

THE HIERARCHICAL STRUCTURE AMONG FEMALE PRISONERS:  
THE CASE OF KARILAR KOĐUŐU BY KEMAL TAHİR

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **THE HIERARCHICAL STRUCTURE AMONG FEMALE PRISONERS: THE CASE OF KARILAR KOĐUŐU BY KEMAL TAHİR**

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This thesis tries to put forward the underlying factors of the hierarchical position of woman prisoners within the novel of Karılar KoęuŐu written by Kemal Tahir through his lived experiences in Malatya Prison during the first half of 1940s. This study is based on literary critical analysis of the book by means of reflexive, interpretive, standpoint approaches of postmodern anthropology, and literary criticism of literary anthropology. In order to reveal the factors that affect the hierarchical structure among prisoners, a very detailed interpretation of the narration in the book is made through the method of thick description. As Karılar KoęuŐu is handled as an ethnographical factual fiction due to several reasons, this study becomes ethnography of ethnography. On the basis of the author’s social scientist

feature and the anthropological characteristics of the narration, considering the historical and sociological background of the time being narrated, it is presented that there is a hierarchical structure among female prisoners, and this structure is affected by the prison's internal settings as well as common factors such as economic status and political power. Although the primary outcome of the study is about the hierarchy between woman prisoners due to the research question, also unexpected results are obtained through this study. Owing to gender bias and ethnic/religious stratification narrations within the book, hierarchical positioning among the prisoners dependent on these factors is also acquired and revealed.

**Keywords:** woman, prison, hierarchy, postmodern anthropology, literary criticism

## ÖZ

### KADIN MAHKUMLAR ARASINDAKİ HİYERARŞİK YAPI: KEMAL TAHİR'İN KARILAR KOĞUŞU ÖRNEĞİ

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Bu tez, Kemal Tahir'in 1940'lı yılların ilk yarısında, Malatya Cezaevi'nde edindiği kendi hapisane deneyimlerini aktardığı Karılar Koğuşu romanında anlatılan kadın mahkumlar arasındaki hiyerarşik yapılanmanın altında yatan faktörleri ortaya koymaya çalışmaktadır. Çalışma, edebiyat antropolojisi ile post modern antropolojinin düşünümsel/öze dönüşlü, yorumsal/açıklamalı ve bakış açısı/perspektif yaklaşımları kullanılarak kitabın yazınsal eleştirel analizine dayanmaktadır. Mahkumlar arasındaki hiyerarşik yapıyı etkileyen faktörleri ortaya çıkarmak için, yoğun betimleme yöntemiyle kitaptaki anlatımın çok detaylı bir yorumlaması yapılmıştır. Roman, çalışmada bahsedilen çeşitli nedenlere dayanarak etnografik bir metin olarak ele alındığından; çalışma da etnografik metnin etnografisi olarak ele alınabilir. Yazarın sosyal bilimci özellikleri ile

anlatının antropolojik karakteristiđi temel alınarak, anlatının getiđi zamanın tarihsel ve sosyolojik arka planı da gz nnde bulundurularak yapılan alıřmada; kadın mahkumlar arasında gerekten de bir hiyerarřik yapılanma olduđu, bu yapılanmanın ekonomik durum ve politik g gibi yaygın sebepler kadar hapisanenin i dinamiklerinden de etkilendiđi ortaya ıkmaktadır. alıřmanın temel sonucu, arařtırma sorusuna bađlı olarak kadın mahkumlar arasındaki hiyerarřik yapı olsa da, alıřmada beklenmeyen bazı sonular da elde edilmiřtir. Toplumsal cinsiyet nyargıları ve etnik ve dini toplumsal sınıf dzenine dair kitaptaki anlatılar, bu faktrlere bađlı olarak mahkumlar arasında geliřen hiyerarřik konumlanmalara dair bilgilerin elde edilmesini ve ortaya konmasını sađlamıřtır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: kadın, cezaevi, hiyerarři, post modern antropoloji, edebiyat antropolojisi

To My Parents  
Şirin and Tahir Turgut



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At last but not the least, I would like to dedicate this thesis to my mother and father, Şirin and Tahir Turgut, as an indicator of my indefinite appreciation for them. Their material and moral support has enabled me to

reach to these days. Especially my father's encouragement helped me to decide to proceed with graduate education. This very first academic study of mine is as meaningful and valuable for my parents as it is for me. If I managed to achieve this study, this achievement belongs to them as much as to me.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Research Problem

I have always been interested in the conceptions of crime and criminality in literature and art, especially visual arts like television and cinema. Within literature<sup>1</sup>, factual or fictional narrations on criminals and criminal events, biographical pieces of literature on criminals; within visual arts, television serials<sup>2</sup> like CSI, Bones and many others, movies<sup>3</sup> about actual crimes and criminals, literary adaptations, et cetera, expose that this subject is a very popular one and is not only interesting for me.

Especially television serials, named Bones, lit a light in my mind about making a decision on my thesis subject. The series is about a biological anthropologist who solves murders by utilizing her profession. In this manner, I have started to think about integrating my old, passionate interest and the subject of my thesis. Thus I determined to approach to the conception of crime anthropologically.

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<sup>1</sup> Only novels on crime have a lot of examples listed on web sites like, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Top\\_100\\_Crime\\_Novels\\_of\\_All\\_Time](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Top_100_Crime_Novels_of_All_Time) and [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Crime\\_novels](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Crime_novels) last visited on: 20.01.2014

<sup>2</sup> Popularity of television serials on crime and/or criminality can be seen in the charts on: [http://www.imdb.com/search/title?count=100&genres=crime&num\\_votes=5000,&title\\_type=tv\\_series,mini\\_series&ref\\_=gnr\\_tv\\_cr](http://www.imdb.com/search/title?count=100&genres=crime&num_votes=5000,&title_type=tv_series,mini_series&ref_=gnr_tv_cr) last visited on: 20.01.2014

<sup>3</sup> When you look at movie genres listed on: [http://www.imdb.com/genre/?ref\\_=nv\\_ch\\_gr\\_5](http://www.imdb.com/genre/?ref_=nv_ch_gr_5) you may find striking that how many crime subgenres there are. Last visited on: 20.01.2014

Subsequent to deciding the general subject of the thesis, my first intention was narrowing down the subject. As Lila Abu-Lughod mentioned what was missing from the ethnographic record, of that “women’s lives had been invisible, occluding important issues about domination” (Abu-Lughod, 2008), invisibility of women within anthropology led me to think on uniting the concept of crime and woman together in an anthropological study. Agreeing with Annette Weiner cited by Marilyn Strathern (Strathern, 2010 [1981]) saying that “any study that does not include the role of women-as seen by women-as part of the way the society is structured remains only a partial study of that society”, including women into the concept of crime, and handling women’s criminality as the subject of my study became an absolute necessity in order to accomplish a complete study.

After coming to conclusion that I would study on women’s criminality, it was time to figure out which aspect of women’s criminality I would be studying. When I looked through the studies done within the scale of Turkey before, I realized that crime issue was generally handled in terms of child and juvenile delinquency, and/or kinds of crimes committed by men. Again in the studies, crime and criminality were largely examined in relation to psychological and psychiatric aspects.

Since I am interested in crime and criminality in arts and literature, I also decided to review them. While doing that I recognized that most of the artistic pieces on crime which involved women in crime were handling the crimes committed against women. So, I came to conclusion that in both academic and artistic works, crime and criminality were attributed mostly to men committed against and directed to women. This kind of a conclusion made me think of woman criminals. Although in male-oriented, patriarchal countries like Turkey crime is seen as a part of male dominance since it

requires power and will to be committed, women also involve in criminal events depending on various factors. Even if there are studies about female criminals at local scale, they are fewer than the others. Besides, most of these studies are rather dependent upon quantitative analysis<sup>4</sup>. After making some research on academic studies, I have turned my head to literary pieces. There were some examples consisting of female criminals in Turkish literature, written either by men or by women.

After looking over academic and artistic works on female criminality, I have turned to the point of figuring out the aspect of female criminality that I would deal with. Since crime is an act of power enacted on the slain, power relations within people who perform that kind of an act of power would be taken into consideration. Lack of, at least scarcity of, the studies conducted about power relations, in an essential manner of hierarchical structure, between female criminals within prison<sup>5</sup> made me decide on the research problem of mine: hierarchical structure between female prisoners.

Following the process of clarification of the research problem, I have chosen the novel, *Karılar Koğuşu*<sup>6</sup> by Kemal Tahir as the field of my case study. Even though there are novels in Turkish literature other than *Karılar Koğuşu*, written by women based on their own prison experiences like *Yıldırım Bölge Kadınlar Koğuşu*<sup>7</sup> by Sevgi Soysal or *Uçurtmayı*

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<sup>4</sup> There are academic studies elaborated sociologically such as (Çelik, 2008) and (Gürtuna, 2009).

<sup>5</sup> The only academic study about hierarchy between female prisoners as far as I could find is a Phd dissertation written by Sanem Kulak-Gökçe, who is a research assistant in the graduate program of Anthropology at Yeditepe University (personal communication). Yet, for another anthropological prison study, master's thesis of Meral Akbaş, which was published as a book soon as "Mamak Kitabı/ The Mamak Book", would be an example (Akbaş, 2009).

<sup>6</sup> The name would be translated into English roughly as "Ward of Dames".

<sup>7</sup> The name was translated as "Yıldırım Area Women's Ward" on [http://www.goodreads.com/author/show/720522.Sevgi\\_Soysal](http://www.goodreads.com/author/show/720522.Sevgi_Soysal) last visited on: 24.01.2014



Vurmasınlar<sup>8</sup> by Feride Çiçekoğlu, there are reasons to prefer the narrative of Kemal Tahir:

First of all, as Kurtuluş Kayalı tells about Kemal Tahir, quoted rather lengthy below, he is obviously a social scientist besides his author identity:

Kemal Tahir tried to make an overall evaluation grounding on the relation between history and sociology... With his trial to understand the very different characteristics of Turkish society, the picture of him as a sociologist emerges much more prominently. Sociological analysis of the matter is clearly existent in Kemal Tahir... His essential interests are shared with Turkish social scientists... [H]e consistently made historical and sociological analysis. His historicist and sociologist identity was stable from the very beginning... The most significant indicator of being his historian and sociologist identity at the forefront from the very start is his statement that of in a society in which its historical reality was deflected, and sociological analysis was constantly neglected, becoming a historian and sociologist is a necessity for the novelist... He tried to figure out and explain the facts of homeland. Not only in his subsequent novels, even in his very first novel, his historian and sociologist identity appears... (Kayalı, 2010)

Secondly, Kemal Tahir accomplishes “distinctive contribution of anthropology to the human sciences” as Sherry Ortner states that:

It is our (*anthropologist*)<sup>9</sup> capacity, largely developed in fieldwork, to take the perspective of the folks on the shore, that allows us to learn anything at all—even in our own culture—beyond what we already know... Further, it is our location... that puts us in a position to see people... as active agents and subjects of their own history. (Ortner, 2010 [1984])

Since “he grounds his comments with scenes he produced from the society, in an effort to express the reality of Turkish people” (Coşkun, 2004), as Ortner states above, his narration would be handled as an anthropological study as well as a sociological one like being expressed above.

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<sup>8</sup> “Do not Let Them Shoot the Kite”

<sup>9</sup> The word in italics is added by me in order to clarify the meaning of the previous word.

Third reason of dealing with Karılar Koğuşu is that; even if various novels of Kemal Tahir, which were written after he was released from prison and based on Ottoman Empire, were issued in some studies; Karılar Koğuşu is not one of them aforementioned in either studies or comments. Maybe, its feature of being unfinished and not being arranged by the author himself, therefore its publication as a preliminary sketch of the notes of the book could be the reason for this. But, his emphasize especially on women in his notes, which were written by putting social and historical context forward, render his narrative worth to be taken into consideration.

Fourth and the last reason for me to handle Karılar Koğuşu is; though women in Kemal Tahir novels were subjected to a few academic studies with their distinct dimensions, her woman prisoners are not handled by their hierarchical interrelations. Such a point of view could contribute to the relative literature.

Pursuant to the reasons listed above, and due to the subject that I determined, I engaged in achieving an empirical based anthropological study grounding on Kemal Tahir's Karılar Koğuşu.

## **1.2. Research Process and Methodology**

At this part of my thesis, I will explain the method I used to achieve a proper and coherent analysis, and then I will try to reveal the pros and cons of the time course of my research study.

### 1.2.1. Methodology: Thick Description

Whether it is called a method or an approach, thick description is used by Clifford Geertz equal to the ethnography. The original resource of thick description, which Geertz took his from, is British philosopher Gilbert Ryle. For Ryle, ““thick” description involves ascribing intentionality to one’s behavior” and “understanding and absorbing the context of the situation or behavior” (Ponterotto, 2006) “to explain the different levels of meaning-making associated with describing and interpreting human activity ... depending on the social context and circumstances” (Mills, Durepos, & Wiebe, 2010).

Stephen Reyna, by asserting that; “the analysis of culture was ‘interpretive’, that anthropologists analyze culture through ethnography, and finally that ‘ethnography is thick description’. These statements equate thick description with interpretation, ...” (Reyna, 1994) expands Geertz’s equation of thick description to ethnography.

Geertz takes the notion of “thick description”<sup>10</sup> and uses it as “an ongoing process of interpretation intended to achieve a level of insight into the nuances and complexities of human actions that are always open to further interpretation” (Mills, Durepos, & Wiebe, 2010).

After Geertz utilized the “thick description”, qualitative researcher Norman K. Denzin extended it to:

A thick description ... does more than record what a person is doing. It goes beyond mere fact and surface appearances. It presents detail, context, emotion, and the webs of social relationships that join persons to one another. Thick description

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<sup>10</sup> For different explanations of “thick description” look Immy Holloway (Holloway, 1997) and Thomas Schwandt (Schwandt, 2001).

evokes emotionality and self-feelings. It inserts history into experience. It establishes the significance of an experience, or the sequence of events, for the person or persons in question. In thick description, the voices, feelings, actions, and meanings of interacting individuals are heard. (Ponterotto, 2006)

By “literary detail” (Ponterotto, 2006) in his explanation, Denzin spreads thick description to humanities.

Although “a central component of “thick description” is the interpretation of what is being observed or witnessed” (Ponterotto, 2006), in other words, is essentially dependent upon participant observation, its close connection “with the narrative process of writing field notes” (Mills, Durepos, & Wiebe, 2010) renders thick description applicable to my study.

There is a working definition of “thick description” made by Joseph Ponterotto, which may be useful for me in order to explain thick description method’s relevance with my study on Karılar Koğuşu:

- 1) Thick description refers to the researcher’s task of both describing, and interpreting observed social action (or behavior) within its particular context. The context can be within a smaller unit (such as a couple, a family, a work environment) or within a larger unit (such as one’s village, a community, or general culture).
- 2) Thick description accurately describes observed social actions and assigns purpose and intentionality to these actions, by way of the researcher’s understanding and clear description of the context under which the social actions took place.
- 3) Thick description captures the thoughts and feelings of participants as well as the often complex web of relationships among them.
- 4) Thick description leads to thick interpretation, which in turns leads to thick meaning of the research findings for the researchers and participants themselves, and for the report’s intended readership.

- 5) Thick meaning of findings leads readers to a sense of verisimilitude, wherein they can cognitively and emotively “place” themselves within the research context. (Ponterotto, 2006)

Regarding that I am being a researcher, making observations upon ethnographically featured non-fictional, realistic narrative, handling the characters within the book as participants I would contend that my study on Karılar Koğuşu overlaps with the rules above:

- 1) While I am handling with the book and its content I took the overall conditions of the time being told within the book, and the context of it into consideration. As I am analyzing the hierarchical structure within a prison, I consider that everything is happening within this institution which has its own cultural characteristics, and at the same time reflects the whole country’s conditions.
- 2) All the events told by the author within the book, is being interpreted after being filtered by my standpoint. Ascribing hierarchical intentions and purposes to the events told in the book is only happening by means of my standpoint.
- 3) I am trying to find the background emotions of the dialog between the characters in the book. Because their dialogical converses exert the implicit ideas of the prisoners.
- 4) The interpretations resulting from thick description will be meaningful not only for me. As anthropological texts are polysemic and polyvocal<sup>11</sup> in terms of postmodern approach to which Geertz and his works lead, in other words as “thick description involves reading of readings” (Reyna, 1994), so interpretation of the researcher becomes open for other interpretations.

