schools. Foucault states that:

"The prison, the place where the penalty is carried out, is also the place of observation of punished individuals. This takes two forms: surveillance, of course, but also knowledge of each inmate, of his behaviour, his deeper states of mind, his gradual improvement; the prisons must be conceived as places for the formation of clinical knowledge about the convicts; 'the penitentiary system cannot be an a priori conception; it is an induction of the social state.'"¹⁴²

The characters who I describe as intellectual subalterns in the stories below are under surveillance practice of the authority figures. As they are thought to be a threat to the society, the state seeks to provide order with such surveillance practices.

3.1. For a Black Undershirt (Bir Siyah Fanila İçin), 1927

The protagonist in *For A Black Undershirt* is Ömer, a political science graduate who becomes shoe shiner. One day, when he is at the Kadıköy Ferry Port, he sees one of his friends from the university. His friend, Güzin is very surprised at seeing Ömer as a shoe shiner. She remembers how successful he was as a student. Ömer starts to polish Güzin's shoes. While he is doing his job, he appears to be quite happy to Güzin. Then, Ömer starts to tell Güzin about his life story following the university years.

After graduation, Ömer says that he was appointed as a caimacam to a small town in Adana, a city in the Mediterranean region. However, during this period, he felt unhappy most of the time. He thinks that he is different from the townspeople with completely different mindsets. Compared to them, he sees himself as a very sophisticated person. In his eyes, life in Anatolia is too simplistic and boring. Because there is not anyone with which he can have a satisfactory conversation, Ömer feels lonely.

One morning, he becomes overwhelmed with his boring life and faces his dilemma again. This happens in a strange way. Ömer is shocked to realize that the night before he wore an undershirt. He wore it in the dark and thus, did not recognize its color. He presumed that it was white. However, this black undershirt was black and made him question himself more and more because he could not help thinking that he had

¹⁴² Foucault, *ibid*, 249.

gotten stuck in this town and there was no way to escape until that time. The black undershirt made him aware of that there was always a way to escape from the sameness and simplicity. He says that: "I felt I changed suddenly... I changed so rapidly that I was thinking that I could hold the separating line between my old identity and new identity."¹⁴³

Briefly, the color of the undershirt becomes a driving force for Ömer, who has constantly complained about the simplicity of life and people in the town. It shows that a black shirt in a box of white undershirts seems weird and this weirdness is quite compatible with Ömer's situation. He makes a decision to leave his job and the town. Ömer moves to Istanbul and does what he wants to do. When he finishes his story, he says goodbye to Güzin but he does not hear Güzin saying 'mad' or 'runaway' (*kaçık*) to him.¹⁴⁴

While in that small town, there are also other factors that make his life difficult. The routines of everyday life are too bad for him. For example, people gossip constantly. To him, gossiping becomes the only pastime for people in the countryside:

"Gossiping runs rampant in Anatolia as a result of unemployment and it occurs as the main activity. Teachers gossip about private accountants, the deed officer gossips about the public prosecutor, district revenue officer gossips about the department manager and after all these gossips they do not feel any shame of getting together at the coffeehouse and playing backgammon and hitting on the waitress. The first school principal tries to an inspector because he wants to pay his debts. These debts arise from his relations with the girls. The city manager efforts to be a member of the parliament because he wants to be superior to the people who cannot disagree now and to show off to his friends."¹⁴⁵

In this way, Ömer is critical of both himself and the environment in which he lives. To him, just like the people who live there, the environment is motionless and straightforward. After realizing this well, he comes to the realization that changing his lifestyle should be as easy as changing his clothes. He thinks:

"Remiss!... The reason of your boredom is not the community or the place but your own situation. You are not able to be a seigneur. You are not patient enough to be dependent on the order or laws. A good place or a good house makes you bored. You just need temporal works and a temporal bed that differs every night...you are so poor that you understand these things just now... From now on the only thing that you will do is to accept your destiny... For that, first of all take off your bowler hat, clean shirt and be free with your black undershirt... You

¹⁴³ "Birden değiştiğimi hissettim... O kadar süratle değişmişim ki, eski benliğimle yeni benliğim arasındaki ayırıcı çizgiyi elimle tutabileceğimi zannediyordum..." Ali, *ibid*, 860.

¹⁴⁴ *ibid*, 862.

¹⁴⁵ "Anadolu'da işsizliğin doğurduğu yegâne iş olan dedikodu almış yürümüştü. Mektep muallimi hususi muhasebe müdürünü, tapucu müddeiumumiye, malmüdürü şube reisini çekiştirir, on dakika sonra da kahvede beraberce tavla oynayıp garson kızlara sarkıntılık etmekten sıkılmazdı. İlk mektep müdürü müfettiş olmak için çalışırdı, çünkü alacağı harcırahlarla, çalgılı kahve kızları uğruna girdiği borçları ödeyecekti. Belediye reisi mebus olmak için faaliyet gösterirdi, çünkü şimdi dış geçiremediklerinin o zaman tepesine binecek, ahbablarına caka satacaktı." *ibid*, 858.

will see that the pleasure of live is hidden in change. But this change will not be so simple like changing your clothes. This change will be in your future...it will be so big ...”¹⁴⁶

Over and over again, he questions himself and sees that as long as he stays in this small town he will lose his mind. He chooses to lose his bright future as a state official rather than his mind: “I was thinking: If I leave I will lose my future, but if I stay I will lose my mind... my mind, my unique friend... I love my precious and lovely poor mind more than anything!”¹⁴⁷

He goes back to Istanbul to his own life where he thinks that he would not lose his mind and leads the complicated life that he has always yearned for:

“Do you know Güzin, there are some walking sticks made of bamboo, I like them too much because they have diversification on their surface, they are not flat. And there are also rattan walking sticks. They are not only flat but also the materials which they are made up of are generous, pure and therefore they are good. Sometimes, there are some walking sticks made of poplar tree. Try to imagine how awful they are! Simple, basic and poor quality. Suppose that we are going to endure them because of their purity! What if they have worms inside?...”¹⁴⁸

In conclusion, it is clear that Ömer does not meet the expectations of society. He does not want to be an ordinary or simple man like bureaucracy would require. In Istanbul, he enjoys being in a position of freedom. He frees himself from the burden of the state, its institutions and dress code. Although he creates a space in İstanbul in which he can act freely for himself as a shoe shiner, his subalternity does not end forever. Instead, it is a small space that he opens up for himself to live a free life.

In this story, we are not aware of Ömer’s family or his social background before his university years. Instead, Ömer is a character who is presented as seeking individual freedom. At the same time, he criticizes the existing system and institutions. When he feels desperate that no big changes are taking place, he chooses to quit his job. In general, he experiences an intellectual isolation which we can comprehend as a feature of a non-bureaucratic intellectual Belge describes the same in his article.

¹⁴⁶ “Gafil!... Burada seni sıkan, halk, muhit değil kendi mevkiindir; sen efendi olmak kabiliyetinde değilsin... Sen nizam, kanun gibi kayıtlara tabi olamayacak kadar serserisin.... Muayyen bir daire, muayyen bir ikametgâh seni sıkar, sana her gün değişen bir iş, her gece değişen bir yatak lazımdır... Ne yazık ki bunları daha şimdi anlayabiliyorsun... Artık yapacağın, mukadderin olan yaşayışa avdettir. Bunun için evvela başından melon şapkayı, sırtından kolalı gömleği çıkartmalı, siyah fanilanla tam bir uçar olmalısın... Göreceksin ki hayatın zevki değişikliktedir... Ama öyle elbise değiştirir kadar basit olanlarında değil, hayatına yeni bir istikamet verecek kadar büyük tenevvüllerde...” *ibid*, 860.

¹⁴⁷ “Düşünüyordum: Gidersem istikbalimi kaybedecektim, fakat durursam aklımı... Yalnız kaldığım günlerde yegâne dostum olan aklımı... Her şeyden daha fazla sevip beğendiğim akılcağımızı!” *ibid*, 859.

¹⁴⁸ “Bilir misin Güzin, bambu bastonlar olur, ben onları çok severim; çünkü bünyelerinde değişiklik vardır, düz değildirler. Bir de hezaren bastonlar vardır. Bunlar düz olmakla beraber ağaçları asıldır, temizdir, onun için iyidirler. Bazen kavak ağacından da baston yaparlar... Düşün ne berbat şeydir bunlar!.. Düz, basit, sonra da nevilere adi. Hadi bunlara da saf oldukları için tahammül edebileceğiniz farz et!.. Ya içleri de kurtlu olursa?..” *ibid*, 858.

3.2. That Friend of Mine (O Arkadaşım),¹⁴⁹ 1928

In *That Friend of Mine*, the writer himself is the narrator. The writer finds a letter written by one of his friends to his ex-girlfriend. The protagonist learns that his ex-girlfriend started to have a university education at Darülfünun,¹⁵⁰ located in Istanbul.¹⁵¹ According to him, a school education puts limits on people, their minds and their capacities. He states: "You cannot have education at the Darülfünun. You are not calm enough... Especially, after you experienced life like that, this routine makes you bored. You need a complicated work, an extraordinary life."¹⁵²

Also, in one of his letters, he says that the school system kills potential. He criticizes education, suggesting that the ruling elite seek to bring equality to people who are not really the same. He also claims that the system makes people be dependent under the people with hegemonic power. As such, he suggests that she needs to go away from any education that would make her lose freedom.

During the early Republican years, the education system became unified, and resulting in a homogenous education system. However, the homogenous essence of the education system led to some problems. Erik Jan Zürcher sees that the totalitarian tendencies of the Republican People's Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası) aimed to spread out the Kemalist ideology throughout the country. Therefore, any newspaper or periodicals that adopted liberal or socialist views were closed down in 1925.¹⁵³ Zürcher also makes a point about Darülfünun (Istanbul University):

"Finally, in 1933, the old Darülfünun ('House of Sciences', the university) in Istanbul was given a new charter and reconstituted as the University of Istanbul. In the process two-thirds of its teaching staff, more than 100 people, lost their tenure and only the most dependable followers of the Kemalist line were kept on. It was the first of many purges the Turkish universities were to experience in the following 50 years."¹⁵⁴

¹⁴⁹ This story was not included in *Sabahattin Ali Bütün Eserleri-Complete Works*, but in the selected stories of Sabahattin Ali, *Çakıcı'nın İlk Kurşunu*. 8. Bs. (İstanbul, January, 2013).

¹⁵⁰ Here it should be noted that although there was a university reform in 1933, Darülfünun did not achieve the Republican ideals. In other words, it did not make revolutionary changes. İlhan Tekeli, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'ndan Günümüze Eğitim Kurumlarının Gelişimi", *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türkiye Ansiklopedisi*, v. 1 (1983): 663.

¹⁵¹ Darülfünun was the name of university in Ottoman Period. Later its name was changed to Istanbul University in 1933 reformation.

¹⁵² "Sen Darülfünun 'da okuyamazsın... Okuyamayacak kadar serserisin... Bilhassa hayatı bu kadarcık olsun gördükten sonra yeknesak mesai seni boğar. Sana karmakarışık bir iş, sana düz olmayan bir hayat lazımdır. Korkarım ki bunları geç anlayacaksın." Ali, *Çakıcı'nın İlk Kurşunu*, 19-20.

¹⁵³ Erik Jan Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, (London-New York, I. B. Tauris, 2004), 180.

¹⁵⁴ *ibid*, 181.

When we take into account the socialist side of Sabahattin Ali, we see that he is actually critic of the totalitarian tendency in education at Darülfünun.

The author criticizes the education system as being uncritical and uniform. The education in schools is not, in fact, creative and sophisticated. In that sense, he thinks that it kills originality. He says:

“Are you crazy? School kills the most important potentials of people. High school could not achieve that, now another school?”¹⁵⁵

“It does not matter how much we try to change our lives to a normal, ordinary life, we cannot achieve. Whatever we do, -as someone said- all rivers fall into the sea...”¹⁵⁶

This story is important in several ways. First, the protagonist’s reflections on the school system are striking as he believes that schools undermine people’s intellectual capacity.

Second, like Ömer in *For a Black Undershirt*, the protagonist here cannot keep up with the system. He is not seen as normal by the society. He is a deviant character when compared to most of the people. But he does not care about how he is seen by the society. What he wants is to get together with his ex-girlfriend and make fun of the world. This also shows that he wants to be with someone who is not ordinary. An intellectual woman may be a good companion for him. The below passage explains what he thinks:

“I beg you my child... and clearly, shamelessly, I am telling... I want our heads to be connected not our bodies... It is shameful to desire the other. Because I will not be loyal to you and you will not be loyal to me. Life... which is only enjoyable change, it is a fool’s job to being attached to one person and I cannot endure an ordinary woman who would not cheat on me. Our society’s regulations and our animal instinct will not oblige to her cheating... In this case, love is something that the smart people would not do.”¹⁵⁷

Third, his challenge to the social norms shows itself in different ways. For example, he thinks that even in a romantic relationship, cheating is normal. In the above quotation, he expresses his ideas about marriage and we see that he is not in search of loyalty in a relationship. To him, being loyal means being simple and similar to the

¹⁵⁵ “Sen deli misin? Mektep insanların tabii istidatlarını öldürmek için yegâne vasıta... Lise tahsili bu fiil-i katli ikmal edemedi diye başka mekteplere girilir mi?” Ali, *Çakıcı’nın İlk Kurşunu*, 19.

¹⁵⁶ “Hayatımızı normal insanlarınki gibi intizam ve kayıtlara tabi kılmayı ne kadar istesek muvaffak olamayız. Ne kadar uğraşsak -birinin dediği gibi- su akar... Değirmen döner...” *ibid*, 20.

¹⁵⁷ “Sana yalvarıyorum yavrum... Ve açıkça, terbiyesizce söylüyorum... Ben senden vücutlarımızın değil kafalarımızın birleşmesini istiyorum... Ötekini arzu etmek münasebetsizdir. Çünkü ne sen bana sadık kalırsın, ne ben sana... Hayat... ki yegane zevki değişikliktir, bir kişiye bağlanmak ancak aptalların işidir ve ben, beni aldatmayacak kadar alelade bir kadına tahammül edemem. Aldatmasına da cemiyetin henüz kıramadığımız kayıtları ile hayvani insiyaklarımız müsaade etmez... Şu halde aşk, zamanımızda kafasını biraz işletmiş olanların yapamayacakları şeydir...” *ibid*, 20.

majority. Here, by rejecting loyalty, I see that he is protecting his freedom. He is totally against the restrictions imposed on him by the society.