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<sup>11</sup> For criticism of Geertz’s polysemic/polyvocal approach see Vincent Crapanzano (Crapanzano, 1992).

- 5) Based on real events between real people on a real time period, my findings which will be held in analysis section, will inherently be realistic. Since all the things in the book really happened to someone, somewhere, somehow; readers of my study would easily put themselves into the character's place.

Besides the working definitions of thick description, there are some classificatory features that a thick description must acquire to be comprehensive. These types of thick description categorized by Denzin are: "biographical, historical, situational, relational, and interactional" (Ponterotto, 2006).

My ethnographical study on Karılar Koğuşu again suits to these categories. But before explaining them in detail, it would be proper to explain that the categorization of Denzin focuses on excerpts from ethnography and biography (including autobiography and life stories) (Ponterotto, 2006)". In this respect my study fits his categorization since Karılar Koğuşu is dependent upon Kemal Tahir's own life-story carrying ethnographical narrative characteristics.

Going back to compatibility with my study and Denzin's categorization; it is biographical because it carries a time line in terms of Kemal Tahir's life in the Malatya Prison. It is historical because it contains real experience in the former times in a detailed way. It is situational because it depicts the location of Kemal Tahir and other prisoners within the condition of being imprisoned. It is relational because it depends on interrelations between Kemal Tahir and the other residents of the prison. It is interactional because again it depends on interrelations of the whole prison one another.

With reference to the above communicated conditions and explanations, I will try to visualize and depict the hierarchical structure within Kemal Tahir's ethnographical narration by means of "thick description" which *merges the lived experiences of the characters in the book with my interpretation of these experiences*<sup>12</sup> in an anthropological manner. So, in this manner, this study would probably provide methodological contribution to the existent literature.

### 1.2.2. Research Process

Anthropology is rather empirical than theoretical. Even Henrietta Moore, in the introduction section of her *Anthropological Theory Today*<sup>13</sup> claims that; "... there is no such thing as anthropological theory" (Eriksen & Nielsen, 2001). This empirical inclination brings about the importance of fieldwork, in other words ethnography. "Fieldwork- direct communication with people and participant observation of their ongoing activities in situ- became a hallmark of anthropological method" (Wolf, 2010 [1982]).

But, after reflexive approach became widespread within, and literary genres interpenetrated into anthropological writing; "positing cultural facts as things ... heard, invented in dialogue or transcribed" (Clifford, 2010 [1986]) became possible as James Clifford claims:

The predominant metaphors ... [participant observation, data collection, cultural description, of] anthropological research ... shift away from the observing eye and toward expressive speech (and gesture) ... in a discursive rather than a visual paradigm... The writer's "voice" pervades and situates the analysis... (Clifford, 2010 [1986])

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<sup>12</sup> The sentence is derived from Joseph Ponterotto (Ponterotto, 2006).

<sup>13</sup> (Moore H. L., 1999)

This shift from participant observation's visual ethnography to literary criticism's ethnography apart from visual evidence renders my study an appropriate anthropological ethnography.

In fact, as I handled a factual narration as a kind of fieldwork area, and tried to achieve an ethnography of ethnography, as I will be mentioned again subsequently in the literary section, by means of thick description method, lack of participant observation method used for data collection turned into an advantageous situation whereas would be seen as a weakness of my thesis; since it avoids "Hawthorne effect". Despite the fact that "Hawthorne effect" is generally used for describing a situation seen in experimental social sciences as psychology, it is also possible to be confronted in anthropological participant observation. Hawthorne effect<sup>14</sup>, also named as observer effect or a variation of demand effect, is shortly tells that due to observer's expectations or anticipations the observee may manipulate his/her motions or actions. In anthropological participant observation it is really possible for informants to tell lies to the observer about their original motivations for not only rituals, but also their daily actions on the purpose of pleasing the observer or of just keeping secret.

At this point, I need to tell my motivation behind preferring a literary anthropological analysis rather than an actual fieldwork. As a matter of fact, my intention at the very beginning of my research study was to conduct an actual fieldwork between female prisoners in order to grasp whether they have a hierarchical structure within them, and if there is what the underlying factors of this structure are. In so doing, my aim with this study was to create a practical efficacy for especially young, inexperienced

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<sup>14</sup> For detailed information about Hawthorne effect John Adair's work can be useful (Adair, 1984).



female prisoners to facilitate their adaptation process to the prison conditions.

After being rejected by the governmental authorities, a light shed on my head, and this gave me the idea to turn my head to a totally different anthropological area. In place of dominant, *positivist mood of anthropology's ignorance in the name of scientific objectivity*<sup>15</sup>; I decided to choose a more reflexive and literary way of anthropology.

Since reflexive/self-reflexive, literary approaches started to affect anthropological writings; as “Evans-Pritchard commented on how literary sources had had perforce to stand in for “direct observation”” (Strathern, et al., 1987), in the way of multivocal, multidimensional, explicitly emotional, interpretive narration style, I had a tendency towards this more empirical, even experimental sort of anthropology.

Considering literary anthropological studies like Michael Taussig's *Law in a Lawless Land* (Taussig, 2003) which is a diary formed anthropological narration, or like Nancy Lindisfarne's *Dancing in Damascus* (Lindisfarne, 2002) story formed interpretations, I have chosen to study on Kemal Tahir's *Karlılar Koğuşu* since “his words upon our social problems settle into his novels” and “his each novel includes an intellectual discussion” (Avcı, 2004). His approach to the social facts and their interpretations within his book rendered it “possible to benefit from his novels in the context of literary [anthropology]<sup>16</sup>” (Yaraman, 2004).

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<sup>15</sup> The sentence is derived from Jonathan Spencer's *Anthropological Order and Political Disorder* (Spencer, 2007).

<sup>16</sup> The word “anthropology” is my adaptation. In its original the word is “sociology”.

In deciding the research site, despite the domination of “personal factors”, “research proclivities” and “chance” or “accident” are binding as well (Berger, 1993). In my situation chance is really a big factor to come across to the Kemal Tahir’s book. As I did not want to change my study subject, namely “hierarchical structure between female prisoners”, and as Kemal Tahir dealt with women prisoners with his social scientist identity our ways crossed.

In addition to basis of choosing the research site, “the choice of concepts we make often depends on our ethnographic materials, and this should remind us to be discerning in our selection of theoretical positions” (Handelman, 1994). Since the focal point of my thesis is, rather than concerning the causes of crime which women committed, the underlying factors of the hierarchical structure between women prisoners and their relations to the other residents of the prison, I would not assay my study problem in terms of theories of anthropology of crime. In addition, notions like crime, women, hierarchy, et cetera are mostly subjects of interest of sociological theories, whereas anthropological theories deal with these notions it would be in terms of “othering”. If I include the facts that I wanted to deal with my research problem “in terms of accessibility to the non-anthropologists” (Strathern, 1995), and that “in anthropological inquiry, [there is] a long tradition of breaking with the past, so that theoretical generations tend to be short-lived” (Strathern, 1987); juxtaposition of the difficulties that I have been through while searching for the theoretical framework to draw around my study would be done.

Despite the quasi-problematic nature of anthropological theory, under the umbrella term of “postmodern” theory of anthropology, I assemble reflexive, literary, standpoint, “thick description” approaches. They all

provide the readers a chance to make their own interpretations by means of polyvocality and polysemy. They all accept and utilize subjective reflections and descriptions. They all handle ethnographic writing as fiction. Reflexive anthropology puts writer in the text. Literary one includes artistic feature and subjectivity in it. Standpoint introduces “[t]he lower classes, which Weber refers to as “relatively non-privileged”, ... marginalized and alienated” (Erickson & Murphy, 2010) with the text. And thick description generates an elaborate meaning from this assembly. By this way, an experimental, thus inherently empirical anthropological study is rendered possible.

Yet, both by adopting and by adapting standpoint, reflexive, literary approaches I have done a general anthropological interpretation. But, in the meantime, I acknowledged that Kemal Tahir’s *Karılar Koğuşu* is eligible for more specific anthropological evaluations like psychological anthropology, et cetera.

Considering the difficulties I admitted above, although I provided a theoretical basis to my study in the subsequent section, instead of making an intensive and systematic theoretical reading, I have accomplished a reflexive and elaborative interpretation of an anthropological factual narration. That is why the theoretical frame that I draw in the following part is sufficient for my study.

To emphasize once more before proceeding to the literature overview and theoretical frame section, since I conducted an anthropological study correspondingly, I would like to point out that the starting point of my study is not theoretical, my study is more empirical rather than theoretically sophisticated.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE**

#### **2.1. Literature Overview**

Due to research problem of my study's dependence on women, hierarchy, prisons and literary narration; I needed to examine anthropological theories including power relations and hegemony, women studies and approaches relating anthropology to literature and/or history in order to draw the theoretical framework of my study.

“Rediscovery of Marxism within anthropology in 1950s brought about a focus on institutions and structural analyses of inequality.” By 1970s, by means of Marxism “power arrived in anthropology” (Eriksen & Nielsen, 2001). Marx himself, and Marxist anthropologists, successors of him, pursued class analysis which is “formed in fields of power” (Roseberry, 1997). But Marxist anthropologists’ materialist explanations of, and economy-political approaches, in a manner of modes of production and division of labor, to the power relations, although Kemal Tahir himself was sharing the Marxist point of view for the most of his life, does not fit to my study’s approach of power issue.

Another Marxist scholar Antonio Gramsci, and his conception of hegemony refers to the “specific distribution of power and influence.” According to

this concept, “in any society, there are specific realities of asymmetry, inequality, and domination in a given time” (Ortner, 2010 [1984]). Gramsci implies that hegemony brings domination together, and domination of a person leads to subordination of the dominated one. This duality of domination-subordination contributes to the explanation of social asymmetry within the prison which is an important dimension of hierarchical structure between Kemal Tahir’s characters.

Foucault and his work on discipline and punishment had an influential effect on the anthropological studies of power during 1980s and 1990s. With “the shift from modernism to postmodernism in the 1980s” (Strathern, et al., 1987), Foucault had a great importance within postmodern anthropology, through the term of discourse, which was used to mean “a public exchange of ideas... evolved as the result of power struggles between participants in it...” (Eriksen & Nielsen, 2001). Although his expression of power in *The Rise of Prison* (Foucault, 2000) was used as a means of domination on the body, yet due to his thought of it as “concentrated in particular structural or institutional locations or centers” (Roseberry, 1997), it may well be adapted to the hierarchical structures between “discursive objects (‘actors’)” (Eriksen & Nielsen, 2001) in prison.

Another contributor to the postmodernist anthropology, Jacques Derrida who was a student of Foucault, also had a great influence on my study with his method of analyzing texts. Deconstruction, which has to be done in written texts, is “locating the centre of power in text, exposing the hierarchical assumptions inherent in text, and then looking for... interpreting the text in new ways” (Eriksen & Nielsen, 2001). This method leads to a self-reflexive way of writing because there are not any stable expressions or meanings within the texts. “Meaning ascribed to the text by

its author becomes open to other interpretations” (Uçan, 2009). Considering the “text-mediated” feature of “sociocultural, fieldwork anthropology and fiction whose material and products are both literally textual”, “deconstruction of anthropology, especially from without, through its writings” would be possible “by importing theories of cultural and literary criticism” (Handelman, 1994), theories of which will be held later in detail.

As I deal with woman characters of *Karılar Koğuşu* in my thesis, and as these characters are marginalized, unprivileged others in terms of their gender and socially excluded status (being prisoner), standpoint theory “which gives voice to the marginalized groups”<sup>17</sup> fits very well with my point of view.

As he is the author of *Karılar Koğuşu*, assaying Kemal Tahir in terms of standpoint theory, may help to fortify the compatibility of the book and the standpoint theory: *It is written by a prisoner-writer who experiences marginalization in his social standing, and one who employs approaches from outside the dominant/popular literary conventions. Though Kemal Tahir is a successful (published many literary pieces throughout his life), well-educated, male, upper-class (intellectually) writer, he is also a “traitor” who is excluded from the canon as a communist and a non-believer.*<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Patrice Buzzanell, *A Feminist Standpoint Analysis of Maternity and Maternity Leave for Women with Disabilities* (Buzzanell, 2003)

<sup>18</sup> The sentence is derived from Lauren Bailey’s undergraduate paper on Standpoint Theory (Bailey, 2013).

*“The standpoint theory strives to understand the world from the standpoint of women and other marginalized groups in society”*<sup>19</sup> by “taking what can be seen from the position of the strange, of one at the margin, of the excluded and the voiceless” (Houle, 2009) into account. By means of standpoint theory, “which was initially formulated in the context of Marxist politics”, it is needed to develop a “politics in which previously marginalized groups can name themselves and participate in defining the terms that structure their world” (Hekman, 1997).

According to feminist standpoint theory, “research, particularly that focused on power relations, should begin with the lives of the marginalized.”<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, “standpoint theory acknowledges that individual experiences, and interpretations of those experiences, vary among members of any social group” (Lenz, 2004). In other words, people living in socially unequal conditions, have distinct point of views due to their mental and emotional perceptions.

In parallel with existence of more than one standpoint, there are two factors that keep me from utilizing the standpoint theory, even though it focuses on the marginalized groups who are generally excluded from or invisible within studies or researches:

- a) “Standpoint theorists anchor their methodology in ‘outsider-within’ position”, and Kemal Tahir fits in this position which is “inhabited by groups who are included in dominant cultural practices but are nevertheless, and for various reasons, unable to fully participate in them” (Lenz, 2004). Despite he is in a privileged position as a man against women, at the same time he is at the same side with women

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<sup>19</sup> The sentence is derived from <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminist-social-epistemology/> last visited on: 22.01.2014

<sup>20</sup> Tracy Bowell, Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Bowell, 2011)

since he is a prisoner like them. But “the practice of privileged persons speaking for or on behalf of less privileged persons” (Lenz, 2004), in this case less privileged ones are the women prisoners against Kemal Tahir due to their gender, in other words his narration of women, would blur whose standpoint is being represented in the book.

- b) Similar to the first factor given above, a “complication of standpoint theory in general is the question of whose standpoint is in fact being advanced or explored in any given study” (Lenz, 2004). In my case study, it is a three dimensional complication. Because, besides blurred standpoints of the author and the characters, my standpoint will be incorporated into my study through interpretation of the book, thus standpoints of the characters, and the author, and mine will become intricate to be separated from each other.

Yet, as standpoint theory and literary criticism contribute and improve each other, I will subsequently explain their interaction in more detail.

Postmodern approach of anthropology has a great impact on my study as it serves as a guide for me to attain the theoretical frame of my thesis.

The term postmodern was first explained, by the French philosopher Jean-François Lyotard in his *La Condition Postmoderne* (1979; *The Postmodern Condition*, 1984), as “a situation where there were no longer any overarching ‘grand narratives’ that could be invoked to make sense of the world as a whole” (Eriksen & Nielsen, 2001).

Postmodernity had an impact on anthropology during the last two decades of the twentieth century. Anthropologists, after embracing postmodernism



which saw the world as of “individual voices rather than hegemonic schools and ideologies<sup>21</sup>” (Eriksen & Nielsen, 2001), began to criticize traditional anthropological research and disciplinary ancestors.

Influence of postmodernism on anthropology was at most, on the writing of ethnography. “Postmodern ethnography emphasized the concepts of writing, narrative and dialogue against a merely scientific recording of facts” (Mutman, 2006 ).

As Mahmut Mutman manifested explicitly;

New ethnography’s discursive paradigm aims to include a plurality of voices in the text:... the native’s as well as the anthropologist’s... This inclusion of the ‘native voice’ is postmodern ethnography’s stronghold, the very stake of its claim to be different from conventional ethnography... Postmodern ethnographic demand... to represent a self-present voice, the native other’s living speech, in writing,... its desire to make the native voice heard in the text, to make the native one of the signatories of the anthropological text... (Mutman, 2006 )

anthropological convention of writing shifted to “polysemic” (Mutman, 2006 ) as well as “polyvocal” (Booyens, 1998). This plurality brought about the subjective nature of the documents produced by anthropologists as “Clifford emphasizes that [ethnography] constructs, fabricates truth and knowledge rather than simply representing facts” (Mutman, 2006 ).

This “linguistic turn”<sup>22</sup> (Booyens, 1998) achieved by postmodern anthropologists, changed the old stance of anthropology as being objective and scientific due to neutral and un-stereotyped position of the author by putting ethnography’s approach of privileging author’s point of view, and of reflecting a particular standpoint forward. Old ethnography’s single

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<sup>21</sup> In my opinion, by saying “hegemonic schools and ideologies”, meta-narratives was meant.

<sup>22</sup> For a critical evaluation of the literary turn in postmodern anthropology, please see (Nencel & Pels, 1991)

author convention collapsed by multivocality of postmodernist ethnography, and this “concept of voice” led to reflexivity, since it demands on “the concept of self-presence” in the texts with “tendency towards dialogue or communication with the anthropological other, a particular desire to bring this other into the text, to articulate his or her voice in a more plural anthropological representation” (Mutman, 2006 ).

Postmodernism is also adopted by literature and art. Following adoption of postmodernism, they intertwined with other postmodern fields and created compiling productions. Since postmodern ethnography’s characteristics as polysemy, polyvocality, subjectivity and reflexivity/self-reflexivity bring it closer to literary pieces, intersection of anthropology and literature becomes possible. As ethnography itself is already “one of the methods employed in the early founding work of cultural studies ... this led to growing interaction and mutual penetration between anthropology and cultural studies” (Mutman, 2006 ).

Emphasis of postmodern anthropology on writing mentioned above, led to either reflexive or literary inclinations, sometimes both of them. As I am taking hold of Karılar Koğuşu bilaterally, it is time to elaborate on both approaches.

## **2.2. Theoretical Frame**

In this part of the study, I will try to examine and explain some specific theories and/or approaches that shed light on generation process of this thesis, or contribute to the configuration of my standing point. These theories and approaches are, as I mentioned in the literature overview

section; reflexivity which was shaped within postmodern anthropology, literary criticism and its link to the standpoint theory and other literary approaches, and lastly interpretative approach.

### **2.2.1. Reflexivity – Postmodern Anthropology**

Postmodern Anthropology's utility to the anthropological writing is reflexivity/self-reflexivity. Although the early instances of reflexive anthropological writings were given in the 1950s, the heyday of it is 1980s. This timespan led to distinctive claims like; "postmodern social theory's ... belated incorporation of ... essential premises [including reflexivity] into social analysis" (Coombe, 1991), or like; "process of self-reflection and the identification of one's positionality in relationship to ... the field of social research ... has fallen 'out of fashion', is disingenuous..." (Moore, 2012). Whether belated or fallen out of fashion, throughout 1970s and 1980s, many anthropological practitioners began to write about their field experiences in a reflexive way.

Anthropologist's attempt for "writing himself or herself into ethnographic texts as a nexus of active voices, real presences, in dialogue with informants, with social situations, with one's projects and moral dilemmas, and with oneself" (Handelman, 1994) yielded emergence of "the self-reflexive 'fieldwork account' as a subgenre of ethnographic writing" (Clifford, 2010 [1986]):

With the "fieldwork account" the rhetoric of experienced objectivity yields to that of the autobiography and the ironic self-portrait. The ethnographer, a character in a fiction, is at center stage. He or she can speak of previously "irrelevant" topics: violence and desire, confusions, struggles and economic transactions with informants...

...

Some reflexive accounts have worked to specify the discourse of informants, as well as that of the ethnographer, by staging dialogues or narrating interpersonal confrontations... But the principle of dialogical textual production goes well beyond the more or less artful presentation of “actual” encounters. It locates cultural interpretations in many sorts of reciprocal contexts, and it obliges writers to find. (Clifford, 2010 [1986])

When I compare *Karılar Koğuşu* with this explanation, it may well be evaluated as a “fieldwork account”, and thus its author, Kemal Tahir would be seen as an ethnographer. Indeed, *Karılar Koğuşu* is an autobiography consisting of the author’s real experiences. Kemal Tahir is a character, as Murat within the book. He is at the center, since everything in the book is happening around him, he is involved in every scene. He tells something about every topic mentioned above. Also the book is dependent upon dialogical communications putting commentaries on social events of various contexts forward.

As I take Kemal Tahir an ethnographer, as if he conducted fieldwork on culture of prison in a small, eastern town, in his homeland as an “insider studying [his] own culture” he becomes an “indigenous ethnographer” (Clifford, 2010 [1986]). In this situation, reflexivity becomes important “as related to the intention to use ethnography for repatriation and cultural critique.” And “‘repatriation’ was to be best accomplished by ethnographers who ... turned their attention ‘back home’” (Trencher, 2002).

Another instance for the book’s consistency with reflexive anthropology underlies in this citation: “Reflexive anthropology sees the resultant productions as a dialogue between anthropologist and informant so-called: the observer/observed relationship can no longer be assimilated to that between subject and object” (Strathern, et al., 1987). Since Kemal Tahir was one of the prisoners, he was subject of the book as well. And the book

as the resultant production consists of dialogues between Kemal Tahir, who is the anthropologist and an informant at the same time, and the other prisoners.

Besides being a reflexive ethnographic piece, the book includes another dimension of postmodern anthropology:

A postmodernist anthropology, does need to be sensitive to the workings of power-in-representation, ... in a manner that interrogates 'the languages, systems of metaphors, and regimes of images that seem designed to silence those whom they embody in representation' and embraces the ethical principle of 'the right of formerly un - or misrepresented human group to speak for and represent themselves in domains defined, politically and intellectually, as normally excluding them'. These include children, ... the incarcerated, ... as well as "minorities" more traditionally defined by ... gender, race, and ethnicity in the social groups that anthropologists encounter. (Coombe, 1991)

Karılar Koğuşu, by focusing on the prisoners who are composed of women, a little girl, ethnic minorities, and vocationally excluded ones, fulfills that explanation.

Self-reflexive approach of postmodern anthropology not only provided a basis for ensuring to address the book in anthropological terms, also helped me to identify the narration language of this study by incorporating I-view, first order expressions into the ethnographic pieces. As a result of this, my study became a self-reflexive piece of work.

### **2.2.2. Literature, Literary Criticism – Theory – Anthropology**

Having numerous concepts associated with literature within cultural studies would be confusing. Therefore, prior to expose my study's connection to these conceptions I would like to explain them and their interrelatedness.

**Literature:** It is the art of written work commonly classified as having two major forms - fiction and non-fiction - which may consist of texts based on factual information and reflective essays.<sup>23</sup>

**Literary Anthropology:** The field of “literary anthropology” actually covers two fields of study. In traditional approach, literary anthropology can be understood as an exploration of different kinds of genre of expression, and how these genres can be said to have a historical specificity, a cultural evaluation, and a social institutionalism attached to them. The latter, the “literary turn,” most broadly, can be understood as anthropology turning its attention to its own processes of inscription.<sup>24</sup>

**Literary Theory:** In humanities in modern academia, it is the systematic study of the methods for analyzing literature.<sup>25</sup>

**Literary Criticism:** It is the study, evaluation, and interpretation of literature, a practical application of the literary theory.<sup>26</sup>

Under the light of these explanations it can be said that literary anthropology tries to explore the literature by means of literary criticism

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<sup>23</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Literature> last visited on: 24.01.2014

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199766567/obo-9780199766567-0067.xml> last visited on: 24.01.2014

<sup>25</sup> Jonathan Culler, *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction* (Culler, 1997)

<sup>26</sup> *Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory and Criticism* (Groden, Kreiswirth, & Szeman, 2004)

and describe its characteristics by means of literary theory. But what concerns me the most, of these literary notions, is literary criticism since “it always deals directly with particular literary works.”<sup>27</sup>

“Publication of *Writing Culture* ... more formally announced the arrival of a project specifically rooted in the methods and interests of literary criticism” (Trencher, 2002). James Clifford, “a central figure in spearheading the literary approach” (Trencher, 2002) asserts, in *Writing Culture* that:

Many of the contributions ... to ethnography, a complex, ... changing and diverse ... interdisciplinary area, ... fuse literary theory and ethnography. [As] they see ethnographic writing as changing, inventive, ... influential writers such as Clifford Geertz, ... Claude Levi-Strauss, ... have shown an interest in literary theory and practice ... [and] have blurred the boundary separating art from science. [Even] Margaret Mead, Edward Sapir, ... saw themselves as both anthropologists and literary artists. [Despite] the notion that literary procedures pervade any work of cultural representation is a recent idea in the discipline, ... it has long been asserted that scientific anthropology is also an “art”, that ethnographies have literary qualities. (Clifford, 2010 [1986])

Moving from that intricate association of literary approach and anthropology I may speak of the anthropological feature of a literary piece as well as “the literariness of anthropology” (Clifford, 2010 [1986]). When I handle *Karılar Koğuşu* in that respect, it may be seen worth to be taken as an ethnographical narration, since it is almost a fieldwork in which participant observation technique was applied and written considering writer’s own life story and lived experiences.

I may attest to the anthropological dimension of a literary piece from another angle, to boot. As the social/cultural anthropology focuses on culture and its institutions which are generated by individuals within

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<sup>27</sup> *Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory and Criticism*

society, through experiences; and as “the materials of art can come from any area of human experience” (Block, 1952) anthropology focuses on literary narratives as a matter of course.

Furthermore, again James Clifford’s ethnographic writing determinations consisting of six rules, to write coherently, endorse my claim about the book to be taken as an ethnographic writing:

- 1) *Contextuality (it draws from and creates meaningful social milieux)*: *Karılar Koğuşu* is derived from a prison which is a social institution, and tells interrelations of prisoners which is again a social action. In addition, the book includes reflections and interpretations of combination of “social structure-social organization” notions in terms of Radcliffe-Brown. As he mentions, in search of “structural features of social life” (in my case it is hierarchy); existence of “social groups” and “their internal structure” (people within prison as a group; male prisoners, female prisoners, civil servants as internal structure) as well as “organization” (activities between more than two members of either group, or internal structure to “give a united combined activity”- everybody has a role in prison) would be examined (Jha, 1994 [1983]).
- 2) *Rhetorically (it uses and is used by expressive conventions)*: *Karılar Koğuşu* is written in a self-reflexive manner. But it reflects experiences and standpoints of the other residents of the prison as well as the author’s. By means of this reflection, which engages lived experiences and standpoints to literary narration, the book contributes to eliminate ethnocentric inclinations.
- 3) *Institutionally (one writes within, and against, specific traditions, disciplines, audiences)*: *Karılar Koğuşu* is a department of a prison, since prison is an institution, *Karılar Koğuşu* is one as well. So, the author writes it in an institutional discourse. Also, Kemal Tahir and all the other characters within the book hold an institutional position. Kemal Tahir’s discourse is in an opponent manner. He criticizes judicial system as it favors the rich, criticizes government for its war time politics, he tries to illuminate the prisoners by divulgence of religious superstitions.
- 4) *Generically (an ethnography is usually distinguishable from a novel or a travel account)*: Although *Karılar Koğuşu* is a



novel, it is factual. Through blurred lines of anthropological ethnographies and literary texts a sharp distinction of these two genres is not likely. *Karılar Koğuşu*, may most certainly be evaluated as an experimental ethnographic narration as it conveys a fieldwork experience, even though it is compulsory. Also this determination does not have certainty, as it says “usually”.

- 5) *Politically (the authority to represent social realities is unequally shared and at times contested)*: *Karılar Koğuşu* mentions about many social realities. An instance for it, is, enormous differences of treating young girls in Malatya and İstanbul, and author’s rise against this condition. Furthermore, he embodies historical context via affirmation of the Second World War.
- 6) *Historically (all the above conventions and constraints are changing)*: This may alter the existing situation inherently.

Considering the fourth rule, I based my objective on revealing and exposing the ethnography within the novel.

Besides verifying anthropological characteristics by means of Clifford’s arguments, another verification for *Karılar Koğuşu* is obtained from Susan Trencher’s citation: “Layton recently reminded anthropologists and literary critics that: ‘Unlike *Oliver Twist* and *Fagin*, the Samoans and Tikopeans exist independently of what is written about them, and the ethnography makes reference to their existence’” (Trencher, 2002). According to this quotation, it is rational to take *Karılar Koğuşu* as literary anthropological piece rather than literary fiction as characters in the book would exist in any way, Kemal Tahir just rendered them visible, took attention to them.

Speaking of “blurring the boundaries” between ethnography and literature as Clifford mentioned and is quoted above, another indicator of this concept is Clifford Geertz. While Clifford Geertz defends handling “culture as text” (Booyens, 1998), James Clifford takes ethnography as “writing culture” (Mutman, 2006 ). So, when these two notions come together it becomes

possible to take ethnography as “writing text”, so that a textual feature can be attributed to ethnography. Also, owing to content of ethnography depending on cultural descriptions and facts, it can be accepted as a “cultural text”. Regarding, “considering art as the apex of culture, and as embodiment of an ineluctable component of culture”, literature as a genre of art and so “as an integral feature of culture” (Iser, 2000), it can be accepted as a cultural text as well. So, in conclusion, literary text turns to be an ethnographic text, which means *Karılar Koğuşu*, a literary text, is at the same time an ethnographic text. When I evaluate the book ethnographically, so to speak, I will be doing an ethnographical ethnography, or in terms of Clifford; “ethnography of ethnography” (Handelman, 1994). At this point I also need to explain that the word ethnography is used as “the written product of fieldwork, rather than the fieldwork experience itself” (Trencher, 2002).

As I will evaluate *Karılar Koğuşu* in a manner of literary criticism, and as I mentioned before about contribution and improvement of standpoint theory and literary criticism one another, overlapping features of both approaches can be expressed as:

- a) As literary criticism takes the experiences and perspectives of the characters within a literary work, it coincides with standpoint theory as it is applied for making sense out of experience.
- b) Literary criticism, by giving the critic an opportunity to make multiple interpretations, exposes a similarity with standpoint theory as “interpretations of individual experiences vary among members of any social group” (Lenz, 2004).
- c) Standpoint theory applauds specifically situated readings about the outcomes derived from evaluations of experiences, and permits

literary critic to examine this situatedness within the scope of its practice.

- d) Literary criticism, by means of its product, namely literary analysis, carries a standpoint of its owner to some extent, because their subjects are determined by the interest of the critic, and they are generated through interpretation.

Despite their common and/or complementary features of the two notions, as I stated earlier, I do not utilize standpoint theory as the theoretical frame of my study, nevertheless it has an undeniable effect on constituting it.

### **2.2.3. Interpretive Approach**

The word “interpretive” as it is taken as a sub-discipline within anthropology is divided into two branches as American and English approach. The English approach, whose pioneer is Victor Turner<sup>28</sup>, is rather interested in society and is called “symbolic anthropology”. And the American one, the one which concerns me in terms of my study, is the interpretive school of anthropology, also referred to as “Geertzian Anthropology” or “Geertzian interpretive hermeneutics” (Handelman, 1994) after Clifford Geertz, which deals with culture.

Geertz takes culture as the “webs of significance” which he derived from Max Weber’s “man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun” (Geertz, 2010 [1973]). Also moving from Edmund Husserl’s statement of “human life-imbued with meaning-can only be understood through study of the lived experience, or subjectivity of people”

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<sup>28</sup> For further information about Turner and his approach, please see (Turner, 1967).

(Erickson & Murphy, 2010), he explains cultural analysis as rather than “an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning” (Geertz, 2010 [1973]).