In this way, Sabahattin Ali criticizes the institution of marriage through his protagonist. His protagonist thinks that he cannot be like other people. He wants to be different from society where uniformity shows itself in all facets of life, including schools, marriages and so on. He says that: "I tell you, neither you nor me, we cannot think in a simple way like the others. I tell you that we shouldn't forget our capabilities that cannot be seen in other people. Neither you, nor me... We cannot be like everyone else..."¹⁵⁸ He hates any kind of restrictions, especially those that come from school, standard job employment and the institution of marriage.

Lastly, I see this nameless character as, simultaneously, and intellectual subaltern. In the end the writer says that: "I left the place where my friend had been. After a while, I heard that the people, who think themselves very clever, immured my friend in a place..."¹⁵⁹

Like prison, mental hospitals also restrict one's freedom. Such institutions from the Foucauldian perspective bring a "homogenous rule of morality." Foucault states that:

"The asylum reduces differences, represses vice, eliminates irregularities. It denounces everything that opposes the essential virtues of society."¹⁶⁰

"The asylum sets itself the task of the homogeneous rule of morality, its rigorous extension to all those who tend to escape from it."¹⁶¹

According to Foucault, one of the functions of asylums is to diminish the deviances which may pose possible problems for the sake of social order. This same idea is apparent in the story of *That Friend of Mine*.

3.3. A Scandal (Bir Skandal), 1932

A Scandal is based on Sabahattin Ali's experiences in Konya where he worked as a teacher. After he published this story in *Yeni Anadolu* newspaper in the title of *A Woman's Trick* (Bir Kadın Dalaveresi), the Board of Education investigated him.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁸ "Ben sana diyorum ki: - Ne sen, ne ben diğerleri kadar düz düşünecek insanlar değiliz... Bunun, kendimize haiz olmadığımız kıymetleri izafe etmekte olabileceğini unutmuyarak söylüyorum. Ne sen, ne ben herkes gibi olamayız..." *ibid*, 20.

¹⁵⁹ "O arkadaşımın bulunduğu yerden ayrıldım. Bir müddet sonra -akıllı olduklarını iddia eden insanların- o arkadaşımı deli diye bir yere kapattıklarını duydum..." *ibid*, 20.

¹⁶⁰ Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, (Translated from the French by Richard Howard Vintage Books, A Division of Random House, Inc. New York), 258.

¹⁶¹ *ibid*, 258.

¹⁶² We learn this from the judicial documents which are transferred to a book called *Mahkemelerde* (In Courts) by Nüket Esen and Nezihe Seyhan.

The protagonist of this story, Nurullah, is a teacher. He works in a small town located in Central Anatolia. As an educated man, Nurullah participates in social meetings and balls, which are mostly organized by educated and elite people. During these occasions, Nurullah is vocal about his ideas regarding the social and economic problems of Turkey. According to him, Turkey is not progressing well, and the progress is only for people who have access to social services, easily. For example, schools, hospitals and other public institutions. He thinks that bureaucracy does not allow social mobility and that people like peasants and the poor are not able to find a place in it.

As he harshly criticizes these things, his school principals and other colleagues warn him not to explain his thoughts in front of everyone. They find his involvement in the political issues too unsettling. They argue with Nurullah and always remind him that they are living in a small town and he thus has to be careful about his behaviors and speeches. Nurullah does not listen to them, but has to deal with such criticisms regularly.

Nurullah's life becomes even more difficult when he develops a close relationship with a woman, Şükufe, who he met at a meeting. During the early days of their friendship, they openly share their ideas about society. As time goes by, people start gossiping about their relationship. Nurullah initially ignores them as he is in love with another woman, a young high school graduate, Beria. However, the gossip circulates quickly. As a result, people change their attitude toward him.

Unlike Nurullah, Şükufe is bothered by the gossip. She decides to stay away from Nurullah. One day, when they see each other at the ballroom, Şükufe rejects dancing with Nurullah. She says: "Sir, will we be forced to dance? Only thing remained he did not do was clinging to my throat and dragging me!"¹⁶³ Under normal conditions, Nurullah would be able to stand for this response, now; however, he does not say anything in front of everyone.

Unfortunately, this case turns into a scandal for Nurullah as many people believe that he is in love with Şükufe, and is disturbing her in society. In their eyes, Nurullah was a troublemaker while in the ballroom. People exaggerated the story to the point that he is depicted as pulling a gun. They talk about his impolite behaviors and his

¹⁶³ "Efendim, zorla mı kalkacağız, bir boğazıma sarılıp sürüklediği kaldı!.." Ali, **Sabahattin Ali Bütün Eserleri-Eleştirel Basım**, 997.

pressure on Şükufe. At first, Nurullah thinks that the gossip will be forgotten. However, Nurullah has to leave for Istanbul because an investigation has been initiated against him by the District National Education Directorate.

Nurullah, as an intellectual subaltern, does not act in accordance with the social norms of the small town. He is isolated and dismissed as a rebel by the majority of the society, just like other subalterns.

Through this story, we can also read Sabahattin Ali's views on Turkey. Nurullah is concerned about the huge wealth gap between urban and rural people. He does not believe that the peasants can free themselves from the imposed obligations and duties. Those in the villages have a lack of sources, which would not help them create a better life for themselves. Unlike the peasants, urban people have access to services such as education, medical care and the public facilities. Sabahattin Ali explains this in the following passage:

"If you please, we should look at the reality, for example we urbanites also pay taxes right? In exchange for this we at least have a broken sidewalk, dimmed street lamp or a police who says that he is there for our and our homes safety; at least we can find a school to send our children, so they will not be wandering aimlessly. But I ask you: What does a peasant take in exchange for what he had given? He has to do his own road, his streets are darker than his poor fortune and school can be found in only one of every hundred villages. Gendarmes do not go for the safety of these but for collecting taxes. We should not fool ourselves; peasants always give but never get in exchange."¹⁶⁴

Nurullah's second concern is that people's level of intellect is too low. He thinks that people want to be educated in order to have a good life, but not to have an intellectual and analytical mind. Nurullah believes that the "intellectuals" do not have practical solutions to the problems of the country. Nurullah attributes importance to reason and thus does not feel comfortable with the educated people. Because of their fixed ideas, he scorns them and thinks that they are foolish. In a meeting he says that:

"It is true that men became an engineer, a doctor and maybe a lawyer or a teacher. However, the prime mover was not an intellectual need but the need of eating well, dressing well and getting married to beautiful women. I mean that they were using their greatest organ as a query

¹⁶⁴ "Rica ederim, biraz hakikatlere bakalım, mesela biz şehirli de hükümete vergi veririz değil mi? Buna mukabil hiç olmazsa sokağımızda bozuk bir kaldırım, yollarda sönük bir lamba, evlerimizin ve şahsımızın selameti için mevcut olduğu söylenen bir zabıta vardır; çocuklarımızı hiç olmazsa boş gezmekten kurtaracak bir mektep buluyoruz. Fakat sorarım size: Köylü verdiği mukabil ne alır? Yolunu kendi yapmaya mecburdur, sokakları zavallı talihinden daha karanlıktır ve mektep, yüz köyün birinde bile yoktur. Candarma onlara asayıştan ziyade vergi tahsilini temin için gider. Kendimizi aldatmayalım, köylü mütemadiyen vermiş, buna mukabil hiçbir şey almamıştır." *ibid*, 974.

for their stomach and genitalia. They do not give more importance to the intellect than the intestine.”¹⁶⁵

As stated above, Nurullah is warned because of his ideas. For example, once his principal tells him: “Sir, you are still young, inexperienced and febrile. I am a kind of your elder brother. Please, don’t take me wrong but please be calmer and not tell your opinion so directly anywhere else. No, no there is no problem but you know we are in a gossipy place!”¹⁶⁶ However, Nurullah tries to tell him that he is not emotionally and intellectually detached from the people of this small village. He says: “Right, I am not from the space. This place is my hometown too, I know here as well as you or maybe better than you.”¹⁶⁷ It is understood from the dialogue between the principal and Nurullah that they are like strangers. The principal represents the state and follows a normal course of life; by contrast, Nurullah represents change and progress.

The story depicts the alienation of Nurullah due to his political ideas. Compared to the people in the town, he has more sophisticated and complicated ideas about progress and the intellectual level of the country. The people, however, continue daily lives without such concerns. At the end of the day, they are only interested in gossiping. Nurullah sees that the root of gossip is in fact evil in people. He explains like that: “At that time I was very ignorant and I did not know some men have such kind of brains including an evil machine in operation just for doing evil things. Until then, I was surely convinced that there should be a reason underlying behind to harm others.”¹⁶⁸

When the people gossip about Nurullah and Şükufe, suggesting that they have an unacceptable relationship, Nurullah ignores them. He also assumes that Şükufe would ignore them as an educated woman, but she does not. He describes the

¹⁶⁵ “Erkekler belki mühendis, belki doktor, belki avukat veya muallim olmuşlardı, fakat bunu bir fikir ihtiyacı olarak değil, iyi karnını doyurmak, iyi giyinmek, güzel karı alabilmek için yapmışlardı. Yani dimağ gibi en asil bir uzuvlarını midelerine ve tenasül cihazlarına uşak olarak kullanıyorlardı. Yalnız ekmek parası düşünen ve asıl vazifelerini, tefekkür kabiliyetlerini tamamıyla unutarak basit birer makine haline gelen bu kafalarda akıl, saf ve maddiyatın dışına çıkabilmiş akıl, artık lüzumsuz bir şeydi. Münevverlerimizde dimağların rolü körbağırşağınkinden daha fazla değildi.” *ibid*, 973.

¹⁶⁶ “Nurullah Bey, daha gençsiniz, tecrübesizsiniz, ateşlisiniz. Ben sizin ağabeyiniz sayılırım, hani aklınıza bir şey gelmesin, fakat biraz daha ağır davranınız, her yerde açılmamanızı sizden rica edeceğim; yok, bir şey olduğundan filan değil; fakat malum dedikodulu muhit!” *ibid*, 978.

¹⁶⁷ “Ben Merih yıldızından gelmedim. Ben de bu memleketin çocuğuyum, buraları ben de sizin kadar, belki sizden iyi tanırım.” *ibid*, 979.

¹⁶⁸ “O zamanlar insanların çok cahili idim ve bazı adamların dimağında, sırf fenalık yapmak için konulmuş, hususi bir cihaz bulunduğunu bilmiyordum. O zamana kadar birisine fenalık yapmak için muhakkak bir sebep lazım geldiği kanaatindeydim.” *ibid*, 995.

gossiping: "They are just like machines in terms of talkativeness and it turns this place into a hell. I feel confused, hopeless but proud and stubborn and I try to fend myself like a deer which is cornered and encompassed."¹⁶⁹

When Nurullah understands that he fails to meet the requirements of the society, like Ömer in *For a Black Undershirt*, he leaves the town for Istanbul. He questions himself as follows:

"Why am I overcome by these men? It is quite simple. Initially I was unarmed and they were attacking me in a way that I did not know until that time. For example, I think that the only referee is sanity while they do not hesitate to sacrifice it to any fraudulence. And they are honest only if their interests are under guard."¹⁷⁰

If he stays in this small town, he would live like a stranger there. He feels like Gulliver and says that: "I am even in more awe that I was when Gulliver was in the hometown of the dwarves and, these dwarf souls which gives me disgust, had tied me up tightly from everywhere. There was no chance to move."¹⁷¹

In this way, Sabahattin Ali compares him with Jonathan Swift's character from the well-known satirical masterpiece *Gulliver's Travels*. Nurullah's experience in this small town has some similarities with Gulliver. Swift satirizes the rulers in Lilliput – the country of tiny people- as they are narrow-minded. Lilliputians believe that they can control Gulliver if they tie him up. This is quite similar to how Nurullah extremely feels.

Nurullah's experience in the small town also forces him to become a deviant. In the end, it is thus him who has to leave the town.

3.4. Intellectual Friend (Fikir Arkadaşı), 1935

This story is about a man's thoughts on his young colleague, who speaks against the politicians and publicly criticizes the existent situation. As two people have testified against him, he is put into prison. To help the colleague, in fact his son, the protagonist goes to a pub to discuss his case with a lawyer.

¹⁶⁹ "Çenelerin yorulmak bilmeyen insafsız makinesi hiç durmadan işliyor ve bana bulunduğum yeri cehennem ediyordu. Bir köpek sürüsü tarafından kovalanarak bir köşeye sıkıştırılmış ve etrafı sarılmış bir geyik gibi şaşkın, meyus, fakat mağrur ve çetin, kendimi müdafaaya çalışıyordum." *ibid*, 1000.

¹⁷⁰ "Niçin bu adamlara mağlup oluyordum? Gayet basit. İlk zamanlarda onların silahlarını bilmiyordum. Bana o zamana kadar bilmediğim şekillerde hücum ediyorlardı. Mesela ben akliselimi en büyük hakem tanıdığım halde, onlar bunu herhangi bir dalavereye feda etmekte tereddüt etmiyorlardı. Ve ancak menfaatlerini haleldar etmediği müddetçe namuslu idiler." *ibid*, 995.

¹⁷¹ "Güliver'in cüceler memleketine düştüğü zamankinden daha çok hayret içindeydim. Ve bana tiksinti veren bu ruh cüceleri beni de her tarafımdan sınıksız bağlamışlardı. Kıpırdanmaya imkân yoktu." *ibid*, 995.

According to the protagonist/the father, his friend/the son is really an intellectual man. The problem is that he does not know how to behave in public. They are both public servants and they should be careful in their speeches about the state all the time. He means that they should not criticize negative issues in the political system.

The protagonist believes that if the young man does not learn how to develop appropriate tactics, he would be in more trouble. As long as he stays silent, he can be secure himself. The man asks the lawyer to go hard in the court. In this way, the son is going to be sent to the prison, which he thinks is something good as it pacifies people who are seen deviant.