He explains analysis as “sorting out the structure of signification”. As he takes “webs of significance” as culture, and as he handles “culture as text” like mentioned before, his analysis becomes sorting out the structure of text (Geertz, 2010 [1973]). In this manner, cultural analysis turns into analyzing a text. When literary text’s transformation into a cultural text expressed in literary section, is taken into consideration cultural analysis would be equated to literary analysis.

Geertz, by expressing fictive characteristics of anthropological writing as;

... anthropological writings are themselves interpretations ... They are, thus, fictions; fictions, in the sense that they are “something made,” “something fashioned” – the original meaning of *fictio* – not that they are false, unfactual, or merely “as if” thought experiments. (Geertz, 2010 [1973])

puts forth common ground of interpretive anthropology and literary anthropology about fictional feature<sup>29</sup> of ethnographies for consideration, for we see the same statement in James Clifford as; “[e]thnographic writings can properly be called fictions in the sense of “something made or fashioned,...” He also utters that; “[i]nterpretive social scientists have recently come to view good ethnographies as “true fictions,”...” (Clifford, 2010 [1986]).

“[A]s cultural anthropology ... is significantly a matter of in a narrative form social and cultural realities”, and as this narration means

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<sup>29</sup> This fictional feature generates a debate among literary and interpretive anthropologists. Clifford Geertz (Geertz, 1983), Max Weber (Weber, 1994), Renato Rosaldo (Rosaldo, 1989), Paul Rabinow & William Sullivan (Rabinow & Sullivan, 1987), and Stephen Tyler (Tyler, 1987) all reject science (or objectivity in science) in their own way, and their rejections are adopted by literary and interpretive anthropologists.

“ethnography, has long been focused precisely on problems of the interpretation and description of ... social and cultural processes” (Marcus & Fischer, 2010 [1986]), Geertz’s assertion of “[e]thnographic description is interpretive” (Geertz, 2010 [1973]) becomes evident in other interpretive anthropologists’ works as well. Besides, since ethnographic texts are dealing with interpretations and “interpretations are always partial ... conditions that must perforce apply to literary analysis as well” (Trencher, 2002), then ethnographies also apply to literary analysis.

Additionally, as he tells that “... a piece of anthropological interpretation consists in: tracing the curve of a social discourse” and then as he continues as “[t]he ethnographer “inscribes” social discourse; *he writes it down*” (Geertz, 2010 [1973]), he puts an emphasis to the anthropologist’s act of writing. Geertz, with this emphasis, “in his effort to delineate a theory of culture, drew on literary scholarship ... as part of an effort to conceptually redefine culture as well as the work of the anthropologist whose job it was to study it” (Trencher, 2002).

So, although Geertz tells that “[c]ulture is most effectively treated, ... , purely as a symbolic system” (Geertz, 2010 [1973]), and focuses on “how symbols shape the way social actors see, feel, and think about the world, or in other words, how symbols operate as vehicles of “culture”” (Ortner, 2010 [1984]), interpretive anthropology, due to its description, as “the explicit discourse that reflects on the ... writing of ethnography itself... [what] grew out of the cultural anthropology ... gradually shifting in emphasis ... to reflection on ethnographic ... writing” (Marcus & Fischer, 2010 [1986]) is accepted as being “literary” (Ortner, 2010 [1984]) and thus applicable to both literary and reflexive approaches.

After putting forth the literature overview related to my study for consideration, and drawing the theoretical framework of it, before undertaking the analysis I would like to make the context of the analysis manifest by expressing the historical context, and the features and the short life-story of the author.

## CHAPTER 3

### CONTEXT OF ANALYSIS

Depending on the theoretical framework that I explained at the ‘Literature’ part, I considered novel of Kemal Tahir, *Karılar Koğuşu* as “ethnography as intellectual autobiography” (Strathern, 1987) since it exposes “lived experience through perceptions of the body” (Strathern, 1987). Although he himself has not handled his literary narrative as an ethnographic piece, due to its characteristics that “takes into account the mutual interaction of all the different social facts which constitute social location, and situate them within the particular social, cultural, and historical matrix in which *he*<sup>30</sup> exists” (Lenz, 2004), it was rendered a result of a fieldwork experience in Malatya Prison, even if it was elicited unintentionally.

Since Kemal Tahir took into consideration the social, cultural and historical matrix within which he was present and reflected those matrices in his narratives as he prefers a “realistic observer”<sup>31</sup> point of view, in order to make both a proper and an intelligible anthropological analysis of his novel it would be useful to consider both the historical context within which he indited his piece and the social and cultural context which provided him to compose it briefly. Therefore, I have chosen to mention the historical background which also took some place in the novel shortly before the

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<sup>30</sup> In the original script the word is “she”, that is why I put the emphasis.

<sup>31</sup> [http://www.edebiyol.com/1940li\\_yillarda\\_turk\\_hikayesi.html](http://www.edebiyol.com/1940li_yillarda_turk_hikayesi.html) last visited on:10.01.2014

analysis part. Afterwards, I will have a glimpse at his life story so as to comprehend the social and cultural background that constituted Kemal Tahir's perceptions which he projected in his literary work, presuming this kind of contextual information would shed light on achieving a detailed hermeneutic anthropological analysis.

### 3.1. Historical Context

Although *Karılar Koğuşu* was published in 1974 for the first time, one year after the death of Kemal Tahir, the book was set in Kemal Tahir's Malatya Prison days. Even if we know that Kemal Tahir was in Çankırı, Malatya, Çorum, Nevşehir and Kırşehir prisons from 1938 to 1950, however there are various information about the exact time period of *Karılar Koğuşu*. According to Nazım Hikmet, due to the heading of section of the book comprising his letters sent to Malatya Prison, Kemal Tahir stayed there from "May 1941 to 1944" (Ran, 2002), for nearly three years<sup>32</sup>, several other sources claim that it "reflects a section from the years of 1942-1943"<sup>33</sup>, "was written at 1943" (Gülendam, 2008 ). Even another source, claiming to be copied from the first edition of one of other books of Kemal Tahir, *Namuscular*, which deals again with Malatya prison days and refers to some of the same occasions, tells that "*Namuscular* is the first book and *Karılar Koğuşu* is the second one from the author's notes of Malatya Prison, which was written in 1945 in Malatya Prison."<sup>34</sup>

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.malatyahaber.com/makale/tarzan-naim-cocuklugum-ve-kemal-tahir> last visited on: 10.01.2014

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.onkajans.com/vestige/view/cinema/karilar-kogusu-kemal-tahir/2302> last visited on: 10.01.2014

<sup>34</sup> <http://ebitik.azerblog.com/anbar/5676.pdf> last visited on: 10.01.2014



In spite of the given dates that are mentioned above, through the historical information about the Second World War took part in the book from time to time as a means of highlighting and enhancing the realistic features of the novel, a time period between 1942 and 1944 appeared. The main character who represents the author, Murat tells somewhere in the book that “he received a letter from the attorney in Ankara about supreme court’s approval of Hanım’s penalty” (Tahir, 2007). Turkish Grand National Assembly minutes<sup>35</sup> contains 1942 dated decision of supreme court about approval. In another page of the book, Murat tells an exactly dated event which happens on 14 October 1943, again somewhere else says that “The Red Army is about to surpass the Romanian border.” (Tahir, 2007). According to David M. Glantz, “by early April of 1944 Soviet units approached the Romanian border.”<sup>36</sup> Another indicator is that of the narration of execution of Hanım Kuzu, one of the female convicts of Malatya Prison. According to the Turkish Grand National Assembly minutes, Hanım’s execution was declared on March 1944. In light of these historical data it can be said that this literary work was written between 1942 and 1944.

In this time period, there were approximately 18 millions of people living in Turkey and more than 85 thousand of the citizens were convicted. If we look at Malatya in special, the city had nearly 425 thousand inhabitants<sup>37</sup> and “more than 350 prisoners” (Tahir, 2007). According to Kemal Tahir’s narration in his book, *Namuscular*, 11 of whole population of Malatya Prison were women who were residents of the “karı koğuşu” (Tahir, 1974).

<sup>35</sup>[http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/KANUNLAR\\_KARARLAR/kanuntbmmc026/karartbmmc026/karartbmmc02601383.pdf](http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/KANUNLAR_KARARLAR/kanuntbmmc026/karartbmmc026/karartbmmc02601383.pdf) last visited on: 10.01.2014

<sup>36</sup> David Glantz, *Red Storm Over the Balkans: The Failed Soviet Invasion of Romania* (Glantz, 2007)

<sup>37</sup> Figures are derived from 1945 general census data (Başbakanlık, 1950)

Since the beginning of the Second World War, although Turkey were not involved in it until 23 February 1945<sup>38</sup>, the whole country was affected by the war conditions. In anticipation of a possibility of involving in the war, Turkey, regarding the military preparations, recruited a large part of the population. Thus, a significant workforce loss appeared and this loss led to decrease in agricultural production. This decline directly had an effect on the county's economy since the economic structure was mostly dependent on agriculture. As the decrease in production affected the amount of raw material, the prices also increased during this period, especially increase in the wheat price amounted to increase in the price of the basic nutritional substance, bread. All these phenomena that caused a chain reaction resulted in the restriction of people's bread consumption.

Also, inflation caused by price increases of raw material which led to a fall in the real income of the civil servants, adversely affected them. In order to fix the damage that inflation created on the wages of servants, salaries were raised. But, since this raise was not sufficient against the high cost of living, the government decided to make food and clothing aid. This food and clothing aid, which consisted of fabrics for clothes, shoes, grain, oil, sugar, coal, et cetera, intended for civil servants, continued until the end of the war.

Despite all the difficulties, inflation, black market, et cetera that the Second World War brought about, some consumption habits did not change. Especially coffee, even though there were serious difficulties in obtaining

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<sup>38</sup> [http://sbe.erciyes.edu.tr/dergi/sayi\\_29/14.pdf](http://sbe.erciyes.edu.tr/dergi/sayi_29/14.pdf) (Özçelik, 2010)

since it was imported, nonetheless was the most sought-after consumer good. Smoke consumption also increased by 60 percent during the war.<sup>39</sup>

Even if the difficulties that the whole country lived through at the edge of the war were not limited to the issues being addressed above, sections of *Karılar Koğuşu* mentioning these issues render them especially significant:

Restriction of bread finds its place in *Karılar Koğuşu* as; "... proletariat... without strike and breadless..."<sup>40</sup> as well as in a dialog between Murat and a bearer, Abuzer who is the father of Aduş, a little girl who is the daughter of one of the female prisoners:

Abuzer: ... At this time we are unable to make money last for bread.  
Murat: Can Gevre not find you a loaf of bread?  
Abuzer: Not all the time. Since the bread is distributed as half a loaf every other day...  
Murat: Yes, the prison is hungry as well...<sup>41</sup>

Conditions of the civil servants and governmental aid towards them are being visible by both expressions of Murat and by the statements of the *informants*:<sup>42</sup>

... The heels of the shoes which have been soled of Mr. İbrahim, Health Officer of Malatya Municipality, were worn out again. Trousers which Central Prison Director wore were patched from knees and back by the same colored fabric.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> All these information are derived from <http://ataturkilkeleri.istanbul.edu.tr/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/ydta-09-bulbul.pdf> last visited on: 12.01.2014

<sup>40</sup> p.208: "... Proletarya... Grevsiz ve ekmezsiz..."

<sup>41</sup> p.300: - ... Lakin bu sefer de ekmeğe para yetiştiremiyoruz.  
- Gevre sana tayın bulamıyor mu?  
- Her zaman bulamıyor. Tayınlar da bir gün yarım çıktığından...  
- Evet... Mapushane de aç...

<sup>42</sup> Since I handled *Karılar Koğuşu* as a literary anthropological ethnographic narrative, the characters in the book became the informants of the author.

<sup>43</sup> P.364: "Malatya Belediyesi Sıhhat Memuru İbrahim Bey'in pençeli kunduralarının topuğu gene aşınmıştı. Merkez cezaevi müdürünün giydiği pantolon dizlerinden ve arkasından kendi renginde kumaşla yamalıydı."

The former assistant head guard who became head guard after Master Mahmut, Master Ali came in to the dorm of Murat:

...

Ali: I may seat, but we will make tea. I brought both tea and sugar.

Murat: Do we not have them? Are you afraid of bribery?

Ali: Your goods are not bribe to me... I just felt like that way.<sup>44</sup>

...

Ali: ... Will we also bother you? The government gives them to us.<sup>45</sup>

On the fourth day, when she wore a costume made from the fabric that government gave and the shoes, men excused their defeat against this suddenly became beautiful woman.<sup>46</sup>

When it comes to scarceness of the coffee and its preciousness, a woman named Azzet, unmarried wife of one of the male prisoners Çullu'nun Hacı, puts forward thoroughly: "... I cannot put up with his ordeal... İsmet Paşa lost the coffee. He wants coffee."<sup>47</sup>

In addition to the issues mentioned above, another significant subject which is explicitly exposed in the book is lack of education of women. In terms of Atatürk, for Turkish women, having education was not only a right but also a duty. As the first educators of the children, women should train themselves as well as men, even more than them. Depending upon this point of view, since the founding years of the new republic, primary education was made compulsory for everyone. Also, in all areas and levels

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<sup>44</sup> P.368: Mahmut Efendi'den sonra başgardıyan olan, eski Başgardıyan Muavini Ali Efendi içeri girdi:

- Otururum ama, çay pişireceğiz. Ben çayı da şekeri de getirdim  
- Bizde yok mu? Aferin sana... Rüşvetten mi korkuyorsun.  
- Senin malın bana rüşvet değildir beyim... İçimden öyle geldi.

<sup>45</sup> P.370: "... Bir de sana mı zahmet edeceğiz. Hükümet bize veriyor.

<sup>46</sup> P.201: "Dördüncü gün, devletin verdiği kumaştan tayyörle siyah zenne kundurasını giyince erkekler birdenbire güzelleşen bu kadına karşı yenilmelerini mazur gördüler."

<sup>47</sup> P.295: "... Ben bunun çilesini çekemem.... Kahveyi İsmet Paşa kaybetmiş. Kahve istiyor..."

of education system making women utilize educational opportunities regardless of sexism, was stated within the National Education Basic Legislation. Nevertheless, in spite of all endeavor to include more woman into education system, aside from participation of women to the higher education, even their literacy rate did not increase properly.<sup>48</sup> Karılar Koğuşu exposes more than one significant instance of this social fact:

The first instance is that none of the woman prisoners are literate, because Murat reads their letters for them, and writes their petitions on their behalf for their requests. Another, and a remarkable instance is, the statement of Hubuş, a female prisoner accused of swearing at the president, İsmet Paşa. She tells Murat when she asks him to write a letter on behalf of her in order to ask for forgiveness that, “How can I swear our Paşa? Both being the Sultan, being on a position of caliph, and also a fellow countryman, from Malatya... God forbid!”<sup>49</sup> This statement shows that a woman living under the republican regime for nearly twenty years still supposes that the president of the new republic is the Sultan of the old empire. Her expression is the proof of ignorance of people especially provincial side of the country, in the 1940s.

Yet another instance not only signifies the cause of lack of education of women but also proves illiteracy of men as well. A dialogue between Murat and the guard Bald Hasan follows at intervals:

Bald Hasan: Our girl got sick.

Murat: What is wrong with her?

Bald Hasan: All of a sudden blood drained off from her mouth.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> All the information about education of women are derived from [http://dhgm.meb.gov.tr/yayimlar/dergiler/Milli\\_Egitim\\_Dergisi/160/cetin.htm](http://dhgm.meb.gov.tr/yayimlar/dergiler/Milli_Egitim_Dergisi/160/cetin.htm) last visited on: 12.01.2014

<sup>49</sup> P.23: “... Ben paşamıza nasıl söverim? Hem padişah olup, halife postunda oturup, hem de bizim Malatyalımız... Haşa...”

<sup>50</sup> P.377: - Bizim kız hastalandı.

...

Murat: What is her disease? Of course, doctor should have said.

Bald Hasan: What would be the illness of a child? Cold... She was telling that her chest aches for a few days... She tells her mother. If she tells me I would hit a slap...<sup>51</sup>

...

Bald Hasan: Doctor gave a prescription. We could not find a chance to give it to the pharmacist. Also, injection is expensive...<sup>52</sup>

...