Briefly, the father wants to protect his son from being hanged. He thinks that he needs a lesson. He goes on explaining his concerns as follows:

"But, do you know, maybe it is a lesson for him. If he is condemned, it is not bad at all. He needed a slap like that, didn't he? Yeah?! How about...? He was going too far. God forbid, he might get hanged... He got off cheap... At the very outside, he will be in prison for one or two years, it is required for him. For his future, life and tranquility in his life... It is required for our ideology. Do you understand? For our ideology... My dear friend, if you love him too, don't defend him..."¹⁷²

The father's belief that one or two years of punishment helps his son to behave himself can be connected to how Foucault interprets the functions of the prison. Foucault states that:

"The practice of placing individuals under 'observation' is a natural extension of a justice imbued with disciplinary methods and examination procedures. Is it surprising that the cellular prison, with its regular chronologies, forced labour, its authorities of surveillance and registration, its experts in normality, who continue and multiply the functions of the judge, should have become the modern instrument of penalty? Is it surprising that prisons resemble factories, schools, barracks, hospitals, which all resemble prisons?"¹⁷³

Foucault clearly criticizes modern institutions with the above quote. The father however sees the prisons like schools where his son would learn how to be a normal person. The father goes on talking:

"What has Mussolini said? A man should be imprisoned for many years in order to become a decent person, he said it, right? Mussolini is such a dandy person indeed... It is essential for an intellectual to be imprisoned in this society's tragic situation. There is no other way to be mature

¹⁷² "Ama biliyor musun?.. Bu belki onun için derstir. Bir müddet yatsa hiç de fena olmayacak. Ona böyle bir sille lazımdı, değil mi? Ha?!... Ne dersin? Gitgide azıtırıyordu. Maazallah tuttuğu yol ipe kadar varabilirdi.... Gene hafif atlattı... Yatsa yatsa bir iki sene yatar, bu da ona lazım... İstikbali, hayatı, ömrünün sükûneti namına lazım... Mefkûremiz namına lazım. Anladın mı, mefkûremiz namına lazım... İki gözüm kardeşim, sen de onu seviyorsan müdafaa etme..." *ibid*, 952.

¹⁷³ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 227-228.

enough to understand life. Perhaps he may give up having his nose in books to see around and may abandon his blind dare.”¹⁷⁴

The father supports his own thoughts on being imprisoned by Mussolini and in fact he also proves that he is a wise man. In fact, Sabahattin Ali criticizes the prison system in Turkey by using the Mussolini example. In other words, he criticizes fascism. Sabahattin Ali questions the state through the words of the father; the state acts like a father who knows what is good for his children. The father’s approach to his son reflects these authoritarian elements. The father also points out that the other colleagues at the office gossip a lot, he believes that his son is a victim of such gossip. He says that:

“A slender, go to the hole... Well actually he is not totally innocent, he didn’t hold his mouth shut and jabbered about everything. I said many times: Son, times have changed, do you believe that you will change the world? Receive your pittance of a salary, go aside... Isn’t that true? We also gain insight about these things... On my own behalf; I am a more intellectual person than him... It’s right, this world system doesn’t work like that, but first things first... Look at me, do I open my mouth? You should cover up your tracks... But this ignorance child never listens to the others... He always stuck his arse. As if he will change the world.”¹⁷⁵

The father critiques his son as he has always spoken his mind regardless of working at a state office. Unlike the son, the father internalizes the state power so that he does not challenge the authority. Unlike the father, the son seeks change just like Ömer in *For a Black Undershirt*, or Nurullah in *A Scandal*. Making a change is a key for those characters. Change represents something good.

In *Intellectual Friend*, I see the son as an intellectual subaltern who, like some other intellectuals, ends up in prison for life where he cannot find unsupervised space.

3.5. Enemy (Düşman), 1936

In *Enemy*, the main characters are also educated people who graduated from the same school. After school, one of them finds a public job and improves his economic and social conditions. He enjoys having a good house with luxury belongings. He is

¹⁷⁴ “Mussolini ne demiş? Adam olmak için şu kadar sene hapis yatmak gerek, demiş; değil mi? Yaman herif şu Mussolini vesselam... Cemiyetin bu feci halinde bir entelektüel için hapis yatmak elzem. Olgunlaşmak, hayatı anlamak için başka çare yok. Bizimki de belki bu sayede biraz kitaplardan başını kaldırdır da etrafını görür, körü körüne atılganlıktan vazgeçer.” Ali, **Sabahattin Ali Bütün Eserleri-Eleştirel Basım**, 953.

¹⁷⁵ “Bir iftira, haydi kodese... Hani hiç kabahati de yok değildi, çenesini tutmaz ileri geri söylenirdi. Kaç kere dedim: Oğlum, devir o devir değil, dünyayı sen mi ıslah edeceksin? Al üç buçuk kuruş maaşını, otur bir köşede... Değil mi efendim? Biz de fikir sahibiyiz... Ben kendi nefsimde ondan çok daha ileriyim... Evet, bu dünya böyle yürümez, fakat her şeyin bir sırası var... Bak, ben ağzımı açıyor muyum? İnsan karda yürüyüp izini belli etmemeli... Fakat cahil çocuk hiç dinlemezdi ki... Hep burnunun doğrusuna giderdi. Sanki tek başına dünyanın mihverini değiştirecek...” *ibid*, 951.

a man of status and enjoys leisure activities (gambling, women, drinking, etc.) but he feels that “in his whole life there is a non-operative side of him.”¹⁷⁶

One night, while he is on getting his house, he sees a shadow of a man who is sleeping in front of the exterior door. The man asks the owner of the house if he would allow him to stay in the courtyard that night as he has no place to go. When he looks at his clothes and pays attention to the man’s speech, he understands that he is not a rambler or a beggar but someone from his university. The owner of the house then invites him inside. Initially however, the man refuses this offer since the police is after him. He does not want to create any problems to this nice man. As he insists, he goes into the house.

As these two men have not seen each other for twelve years, they chat about what they have done so far. Although they have a warm conversation in the house, the house owner cannot help but think about what the guest has told him. He does not go to sleep and by coincidence he sees something about his guest in the newspaper. He realizes that the police is after him as he is extremely dangerous. He does not like the idea of providing shelter for a criminal. He decides to call the police because after the long conversation with the guest, he thinks that the man has the capacity to ruin society. He informs the police about the man who is sleeping in the living room. Four policemen come to take him.

In *Enemy*, we read about an encounter between two old friends who follow a different path after the university. The owner of the house represents a man who has a normal and acceptable life. In this way, he finds an opportunity to gain money and thus he feels more self-confident and powerful. That is to say, unlike the old friend, he does not question the system, in which he has found room already.

However, the guest represents the abnormal and the deviant. The majority of people see him as an enemy. These factors make him an intellectual subaltern, who, like some others, is put into prison due to his thoughts. The owner of the house wants to learn why the police is after him and he asks:

“What did you do wrong? Why the police seek for you? Once I heard that you had dangerous and obsessional thoughts and you were dismissed!”

“The things you will guess!”

“Do you expect to change the world?”

“You have to believe that this world is unchangeable!”¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁶ ‘bütün ömrünce işlemeyen bir yeri varmış gibi’ *ibid*, 955.

Here, like in other stories, there is a focus on the issue of change. The house owner finds his friend too idealistic because his friend thinks that it is possible to change the world. This belief is in fact is another common aspect of intellectual subalterns. Although they fail to change the world, they at least make some changes in their lives; they leave one place for another; they usually go to a city that they are more familiar with. The dialogue between the house owner and the guest proceeds like this:

"The landlord stood up and approached the other and put hand on his shoulder:

"Tell me everything!" he said.

"You tell me!"

"You see, I took the normal path and well, I've been something!"

"Are you so sure that you took the normal paths?"

"Why? ... I worked, and became helpful and showed a progress!"

"I do not know about how you took the path... it could be normal ... But do you believe in your path? Especially in that you became helpful..."¹⁷⁸

These two friends differ from each other in terms of being normal and abnormal. Foucault's *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of Prison* may help us understand how authorities use binary division to exercise individual control:

"Generally speaking, all the authorities exercising individual control function according to a double mode; that of binary division and branding (mad/sane; dangerous/harmless; normal/abnormal); and that of coercive assignment, of differential distribution (who he is; where he must be; how he is to be characterized; how he is to be recognized; how a constant surveillance is to be exercised over him in an individual way, etc.)"¹⁷⁹

According to this quotation, the man is branded as mad, dangerous and abnormal by the owner of the house; that is why he informs the police about his place. In other words, Sabahattin Ali criticizes the thought that, as long as they are not controlled by or put under the surveillance of the authority, he or she is seen dangerous to the society.

¹⁷⁷ "Ne yaptın da seni polis arıyor? Ben bir zamanlar tehlikeli fikirlere saplandığını ve işinden çıkarıldığını duymuştum!"

"Tahmin edebileceğin şeyler!"

"Dünyayı değiştireceğini mi sanıyorsun?"

"Siz dünyanın değişmez olduğuna inanmaya mecbursunuz!" *ibid*, 958.

¹⁷⁸ Ev sahibi kalktı, ötekinin yanına geldi, elini omzuna koyarak:

"Anlat!" dedi.

"Sen anlat!"

"Görüyorsun.. Normal yollarda yürüdüm ve eh, bir parça bir şeyler oldum!"

"Normal yollarda yürüdüğüne bu kadar emin misin?"

"Neden?.. Çalıştım, faydalı oldum ve ilerledim!"

"Yürüyüşünü bilmem... Normal olabilir... Fakat üzerinde yürüdüğün yola bu kadar inanıyor musun? Hele faydalı olduğuna..." *ibid*, 959.

¹⁷⁹ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of Prison*, 199.

The house owner also thinks that the guest is angry as he is not a wealthy person. This shows that there is a class gap between the old friends. This is well portrayed by the dialogue stated below:

"If I deny thinking to my mind and seeing to my eyes, you know that it is not so hard for me to arrive at the point where you think you are..."
"I don't know... You were the smartest at school!"
"What about now?"
"The most nonconformist now!.."180

During the school years, the guest was a very successful student but now he is seen as an enemy by the society because of his ideas. Furthermore, the word "enemy" in the story refers to the concept of the 'leper' which Foucault describes. The protagonist is branded as an enemy in the society and it is impossible for him to get rid of this brand. Foucault exemplifies the 'leper' like this:

"On the one hand, the lepers are treated as plague victims; the tactics of individualizing disciplines are imposed on the excluded; and, on the other hand, the universality of disciplinary controls makes it possible to brand the 'leper' and to bring into play against him the dualistic mechanisms of exclusion."181

As the two friends chat longer, the house owner questions him more and more. However, he is obsessed in a way. The following passage gives an idea about his confusion: "Might he be right? He thought. "I don't think so... Is the whole world so fool? Human beings are weird creatures... When he is obsessed with something, even the most clever ones lose his mind!..."182 In other words, to the house owner, the guest has crazy ideas. How clever he is means nothing to the house owner since the guest is a leper that has not followed a normal course of life.

Here, I am aware of the fact that leper is a concept that was originally used in the Western context. Still, Foucault's leper helps to articulate how disciplinary institutions such as prisons were the places where Sabahattin Ali's some characters end up their lives. Furthermore, the expressions such as being mad or crazy; being a threat or an enemy to the order of society and having weird ideas are repeatedly stated in the stories. In my opinion, these are relevant to the Foucault's leper.

¹⁸⁰ "Kafama düşünmeyi, gözlerime görmeyi yasak edebilirsem, senin çıktığını zannettiğin yere varmamın bana güç gelmeyeceğini bilirsin..."

"Bilmem... Mektepte en ilerimizdin!"

"Şimdi?"

"Şimdi en ayırımız!.." Ali, Sabahattin Ali Bütün Eserleri- Eleştirel Basım, 960.

¹⁸¹ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of Prison*, 199.

¹⁸² "Söylediği şeylerde bir hakikat olabilir mi ki? diye düşündü. "Zannetmem... Bütün dünya budala mı? İnsan acayip mahlûk... Kafası bir kere bir şeye saplanıverince en akıllısından böyle bir mecnun doğuyor!.." *ibid*, 961.

At the end of the story, it is clear that he lives in a society that does not allow him to express himself. As a result, he is arrested by the police and put in the prison. Here is a real criticism of the prison system and again I refer to Foucault to understand the functions of the prisons. Foucault elaborates on this critique saying:

“Disciplinary space tends to be divided into as many sections as there are bodies or elements to be distributed. One must eliminate the effects of imprecise distributions, the uncontrolled disappearance of individuals, their diffuse circulation, their unusable and dangerous coagulation; it was a tactic of anti-desertion, anti-vagabondage, anti-concentration. Its aim was to establish presences and absences, to know where and how to locate individuals, to set up useful communications, to interrupt others, to be able at each moment to supervise the conduct, of each individual, to assess it, to judge it, to calculate its qualities or merits. It was a procedure, therefore, aimed at knowing, mastering and using. Discipline organizes an analytical space.”¹⁸³

In a disciplinary space, like in prisons told here by Sabahattin Ali, the ruling elite and “normal people” seek to control people if they see them as dangerous to society. They easily call such people the enemy. Of course, Sabahattin Ali uses the term enemy since he lives in a world that forces dichotomies, like the Self/the Other.

3.6. Asphalt Road (Asfalt Yol), 1936

Asphalt Road is on a teacher and his experiences in a village. As he is familiar with the peasants beforehand, he feels that it would not be hard to work for him. He is an idealist teacher, and he never complains about the poor school conditions. Rather, he improves its physical conditions. Also he develops good relationships with the peasants of the village.

The major problem in the village is the lack of an asphalt road. One day, the teacher comes up with an idea to solve the problem. As he is sure that the officials would ignore a single, long petition, he writes many short petitions and sends all of them from different villages. In this way, he makes sure all letters will be read by the officials.

However, one day in the city, the Director of the National Education from the province criticizes him for doing non-school work: “You may find time to deal with non-school works, do you have less students?”¹⁸⁴

Among the Director’s criticism is that he spread the ideas in the constitution to the peasants. For example, when a peasant could not get an answer for his petition from

¹⁸³ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of Prison*, 143.

¹⁸⁴ “Siz okul dışındaki işlerle de uğraşacak vakit bulabiliyorsunuz galiba, talebeniz pek mi az?” Ali, *Sabahattin Ali Bütün Eserleri-Eleştirel Basım*, 1073.

the Department of Land Registry, he protests the officials so they have to give an answer to him. The state officials go to the Director of the National Education to complain about the teacher for being busy with non-school work.

Like in many other stories, here too, powerful figures from the local areas exert pressure on the state officials to oppress those who challenge the existing system. Among such figures is a rich landowner, Rüstem.

The problem between them starts when a state official comes to the village in his car with which he has a problem due to the village road. The state officials ask the city governor to solve the road problem. At that point, the city governor tells the official that they have already had a road project and a new road will be built soon. Soon, the road is built but it does not satisfy the peasants, who are not even allowed to attend its opening ceremony. The teacher describes the day of the ceremony, saying:

“People and peasants were watching from a distance, I came to them, I spoke to them, I was floating on air. After returning to my place, it came to mind to wave the peasants to come closer. Once for all, this way is their way. A few of them tried to come but gendarmes did not let them, I did not interfere it but my heart sank.”¹⁸⁵

Ten days after the ceremony, the road is destroyed by the carts and the carriages. Since this new road does not suffice anymore, the peasants have to use another road which is in poor condition. Since, in the eyes of the peasants it is the teacher who promoted the road project, they go and attack on him. Indeed, they see the teacher as an enemy and they do not want him there anymore. The village headman asks him to leave the village to avoid more problems. Like some other protagonists of Sabahattin Ali's stories, he has no choice but to leave.

There are some important points in this story. First, the teacher wants the peasants to be aware of their rights. He believes that they can be enlightened if they know about what the constitution promises to the citizens. He often reads the law books in front of them to express that the only way of reducing the distance between the state and the peasants – citizens- is to know their rights.

Second, those who represent the bureaucracy do not allow the teacher to convince people about their rights. Their being enlightened in this way means that the state officials would do more work, which they do not like. The peasants themselves also

¹⁸⁵ “Halk ve köylü uzaktan seyrediyorlardı, yanlarına gittim, konuştum, sevincimden herkesi kucaklayacağım geliyor. Yerime döndükten sonra aklıma geldi, köylülere, yakına gelmeleri için işaret ettim. Bu yol herkesten evvel onların demektir. Bir kaç tanesi ilerleyecek oldu, jandarmalar bırakmadı, ben de sesimi, çıkarmadım ama neşemin yarısı kaçtı.” *ibid*, 1077.

serve to preserve the status quo by kicking the teacher out of the village instead of taking sides with him.

Third, the road is in fact a symbol of the gap between the center and the periphery. They are two separate worlds, and the road does not function as a bridge that can reduce the existing gap between the state and its citizens. Sabahattin Ali's characters are so idealistic that they seek to reduce this gap, like the one between the city and the village. They fail to do so due to the challenges that come from the authority figures from both the center and the periphery.

The teacher, another intellectual subaltern who is isolated mostly as a result of his idealism, can only get his freedom by leaving the village. This is also the same for many Sabahattin Ali's characters. These intellectual subalterns' voices are hardly heard since the so-called normal representatives of the status quo wins over their idealism.

3.7. Decollement (Dekolman), 1947

In *Decollement*, the protagonist of the story earns his life by making cheap translations for some medical journals. He stays with a relative, the owner of a hospital located in Ankara. One day, he receives sizeable payment for one of his important translations because the doctors are incapable of providing a cure for a well-known person who suffers from a disease named decollement. They need to search more on this decollement operation. For a further treatment, the Turkish doctors unwillingly ask help from a German born Jewish professor living in Istanbul. The German doctor however agrees to give guidance.

Before the foreign doctor comes to the hospital, the translator reads an essay in a medical journal about the decollement. After having sufficient knowledge about this illness, he offers the Turkish doctors to translate this particular essay. His aim is to make sure that the Turkish doctors would not be humiliated in front of the foreign doctor. The Turkish doctors read the translated essay and feel ready to do surgery together with the foreign doctor.

They go to the surgery together with that Jewish doctor. During the surgery, the Turkish doctors constantly interrupt the foreign doctor about how the decollement operation should be done and, in this way; they try to show him that they are

knowledgeable enough. When the Jewish doctor ensures that the Turkish doctors are familiar with the procedure, he explains that he has already written an article showing the method used to cure the decollement. He says that his article has been published in the *Haftalık Tıp Gazetesi* (*Weekly Medical Newspaper*) but for the essay he needs to use a fake name since his is a foreigner in this country. Sabahattin Ali here questions how difficult to be a foreigner in a foreign country and thus questions the nature of the nation states that define borders and identities.

It seems that there are two intellectual subalterns in this story. One of them is the main character who has to stay with his relative and makes cheap translations to earn a livelihood. He is unhappy since the children who share a space with him do not respect him. Although he is an educated man like the doctors, he does not have a full time job. He uses his intellectual capital by translating medical works into Turkish. Through this, he does not seem to make a big jump in his life.

Another subaltern is the Jewish doctor, who left Germany and came to Turkey as a result of the rise of fascism and of the anti-Semitic stance in his country. In Turkey, he is not very comfortable and needs to hide his identity as the writer of that particular article. As being a foreigner and a Jewish in a foreign country, he has less room compared to the Turkish doctors. Unlike other intellectual subalterns, he is foreigner in a foreign land.

It was in 1933 when Hitler came to power and German scholars and scientists migrated to Turkey. With the invitation of the Turkish government, 63 of them came and contributed to the Turkish academic world. They helped to strengthen the academic education and influenced the coming generation.¹⁸⁶

It is obvious in *Decollement* that Sabahattin Ali provides some insight on the immigration of the German intellectuals and their experiences in Turkey.

3.8. Conclusion

In the stories written between the years 1927 and 1947, mentioned above, there are some features shared by Sabahattin Ali's main characters. I call them intellectual subalterns, whose voices are lost in official records. Intellectual subalterns are usually stigmatized by those who are considered normal, the representatives of the

¹⁸⁶ Zürcher, *ibid*, 281.

status quo. For the sake of preserving their existing situation, the state elite, its officials, and local figures are not willing to let these real intellectual people speak for themselves. They either escape or end up the life in prison or asylum.

The intellectuals of these stories feel alienation and isolation. According to the authority and the majority, they live at the margins and take extreme positions which make them a target. People often judge them as crazy, insane or the enemy. A political science graduate named Ömer in *For a Black Undershirt*, a young public servant in *Intellectual Friend*, the guest in *Enemy*, and the young man kept in a mental hospital in *That Friend of Mine*; all of these characters live on the edge of the society, seen abnormal and deviant. Feeling like Gulliver or being from Mars, Nurullah in *A Scandal* is alienated just like the others.

Another subaltern is in *Decollement*, when the Jewish doctor hides his name in a medicine journal. Hiding their identity is one of the tactics used by subalterns. On one hand, the Jewish doctor hides his identity, on the other hand the translator feels alienated in his land. Like the doctor, he is like a stranger. As he does not have enough money he does not move out of the place where he does not receive any respect. He also has to accept what the doctors give him for his translations. Unlike some other intellectual subalterns, he keeps his job, however. In this sense, he is not as idealist as the others who are put in prisons.

All of these characters seek to make changes in their societies but they achieve only a little. For example, Ömer in *For a Black Undershirt* believes that change is the only enthusiasm in his life. This is what he cannot find in a small town, where routineness becomes normal. He is also unsatisfied with his job and thus he decides to go to Istanbul. At least he makes some life changes, and in this way he gets rid of all the burdens of the bureaucratic life, which tends to permeate everything. On the other hand, the teacher in *Asphalt Road* believes that he can make significant changes in the village. He aims at enlightening the peasants about their constitutional rights. Here, I see that his devotion to enlighten the peasants as a village teacher is one common characteristics of intellectuals who had rural backgrounds in the early Republican Turkey as it has been described above by Murat Belge. Belge focuses on the role of the village teachers since they were active not only in the education but

also in the political formation of the villages.¹⁸⁷ Here Sabahattin Ali shows the contradiction between the Republican reforms and the mentality of the authorities because the teacher at the end fails and has to leave.

Furthermore, the protagonists in *Asphalt Road*, *An Intellectual Friend* and in *Enemy* believe that they can change their societies. They are too idealistic.

These intellectual men do not have the same ends. Ömer in *For a Black Undershirt* leaves the small town for Istanbul with hopes and enthusiasm. The protagonists in *Intellectual Friend* and in *Enemy* are two other characters who the police are after. They end their lives in prison. Sabahattin Ali's intellectuals go between freedom and captivity. The nameless character in *That Friend of Mine* is immured in a mental hospital. Furthermore, the majority of people call most of these characters crazy, insane or mad although they give importance to reason. They believe that society can only change if people exercise their minds. To them, using their minds does not solely mean earning a lot of money and having a high standard of living.

With his stories, Sabahattin Ali in fact tells the problems of the intellectuals from the early Republican period. In order to comprehend Sabahattin Ali's characters in a better way, I conceptualized the term intellectual within the framework of Gramsci's writings. For example, Gramsci's statement "All men are intellectuals, one could therefore say: but not all men have in society the function of intellectuals."¹⁸⁸ is really important for us. Gramsci's distinction between the intellectual potential and the function of the intellectuals in the society carries us to a point which Sabahattin Ali particularly shows in the stories entitled *For A Black Undershirt*, *That Friend of Mine*, *Intellectual Friend*, and *Enemy*.

Finally, I can say that with these characters, Sabahattin Ali pays attention to the degenerate bureaucratic system. Just like in many of his stories, he again concentrates on the gap between the villages and cities. It appears to me that Sabahattin Ali aims at showing the problems of Turkey through his story characters as subalterns.

¹⁸⁷ Belge, *ibid*, 126-127.

¹⁸⁸ Gramsci, *ibid*, 51.

4. WOMAN, TWICE SUBALTERN?

“A young woman of sixteen or seventeen, Bhuvaneswari Bhaduri hanged herself in her father’s apartment in North Calcutta in 1926. The suicide was a puzzle since, as Bhuvaneswari was menstruating at the time; it was clearly not a case of illicit pregnancy. Nearly, a decade later, it was discovered that she was a member of a one of the many groups involved in the armed struggle for Indian independence. She had finally been entrusted with a political assassination. Unable to confront the task and yet aware of the practical need for trust, she killed herself.”¹⁸⁹

The real experience of Bhuvaneswari Bhaduri as a young woman has been a mystery for a long time. As she could not speak for herself, she had to hang herself in the patriarchal Indian society where she was left no room.

There are women in Turkish society who are like Bhuvaneswari. The present chapter thus focuses on Sabahattin Ali’s female characters, most of whom are peasants and illiterate. It seeks to explain how women survive in a patriarchal society and usually act in accordance with social norms, most of which are set by men, as it was in Bhuvaneswari’s society.

As I have stated in the previous chapters, Sabahattin Ali wrote in the early years of the Turkish Republic when the government aimed to maximize the rate of women’s literacy and then took steps by providing free education. In her article, “The Modernization Project and Women in Turkey”, Yeşim Arat questions the meaning of the reforms with the Republic revolution for Kemalist women and feminist women. There are some new roles which the Turkish Revolution provided and women have to make efforts to sustain these roles. In order to improve the level of the democracy, the Republican elite brought equality between women and men. Women had to continue their traditional roles but also they were expected to be equal to men. Therefore, the new Western approach concerning women’s rights was integrated into the new Republican project in Turkey.¹⁹⁰ Arat states in the same article that:

“While the government was supporting a group of women from the aristocracy for the participation in the public life, it sent another message to the “other” women with an increasing number. According to that message, these women should have made a contribution to this modernization process as becoming women like Western housewives who has “order”, “discipline” and “rationalism” in the setting up a house process rather than becoming

¹⁸⁹ Spivak, *ibid*, 103.

¹⁹⁰ Yeşim Arat, “Türkiye’de Modernleşme Projesi ve Kadınlar”, *Türkiye’de Modernleşme ve Ulusal Kimlik*, ed. Sibel Bozdoğan, Reşat Kasaba. (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1999): 82-98.

professional aristocrats. Girls' Institutes (*Kız Enstitüleri*) constituted in 1928 under the board of education's directorship and later the *Akşam Kız Sanat Okulları* served this purpose. These institutions were directing the women to "be modernized" at home by operating the Taylorism method in Turkey."¹⁹¹

Here Arat questions the function of women in the modernization project of Turkey because women still continued their traditional roles as being mothers and raising the new generation of the Republic at home.

Furthermore, Nermin Abadan-Unat asserts that the status of women was improved for urban women since the early years of Republic. She states in her article, "Major Challenges Faced by Turkish Women: Legal Emancipation, Urbanization and Industrialization":

"The drastic change of the status of Turkish women be it within the family or in a larger context became meaningful only in urban settings. Today, still traditions, mores and even superstitions still prevail with the impact of rigid social stratification. The essential reasons for the traditional, secluded behavior of its rural womanhood are closely related to isolation and autarchy."¹⁹²

In the above description, women experienced rigid traditional norms in the village and even they were not conscious of these norms, which in fact they deeply internalized. In that sense, Sabahattin Ali addresses the problems of being a woman in the rural margins. Unat also notes that:

"The Turkish peasant woman continues her life cycle far from any social security, in midst of a myriad of exploiting relationships. Economic, social, religious and traditional dependencies are still depriving her from claiming those legal rights her urban counterparts are so able to claim and to defend."¹⁹³

Here, Unat focuses on the disparity between Turkish peasant women and their civil rights as they are traditionally dependent on the males in the village. In the stories analyzed below, Sabahattin Ali deals with the women's dependency on the males and the authority figures in rural Anatolia. Ali's and Unat's approach to the experience of rural women is similar.

As understood by Sabahattin Ali, the rural women are almost invisible in the patriarchal society of the early Republican Turkey. Their being invisible perpetuates their subaltern positions. As a socialist and realist writer of the early Republican Turkey, Sabahattin Ali makes it possible for us to hear the voices of the women whose voices are not heard. The below stories intend to show how this happens.

¹⁹¹ *ibid*, 87-88.

¹⁹² Nermin Abadan-Unat, "Major Challenges Faced by Turkish Women: Legal Emancipation, Urbanization and Industrialization", *The Turkish Yearbook*, v. 16, (1974): 30, 31.

¹⁹³ *ibid*, 32.

4.1. The Comic of the City (Komik-i Şehir), 1928

The Comic of the City is about an actress's life and her suffering. She, Viktor and her lover Rahmi, who is also the owner of the theatre company, go from town to town throughout Anatolia and perform plays.