Murat: How old is your daughter?

Bald Hasan: She has turned to thirteen.

Murat: How many years is she working?

Bald Hasan: For two years.<sup>53</sup>

...

Murat: Girls are going to factory at the age of eleven... In the village, we wed them before they are twelve... Well then, what will happen to the school?

Bald Hasan: School? What will we presume to send them to school? What would my daughters do if they go to school?..<sup>54</sup>

...

Murat: You will look after her well, Hasan. She will eat plenty of meat... eggs...

...

Bald Hasan: Did you hear Master Ali?... I would eat eggs if I find them, meat as well... Are you kidding me master...

Murat: Well, but if not, she dies.

Bald Hasan: If she falls due, she would die master... If one does not reach due date, one would live. Everything comes from Allah...

...

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- Nesi var?

- Ağzından birden bire kan boşanmış.

<sup>51</sup> P.377: - Hastalığı neymiş? Doktor, tabii söylemiştir.

- Çocuk kısmının hastalığı ne olur? Soğuk algınlığı... Kaç gündür, göğsüm ağrıyor diyormuş. Anasına söyler. Bana söylese çarparım şamarı...

<sup>52</sup> P.377: "Doktor bey ilaç yazmış... Fırsat bulup eczacıya veremedik... İğne de pahalıdır."

<sup>53</sup> P.378: - Senin kız kaç yaşında?

- On üçüne girdi.

- Kaç senedir çalışıyor?

- İki senedir.

<sup>54</sup> P.379-380: - ... Kızlar on bir yaşında fabrikaya, ipeğe, halıya, tütüne gidiyorlar... Köyde on iki yaşına basmadan evlendiriyoruz... Peki mektep ne olacak?

- Mektep mi? Bizim neyimize mektep beyim... Benim kızlar okuyup da ne yapar?..

Bald Hasan: Everybody cannot catch the opportunity of dying  
by the order of Allah, master...<sup>55</sup>

As seen above, since men are ignorant themselves, education of women dependent on those men ipso facto becomes nearly impossible.

Handling manner of Kemal Tahir the above-mentioned historical data in his literary anthropological narrative, *Karılar Koğuşu*, and his approach to people and events within his mandatory fieldwork, the prison, reveal that his educational status and past experiences bring him in his point of view. In order to comprehend his point of view thoroughly and to succeed in making a proper interpretation of his literary piece, I deemed suitable to look at his life story.

### 3.2. About Kemal Tahir

Life story of Kemal Tahir has a few milestones that affected his point of view and thus his literary identity. In explaining these milestones, and exposing his standpoint and authorship I preferred not to interpret what people wrote about Kemal Tahir, instead I have chosen to quote what was said about him. These quotations helped me to internalize political and social identity of Kemal Tahir which shaped his narratives especially throughout his prison years, and to comprehend his literary anthropologist (though in many quotations he was called as a sociologist) approach.

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<sup>55</sup> P.381: - Kıza iyi bakacaksın Hasan. Bol et yiyecek... yumurta...  
- Duydun mu Ali Efendi?... Yumurtayı bulsak biz içeceğiz... Eti bulsak biz... Şaka mı ediyorsun beyim...  
- İyi ama kız ölür.  
- Vadesi bittiyse ölür beyim... Vadesi bitmeyen yaşar. Her şey Allah'tan...  
...  
- ... Allah'ın emriyle ölmek herkesin eline mi geçer beyim...

Kemal Tahir was born in a family whose members worked close to the Ottoman Palace. He travelled a lot due to occupation of his father in his childhood. After settling down in İstanbul, he enrolled to Galatasaray High School. His mother died when he was at the 10<sup>th</sup> grade, so he dropped out of school. At first he worked as a clerk of a lawyer, then he worked as a warehouse officer in the coal enterprise. In “1930s, when he started journalism, this young man, enthusiastic about literature, was a romantic Kemalist on whom a poetic sauce of socialism was poured” (Özden, 2010). He met Nazım Hikmet and this was the first milestone in his life which led him to adopt socialist ideas. “Recklessness, challenging state, being producing something always exciting of Nazım Hikmet in the fields of literature, art, and thought also affected Kemal Tahir as well as the young intellectuals of the time” (Çelik, 2004).

The second and probably the most important turning point in his life was being accused of sedition within the Navy along with his brother Nuri Tahir who was a naval officer then, and with Nazım Hikmet. “At the end of the trial, he was given 15 years of penal servitude, it was decided to be deprived of public office for a lifetime, and to be kept under the interdiction during the jail time” (Çelik, 2004). He spent 12 years, from 1938 to 1950, in Çankırı, Malatya, Çorum, Nevşehir and Kırşehir prisons.

After becoming a communist by court order, since they stayed and worked together with Nazım Hikmet in Çankırı, he turned into a sharp/keen Marxist. While previously he was dealing with the problems of the new country with a Kemalist point of view, in due course he headed towards Socialism and Marxism. (Erverdi, 2010)

Due to his health conditions and because of poverty, Kemal Tahir had hard times in prison. Nazım Hikmet encouraged him in order to improve both his ideological consciousness and his literary skills. He also supported Kemal Tahir financially.



During his prison years in several remote places of Anatolia, Kemal Tahir “recognized not the people seen and reflected by books or a certain coterie, but the people who were born and raised on this land, the people reflecting the characteristics of this land.” His effort to express the reality of Turkish people by means of “commenting on almost every issue outside until then stereotyped viewpoints, and grounding those comments with scenes he produced from the society” (Coşkun, 2004) formed “difference of his perception of novel” also by benefiting from “his historian and sociologist identity” (Kayalı, 2010). As he was aware of “contribution of social and historical facts known scientifically for a substantial and realistic literature” (Ergun, 2010), his “suggestion of the social discourse” (Sarıkoça, 2004) “that there is in it poetic, literary, or symbolic truth” (Strathern, et al., 1987) brought him in “his reputation and dignity which arrive to date” (Sarıkoça, 2004). Indeed, in his correspondence with both Orhan Kemal and Nazım Hikmet during his prison years, both authors emphasized Kemal Tahir’s literary anthropological inclination to reflexive narration by claiming that “the genuine realist novel which reflects peasantry reality” (Tahir, 1993), and “Turkish peasants’ reflection by letting them speak, act and think” (Ran, 2002) was written for the very first time in a best way by him.

According to such comments on his literary style “as a researcher and a man of thought” (Kavut, 2010), “an idea that the prison life was very efficient in terms of Kemal Tahir occurred” (Kayalı, 2010). Nevertheless, difficulties he experienced during his years in prison did not change.

Kemal Tahir gave a big fight to cling to life in his prison years. In those difficult years, the biggest supporter of him was Nazım Hikmet. Their relation continued for ten years through letters written to each other. Towards the end of 1940s, tension between the two fellows, which started with desire of Nazım Hikmet to break up with Piraye, gradually led to transformation of the intimacy into a standoff. In 1950, they were released but

they did not call each other pretty much. After Nazım Hikmet left the country, two friends went to separate ways. (Sevim, 2004)

Beside their disagreement about the relationship between Nazım and Piraye, a dissidence on Marxism also occurred between two of them. Kemal Tahir started to question the patterns of western Marxism in the prison, and tried to understand Turkish society that does not fit into those patterns.

Kemal Tahir defended that European class structure did not exist in Anatolia, and that class struggles did not appear in our history. For this reason, he manifested that classical Marxism could not explain Turkish social structure, and that the Western patterns could not solve our issues. (Erverdi, 2010)

He adapted the theoretical means of Marxism to the circumstances within which he exists. In accordance with the historical materialist worldview he adopted, examined the society in which he exists in terms of production relations. He based the segregation of east and west on the decisiveness of fundamental differences between production modes. (Kavut, 2010)

As well as political standpoint of Kemal Tahir took shape in prison, his literary point of view had also its share owing to “an unfortunate way of experiencing Anatolia” (Coşkun, 2004). When he began dealing with Turkish social structure depending on his political identity, he attempted “to explore what would be the word that his own society may tell to the world” (Ayas, 2010). In this attempt, “he tried to ensure settling accounts with Turkey on its own in his novels and thought” (Sarıkoca, 2004). While handling the issues of his homeland in his novels, as many of the comments on him indicates almost in the same way, he “focused on the issues of” (Kayalı, 2010), “needed to incline though divergent but contextually complementary fields” (Ergun, 2010), “not being limited to literature, actively engaged in” (Sevim, 2004) the social sciences from history to sociology, from philosophy to economics, from political science to psychology, from folklore to anthropology.

Involvement of Kemal Tahir in social sciences within his novels;

... came both from considering the issue of novel as, with his words “a vast kind of literature leading to very deep, based upon philosophy and technique, including and utilizing the whole issues in the world”, and from finding the scientific researches, made in the areas of history, sociology, philosophy, et cetera until now in order to base that vast kind of literature on the facts of Turkish society, inadequate, deficient or wrong. (Ergun, 2010)

As a matter of fact, as Kurtuluş Kayalı stated, “In the first years of the republic, our authors in some place/degree performed social scientism” (Ergun, 2010).

Until very recently, literature was not considered as *just literature* as it is seen today. Almost all of the major novels was regarded not only as a work of art, but also was taken seriously in terms of politics, sociology and philosophy. (Ayas, 2010)

Even if “endeavor of Turkish intellectuals to comprehend social problems within art branches was not seen in Kemal Tahir for the first time” (Ertürk, 2010), “he was an author differing from many novelists, and acquiring a specific position at the point of his relations with society and almost every item that constructs the society” (Coşkun, 2004).

“Since the very first mission of literature in societies had to be making people/individuals conscious” (Ergun, 2010), and due to social scientist characteristics of our authors;

Turkish writer, not only reflected the society, but also showed *the truth*<sup>56</sup> to that society. Owing to appraisal of Turkish writer to itself beyond reflecting the society, Turkish literature was separated from literature of many other countries. (Coşkun, 2004)

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<sup>56</sup> Emphasis is put in original.

Not only Turkish literature differed from the rest, also Kemal Tahir was differed from other Turkish authors because;

In his reflection of society, he took place in an attitude of a mere interpreter, not in an attitude of a *shepherd*<sup>57</sup> which was used by Foucault for the intellectual person in the sense of a *person who wants to manipulate the society*.<sup>58</sup> (Coşkun, 2004)

*In order to construct his novel on the realities, so as to make literature more substantial, more realistic and more socialist, Kemal Tahir searched for the social and historical facts in the information sources of the social sciences even though he was not a scientist but a novelist.*<sup>59</sup> Anyway, in the novels of Kemal Tahir;

... the relationship between scientific knowledge and novels was not in the direction of simple and direct information transfer. This transfer was in line with the transformation of concrete historical reality relating to the society and people, into novel materials. (Sarıkoca, 2004)

In his novels, “alongside of existence of strong social structure assays, it is possible to find in-depth intellectual debates on many social and historical subjects” (Avcı, 2004). In fact, “in all of his novels until the end of the 1950s, Kemal Tahir put the social and historical content in the forefront” (Gay, 2004).

Indeed, if we take *Karılar Koğuşu* into consideration, even if it was published in 1974, was written before 1950s, it provides us a thorough comprehension of the social and historical context. It also “possesses affluent means of expression concerning variable and multi-layered dimensions of reality, briefly state of humanity” (Özden, 2010). As

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<sup>57</sup> Emphasis is put in original.

<sup>58</sup> Emphasis is put in original.

<sup>59</sup>This sentence is derived from a paragraph on (Ergun, 2010).

“personal life and world view, most confidential experiences and thought were united artistically in novel for Dostoyevsky” (Özden, 2010), Kemal Tahir went along with Dostoyevsky and furthermore applied that composition in his novels, of course in *Karılar Koğuşu* as well.

In addition to social and historical context, union of personal life and world view, most confidential experiences and thought, “[w]oman<sup>60</sup> who was oppressed by customs, rituals and traditions as well as religious repression and prohibitions, took its part in the works of Kemal Tahir” (Chmielowska, 2004). *Karılar Koğuşu* is one of the prominent literary narratives, which takes woman in hand. It has another significant feature that it reflects woman both in social context, and from standpoint of the author. *Regarding their socially excluded, inexperienced and vulnerable positions, in terms of adapting themselves to social life, giving place to women’s standpoint, in order to explain whether mild or harsh effects of political events on our social life, within the book is valuable.*<sup>61</sup>

Considering the information given above about the historical context and the author, the analysis of *Karılar Koğuşu* and its women, by means of the technique of thick description, in an interpretive anthropological manner would be more intelligible and adequate I presume.

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<sup>60</sup> Emphasis is put on its original.

<sup>61</sup> The sentence is derived from Kemal Tahir’s mails sent to his soon to be wife from prison (Tahir, Notlar/Mektuplar, 1993).

## CHAPTER 4

### LITERARY CRITICAL ANALYSIS

In literary style of Kemal Tahir, “there is a general plan for novels, and the main circle colligating countless heroes and themes in each of them is the world view which gives color to that general plan” (Ayas, 2010). Although *Karılar Koğuşu* is an uncompleted<sup>62</sup> piece, it has a general plan of Malatya Prison in the beginning of 1940s. In the background of this general plan, there is the Second World War. Though the attention is on the prison and people within it, historical context outside the prison appears from time to time. The author mentions several people albeit only a few of them are in the foreground. Even if he deals with many themes, he puts just one or two of them forward. While describing, depicting and explaining these people and themes, he manifests his world view which frames general plan of his novel, and which generates the main circle mentioned above in the citation.

A comment on literary works of Kemal Tahir states that “the subject of the works is quite natural” (Chmielowska, 2004). Since Kemal Tahir, “in accordance with his idiosyncrasy, was looking through a leftist window to the matters of an experienced life”, as that experience brings reality along, and was “in an effort to express the reality of Turkish people” (Coşkun,

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<sup>62</sup> I emphasize its incompleteness because it may not be carrying all the significant features of Kemal Tahir novels, since he could not make the final touch to his notes on *Karılar Koğuşu*. Nonetheless, if we consider this incompleteness from a different angle, it would turn into an advantage from a disadvantageous position since it keeps on its originality as it was not changed even by its author.

2004), his real subjects are also natural. In *Karılar Koğuşu*, his subject is woman convicts of Malatya Prison. As he experienced the prison “which became the place he had a very close contact with his own people” (Ayas, 2010) himself, those women who were the subject of the novel, are real and natural as well.

In his works the author appears as conveyor, foreteller or informant (Chmielowska, 2004). In *Karılar Koğuşu*, the author is the one who tells his own experiences from a third party. In fact, the author is represented by Murat in the book, and Murat is both an informant since he brings information brought from the other prisoners, and/or from within the prison. He is also a conveyor since he transfers historical and social data to the reader.

Now I will proceed to interpret what Murat tells and conveys in the name of Kemal Tahir in *Karılar Koğuşu*. I will start by depicting<sup>63</sup> main characters of the book and then go on with a brief synopsis:

**Murat:** A novelist, from İstanbul. He is a political criminal. According to Tözey, “He contends with the government.” As Kemal Tahir “makes the prisoners talk, notes their behaviors, deals with unrest if it occurs, looks after causes of unrest, makes an effort to eliminate the conflicts between the convicts and the administration (Özsoy, 2004), so does Murat, since he is the author himself. He is a mediator between government and the prisoners, especially female ones. He has a cat, Mahpus. He smokes cheap cigarettes<sup>64</sup>. He is single.

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<sup>63</sup> Depictions of the characters except for Murat are taken from the book, made by Kemal Tahir. Sequencing is made according to the book.

<sup>64</sup> Köylü cıgarası

**Aduş:** She is the daughter of one of the prisoners, Kurdish Gevre. She is a very small, brunette, thin girl. She is four years old. She does not take off her necklace made from mule beads, yellow and nickel pennies. She learnt Turkish and dancing<sup>65</sup> very easily. Murat measures her height, for the time being she grows three fingers taller in a year. Murat says that “She is not only getting taller but also getting smarter.” She thanks the prisoners who give her money, and nobody can take that money from her even if German Army comes. She would give the money absolutely to her mother. For the moment, she is helping all of her family including her prisoner mother, her carrier father, and three siblings who are outside with their father.