Everything starts when this theatre company goes to a small town. At this town, a rich local family, known as the Çömlekçizades hears of Viktor's beauty. Some members of this rich family kidnap Viktor and Suzan, who also works for the same company. Soon afterwards, Suzan manages to run away from the kidnappers, but Viktor fails to do so. Her boyfriend Rahmi then goes to the gendarmes and the caimacam to rescue Viktor. However, both the gendarmes and the caimacam refuse to find Viktor with the excuse of the winter conditions. For this reason, Rahmi looks for Viktor by himself and finds her unconsciously laying in the middle of the forest. Sabahattin Ali does not give us much detail about Viktor's experiences during the kidnapping, but she was most likely raped and beaten as she is physically weak and unconscious when Rahmi finds her.

Rahmi takes Viktor to the caimacam to start the official procedure. The caimacam who is alone with Viktor tends to sexually harass her. She resists by slapping him. This makes the caimacam angry and then he writes a report stating Viktor as a prostitute. According to the report, she has gone to the mountain area with the Çömlekçizades intentionally. In order to make the report more valid, he sends Viktor to the state doctor for a medical examination and then to a brothel. Viktor becomes the victim of the local power figure and the official power.

Rahmi begs the caimacam and the chief of the gendarme to release Viktor, but he fails. Finally he threatens the caimacam as follows: "If you don't give her.... Then... Do you know I will kill you with my hands? I will smother you with pleasure ... Do you know how it will be pleasant to kill you... Tomorrow I will come to your office... I will see her there, won't I? Or!...."¹⁹⁴

The caimacam who is really terrified by Rahmi sends the theatre company out of the town with the argument that the company is morally corrupt. Sabahattin Ali narrates

¹⁹⁴ "Eğer vermezsen... O zaman... Biliyor musun... O zaman seni öldürürüm... Bu elimle... Boğazımı sıkırım... Seni zevkle... Kahkahayla öldürürüm... Bilsen seni öldürmek ne tatlı olur... Yarın dairene geleceğim... Onu orada bulurum değil mi?.. Yoksa!.." Ali, *Sabahattin Ali Bütün Eserleri-Eleştirel Basım*, 877.

what happens as follows: "The day after, the Komik-i Şehir Rahmi Bey company was being temporarily carried out the town on the grounds that it caused many events and gendarme case subverting the order of the town with the accompany of the two gendarmes in a spring cart (*yaylı*)."¹⁹⁵

On their way to another place, the spring cart has a terrible accident while crossing the bridge. The only person who survives is a gendarme who later tells the caimacam that it was not an accident. He says, "While we were on the bridge a red head man caught the bridles and violently pulled them and despite the endurance of cabbie and the animals they drifted with the current."¹⁹⁶ After listening to him, the caimacam orders him to shut up the mouth as he might have seen a ghost with the fear; if he told the story like that everybody would laugh at him.

There are many important points in this story. First, Sabahattin Ali informs the reader that Viktor is the daughter of a rich Jewish man from İzmir and explains how she took part in the theatre company: "When her father committed suicide probably because of financial problems, -after presumable procedures that everyone can think of easily- she joined these portable theatre companies and travelled the whole West Anatolia for years."¹⁹⁷ The usage of expression in the story as 'presumable procedures that everyone can think of easily' (*herkesin kolayca tasavvur edebileceği birtakım safhalardan sonra*) clearly means that society does not give any credit to a woman working for a theatre company. Being an actress is not seen appropriate for a woman and she must have acted indecently to have such a job. Here Sabahattin Ali focuses on the social construction of a woman's job, which is seen as indecent, or even immoral, for a woman. At the very beginning of the story, the writer states that the peasant women curse the coming of the theatre company to the village as they think that it will cause corruption in their domain.

It should be noted here that during the Republican Era, many theatre plays were written and some of those plays reflected the situation of theatre companies. It is

¹⁹⁵ "Ertesi gün, Komik-i Şehir Rahmi Bey kumpanyası, birçok vukuata, memleket inzibatını ihlal edecek ahvale sebebiyet verdiklerinden, bir yaylıya doldurularak, idareten kaza hududu haricine, -iki candarma refakatiyle- çıkarılıyordu." *ibid*, 877.

¹⁹⁶ "Bilhassa, o vakanın söylendiği gibi kaza olmadığını, çünkü köprünün üstünde giderken arabanın içindekilerden kızıl saçlı bir adamın atılıp dizginleri yakaladığını, şiddetle asılarak arabacının ve hayvanların mukavemetine rağmen dereye sürüklendiklerini anlattı." *ibid*, 879.

¹⁹⁷ "Babası galiba bir para meselesi yüzünden intihar edince -herkesin kolayca tasavvur edebileceği birtakım safhalardan sonra - bu seyyar tiyatro kumpanyalarına girmiş, Garbi Anadolu'yu senelerce dolaşmıştı..." *ibid*, 866.

noteworthy to see that Sabahattin Ali points the perception of actresses in the society with *The Comic of the City*. Second, when Viktor is kidnapped, it becomes clear that the Çömlekçizade family is a more powerful figure than the gendarmes and the caimacam. The latter do not want to ruin their relationship with this local power and thus do not start official procedure. Sabahattin Ali explains how Rahmi feels and questions that there is no one, not even a government that can provide shelter for them: “It is like he is dreaming... What can he do? Who can help him in this strange place? Isn’t there any government?.. Isn’t there any government that says they are free and safe?”¹⁹⁸ The justice system at the local level did not work well. Indeed, the state representatives who allied with the powerful local figures do not really apply the laws. Doing nothing, the justice system works for the powerful.

Rahmi is not a powerful man in that region when compared to the Çömlekçizade family, the caimacam and the gendarmes. The caimacam thus dismisses Rahmi from his office: “The caimacam lied back and sighed with relief. He grumbles: “Luckily, I have asked the gendarme commander... Otherwise I would get into trouble with the Çömlekçizades...”¹⁹⁹

Viktor’s voice is heard a little. It is when she slaps the caimacam. It is difficult to challenge his authority. In fact, he sees himself the king of that place. Sabahattin Ali tells us about this: “Why does he hesitate?.. Is not he the king of this small town?.. Who can bring him to account?.. Especially for this actress!...”²⁰⁰ Although the caimacam cannot clamp down on the rich families, he sees himself as a king who cannot be questioned. He thinks that Viktor has to obey him since she is an actress who does not seem to have a proper place in the society. However, Viktor’s resistance and her slapping him leaves him shocked. He decides then to write a report as she is a prostitute and sends her to a brothel, in this way he insults her more and more. Sending her to the brothel means that she is also left no room in that place. Nothing will be the same since she is officially stigmatized as a prostitute.

¹⁹⁸ “Rüyada gibiydi... Ne yapacaktı?.. Kime gidebilirdi bu yabancı yerde? Hükümet yok muydu?.. Başlarında kedilerinin hür, namuslarının emniyette olduğunu söyleyen bir hükümet yok muydu?..” Ali, *Sabahattin Ali Bütün Eserleri-Eleştirel Basım*, 870.

¹⁹⁹ “Kaymakam koltuğunun arkasına yaslanarak derin bir oh çekti: “İyi ki candarma kumandanına sordum... Çömlekçizadelerle uğraşıp dertsiz başıma dert mi açacaktım?..” diye söylendi.” *ibid*, 875.

²⁰⁰ “Niçin çekiniyordu sanki?.. Bu sapa kazanın kralı demek değil miydi o?.. Kim hesap sorabilirdi kendisinden?.. Bilhassa böyle bir tiyatrocı kız için!..” *ibid*, 875.

4.2. Geese (Kazlar), 1933

Another tragic story is *Geese*. This is a story of both Dudu and Seyit. Three years ago, Dudu's husband Seyit kills somebody during a wedding ceremony and therefore he is sentenced to ten years in prison. In fact, eight people fired their guns during the wedding, it was not clear who really killed the guy. However, everyone except Seyit and Durmuş, bribed the district interrogator in order not to go to the prison.

The prison conditions are not good. While in the prison, Seyit writes a letter to his wife to bring two geese to the prison. Seyit is planning to give two geese to the head guardian and the director of the prison. In this way, he hopes to change his bed for a better place as he is too ill. On the following visit, Dudu goes to the prison with only one goose which she has stolen from her sister-in-law. Since her visit is not a scheduled one, the officers do not let her see Seyit. In fact, at that moment, Seyit's funeral is being carried to the mosque. Still, the guardians take the goose and other things that Dudu has brought to her husband. Knowing nothing about her husband's death, Dudu goes back to her village where the gendarmes are arresting her for theft. Dudu is put her into jail for three months upon her sister-in-law's complaint. During her stay in the prison, she is not informed by her husband's death.

From *Geese*, we learn that Seyit is a weak person who cannot defend himself well. Thus, he ends up in the prison where after three years of imprisonment, he dies. Sabahattin Ali criticizes the prison conditions through this story. Seyit's tuberculosis worsens day by day under the bad conditions and he is therefore sent to the hospital by the prison's doctor to get a better treatment. But there is not much hope for Seyit. Indeed, the hospital does not accept him anymore since his tuberculosis is no longer curable. Sabahattin Ali writes:

"The hospitals would not accept those patients whose tuberculosis was incurable. Their orders were like that. In fact their punishments need to be postponed and then they need to be discharged from prison. But Seyit did not know what his illness was. Those vigilant and brazenfaced prisoners who know such kind of tricks would not take care of him. Because he was so poor. His statement of health documents were on the table of prosecution, but as no one was following them, they were just waiting for their turn."²⁰¹

²⁰¹ "Tedavisi kabul olmayacak kadar ilerlemiş veremleri hastaneler kabul etmiyorlardı. Nizamnameleri böyleydi. Böyle hastaların cezalarının tecili ve tahliyeleri icap ederdi. Fakat Seyit, hastalığının ne olduğunu bilmiyordu. Hapishanelerin bu gibi dalaverelerini bilen açığız ve pışkin mahpusların da onunla meşgul oldukları yoktu. Çünkü çok fakirdi. Evrakı ve raporları müddeiumumilik kaleminde duruyor, takip eden olmadığı için sıra bekliyordu." *ibid*, 824.

He dies under the poor and unhealthy prison conditions. He is one of the subalterns, but his wife is twice subaltern because Dudu is both a submissive and a silent person. In order to do what her husband asks from her, she even steals a goose from her sister-in-law.

In *Geese*, Sabahattin Ali focuses on how people who do not bribe the authorities are doomed to have poor prison conditions. The two geese are in fact the symbol of bribery but such a bribe does not help Seyit and Dudu. Seyit dies in the prison while Dudu is sent to the prison. Like in other stories, Sabahattin Ali not only criticizes the justice system but also the bad prison conditions.

4.3. Oxcart (Kağrı), 1935

Oxcart is about a tragic story of an old woman who has a son known as Mehmet the Yellow (Sarı Mehmet). His son is killed by Hüseyin of *Savruks* who is Mevlüt Agha's son. Following the murder, Mevlüt Agha comes together with the imam and some leading peasants of the village coffeehouse to convince Mehmet's mother not to sue Hüseyin. Here, the imam as the religious figure of the village, plays an important role in this regard with a speech full of affection:

"What will you have if you sue? Who wants to go the court and give evidence against the son of Mevlüt Agha? Even if someone does, then you have to go to the district once or twice a month. Who will look after your field and deal with your works? Going to the district will take your double day and when you arrive there the officials may say that your witnesses are absent, so you should try again and again. Maybe you will miss the exact date, the gendarmes withhold you, and you cannot get away with it, you can lose your home. It was an accident. It is providential. Will you object to God with the decision of the court? Whatever you do, your son is dead and he will not arise from dead. Let's close this case. Your son never supported you. He used to spend your money with useless things. He was greasing the palm of women. Look, Mevlüt Agha says that he will look after and support you. How's that sound?"²⁰²

As stated in the above quote, the imam seeks to prevent this old and illiterate woman from going to court. She is not willing to do that since it is really hard to survive in such a small environment and deal with such important people. These people know how to treat her well. For example, before the funeral, Mevlüt Agha sends two goats,

²⁰² "Daya edersen ne kazanacaksınız? Kim gider de Mevlüt Ağa'nın oğlu adam vurdu diye şahitlik eder? Etse bile sen ayda bir iki defa kasabaya gidip her seferde dört beş gününü gâvur edersen tarlanı kim eker, işine kim bakar? Kasaba iki günlük yol, gidersin, şahitlerin gelmedi, haftaya uğra derler, mahkemen talik olur. Sen gününü şasıpıp gidemezsin, candarma alır seni götürür, gayrı kendin istesen bile yakını sıyıramazsın, evin barkın yıkılır. İşte bir kazadır oldu. Cenabı Hak böyle istemiş, Allah'ın emrine mahkeme emriyle mi karşı koyacaksınız? Ne yapsan oğlun geri gelmez. Gel bu işi kapatalım. Sarı Mehmet'in sana bir faydası yoktu ki; düğünde seyranda gezer, sattığın iki şinik ekinin parasını avratlara yedirirdi. Bak Mevlüt Ağa bundan sonra seni hep kollayacağını söylüyor. Ne dersin?" *ibid*, 883.

a bag of flour and some sugar to the old lady to negotiate over dying of natural causes.

However, it is not the mother but another man known as Poor (*Garip*) Mehmet who reports the murder to the gendarmes, as he has a bad relationship with Hüseyin. The gendarmes thus come to the village to investigate the old woman to understand what really happened to the son. She only says that she will not go for the lawsuit. But the gendarmes are not convinced and ask the woman exhume the dead body, which she is also supposed to bring to the district doctor by an oxcart, where the name of the story derives from. Sabahattin Ali portrays a nameless woman who does not challenge any authority.

That night, the woman has to take the dead body by herself to the district. On her way, she feels dizziness due to the bad smell coming from the corpse. The woman then loses control of the oxcart and she falls down while the oxcart continues to go into the darkness with the corpse.

The first point stated in *Oxcart* seems to be how people negotiate at the local level. In other words, informal justice that takes place in the village serves those who are powerful figures, such as Mevlüt Agha, a landlord. The others are the imam as a religious leader and muhtar as the village headman. Due to Mevlüt Agha's economic power, muhtar acts like an ally to Mevlüt Agha. The imam is more like a mediator between the different parties when he tries to convince the mother to understand that her son's death is his destiny. The old woman is left no other choice but to accept that her son's death is previously determined as if by destiny or fate. By using such explanation of predestination, they seek to prevent the woman from suing the murderer.