**Ayşe Ana:** She is the guard of women. She is very tall and very fat. The old ones tell that she had outstanding beauty in her youth, that there were no other women in all Anatolia who had a whiter skin than hers. Since she was a little bit loose, her husband tore bat to pieces on her back. She has an Aleppo boil on her right cheekbone for two years. Because of boil, her face became a little bit scary and so very mournful. She tries everything from dye to mud in order to heal the scar. Her husband is dead. She has a daughter, and a son who beats her for money. She wishes İsmet Paşa and the other generals well since they started a custom of employment of women.

**Hubuş:** She is accused of insulting the president and the government, and she is sentenced to 14 months. She is a fat and short, around 55-60 year-old woman. Since she aged, she covers herself with clothing in order not to show her face to the opposite sex. Despite her age, she has a young, thin, languorous, coquettish voice. She married four times. The first three ones

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<sup>65</sup> Çiftetelli oynamasını



died and left her six children, three boys and three girls. Her fourth husband, Mehmet was living in adultery with another woman at the time he got married. He is barely 30 years old, is accepted as the most beautiful man of Malatya, and his occupation is living off of older women. He married Hubuş for the money inherited from her previous three husbands but he attempted to marry again since Hubuş is in prison. Because of this, Hubuş is seeking for a remedy to be released.

**Sıdıka:** She is accused of murdering her mother-in-law by accident, and sentenced to three years. After her husband left home to do his military service, his brothers left their ill-tempered mother to her. During a fight between bride and mother-in-law, Sıdıka hit her with a bat, woman being wounded in the head, died three days later. Due to her offense, she is afraid of being hanged. She is a thin, brunette, and quite nervous woman. She has a skinny face. Her all life seemed to pass between mindlessness and recklessness. If she becomes a little bit fleshy, she would look like a chicken. She does not look like anything for the moment.

**Gevre<sup>66</sup>:** She is accused of causing death of a neighbor in a fight by beating her buttock, and she is sentenced to two years. She is mother of Aduş. She is a Kurdish woman who cannot speak any Turkish. She was badly frazzled like all poor peasant women. She does not look like townsfolk, she does not shake her shoulders flirtatiously, she does not grin. She has black eyes which look quite smooth, in a sisterly way. Her bare feet were enormous.

**Nafia:** She is accused of adultery, and is sentenced to three months. She looks severely and serious with her almond-shaped, hazel-colored eyes. She

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<sup>66</sup>Although at the beginning of the book she is called as Fati, then her name becomes Gevre. Towards the end of the book, Kemal Tahir mentions about her daughter outside the prison as Fati. Therefore I will use Gevre as her name for the rest.

is middle-sized, thin but she has a well-proportioned<sup>67</sup> body. She is very beautiful, and she has a proud posture.

**Hanım:** She is accused of murdering her husband with her lover by poisoning him. She is sentenced to death penalty. Her beloved man is younger than her, son of her neighbor. She has beautiful, black eyes. She smiles coquettishly. She does not give up being flirtatious. As always, she opens her face which is covered by headscarf up to half of her nose pretexting to fix it. Although she has two children, her skin is highly tight and lusterless. She looks like a boy. Nonetheless she is one of the unforgettable beauties. As she smiles, her cheeks dimple, her a little bit thick lower lip twists sassily. Redness of her mouth on her luster face astonishes people. She has a strong, podgy body.

**İnci:** She is accused of theft, and is sentenced to 22 days. She is gypsy. She is married. She is an itty bitty but quite well-proportioned woman. Until her husband calls her name, she would not exit to the yard.

**Tözey:** She is accused of insult, and sentenced to one month. Her occupation is prostitution. She is rather fat, has thick legs... without socks... She is one of the happy women who never expose her ugliness, though she is. Her nose is both big and a bit crooked. On the contrary, her eyes are black and bright, her thick lips are red. She has such cleanliness on her that refreshes one. She had a reassuring seriousness that can only be encountered at the good ones of the licensed kind, of what married women engaging in prostitution in their own house would not manage even if they turn to age of 40.

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<sup>67</sup> mütenasip

**Şefika:** She is the guard of women after death of Ayşe Ana. She is daughter of Ayşe Ana. She is married and has six children. She is about 40 years old. She is a cheerful woman who is unlike her mother. She is tall and sonsy as well, but she is not hulk like her mother. She steps a bit inwardly. There is not any tiredness in her close to white, greyish blue eyes reminding that she is mother of six children. She is embarrassed of (she feels she owes to) Murat and states her gratefulness in any cases, since she is aware of that her acceptance into the prison is due to his help.

Although these women, described above in detail are leading characters of Kemal Tahir in his book, and are the main subjects of the topic of my analysis, there are many other characters, both male and female: prison director, head guard Mahmut, subsequent head guard Ali, guardians, husbands, sons, fathers, lovers of the female prisoners and guards of women, soldiers and bureaucrats at several grades, other male prisoners, juvenile delinquents as well as several other prostitutes of Malatya whorehouse visiting Tözey, wives and mothers and lovers of the guards, and the male prisoners, three daughters of the head guard Mahmut; Selime, Hidayet and Nebahat,... et cetera. Nebahat has a significant position because Kemal Tahir got engaged to her for a while<sup>68</sup> before he was released by the general amnesty in 1950.

The book, taking progress of the Second World War, and Hanım's lawsuit process until her execution as the pivotal events, reflects quotidian life in Malatya Prison. Focusing on the women's ward of the prison, he depicts inner face of the prison alongside with the psychological conditions of the prisoners, women's positionality within society at the time. His depictions, explanations and interpretations attribute to his anthropologically

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<sup>68</sup> Kemal Tahir mentions about this engagement in his letters to his soon to be wife, Semiha. In these letters he refers to her as Melahat, and tells that they're engaged for 7 years (Tahir, 1993).

observative stance rather than his author identity. Stories of each one of all, with Murat's questioning, not only exhibit Anatolian women's never-ending ordeal even within prison but also expose commentaries and opinions of the author depending on his standpoint. The book has also significance as it shows especially men's ignorance in terms of religion. With Murat's sceptic comments on religion, prophet, god people's ungrounded faith is put forward. Karılar Koğuşu is also valuable as it clearly displays "corrupt values to which people conform, lacking individual and social Will to change" (Gagnier, 2011) in 1940s Malatya.

Since the topic of this study, in the light of the book's content, is the hierarchical structure between female prisoners in the case of Karılar Koğuşu by Kemal Tahir, my focal point will be relationship between female prisoners. But, since the relations between the guards and the prisoners, Murat and the female prisoners, Murat and the guards of women are also delineated, I will take the hierarchical structure within those relations into consideration, as well. Besides interrelationship between residents of prison, androcentric discourse within a patriarchal society and its representation by male aspect is another dimension of my analysis. On the other hand, gender relations in the 1940s, and its manifestations within the sections of the book worth handling, since it reveals the social structure of that period. Due to its effect on the hierarchical structure between male and female residents of prison, it will take part in the analysis.

As I proceed to analysis part under four subtitles, I will utilize relevant quotations as well as my own ideas in order to make interpretations. While I am making the analysis, intertwined reflexive, interpretive, standpoint approaches and "thick description" method will be my guide.

#### **4.1. Hierarchical Structure between Female Prisoners**

As we all admit, “[i]n many societies an important element of the structural system is division into social classes ... on the basis of sex and age” (Radcliff-Brown, 2010 [1958]). Patriarchal originated societies like ours render men in the front side of cultural structure and let them shape the several institutions which compose cultural structure. Therefore, as I will be attesting this issue later, since prison is one of these institutions which constitute the cultural structure, it is possible to observe such social stratification in prison. And as Karılar Koğuşu subjects prison life of women, derived from direct observation and lived experiences in a literary factual narration which is held as an ethnographic literary piece with a function of transferring culture within which it is shaped, it is likely to trace this kind of a stratification. Women of the prison are the suppressed ones in this division into classes. However, these suppressed women intend to oppress one another for several factors, by means of several variables. What concerns me in this study is searching out these factors and variables.

First of all, women prisoners’ hierarchical positioning starts with depictions of these women by Murat. Physical appearances play an important part for their positioning from the perspective of the author, so the reader accepts it as such. Nafia is the most beautiful woman of the prison. But, actually, a more important dimension of women in order to be rendered more visible and more dominant within the book is their feelings or affections for Murat. This dimension may not be so explicit but not really implicit also. In this manner, Hanım and Tözey have higher status than other women.

Hanım, since she is in need of Murat to reverse her judgment has an important situation. Because Kemal Tahir himself tells in his letters to his soon to be wife from prison, that “But I am nonetheless easterner.<sup>69</sup> I think of women to be dependent for protection” (Tahir, 1993). So, in a way, Hanım’s power comes from her powerlessness.

On the other hand, Tözey has a completely opposite situation in comparison with Hanım. As Regenia Gagnier enrolls, “Marx called money “the truly creative power”” (Gagnier, 2011), Tözey has that power of money. She uses money to eliminate negative influence associated with her vocation, thus gain a proper status, and overcome the troubles she has. Still, she has a desperate need for Murat’s attention, and she does not hesitate to use the power of money to attract him. He anyway evaluates Tözey’s situation in two different aspects:

- 1) As she is a fallen woman, she is needed to be shown mercy.<sup>70</sup>
- 2) Her endeavor to relieve a pitiful man, whom she deems worthy of compassion, renders her someone doing a very much noble, honorable thing.<sup>71</sup>

After assaying Hanım and Tözey’s special positions from Murat’s standpoint, I will interpret hierarchical structure of women prisoners in relation to some statements on anthropological standpoints:

At the time when *Karılar Koğuşu* was written, the country was in economic straits due to constraints in relation with the Second World War. So having

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<sup>69</sup> The exact word is “şarklı”. In that respect it can be understood as “macho characteristics” but I preferred to use direct translation of it.

<sup>70</sup> The sentence is derived from p.234

<sup>71</sup> The sentence is derived from p.268

money led to having power back then. In fact, “[t]he political economic tradition within anthropology has viewed culture as being shaped in the context of unequal access to wealth and power... [T]he material conditions of human existence are understood to condition the character of social relations” (Erickson & Murphy, 2008). Reflections of this statement within the book are generally associated with Tözey, as her vocation is independent of such governmental constraints and brings her hierarchical empowerment.

Accessing restricted imported goods such as coffee and fuel is a good example of having wealth and power. As soon as she is jailed she gestures everybody with coffee. As Topal Sefer tells, “She has a lot of coffee.”<sup>72</sup> Besides, she is in a privileged position to order fuel to a public officer, Corporal Aziz. Even, she has the power to cause the Corporal to be imprisoned.<sup>73</sup>

Tözey gains this power by means of her intimate relations with several bureaucrats in several ranks. Even, when newcomer sergeant of headquarters, Rıfki attempts to forbid Tözey’s prison visits to see Murat, Murat tells that “Tözey was literally deputy district attorney for some time... In a range, in Malatya such a situation occurs that judiciary manoeuvres takes place in Tözey’s room in the whorehouse, and everybody goes there for favoritism.”<sup>74</sup> Both these relations with important people in important positions, and the money earned through these relations situate Tözey in a significant hierarchical place. Besides, her generosity, charity, et

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<sup>72</sup> P.79: “Onun kahvesi çok...”

<sup>73</sup> P.83: “... Yarın Muhsin Bey’e haber yolluyacağım. Seni hapsettireceğim...”

<sup>74</sup> P.270: “... Bu Malatya şehrinde bir aralık öyle bir hal olmuş ki adliye dalavereleri Tözey’in kerhanedeki odasında ceryan edermiş ve herkes oraya iltimasa gidermiş.”

cetera contributes her to promote this place. Indeed, when she organizes a Mevlut after women's guard Ayşe Ana's death, gains everybody's regard, "God bless the organizer."<sup>75</sup> Of course Tözey is aware of the effect of this kind of charity events, because as it is claimed in the book: "Tözey keeps looking at the floor, but she has an arrogant stand proving that she owns this society."<sup>76</sup>

Again a statement that I identified with the hierarchical power that Tözey holds is Susan Gal's claim:

... [U]se of women's language as sexual commodity... is not only the sexual content of the talk... Using exactly the stereotyped and stigmatized forms of "women's speech"... that the women ... see themselves as feminists in control of their work and their lives ... [S]exualized language is economically powerful for these women because it provides a safe, flexible, and relatively lucrative income during hard times (Gal, 2010 [1991]).

In fact Gal uses this statement to define women in the "adult message industry" and owner and operator women of "fantasy phone lines", but I found it similar to an example in the book related with Tözey:

One night while İnci is in the bathroom in the yard of prison hears a man's voice and yells for help. Head guard of prison runs immediately but loses the man before seeing him. Thereupon everybody is called to testify. Every woman has an excuse not to testify. Afterwards, a dialogue between Tözey and the head guard, Mahmut develops:

Tözey: Why do you meddle with this issue this much?

Mahmut: ... Because in the end there will be a sanction.

Tözey: What sanction? We did not come here from the mosque.

Some of us are thieves, some of us are killers... Some of us are

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<sup>75</sup> P.170: "...Okutandan Allah razı olsun..."

<sup>76</sup> P.168: "Tözey gözlerini yerden kaldırmıyordu ama bu cemiyetin sahibi olduğunu ispat eden kibirli bir hali de yok değildi..."



prostitutes. One may climb or lapidate the window of such commodities like us. It is not a shame...  
Mahmut: ... Bring the Gypsy woman...<sup>77</sup>

Mahmut forces İnci to testify. İnci, looks at Tözey's face with astonishment and fear. Mahmut threatens İnci for putting her into the dungeon for one month. Tözey defends İnci: "I told the truth, İnci, you do not need to hide, sister, fornicator came to me. Just tell..." and turns to Mahmut with anger: "Do not scare the woman. What is her guilt so as to put her in dungeon?... What happened? I am a bad woman. Everybody reaches for me. Is it shameful?"<sup>78</sup>

By talking like that, Tözey puts forth her sexual identity to avoid forthcoming problem and to protect her ward-mate. She also keeps talking about Mahmut's "dirty" secrets with another prostitute, and by this way she keeps safe. Besides, this kind of, especially sexual secrets she keeps about important people in Malatya proves and improves her hierarchical situation that she utilizes "during hard times."

After this incident, this time rather than protecting a ward-mate of her, to defend herself against Murat, Tözey appeals for "stigmatized form of women's speech": As she puts herself forth to protect Sıdıka from being punished, the man who got into the women's ward was in fact Sıdıka's lover, she suffers from upsetting Murat. In order to convince him to her

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<sup>77</sup> P.146: - ... Başefendi, sen bu işi neden kurcalıyorsun gece vakti?  
- Kurcalamadan olmaz. Sonunda mesuliyet var.  
- Ne mesuliyeti? Biz buraya camiden gelmedik. Kimimiz hırsız, kimimiz katil...  
Kimimiz orospuyuz. Böyle malların penceresine de çıkarlar, camlarını da taşlarlar. Ayıp değildir...  
- ... getir Çingene karısını...

<sup>78</sup> P.147: "Ben doğrusunu söyledim İnci, saklama kardeş, zampara bana geldi. Söyle..." "Karıyı ürkütme. Onun ne suçu var ki zindana atacaksın... Ne olmuş? Ben kötü bir kadımdım. Bana herkes elini uzatır. Ayıp mı?"

innocence, she forces Sıdıka to confess the issue. When Sıdıka tells that she is embarrassed Tözey opens her mouth:

... You are not ashamed when you call a strange man to the window of toilet. You are not ashamed of kissing him at the window of water-closet... You will tell the truth... Moreover she cries... Look at her... Immodest... These dames do not deserve even being prostitute. Even prostitution...<sup>79</sup>

By talking like this, although she seems as if she puts herself in a bad situation, in fact she shows that she is in control of her life. She admits she is a prostitute but she exalts her figure by putting her commendable sides forward, such as honesty. She justifies her situation by proving that even if she is a wicked woman, she is not immoral.

At this point, depending upon Tözey's superior positioning within prison, opening a parenthesis about the internal setting of the notion of honor would be proper in order to understand prison dynamics.

In the Turkish dictionary, honor is explained as honesty and propriety as well as obedience to the moral regulations and social values within a society and chastity.<sup>80</sup> Like the dictionary explanation, many studies<sup>81</sup> on the notion of honor show that honor is generally identified with the sexuality of women in Turkey as the other patriarchal societies. Therefore a woman, whose occupation is prostitution, would presumably be seen as inferior in terms of honor to the rest of society. But the variability of the

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<sup>79</sup> P.155: "... Elin herifini kenefin penceresine çağırma utanmazsın! Apteshane penceresinde öpüşmeye utanmazsın... Doğrusunu söyleyeceksin... Bir de ağlar... Şuna bakın... Utanmaz... Bu karılar orospuluğu bile hak edemiyorlar. Orosuluğu bile..."

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[http://ked.tdk.org.tr/index.php?option=com\\_bts&arama=kelime&guid=TDK.GTS.53140d050a51a1.30879585](http://ked.tdk.org.tr/index.php?option=com_bts&arama=kelime&guid=TDK.GTS.53140d050a51a1.30879585) last visited on: 03.03.2014

<sup>81</sup> Seminar speech of Associate Professor Hatice Kurtuluş (Kurtuluş, 2010), and symposium paper of Assistant Professor Musa Öztürk and Research Assistant M. Ali Demirdağ (Öztürk & Demirdağ, 2011) would be examples to such studies.

perception of the notion of honor from time to place, from racial and/or religious classes to socio-economic and political conditions of the society have an influence on such evaluations of power/position. Thus, perception of the notion of honor most likely differs within the setting of the prison from the setting of outside, the city of Malatya at the time of the Second World War. As everybody inside the prison is a criminal somehow, judgments of the prisoners one another, in terms of honor vary. If we evaluate the perception of honor within the setting of the prison over Tözey, her “morally inappropriate” position within the society transforms into an acceptable form since everybody in the prison is in a way “morally inappropriate” as well. Especially as she does not feel ashamed because of being a prostitute and sees it as her profession, renders Tözey empowered in terms of her discourse. Also other prisoners perceive her in a different manner than her dishonorable situation outside the prison. Rather they evaluate her due to her virtues such as being charitable, generous, honest, et cetera. That is why she has a superior position in the prison due to its internal settings, despite her occupation.

By virtue of Tözey’s position is arguably the most dominant one within the prison along with women’s guard Şefika, which will be held in the subsequent sub-section, this assertion is related to her again. According to Geertz, logic of culture “derives rather from the logic or organization of action, from people operating within certain institutional orders, interpreting their situations in order to act coherently within them” (Ortner, 2010 [1984]).

In other words, or I can define it as my interpretation; in mainstream cultural organization, the logical action for people is fitting their operations to the orders of institutions by means of interpretations of their positions. So

as to adapt it to Karılar Koğuşu, I may assert that, every woman acts in compliance with the rules of prison regarding their positioning within the hierarchical structure. Here again, Tözey's situation appears distinctly from rest of the female prisoners, due to her influence, power, wealth, whatever shapes her dominance in hierarchical structure. She, then, posits herself outside the institutional orders within mainstream cultural organization. That is why she is capable of gathering all the administrative unit of the prison and Murat in front of the door of women's ward for entertainment, or of accepting her visitors in the head guard's office, or just before being released, of going upstairs to see Murat's room, or of taking Murat out of prison (although Murat does not accept this favor).

Tözey's eventual bringing up against other female prisoners is related with Murat. To what extent the women are related with Murat, have an effect on their hierarchical status. In parallel with this relation there is a rivalry not only between female prisoners but also women's guard and head guard Mahmut's daughter Nebahat are involved in that rivalry.

Murat, in a conversation with the women states that Hanım is his deputy in the women's ward to bring information from within women. This mission ascribes Hanım hierarchical superiority against the other women.<sup>82</sup>

What determines the relationship between Murat and female prisoners is "domestic work"<sup>83</sup> they do for Murat. Nafia irons his clothes<sup>84</sup>, Tözey sends

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<sup>82</sup> P.30: "... Benim vekilimdir. Aman aleyhimde söyleyen olursa, Hanım, sen işini bilirsin."

<sup>83</sup> Doing domestic works for Murat brings women about being close to him. Even Tözey and Hanım almost fight for that (p.302-3)

<sup>84</sup> P.28: "Nafia Hanım da ütünün kömürüne para veriyor..."

him meal<sup>85</sup>, Hanım washes his clothes.<sup>86</sup> But, other than these works, there is an important metaphor associated with Murat between women: wool.

Murat wants to have a pullover to be knitted for the forthcoming winter. That is why he requests head guard's daughter to buy raw wool for him. He gives raw wool to Gevre for washing and spinning. Then he asks Hanım to knit it for him. With this job-sharing over a pullover, keeps Murat equally distant from each woman. When Tözey comes, she attempts to interfere in this issue. She tells Murat her disapproval to turn that wool into a pullover. She rather wants to have knitted a pair of socks. She finds fault with every other woman's work on the wool with jealousy. First of all, she claims that raw wool is bad. She accuses Gevre for spinning the wool thick and rough. She tries to convince Murat for making socks from that wool but cannot succeed it. This time she offers him to send his clothes "home" to be washed. But Murat again denies her suggestion since he wants not to displease Hanım. In doing so, she reinforces her position in the hierarchical structure of the prison.

Hanım, in order to protect her privileged position in the eye of Murat, chooses to blame Murat and decry Tözey. She accuses Murat for not being interested in her when Tözey comes. She intends to settle accounts with him on Judgment Day since Murat does not make anything to save her from being executed. She does not want Murat to be released to save her because she thinks if Murat goes out, his interest in bad women leads to forget her. Besides, she complains Tözey to Murat about her attitude to knitting issue. "How dare that stranger bitch interfere in your wool." she says.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> P.88: "Ertesi gün Tözey, Hacı Abdullah'la İstanbullu'ya çiğköfte yapıp yolladı."

<sup>86</sup> P.93: "Bu sefer de Hanım gücenir... Allah razı olsun, pekala yıkıyor."

<sup>87</sup> P.236-7: "... Senin yününe ne karıştır elin kahpesi..."

Another dimension that posits female prisoners hierarchically is their standpoints. Each and every one of them evaluates and posits one another due to the crimes they committed:

Hanım calls Nafia “bitch” as she tells “edgy” Sıdıka that she is scared of Hanım since she will be executed.<sup>88</sup>

Hubuş calls Nafia “bitch” as she equates Nafia with her fellow wife because of her offense of adultery.<sup>89</sup>

Tözey calls Hanım “bitch” as she poisons her husband with her lover.<sup>90</sup> She also tells for her that “Ropes are wrapped around dame’s neck, she has one foot in the grave, still interested in men.” and “As if she were a nice woman, she would not poison her husband.”<sup>91</sup>

Although Hanım and Tözey seem the most dominant figures within the prison’s hierarchical structure, each woman sees herself superior to others. While they posit themselves in accordance with their intimacy to Murat or the crimes they commit, when it comes to evaluate women’s guards different dynamics involve in it.

## 4.2. Hierarchical Status of Women Guards

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<sup>88</sup> P.46: “... Nafia olacak orospu Cinli Sıdıka’ya söylerken ben işitmedim mi?..”

<sup>89</sup> P.65: “... Nafia kaltağı gibi, karıyı da, herifi de içeri atsınlar.”

<sup>90</sup> P.108: “... Kaltak kocasını zehirlemiş...”

<sup>91</sup> P.290: “... Karının boğazına ipler dolanmış, bir ayağı mezarda, gene de gözünü erkeklerden alamaz...”, “... İyi bir karı olsa kocasını zehirlemezdi...”

Although the two women's guards have a mother-daughter relation, their attitudes and hierarchical status are so different from each other.

Old and sick Ayşe Ana, as being grateful of being able to work and gain money, with "the fear of losing her job or some privileges of her job" (Rolin, 2009), rather works as a mediator between prisoners and "outside" than a dominant, regulative figure. After her death, she was told as a nice but fearful woman. Also, "If you tell her that you will submit a petition about her, she would shiver like a mangy dog."<sup>92</sup> was said after her.

In order to emphasize Ayşe Ana's fearful and recessive attitude Kemal Tahir tells as follows:

"Ayşe Ana" ruined title of "women's guard" for years. With the fear of being in need of her drunk son and lunatic daughter by losing her salary, poor old woman, cringed and groveled... She complied with every word however harsh it was, she provided every kind of service whoever ordered...<sup>93</sup>

On the contrary, Şefika, Ayşe Ana's daughter is totally aware of the power she holds. Susan Gal defines that "... domination is as much a matter of cultural and psychological processes as of material and political ones, it operates by shaping dispositions of actors..." (Gal, 2010 [1991]). Indeed, this definition is obvious in Şefika. As soon as she starts to work in prison, she manipulates, threatens, suppresses everybody from prisoners to Murat and even director of prison by means of political domination given by state.

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<sup>92</sup> P.158: "İyiymi ama korkaktı. Hakkında istida vereceğim desen uyuz kopek gibi titrerdi."

<sup>93</sup> P.198: "Hele "Ayşe Ana", "Karı gardiyanlığı" sıfatını senelerden beri, berbat etmişti. Maaşını kaybederek sarhoş oğlunun, deli kızının amanına düşmek korkusuyla biçare kocakarı köpekleştikçe köpekleşmişti... Ne kadar ağır olursa olsun, her söze boyun bükerek, kim buyurursa buyursun, her hizmete koşardı..."

Even if someone attempts to act against her like her mother, she does not hesitate to show her impudicity. Even Hacı Abdullah, a male prisoner who knows her formerly, tells that “She is indecent. She leaves Tözey behind in indecency.”<sup>94</sup>

Her awareness of the power she has, almost arrives at “feminism’s core ethic [by Strathern]: a commitment to viewing social life as riven with hierarchical relations of domination and inequity” (Erickson & Murphy, 2008). When the guards order her around, she starts to scream like “Are you commanding your wife? How dare you charge me with duty?”<sup>95</sup>

Even on the second day of starting to work in prison an incident shows that dominant actions will not operate on her: Hacı İbrahim, a male guard who returns from vacation, without looking at her face, wants a glass of water from Şefika. As she does not give him water tells him that: “Be aware, Hacı İbrahim, I differ from my mother. You look down on me as I am a woman, but I do not let you in my house as a male dog.”<sup>96</sup>

By this way, Şefika “literally proclaims her liberty on the second day”<sup>97</sup> and establishes her authority. Even Murat refrains from this “bizarre danger”<sup>98</sup>, or in guard Abdullah’s words “suited devil.”<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> P.188: “... Edepsizdir. Edepsizlikte bu Tözey’i suya götürür de susuz getirir.”

<sup>95</sup> P.199: “... Sen karına mı kumanda ediyorsun?... Sen bana vazife öğretecek adam mısın, herif?..”

<sup>96</sup> P.201: “... Gözünü aç Hacı İbrahim, ben anam karıya benzemem. Siz karı diye bana tepeden bakıyorsunuz ama, ben sizi erkek it yerine evime uğratmam...”

<sup>97</sup> P.201: “... İstiklalini resmen ilan etti...”

<sup>98</sup> P.197: “acayip tehlike”

<sup>99</sup> P.223: “esvaplı şeytan”



As Şefika gossips, cheats on her husband (not only once, she leaves her husband for three times and then returns, after she starts to work in prison she ran off with male guard Derviş Abdullah), utilizes her sexuality in order to manipulate men, threatens, slanders, in other words since she does not obey any moral principles, she is being excluded morally from being an individual entity as “[d]efinition of “individual” by Dumont... refers to a culturally constituted moral entity...” (Strathern, 2010 [1981]).

Şefika, in her relations with the female prisoners, displays oppressive attitudes. She struggles with Hanım since she meets with Ali at the yard. In her behaviors especially towards Hanım and Tözey, jealousy of Murat can be sensed. But her approach to Gevre, brings ethnic identity discrimination into mind.

#### **4.3. Religious/Ethnic Identity and Their Effects on Hierarchical Structure**

Kemal Tahir, giving visibility and returning the voice of the oppressed and suppressed people, as he is also one of them, does intrinsically not neglect ethnic and/or religious minorities in Karılar Koğuşu. Their position within the public space is not explicitly exposed but it is still possible to find some clues about ethnic/religious minorities’ hierarchical status.

Two research areas on ethnicity in the 1970s have significance for finding a place in Karılar Koğuşu:

A trend in 1970s anthropology, ethnicity studies, handled by George DeVos<sup>100</sup> who is committed to an anthropology ... inspired by social psychology and its interest to identity

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<sup>100</sup> (DeVos & Romanucci-Ross, 1975)

formation, deal with a crucial aspect of ethnicity is self-identification... Another body of research ... [elaborated by Michael G. Smith<sup>101</sup>] ‘plural societies’ ... refer to societies composed of multiple ethnic groups. (Eriksen & Nielsen, 2001)

First of all, we have information about ethnic/religious affluence of Anatolian soils.<sup>102</sup> From Ottoman Empire times until today, it can easily be said that we have a ‘plural society.’ We see the traces of this statement in Karılar Koğuşu, because there are Kurdish, Gypsy, Armenian people within and outside the prison, also non-Muslim and Albanian people are mentioned.

With respect to “self-identification as a crucial aspect of ethnic-identity formation” Karılar Koğuşu includes a really very detailed example. It is about Abuzer, who is husband of one of the prisoners, mother of Aduş at the same time, Gevre. During being drafted into military service emergently, Murat writes a petition in order to get permission for one week. Although Aduş and Gevre are in the prison, there are three other children outside, living with Abuzer. That is why, until finding a solution for the children, Abuzer needs time. He goes to governor’s office with the petition to give it to governor in person. Rest of what happens is told by Abuzer to Murat:

Murat: What did the governor say? Tell that to me...  
Abuzer: I went to the governor’s office. Police did not let me in. I begged for it. At last, we entered the room. He read the petition. He dialed the phone. That is the way it is, he is talking to draft office. He said “Hello”. He pulled the petition in front of him. He read my personal record. Suddenly his face changed. “I did not know. His name misled me. Sorry about that...” he said. He hung up the phone and turned to me: “What is your name?”

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<sup>101</sup> (Smith, 1965)

<sup>102</sup> For a rather contemporary ethnic identity research see: <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/--milyon-kisi--etnik-olarak--turk/guncel/haberdetayarsiv/22.03.2007/250844/default.htm> last visited on: 31.01.2014

he asked. I said “Abuzer.” He said “Tell the truth...” While saying “How would it be a lie, there it is Abuzer... Here is my birth certificate.” I proceeded to show it. He turned its pages. “This certificate is a fake. Look, I make you wretched.” he said. He was looking for my father’s name. It is shown as Silo Ağa in the certificate, master.

Murat: What do you mean it is shown? What kind of a thing is it?

Abuzer: I told the matter to governor. “You were a non-Muslim. You were Armenian...” he said. “God forbid, I am not a non-Muslim... I am not Armenian.” I told. “Shut up, they draft you into military service along with non-Muslims. They will not give any weapon.” he said. They know that. But I am not non-Muslim. When my father was shot I was a new-born. Silo Ağa made my mother Muslim. I became a Muslim too. I know neither my mother, nor my father. “I am Muslim.” I said. “You are non-Muslim.” he said. I recited bismillah, master... I prayed... I prayed. He did not believe... Since I am non-Muslim... They did not give permission, master.<sup>103</sup>

This dialogue clarifies the issue of identity-formation very sharply. Although Abuzer is descendant of an Armenian family, he was raised as Muslim and he feels himself Muslim. People make several choices and due to these choices they form their individual identity to fit in a classification. Ethnic and/or religious identity classes are in fact cultural institutions. To be a part of such institutions, people make their own decisions. An outsider cannot force anybody to fit into a certain formation. In this instance, Abuzer

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<sup>103</sup> P.344-5: - Vali ne dedi? Sen onu söyle...