The second point is that the old woman is poor and she thus needs to accept what is given to her by Mevlüt Agha, but this does not help to end her sorrow. What is also harder for her is that she is disgraced at the government's door once more. In the past, she was a witness of a theft at a very young age and thus she had to go to the court every six months. This was very hard for her. Sabahattin Ali tells her story and dilemma:

"Her sorrow has not stopped yet, but she does not want to disgrace herself at the government's door and this is worse than the grief of losing her son. She remembers that thirty years ago she was the witness of a peasant whose one packet of bulgur was stolen. At that time, she went to

the court for six months and her fields became forlorn. Whereas she was younger at that time...”²⁰³

On the basis of this past experience, the woman does not say anything to the gendarmes that her son was killed by Hüseyin. Despite her grief, she thinks that the enforcements of the formal authority are not practical and she seems to find informal but practical solutions to survive in the village.

Finally, her silence is another important point that appears in other stories. Sabahattin Ali tells: “The old woman was lamenting and saying “They did not let my son be alone even in his grave!” and she was crying as silent as all the Anatolian women while she was sitting.”²⁰⁴ She stays silent as she is powerless so that she cannot deal with the agha and other leading figures. Her silence can be considered as a kind of survival strategy of any women like her although they continue to suffer.

Like other subaltern women, she dies and, as a nameless person, disappears into the darkness of the night.

4.4. Gramophone Woman (Gramofon Avrat²⁰⁵), 1935

Gramophone Woman is a story on a young and beautiful woman who lives with a brothel owner called Azime. Her nickname is Gramophone Woman that comes from her singing and dancing qualities which she displays at the drinking parties in Konya.

In *Gramophone Woman*, Sabahattin Ali details the story of a nameless woman again in fact she hides her own identity under a nickname, Gramophone Woman. The author says that: “The real name of her is unknown. Only a few people know where she is from. If we consider that she has a smooth talking, she might have stayed with a signor as an adopted child in the city.”²⁰⁶

This woman does not stand for herself. For example, when her lover is shot in a fight, she does not have a man to protect her. Sabahattin Ali explains: “Just like the

²⁰³ “Oğlunun acısı daha içinden çıkmamıştı, fakat hükümet kapısına düşmek ona oğlunun ölümünden çok daha korkunç geliyordu. Otuz sene evvel bir kere kasabanın pazarında köylülerden biri bir torba bulgur çaldırılmıştı ve bunu şahit göstermişti. O zaman tam altı ay mahkemeye gidip geldiğini ve tarlalarının yüzüstü kaldığını düşünüyordu. Hâlbuki o zaman daha gençti de...” *ibid*, 885.

²⁰⁴ “Kadın: “Yavrumu mezarında bile rahat komadılar!” diye iki yanını dövüyor ve bütün Anadolu kadınları gibi ses çıkarmadan ve pek az hıçkırarak ve çömelerek ağlıyordu.” *ibid*, 886.

²⁰⁵ Avrat: 1. Woman 2. Wife

<http://kubbealtilugati.com/sonuclar.aspx?km=avrat&mi=0> [20.08.2015].

²⁰⁶ “Asıl adı pek malum değildi. Nereden geldiğini de bilenler azdı. Dilinin epeyce düzgün olduğuna bakılırsa herhalde şehirde bir efendi yanında evlatlık kalmış olacaktı.” Ali, *Sabahattin Ali Bütün Eserleri-Eleştirel Basım*, 900.

other lonely dancing women without an Efe (guardian), she falls into the hands of Azime,²⁰⁷ who runs a brothel. Every night Azime sends the Gramophone Woman to the drinking parties with a guardian, Murat.

She is a weak person and thus needs someone to protect her. This can be a lover (the Gramophone Woman's dead boyfriend from Dereköy village), a brothel holder (Azime), a guardian (Murat) or an old man who takes her as a mistress. She is not an independent woman, despite the fact that she earns her own living by singing and dancing. Despite her dancing and singing abilities, she seems to be lost without a man or a guardian.

Although the Gramophone Woman and Murat fall in love, they never express their feelings to each other. In the middle of their unspoken love, a fight takes place. One night, the Gramophone Woman finds herself being shot. She then calls Murat to help her. While rescuing her, Murat shoots one of the men fighting. They run away, however the gendarmes going after catch them soon. The Gramophone Woman who is wounded during the fight is sent to a hospital and Murat to the prison for murdering one of the fighting guys.

The Gramophone Woman who faces difficulties in her life needs to develop tactics, which helps her to escape for example from men who fight over her. When a fight takes place, she silently leaves that place. Sometimes it may not work, but this is her tactics. With the following quote, Sabahattin Ali explains her tactic: "When the ones who fight to forget about her, she moves away silently; with the man who accompanies her and never fights by getting the car which waits in front of the door; through the vineyards, she comes to the "Aunt Azime."²⁰⁸

After she gets better, the Gramophone Woman does not go to the drinking parties again. But she does not have much choice and thus ends up becoming a mistress to an old man. After a while the old man throws her out and then she once again finds herself in a brothel. She sends money to Murat; she earned this money by selling her body. She thinks that she owes him.

²⁰⁷ "... bütün öteki kimsesiz ve efesiz oturak kadınları gibi Azime'nin eline düştü." *ibid*, 900.

²⁰⁸ "Tam kavga alevlenip kendi yüzünden dövüşenler kendini unutupca usulcacık sıvışıyor, onu getiren ve asla kavgaya karışmayan adamla beraber, kapının önünde bekleyen arabaya atlayıp bağlar arasından dolaşarak 'Azime yengesine' geliyordu." *ibid*, 901.

Both the Gramophone Woman and Murat have miserable lives and jobs. With this following passage, Sabahattin tells us about the nature of their relationship: “Even though they have never talked to each other, she was feeding this man who shot a man for her sake without thinking, with the money she earned from her body, maybe she was living only for that.”²⁰⁹

The Gramophone Woman’s subaltern status never ends. She is hooked into a system where in order to earn her livelihood; she dances, sings, or sells her body.

4.5. Cars for Five Kuruş (Arabalar Beş Kuruşa), 1936

In *Cars for Five Kuruş*, Sabahattin Ali recounts the story of a mother and her son. The story shows class differences among his female characters.

In this story, the son sells the wooden wheeled cars on the streets, near a luxury city shop. One day when the son is selling toys, the mother who is watching him sees a rich woman and her son getting out of their car to go to this shop. When the rich kid sees the poor kid, he realizes that it is his classmate. He then goes to talk to him. They talk on their school, teachers, and so on. While talking, they warmly hold each other’s hands. Seeing them talking, the rich child’s mother starts shouting at the poor mother and his son. She says, “Look! He is dirty! How do you dare to talk to my son?”²¹⁰ she then pulls her son away from the poor child.

These two women and their children are different from each other. Obviously, they have class difference. The poor woman is described with ‘a burqa’ but the rich woman with ‘fur coat and snakeskin shoes.’²¹¹ The poor child does not dress well while the rich child is ‘with white beret and leggings and a soft dark blue coat.’²¹² This detailed description shows different states of being poor and rich. In other words, in spite of the efforts to bring equality and emphasizes on solidarity, the Republic does not seem to bridge the gap between the existing gap between classes in those years.

²⁰⁹ “Aralarında tek kelime bile konuşmadıkları halde kendi uğruna hiç düşünmeden adam vuran bu çocuğu, vücudunu satıp kazandığı paralarla besliyor, belki de artık yalnız bunun için çalışıyordu.” *ibid*, 903.

²¹⁰ “Pis, baksana, senin konuşabileceğin bir insan mı bu?” *ibid*, 948.

²¹¹ *ibid*, 947.

²¹² *ibid*, 947.

The rich woman is quite noisy and aggressive towards the people who do not belong to her class. She also claims that the poor child is very dirty and he should not talk to her son for this reason. The lower class people are dirty in her eyes and these class differences show themselves through the contrast of dirtiness and cleanliness.

In *Cars for Five Kuruş*, there is the idea of dirtiness versus cleanliness; and the idea of silence versus noisiness. As the poor mother and the son stay silent when the rich woman says that she will phone the school to change his son's classroom as this poor child does not deserve to be in the same place with her son. She says: "I will also call your school tomorrow! How can they dare to make you contact with the people who are not on the same level as you."²¹³ Silence appears in a dominant way in this story. The poor woman continues throughout the story and it symbolizes her weaknesses.

This lower class, nameless poor woman is a subaltern because she does not have a voice. Nothing seems to be negotiable with the upper class woman except staying silent. In this way, she would not have any trouble. It is clear in this story that she is twice a subaltern since a woman from the upper class causes her to suffer, despite being of the same sex.

4.6. Hot Water (Sıcak Su), 1937

In *Hot Water*, Emine is the protagonist. She is married to İsmail, who the gendarmes are searching for a long time for shooting an agha's son. Killing a powerful figure's son makes the gendarmes search his house four times. On the fourth search, the gendarmes come to the house. There, Emine once again tells them that she does not know where her husband really is. However, the gendarmes are not convinced and they decide to search the house over and over again. She then tells them: "Help yourself; search the house, İsmail is not here. I said the same when you came last; he hasn't come home since the spring. It has been four months."²¹⁴

The gendarmes who do not believe in her initially try to convince that the government does not let her husband go:

"You see, you should not expect any favour from him anymore. The government does not let him go. They will question him. Why do you feel for this merciless murderer? But you may

²¹³ "Ben yarın mektebinize de telefon edeceğim. Seni kendi seviyende olmayanlarla temas ettirmeyi gösteririm!.." *ibid*, 948.

²¹⁴ "Buyurun, arayın, İsmail evde yok. Geçen sefer geldiğinizde söyledim; bahardan beri İsmail gelmiyor. Dört ay mı oldu ki ne!.." *ibid*, 1041.

say that he did not do it for fun, but for to protect himself. So why did he escape? Here is the court of the government. They will not kill him because of that. He will be sentenced as long as he deserved. As I said before, leave him alone, stop looking after him, and tell us where he is at this night. Look, you are young. Don't chuck yourself away... Come on Emine, let's tell us that he was here a few minutes ago, wasn't he? Who let you know that we were coming?"²¹⁵

The gendarmes soon understand that Emine will say nothing about her husband's place. When they see the hot water, they guess that it is going to be used after a sexual intercourse, so İsmail must be somewhere nearby. One of the gendarmes tells:

"I guess İsmail is most probably not far from here and I think if someone raped his wife he would show up, wouldn't he? I will catch Emine and throw her to the bed, if she screams, İsmail will not be able to bear and he will come. Then you will wait near the door and grab him dead or alive... If she does not scream... So what shall we do? You will try one more time!"²¹⁶

This is the first time that Emine feels desperate. Sabahattin Ali tells her fear of what the gendarmes would do next:

"The gendarme, who has just checked the hot water, grabbed the wrist of the woman with his smashing eyes and took her to the corner of the room. The other gendarme took his gun and went out of the room. But neither this one nor the other could wangle words out of her. Nonetheless, she did not scream or call for help."²¹⁷

The two gendarmes who cannot get any information from Emine become violent and rape her. Sabahattin Ali actually tells Emine's tragic and heart-breaking story. He tells her desperate situation with the following quote: "The woman turned pale and she was trembling. She was biting her lower lip almost to the point of bleeding. She looked around. There were only four walls and two gendarmes."²¹⁸

By raping, they suppose that they can make her talk. However, Emine says nothing. When it is almost the morning, just after the gendarmes leave the house, Emine disappears silently and is hiding in the bushes. Later in the morning, İsmail shows up but he does not find his wife around. From that day on, no one sees Emine. Sabahattin Ali writes how she disappears: "After a while the gendarmes were leaving

²¹⁵ "Bana bak, Emine" dedi, inkârı bırak. Bu oğlandan gayrı sana hayır gelmeyeceğini anladın. Devlet onu sana bırakmaz. Ondan sorulacak hesabı var. Nesine acırsın yabanın katilinin? Ama diyeceksin ki, o keyfinden adam vurmadı, canını kurtarmak için vurdu. Peki, ne diye dağa çıktı öyleyse? Devletin mahkemesi yok mu? Vurduğu uşak, ağa çocuğu diye onu yiyecek değiller a! Hakkı ne ise o kadar yatıp çıkacaktı. Dedim ya, bırak sen onun arkasını da, nerede olduğunu, bu akşam nereye kaçtığını bize söyle. Bak gençliğin var. Kendine yazık etme... Hadi Emine, deyiver bakayım. İsmail biraz evvel buradaydı değil mi? Kim haber verdi geldiğimizi?" *ibid*, 1041.

²¹⁶ "İsmail herhalde uzakta değildir, bize teslim olmaya gelmezse, karısının ırzını kurtarmaya da gelmez mi? Ben şimdi Emine'yi yakalayıp mindere atarım, bağırsa nasıl olsa İsmail dayanamaz, neredeyse çıkar gelir. O zaman kapının yanında bekler, ya ölüsünü ya dirisini yakalarsın... Bağırmazsa... Eh, ne yapalım... Bir kere de sen denersin!..." *ibid*, 1043.

²¹⁷ "Biraz evvel sıcak suya bakan candarma, gözleri parlayarak kadını bileğinden yakaladı ve odanın kenarına sürükledi. Öbür candarma silahı eline alarak dışarı çıktı. Fakat ne öteki ne de bu, kadının ağzından bir kelime bile alamadılar... O, her şeye rağmen bir kere bile bağırmadı, yardıma kimseyi çağırmadı." *ibid*, 1043.

²¹⁸ "Kadın sapsarı kesilmişti ve titriyordu. Alt dudağını kanatacak kadar ısıırıyordu. İki tarafına bakındı. Dört duvardan ve iki candarmadan başka bir şey yoktu." *ibid*, 1043.

home with their guns on the shoulders, with a smooth smile and a little concern in their minds, Emine crept out slowly behind them. She dived into the forest by disguising herself.”²¹⁹

Emine does not act according to the expectations of the gendarmes and she stays silent during the rape, as she wants to protect her husband. However, after the rape which makes her feel shame, she leaves the house in the darkness. In this way, no one would know what has happened to her. From that day on, no one hears from Emine and the reason behind her disappearance is always unclear to İsmail and their neighbors.

It should be noted here that there are some differences between the first and the above versions. The end of the story in the first version is like this: “However, in the evening, İsmail dives into the forest and finds her wife’s body while it is dangling on the branch of an elm.”²²⁰ Emine disappears or dies as there is no place left for her in her village although no one knows of the rape but the gendarmes. So, this is more like an inner shame. Here, Spivak’s focus on Bhuneswari Bhaduri’s suicide in “Can the Subaltern Speak?” has some similarities. The reason behind their suicide is unclear to people. Both Emine and Bhuneswari feel the shame of having no place in their societies.

Another important point in the story is that İsmail trusts Emine implicitly that she will never say anything. Therefore he keeps calm and silent when the gendarmes come and he does not mind their long interrogation of Emine. Emine without her husband does not seem to have much power in that society and for that reason she lies to the gendarmes.

Finally, *Hot Water* represents how sexual violence takes place at the village level where some women most likely hide themselves as rape victims. They either choose to die or to escape from such a “shame.” With this story, Sabahattin Ali states how women with such shame handle the problem. He also criticizes the abuses by the gendarmes at the local level and how they work for the interests of the powerful

²¹⁹ “Bir müddet sonra candarmalar silahlarını omuzlarına vurup yüzlerinde tatlı bir yorgunluk ve içlerinde hafif bir endişe ile evi terk ederlerken, Emine de yavaşça arkalarından dışarı süzüldü. Çitin kenarlarına sine sine ormana daldı.” *ibid*, 1043.

²²⁰ “Ancak akşamüstü, ormanın ta içeri taraflarına dalan İsmail, karısının bir karaağaç dalında ağır ağır sallanan ölüsünü buldu.” *ibid*, 1044.

(agha) rather than that of the lower class people. Thus, the gap between the state and its citizens is not being reduced under such circumstances.

4.7. New World (Yeni Dünya²²¹), 1942

In *New World*, Yeni Dünya is a nickname given to a dancing woman. In a village wedding, her dancing does not satisfy the men. They thus ask for another dancer, *Deli (Mad)* Emine. Deli Emine dances well and the men who want to entertain themselves start humiliating Yeni Dünya, saying that Emine's dance is better. This makes Yeni Dünya jealous of Deli Emine and forces her do her best.

It is like a dance competition. Their competition amuses the men and they decide to take both of them to the bride's village. Although Yeni Dünya feels sick during her dancing, she does her best again under the pressure and possible humiliation; she does not want to be mocked by Deli Emine or the men watching her. When she understands that she cannot continue anymore, she is sent to an old woman's house in that village. In the old woman's house, she groans till the morning and then she dies there. The following day, people seem to forget about her and leave the village. Seeing this, the old woman, stops the wedding convoy and insists that they should take the dead woman's body. Although they do not want to carry a dead body in the van, they blanket it and put it on the spring cart.

Unlike Yeni Dünya, who is passive even as a dancer, the old woman appears in the story as strong and active. She criticizes the men who have forgotten to take Yeni Dünya. She blames them and tells them that they are not good enough and not scared of God. She yells at them as such:

"Look at them... They are not scared of God. On the top of that they inflict her upon me, they leave the dead body to me and go. As you have brought, then you will take her!"²²²
"Everybody knows that you are disloyal people!.. We gave you four brides and all of them are dead now... Take this woman; bring her to the place where she came from. I am an old woman, how can I bury her?"²²³

As shown above, the old woman is angry with the men. She says that she is old and thus she cannot bury the body. With such anger, she yells that there have been four

²²¹ The name of this story refers to the nickname of the protagonist and the meaning of the word is stated at the beginning of the introductory chapter with a footnote.

<http://www.kubbealtilugati.com/sonuclar.aspx?km=yeni%20d%C3%BCnya&mi=0> [20.08.2015].

²²² "Bakın şunlara... Allahtan korkmazlar. Hasta karyı başıma sardıkları yetmedi de, şimdi ölüsünü üstüme yıkıp gidiyorlar. Getirdiğiniz gibi alın götürün." Ali, *Sabahattin Ali Bütün Eserleri-Eleştirel Basım*, 1167.

²²³ "Sizin köyün hıyanet olduğunu kim bilmez ki!.. Dört gelin verdik de birini sağ komadınız... Alın karyı, geldiği yere götürün... Benim gibi kocakarı o cenazeyi nasıl kaldırır?" *ibid*, 1167.

brides who died or were killed in the village where those men come from. Only in this way, we can hear about those brides.

This story has some important points, which help us understand the world of women from the lower class. Like in *Gramophone Woman*, Yeni Dünya and Emine gain money through dancing. As long as they dance and use their bodies, they continue to survive or stay alive. The men who are watching them do not care about these women. They are not bothered by Yeni Dünya's sickness and death. Even Deli Emine is cruel to Yeni Dünya. She does not side with her. Instead she competes more and more to secure her own place. Indeed, Deli Emine says that Yeni Dünya cannot be a good dancer as long as she is ill. It is possible that, their world full of competition makes her cruel to someone with the same sex.

As I mentioned above, only their bodies sell. Sabahattin Ali tells about the size of their bodies. He describes Yeni Dünya as skinny and Deli Emine as plump. Being skinny means that she is not a good dancer in the male dominated world. It is being inferior to who is plump, which seems to be sexually much more attractive in the eyes of men.

Another point is that Yeni Dünya's real name is unclear to us. In other words, she is one of those nameless characters. *Deli* (mad) is also the nickname of Emine; most likely it comes from her dancing style. It is possible that Emine may not be the real name. Yeni Dünya is probably something that describes the woman's body or her female qualities. A nickname may also mean a second identity, or a false identity in such a society. With such names, they hide their real identities as a survival strategy. Yeni Dünya becomes only visible when she dances well, otherwise she does not have any value to men.

Finally, like the four brides mentioned above, Yeni Dünya has a tragic end. The four brides do not really change their circumstances. They are twice subalterns as people forget about them and their stories.

4.8. Two Women (İki Kadın), 1942

Two Women is about Hacer and Esma, the wives of Kerim Agha. Kerim Agha is a stingy man who does not give enough food and money to his wives. Indeed, he always keeps the keys of the food storage on his waist. When he suddenly dies at one

night due to a severe illness, his wives, now new widows, take the storage key from his waist and prepare food. That is to say, they have a feast for themselves which they have always yearned for all their marriage. However, they cannot find where Kerim Agha hid his money. For this they put a curse on him. It is like a taking revenge from a stingy man; now they feel more powerful as they became free for the first time in their life. But they have to inform the neighbors about the husband's death and thus they mourn for him in front of the people.

In *Two Women*, Sabahattin Ali emphasizes on the marriage institution at the local areas where polygamy is practiced. Hacer is the first spouse of Kerim Agha with a civil marriage and we can infer from the story that she does not have any children. That is why Kerim Agha made an unofficial marriage to Esma. Unlike Hacer, Esma has a three year-old son, Necati. Here it is obvious that the civil code of 1926 that banned polygamy does not seem to have much meaning at the local level.

Essentially, 1926 Turkish Civil Code which was adopted from the Swiss Civil Code brought some novelties for women. In the second chapter of the law, which is the Family Law, polygamous marriage was banned²²⁴, religious marriage conducted before civil marriage was not recognized²²⁵, and equal rights were given to the women with civil marriage in case of inheritance²²⁶. However, in Sabahattin Ali's *Two Women*, published in 1942, we see that men continued to marry more than once, let's say under the situation when they do not have children from the first wife. In other words, the Turkish state, fails to make the civil code work at the local level.

Like in *Yeni Dünya* story, there is a competition between these two women; Hacer and Esma. The women of the present story do not have a good relationship. Hacer criticizes Esma when Esma is afraid of touching Kerim Agha's dead body. Hacer says: "Come on! When he was alive, you came as a *kuma*²²⁷ and went to bed with him; now are you afraid of touching his dead body?"²²⁸ Then, she despises her because she could not make Kerim Agha tell where he hid the money. She says that: "What a pity... You are young also... Why didn't you make him tell where he buried

²²⁴ "Turkish Civil Code (743S.K.)" *Resmi Gazete*, 339 (Nisan 1926): 112/1.

²²⁵ "Turkish Civil Code (743S.K.)" *Resmi Gazete*, 339 (Nisan 1926): 110

²²⁶ "Turkish Civil Code (743S.K.)" *Resmi Gazete*, 339 (Nisan 1926): 209

²²⁷ Kuma: The second or the third wife of a man.

http://tdk.gov.tr/index.php?option=com_gts&arama=gts&guid=TDK.GTS.55cb3788b03a31.21418246 [20.08.2015].

²²⁸ "Hadi, sağ iken üstüme kuma gelip koynuna girmesini bildin de şimdi ölüsüne dokunmaktan mı korkuyon!" Ali, *Sabahattin Ali Bütün Eserleri-Eleştirel Basım*, 1176.

the money?"²²⁹ Herein, Hacer despises Esma's as being young but lack of sexuality. She thinks that she could have convinced Kerim Agha to tell her where he buried the money. Moreover, Hacer continues to humiliate Esma for having a civil marriage and thus she has no right to inherit anything from the husband.

"You are the second wife... You did not get married him in a formal way... No one cares about the share of Necati."²³⁰

"Why are you glancing at me? Are you depending on your youth? Who will get married to you with your bastard? You will understand when you go into a strange place!"²³¹

Esma tells her that she did not want to be the second wife. It was not her choice, but the choice of her father that forced her to marry Kerim Agha. Hacer's attack on Esma probably comes from Esma being very young and having a son, representing the future of the family. Namely, she is jealous of Esma and it is now that she really expresses her real thoughts and feelings as she is more powerful; she is the legal wife who has the right to inherit everything.

In this story, Esma is a silent character compared to Hacer. As such, she stays silent when she is forced into a marriage by her father. She is oppressed in a variety of ways by her husband, and later by Hacer. After the husband's death, she is deprived of her legal rights due to her unofficial marriage. It seems that having a son does not provide her a good status in the absence of her husband. She is the second wife which means that Esma is less powerful compared to a legal wife although the latter is with no son.

Hacer and Esma have something common however. They agree on having feast just after the stingy husband's death. They also agree on pretending in the morning that they are grieving while they are in front of other people. These are the tactics developed by these women. So they have different on-stage and off-stage behaviors.

Sabahattin Ali gives details on this:

"They went upstairs. Hacer covered her head. Esma woke Necati up and hugged him. Without looking at the dead body which was lying in the middle of the room, they rushed out the door. They started to cry and lament with a voice that filled all the nearby houses and streets. Hacer was saying: "Oh my neighbours! He has gone! He has gone without comfort and peace! And Esma was shaking Necati who was crying she was woken up suddenly and groaning bitterly: "Oh my poor Necati! He is an orphan at three years old!"²³²

²²⁹ "Yazık... Gençliğin de var... Ne diye bir gece gömünün yerini söyletemedin?" *ibid*, 1177.

²³⁰ "Sen benim üstüme kuma geldin... Hükümet nikâhı olmadın... Necati'nin mirasını kimse tanımaz." *ibid*, 1177.

²³¹ "Ne yüzüme bakıyon kız? Gençliğin var diye mi güveniyon? Kucağında piçinle seni kim alır?.. İl orağına gidince aklını başına devşirirsin!.." *ibid*, 1178-1179.

²³² "Yukarı çıktılar, Hacer kadın başına bir çaput örttü. Esma horul horul uyuyan Necati'sini kucakladı. Ortada yatan ölüye bir göz bile atmadan aşağıya inip kapının önüne fırladılar. Bütün yakın

To summarize, in *Two Women*, Sabahattin Ali tells us the story of Hacer and Esma, their polygamous life and the latter's deprive of the legal rights. Here, Esma is the true subaltern due to the forced polygamous marriage, the fact that she is the second wife, her husband's stinginess, the jealousy of the first wife and her deprivation of inheritance without a civil marriage.

4.9. Freckled (Çilli), 1947

Freckled tells the story of a writer's encounter with his former student Nigâr in a pub in while in İzmir. Freckled is her nickname. When she finishes secondary school, her father makes her get married to a forty-year old public servant who is a drunkard and a jealous man. Moreover, as the man is impotent, they cannot have children. Nigâr desires this a lot. This is where their relationship gets stuck.

One day Nigâr sees an old friend from secondary school named Kemal, on the street and she invites him to her house. However, this is soon heard by the husband and he goes to the house and beats her wife. Instead of protecting Nigâr, Kemal runs away. Nigâr decides to leave the husband. Instead of going to stay with her family, she goes to İzmir where she starts to work in a pub.

As time goes by, Kemal sees Nigâr at the pub and feels guilty about what he has done to her. To apologize her, he proposes an official marriage. The two then decide to leave İzmir for Istanbul. In Istanbul, Kemal changes his mind and says to Nigâr that he does not want to marry to her anymore. But, as it turns out, Nigâr is pregnant. Kemal asks her to have an abortion. Nigâr tells Kemal that she would have an abortion in İzmir with the help of an acquaintance and leaves Istanbul. However, she gives a birth to her child and never turns back to Istanbul. She does not tell Kemal anything. "Why should I tell someone who did not want his own child? I gave birth to him and I am going to raise him. This foolish man is not even going to know about his son."²³³ Here, we see a strong woman who makes her choices although life is not easy. In order to earn her livelihood, she starts working in a pub again. As a single mother, she has some hardships during this part of her life. She does not want

evleri, hatta sokakları kaplayan yanık bir sesle bağırp ağlaşmaya başladılar. Hacer kadın: "Amanın komşular!.. Gitti... Dünyasına doyamadan gitti!.." diye ağlarken, Esma da uykudan birdenbire uyandırıldığı ve ne olduğunu anlayamadığı için avaz avaz bağırarak çocuğunu kucağında sallıyor: Vay benim üç yaşında yetim kalan Necatim!.." diye köyün havasını çınlatıyordu." *ibid*, 1179.

²³³ "Çocuğunu istemeyene ne diye haber verecekmışim? Onu ben doğurdum, ben büyüteceğim. Haberi bile olmayacak budalanın." *ibid*, 1275.

her child to grow up in hotel rooms. She therefore asks her teacher who is also the writer of the story to find a place for his son in an orphanage in Ankara until he gets two years old. As a single mother, Nigâr as a wants her son to have a good education. This is why she asks for help from the teacher. Here, we can see the difficulty that she faces as a working class woman with a child.

In *Freckled*, Nigâr's story can be examined in two different phases. In the first phase of her life, Nigâr is too obedient that she cannot resist her father who forces her to marry an old man. She then has to bear her husband's violence.

In the second phase, Nigâr succeeds in escaping from her husband's house and starts an independent life. This is the turning point in his life. She tells her escape story,

"He brought disgrace on me in Aydın. I could not convince anyone that we do not have an affair with Kemal. Oh, Hodja, you know better, I'm such an unstable woman. I now boggle at the seven years I spent with that man. As I said, that was my ignorance. This is also ignorance. I lost my temper. I stormed off as I shut the door in his face."²³⁴

Nigâr can stand on her own feet as a working woman in İzmir. She also leaves Kemal when he wants her to have an abortion. Here, she is strong and conscious that she can make her decisions.

In *Freckled*, Sabahattin Ali criticizes marriages at early ages. However, the most important point that he emphasizes is how a working woman brings more freedom to her life although she faces many hardships, like Nigâr who needs to leave her child to the orphanage for a while. In that sense, Nigâr is quite different from Dudu in *Geese*, Emine in *Hot Water* or Hacer and Esmâ in *Two Women* as they stay silent and obedient. At least to some extent, Nigâr can end up her subalternity by making her own choices and thus speak for herself.

4.10. Lifeguard (Cankurtaran), 1947

In *Lifeguard*, Sabahattin Ali tells Asiye's story. Asiye is a sixteen year-old married and pregnant woman. The story details how when the midwife fails to help her to give a birth in the village, her husband, İbrahim, takes her to the head doctor in the district. The district doctor sends them to a private clinic owned by Dr. Mütene Cankurtaran because the he himself is not allowed to help any delivery.

²³⁴ "Beni bütün Aydın'a rüşva etti. Kemal'le bir geçmişimiz olmadığına kimseyi inandıramadım. Aman Hoca, siz bilirsiniz, ben delibozuk bir kızım. O herifle yedi sene nasıl oturdum, şaşıyorum. Dedim ya, cahillik. Bu da cahillik. Kan başıma çıkıverdi. Kapıyı suratına kapadığım gibi çıktım gittim." *ibid*, 1274.

Being hopeless, İbrahim takes Asiye to Dr. Cankurtaran. There they experience money problems. The doctor requests four hundred Turkish liras but İbrahim cannot afford this, and can only give a hundred and thirty liras. For the rest of the money, the doctor makes her sign a paper.

Although the baby dies during the delivery, the doctor tells İbrahim that he will keep Asiye at the hospital up until he brings the rest of the money. İbrahim sells everything to take Asiye back from the clinic but he fails to get the money together. When Dr. Cankurtaran sees that İbrahim will not be able to pay the money, he makes Asiye clean the clinic, despite the fact that she suffers from the terrible postnatal pains. İbrahim realizes that he will not be able to take Asiye and he goes to the doctor to tell him: "Take her; she can be yours from now on. There are many women in the village, hah! May she do you good!"²³⁵ So, he gives up taking Asiye from the clinic and goes back to the village.

Asiye feels too angry when she hears what her husband has told the doctor. She thus escapes from the clinic during the night and goes to her village, as her husband did. She repeats İbrahim's words loudly on her arrival to the village. Those who hear her screaming go out and see Asiye dying. Sabahattin Ali gives more detail in the following quotation:

"When she arrived near the village, her head writhingly got close to her knees. Although she suffers for the pain, her yelling like a wild animal 'There are many women in the village, hah!..' was screaming the place down. Those who heard this voice is heard this voice got of their homes. They hugged and took her but she could not live till the morning."²³⁶

In *Lifeguard*, there are some important points that Sabahattin Ali analyzes. First, I see that Sabahattin Ali gives the doctor a name Mutena Cankurtaran for a reason. He is ironic since his first name 'Mutena' literally means chosen carefully to be the best and the most beautiful.²³⁷ Mutena however does not save Asiye who dies due to the doctor's malpractice.

Second, Asiye is a silent and passive character. She loses her baby and then she is exposed to harsh treatment and violence by Dr. Cankurtaran and the clinic workers.

²³⁵ "Al böyleyse senin olsun. Köyde karı yok değil a! Hayrını gör!" *ibid*, 1299.

²³⁶ "Köyün kıyısına geldiği zaman, kıvrıla kıvrıla başı dizlerine yaklaşmıştı. Böyle olduğu halde, vahşi bir hayvan gibi: "Köyde karı yok değil a!.." diye bağıışı ortalığı çınlatıyordu; bu sesi duyanlar evlerinden fırladılar. Yanına vardıkları zaman Asiye yere yuvarlanmış, debeleniyordu. Hemen kucaklayıp götürdüler. Fakat sabaha çıkmadı." *ibid*, 1301.

²³⁷ Mutena: Chosen elaborately and carefully to be the best, elaborated.

<http://www.kubbealtilugati.com/sonuclar.aspx?km=mutena&mi=0> [20.08.2015].

Sabahattin Ali chooses an ironic name and surname which means 'A person who saves lives elaborately'. However, the practice of the doctor is just the opposite of his name.

Sabahattin Ali tells this: "The poor girl, who could not get over yet, was sweeping the floor from morning till evening, collecting garbage and cleaning the marks of spits only with pants which are made of grey cotton cloth and short-sleeved shirt."²³⁸

Last but not least, Asiye escapes from the clinic only when she hears that İbrahim tells the doctor that he has possibility of being with other women from the village. The husband in fact insults her and does not give any value to Asiye. Through this story, Sabahattin Ali not only criticizes the husband's attitude towards Asiye but also the health system. Asiye as one of the author's subaltern characters becomes the victim of this system, requiring money from the poor people such as this couple. Sabahattin Ali points out that the state does not seem to provide social benefits and assistance to its citizens.

4.11. Conclusion

The stories analyzed above have many common features. For example, most female characters are peasants and illiterate, except Viktor in *The Comic of the City* and Nigâr in *Freckled*. Even the level of literacy that they have or their being relatively educated compared to the other female characters does not make them independent and self-confident in their society. Here, Abadan-Unat's quotation becomes meaningful for us:

"In so far as education is the only door of escape for all "second class citizen" woman of the Third World, it cannot be looked upon as an independent vehicle of change. Because education becomes only meaningful when its recipients are able to use it as a tool for given economic and social functions. This observation explains partly why inspite of the tremendous efforts spent on education for half a century in Turkey, the picture of its rural female population is still far from representing a liberated, independent minded, self-conscious womanhood."²³⁹

In the stories *The Comic of the City* and *Freckled*, Viktor and Nigâr are not able to use their education to improve their life conditions. In other words, being literate does not guarantee their freedom.

The female characters in all the stories are powerless. They are generally silent; they cannot speak for themselves. They are also submissive characters who do not challenge the authority figures such as the husband, the father, the agha, the caimacam or the gendarmes.

²³⁸ "Hala kendini toparlayamamış olan kızcağız, amerikanbezinden, paçaları bağlı bir donla kısa kollu bir gömlektten başka sırtında hiçbir şey olmadan, sabahtan akşama kadar yerleri siliyor, çöpleri taşıyor, tükürük hokkalarını temizliyordu." Ali, *Sabahattin Ali Bütün Eserleri-Eleştirel Basım*, 1299.

²³⁹ Abadan-Unat, *ibid*, 33.

The silence and fear of women are obvious in these stories. For example, the old woman in *Oxcart* stays silent upon her son's death and she does not tell the truth to the gendarmes since she does not want to go to the government's door. Her conditions force her to negotiate with the powerful figure, the agha whose son killed the woman's son. To ally with the agha, the imam and the village headman try hard to convince the woman not sue against the agha's son. Namely, the women disguise their real feelings and thoughts and then act according to the changing conditions. Simone de Beauvoir explains such a disguise as in the following quotation:

"Furthermore, like all the oppressed, woman deliberately dissembles her objective of actuality; the slave, the servant, the indigent, all who depend upon the caprices of a master, have learned to turn toward him a changeless smile or an enigmatic impassivity; their real sentiments, their actual behavior, are carefully hidden. And moreover, woman is taught from adolescence to lie to men, to scheme, to be wily. In speaking to them she wears an artificial expression on her face; she is cautious, hypocritical, play-acting."²⁴⁰

I think the old woman's suppression of her real thoughts upon her son's death and Emine's lies to the gendarmes are two examples of such kind of dissembling that Beauvoir points out in the above quotation. They carefully hide themselves in order to keep themselves from situations that may cause trouble. They have to be cautious like other subalterns.

Rape is another issue touched in some of these stories. Viktor in *The Comic of the City* and Emine in *Hot Water* are two rape victims. They are not able to stand against the rape. Both of them have tragic ends; Viktor is sent to a brothel and Emine commits suicide or escapes according to the two different versions of the story. They are also the victims of the male dominated society. In any case, the Çömlekçizade family and the gendarmes rely on the patriarchal hegemony that does not give any space to women to express themselves. The alliance between the influential families (e.g. the Çömlekçizade family) and the gendarmes show that the state has a limited power to infiltrate into the local society.

Gramophone Woman and Yeni Dünya are two women who also have a lot in common. They are known by their nicknames. Their real names and backgrounds are unclear to the reader however. As they are both dancers, they are regarded as frivolous. Males care about them as long as they dance well. Their survival depends on their being alive, healthy and beautiful.

²⁴⁰ Simone De Beauvoir, "Chapter XI. Myth and Reality" from *The Second Sex* in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, (W.W. Norton & Company, New York-London, 2001), 1411.

Asiye in *Lifeguard* dies as a victim of the health system. In my opinion, Sabahattin Ali harshly criticizes the health system which does not really serve the poor people.

Briefly, we see that there are different types of subalternity of women in these stories. Bülent Somay states that there are countless signs of subalternity of women because majority of women are systematically and regularly exposed to male violence; they are mostly excluded from production, circulation and communication tools in many cultures; they are forced to polygamy as well as prostitution.²⁴¹

Unlike Somay, I see that on the one hand Sabahattin Ali criticizes the state, its representatives, and local power figures since they oppress women in a violent way and they do not allow them to speak for themselves; on the other hand Sabahattin Ali's characters have strong agencies. At least some of them can speak for themselves and resist to the power figures.

²⁴¹ Somay, *ibid*, 160.

5. CONCLUSION

Sabahattin Ali's stories were reflective of his time. He himself lived in different parts of Turkey as a village teacher and therefore, his works are valuable so that they provide us a great deal of evidence on urban and rural people. This thesis has analyzed Sabahattin Ali's works to tell the unofficial story of the early Republican years. That is to say, this is not an official story of the elite but an unofficial and untold story of the nameless, alienated, deviant and silent people. To achieve this, I apply the term subaltern, which of course has a different connotation when applied to the Turkish context.

This thesis has examined Ali's stories to show how his male characters either stay silent or to some extent challenge the authority figures, such as the agha, the gendarmes and the state. Stories shared some similarities. For example false consciousness is obvious in some of them. This is seen in *A Sailor's Story*, in which the young stoker mentally suffers a lot when he questions his working conditions, which he initially blames fate or coincidence. He later challenges the hierarchy between the crewmen and the captain. In other words, he finds power and inner courage to change his fate and acts according to his own will. Thus, I argue that this young man gives hope and courage to other workers around him, therefore ends his false consciousness.

Unlike the young stoker, the builder in *Apartment* does not challenge the authority. He accepts what is given to him. Indeed, he does not find enough courage to defend his son. His circumstances are quite different from the stoker's. The stoker has a strong agency and thus he decides on his own; on the other hand the latter stays silent.

I have also paid attention to the stories in which the protagonists are all educated men, who I call as intellectual subalterns. They have progressive views, which mean to promote change in their societies. Stories clearly show how they harshly criticize the deficiencies of the political system. I have demonstrated that they have strong agencies so that they make conscious choices. They however were seen deviants by

the society and therefore they are forced to leave the places in which they are living. They experience loneliness and feel alienation. In some cases, I have shown how they are sent to a prison or to a mental hospital; through such modern institutions, the state tends to put them under its control.

I have questioned if Sabahattin Ali's female characters are twice subalterns because they live in harsher conditions compared to men. They are usually forced to obey the rules of the patriarchal society, both at home and outside. When they cannot fulfill the expectations of their societies, they choose to leave; this is obvious in the case of rape. Under such circumstances, some of them stay silent, some end up having a miserable life. There are others who die in a tragic way. Dudu in *Geese* and Emine in *Hot Water* are two characters who stay silent. At the end, one was imprisoned, the other one is lost.

This thesis has illustrated how staying silent and being voiceless are important themes of Sabahattin Ali's stories. It has also dealt with how one's subaltern position may end if he or she can speak for him/herself. If a subaltern speaks, it means that s/he can be aware of his or her potentials. For example, the bard in *Voice*, the shepherd in *Dog*, or the young man in *Truck* are characters who are not able to speak for themselves. They do not seem to be aware of their inner strength. I think that they are doomed to this fate due to their weak social positions. I have also shown how the silence of women is different from that of men if they are before the authority.

Being nameless is another important theme. Only a few of the story characters have real names. Many of them are nameless or have nicknames. In my opinion, nameless people do not seem to have a real agency. I argue that nameless story characters are more passive than those who have names. For example, the man in *That Friend of Mine*-, the one who is arrested by the police in *Enemy*, the doctor and the translator in *Decollement* or the other one in *Intellectual Friend* are all nameless characters. They are stigmatized through hate language used against them. They thus feel like a stranger.

Overall, this thesis has told an unofficial side of the early Republican Turkey. It has aimed at giving voices to those who are lost in official histories or in grand

narratives. This thesis has finally sought to uncover the stories of those who for example most likely said that “I could not find my voice in that room”.²⁴²

²⁴² Sabahattin Ali, *Sabahattin Ali Bütün Eserleri-Eleştirel Basım*, 1028.

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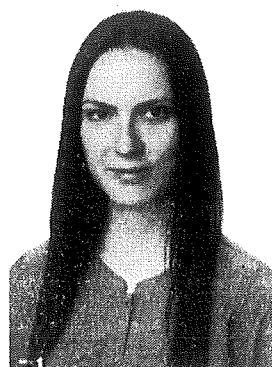
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