- Valiye gittim. Polis içeri bırakmaz. Yalvardım. Sonunda girdik. İstidayı okudu. Telefonu çevirdi. Öyle ya, askerlik şubesiyle konuşuyor. “Alo” dedi. İstidayı önüne çekti. Künyemi okudu. Birdenbire suratı değişti. “Bilmiyordum. Adı beni şaşırttı. Kusura bakma...” dedi. Telefonu kapatıp bana döndü: “Senin adın ne, bakalım?” dedi. “Abuzer” dedim. “Doğru söyle...” dedi. “Yalan olur mu, Abuzer işte... İşte nüfus tezkerem,” diye davrandım. Çıkardım. Yapraklarını çevirdi. “Bu nüfus kağıdı sahte. Bak seni perişan ederim,” dedi. Babamın adını arıyor. Babamın adı nüfus tezkeremizde “Silo Ağa” diye görülür beyim.

- Görülür ne demek? Bu nasıl iş?

- Valiye meseleyi anlattım. “Sen gavurmuşsun. Ermeni imişsin...” dedi. “Hâşâ ben gavur değilim... Ben Ermeni değilim,” dedim. “Sus, seni gavurlarla beraber askere alıyorlar. Silah da vermeyecekler,” dedi. Kendileri bilir. Lakin ben gavur değilim. Babamı vurdukları zaman ben yeni doğmuşum. Anamı Silo Ağa Müslüman etti. Ben de Müslüman oldum. Anamı da tanımam, babamı da tanımam. Ben Müslümanım,” dedim. “Sen gavursun,” dedi. Eşhedü çektim beyim... Elham okudum... Tebareke, Elemtere okudum. İnanmadı... Biz gavur olduğumuzdan... bize izin vermediler beyim.

does all his best to convince governor to his self-identified ethnic identity. Nevertheless, he cannot evade being discriminated due to his roots since governor, in an ethnocentric manner, excludes him as a marginal identity from generality of society.

In fact continuous part of this conversation is also meaningful for ethnic/religious identity conceptions. A friend of Abuzer, who is with him during all these process, accuses governor as being the real non-Muslim as he does not give necessary permission to Abuzer. He says for the governor: “... As if he is a Muslim... Does a Laz get to be a Muslim?”<sup>104</sup> Upon this sentence Murat gives him a good lesson:

... You are no different than the governor now. He calls Abuzer “non-Muslim”, you call him “non-Muslim” as he is Laz. But his non-Muslim character does not come from his ethnicity. As he is a merciless person, he is relentless to the poor... What kind of a thing this being Muslim... At the time of Prophet Ali, a person became Muslim when he recited bismillah... Now getting born from a mother as Muslim is not enough...<sup>105</sup>

Identifying and classifying oneself with respect to his/her religious and/or ethnic identity in plural societies like us is a little bit meaningless because, like Abuzer’s situation there are many people coming from mixed-identity groups. It is not about being a member of dominant ethnic/religious identity. It is about being human and not marginalizing the rest. All different sub-identities compose a whole, inclusive cultural structure. That is why one is not superior to another. *Also utilizing being a part of a*

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<sup>104</sup> P.346: “... Kendisi Müslümanmış gibi... Ulan Lazdan Müslüman mı olur?...”

<sup>105</sup> P.346: “... Sen de şimdi vali beye döndün. O Abuzer’e “gavur” diyor. Sen de Laz olduğu için ona “gavur” diyorsun. Halbuki onun gavurluğu Lazlıktan ileri gelmiyor. İnsafsız, fukaraya merhametsiz bir adam olduğundan... Bu Müslümanlık ne biçim şey... Hazreti Ali zamanında kelimeyi şahadet getireni Müslüman sayarlarmış... Şimdi anasından Müslüman doğanı kabul etmiyorlar...”

*dominant identity as a means of personal domination tool cause damage on more comprehensive cultural institution; moral justice.*<sup>106</sup>

Similar to the governor's attitude, "inferiority and humiliation that had been imposed on" ethnic/religious minority groups as it is told by Frantz Fanon<sup>107</sup>, who is a non-anthropologist writer, in his "published ... books about power and identity in unequal group relationships" (Eriksen & Nielsen, 2001) have very obvious indicators again in Karılar Koğuşu.

First one comprises both ethnic and religious identity. Hubuş, who is accused of swearing the president, wants Murat to write a letter for being forgiven to be sent to İsmet Paşa's cousin. While she is telling Murat what to write, she says that two of her hirers slandered her, and continues: "... Albanians slandered me. We are Turkish. These miserable are all Albanian... We are Muslim... These are all non-Muslim. Though not, do they go out without headscarf?..."<sup>108</sup> By saying this, she claims that she must be telling the truth due to her ethnic and religious identity. Being both a "Turkish" and "Muslim" woman makes her reliable. She especially remarks her identities in the letter to connect to the receiver on the basis of shared ethnic and religious identity. On the contrary, according to Hubuş, Albanians are liars and slanderers. Anyway, by virtue of the fact that they go out without headscarf they are rendered non-Muslim, thus dishonorable.

Second representative of exploitation of ethnic/religious identity for humiliation or inferiority is based on Gypsy people:

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<sup>106</sup> Sentence is derived from Edward Tylor's definition of culture (Tylor, 1920 [1871]).

<sup>107</sup> (Fanon, 1986 [1952])

<sup>108</sup> P.24: "... Arnavutlar bana hakaret ettiler. Biz Türk'üz. Bu garipler hep Arnavut... Biz İslam'ız... Bunlar hep gavur. Gavur olmasalar başları açık sokağa çıkarlar mı?..."

Considering İnci, a female convict in the prison, and her husband's intimate relationship; as husband Memo comes every day, from early in the morning until midnight, to see his wife, also helping prison personnel in their daily works, and as loyalty of İnci to her husband; Murat claims that "We insult İnci and Memo as calling them Gypsy. Thank God, gipsydom is in us..."<sup>109</sup> He says that regarding so-called "superior" Turkish convicts' situations: Nafia's lover, who caused her to be incarcerated, as soon as he gets out commits adultery again, this time with Nafia's younger sister, Sıdıka's husband tries to deceive her in order to give him golden jewels she owns, young husband of Hubuş returns to his ex-lover and moves into Hubuş's house with her in a short time after Hubuş is jailed, and many other betrayals. That is why Gypsies, who are attributed by paltriness, wickedness and other malignity, may not be inferior.

In an instance again with İnci, and this time Corporal Aziz, being Gypsy refers to be telling lie. One night a man enters to the women's ward from window of bathroom. İnci notices that and yells for help. Afterwards, Corporal is called, when the event is told him, he replies: "That Gypsy woman? You move with a Gypsy woman's word... Shame on you!.. You stain vocation of gendarme with a Gypsy woman's word."<sup>110</sup>

Corporal, humiliates İnci not only for being a "Gypsy" but a "Gypsy woman", accuses her for slandering and rather believes some other people's, a male, Turkish, devout soldier, words. Later on, it appears that

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<sup>109</sup> P.67: "Bir de İnci ile Memo'ya Çingene diye hakaret ederiz. Elhamdülillah Çingenelik bizde birader..."

<sup>110</sup> P.141: "Şu çingene karısı mı? Bir Çingene karısının lafıyla... Aşk olsun Mahmut Efendi. Jandarma mesleğine leke sürüyorsun. Bir çingene karısı..."

İnci tells the truth but in order to protect another female victim, she breaks her own words.

But the most common usage for ethnic/religious identity for humiliation is non-Muslim and Kurdish.

Murat asks Hanım if she is a non-Muslim as she does not believe in his oaths about rearrangement of her penalty.<sup>111</sup>

Women's guard Şefika tells that a non-Muslim would not do to a Muslim what her husband did to her.<sup>112</sup>

A male victim, Ahmet Ağa, who became rich by marrying his master's widow wife after he was killed while he was a servant, due to his hatred towards his neighbors who remind him his old vocation, he says "All the poor in the village ought to be slayed for the purpose of non-Muslims..."<sup>113</sup>

When Murat strives to find a place for Gevre's children, who stood alone outside after her husband is drafted for military service, Ahmet Ağa calls one of the children as "son of non-Muslim"<sup>114</sup> due to Gevre's husband's Armenian descendants. He also calls the same boy as "offspring of Kurdish"<sup>115</sup> and says for the children that "Are these human beings master?... Human? These would be sacrificed for human being..."<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> P.45: "... Kız sen gavur musun?..."

<sup>112</sup> P.210: "... Onun bana yaptığını, gavur Müslüman'a yapmaz..."

<sup>113</sup> P.356: "Köydeki bütün fukaraları gavur niyetine kesmeli..."

<sup>114</sup> P.357: gavur oğlu

<sup>115</sup> P.357: Kürt dölü

<sup>116</sup> P.357: "Bunlar insan mı beyim?... İnsan mı... İnsana kurban olsun bunlar..."

Instances of using “Kurdish” ethnic identity for humiliation, except the one above, is generally made by Murat against Topal Sefer, who is responsible for the distribution of the bread:

When Murat and Sefer are talking about sexual intimacy between Sefer and Şefika, he tells Sefer that; “... God created you as Kurdish, but not a moke Kurdish... You are a clever Kurdish...”<sup>117</sup>

In the course of writing a petition for Gevre’s husband Abuzer, as I told it above in detail, Murat compliments on Sefer since he reminds him of children to write to petition: “Well done Sefer... Well done son of a Kurdish... You think of well... This much intelligence is elusive in Kurdish part, but...”<sup>118</sup>

Whether an ignorant farmer from a rural town or a sophisticated writer from “cultural capital city”<sup>119</sup> of the country, using ethnic/religious identity forms either for inferiority or for humiliation is not regarded as a cultural discrimination. The underlying reason for accepting such a behavior as a common one, at least in my opinion, is the historical context of Turkey. Coming out of a war, in which homeland was invaded and destroyed by non-Muslims, could have constituted an understandable prejudice against them. Also, new country’s political applications on ethnic minorities,

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<sup>117</sup> P.313: “... Allah seni Kürt yaratmış ama, eşek Kürt yaratmamış... Sen akıllı bir Kürt’sün yavrum...”

<sup>118</sup> P.342: “Aferin Sefer... Aferin Kürt oğlu... İyi akıl ettin... Kürt kısmında bu kadar akıl bulunmaz ama...”

<sup>119</sup> Istanbul was selected as “European Cultural Capital” in 2010. For information: <http://www.ibb.gov.tr/sites/ks/en-US/0-Exploring-The-City/European%20CapitalofCulture2010/Pages/Draft.aspx> last visited on: 01.02.2014



especially on Kurdish such as “Reform Plan for the East” could have affected the perception of “Kurdish”.

Speaking of “Reform Plan for the East” which includes regulations, such as forbidding Kurdish speaking in some parts of Turkey including Malatya, evokes a statement of Susan Gal:

It is through dominant linguistic practices ... that speakers within institutions ... impose on others their group’s definition of events, people, actions. This ability to make others accept and enact one’s representation of the world is [a] powerful aspect of symbolic domination. Domination and hegemony are matters of expressive form as well as cultural content. (Gal, 2010 [1991])

Although example of the author for the institution is school, it can be applied to prison since it is another institution, as well. Referent of this statement within Karılar Koğuşu is Murat’s approach to Aduş and Gevre: While depicting Gevre’s appearance putting an emphasis on her incapability of speaking any Turkish, trying to teach Turkish at every turn to Aduş, getting mad at her when she gets out of the taught language patterns, making Aduş representing herself in terms of dominant language are all hegemonic and dominating aspects of Murat’s tendency. What additionally reminds Murat’s will to teach Turkish to Aduş me is, that of the leading proponent of Marxist or Marxist influenced American Anthropologist, Eric Wolf’s inquiry in his major work, *Europe and the People Without History*, into “the complex economic, cultural and political effects of colonialism on the people” (Eriksen & Nielsen, 2001). Murat’s, essentially Kemal Tahir’s endeavor to teach Aduş Turkish, discussions about the Second World War and other social, political contexts and religious superstitions with the prisoners as well as the administrative unit of the prison, all remind me attempt of the colonizers to civilize primitive indigenous people, as he goes from Istanbul to Malatya like colonizers travels from west to east. Although his travel is obligatory unlike

colonizers', Murat's position in the Malatya Prison resembles the colonizers' ethnographic studies.

In spite of the fact that Kemal Tahir falls into failure of utilizing hegemonic discourse on the ethnic/religious identity he reflects his interpretations in a reflexive way from his standpoint. For better or worse he gives voice to a suppressed part of society which are separated and excluded from the rest by hegemonic language discourse. Thus, he manages to expose ethnic/religious minorities' existence as he does with the women's visibility in the next section.

#### **4.4. Male-Oriented/Androcentric Discourse on Females Manifestations of Gender Relations**

There are many instances of male-oriented and gender biased discourse in the book. These manifestations generally belong to male prisoners and officers, which are normal in a way because these men were born and raised in a small Anatolian town, nearly all of them are illiterate, and coming from patriarchal family types. But from time to time Murat also makes statements about women and these statements may well be as much sexist as the others'. This point is striking because Murat, that is to say Kemal Tahir, is well-educated, coming from a big city, İstanbul, sophisticated, wise in the eye of the other residents of prison, a tactful author. Another striking point is that women themselves are also involved in such discourse. They position themselves or other women inferior to men. Under these circumstances, it is obvious that even if the new, young republic starts the employment of women<sup>120</sup>, gives the right of voting to women<sup>121</sup>, namely

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<sup>120</sup> P.11: "karıları çalıştırma adeti"

tries to provide gender equality in many areas, it is not accomplished until then. Leaving uneducated, rural area inhabitants aside, even a cultivated, big city inholder keeps the traditional, male-dominant standpoint.

Marilyn Strathern's statement based upon her fieldwork trip in the Papua New Guinea Highlands to Hagen People; "... through the different ways *noman* [mind, consciousness, conscience, desire, the capacity to translate wishes or intentions into action] works, females are held to be less capable than males of pursuing rational goals" (Strathern, 2010 [1981]), carries similar characteristics with some of the expressions within Karılar Koğuşu:

The most prominent instance pertinent to this statement is Murat's thoughts about Hanım's case. As Hanım Kuzu poisons her husband in collaboration with her much younger lover, she is sentenced to execution. Murat advises her to blame Ali (Hanım's lover) in order to escape from death sentence since Ali is under-aged. Meanwhile Ali agrees with Murat's recommendation. However, Hanım admits her guilt everywhere but denies it in the court. In fact she aims at protecting her lover from being executed, but her stubbornness for not to blame Ali, ends with death sentence for her, and 30 years jail for Ali. Murat and Ali try to convince Hanım to blame Ali for the appellate court but it does not work and her judgment becomes definite. At the end Murat rises up;

I am not soft-hearted. I am not fair either... I am mad at Ali. I am mad at Hanım likewise. If she ran off with the boy, she was going to be sentenced to three months for adultery. She is doing time for one and a half years. In the meantime she could fornicate six times, eventually she would have right to be alive. Each of us is outfoxing... Being executed for not to spend three months in jail... All of us are fools... All of us...<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> P.14: "... reyi karılara verdi"

<sup>122</sup> P.384: "Ben yufka yürekli değilim. Vicdanlı da değilim... Ali'ye de kızıyorum. Hanım'a da kızıyorum. Oğlanla beraber kaçsa zinadan üç aya mahkum edilecekti. Bir buçuk senedir yatıyor. Bu müddet içinde altı defa resmen zina etmeye, sonunda gene de yaşamaya hakkı olacaktı.

Hanım kills her husband with the intention of being together with her lover. Even if she is told what to do for achieving her goal, she is away from that consciousness. Men are more capable of finding a solution. Instead of paying attention to the offer she keeps her obstinacy and she loses her life with the chance of being together with Ali.

In a similar vein, a dialogue between Topal<sup>123</sup> Sefer and Murat about Tözey and her feelings for Murat exposes that, men of that time share the same feeling that women are less capable than them:

Murat: What do I do?

Sefer: She is waiting at the door. She begs you to come for a five minute, then, never come if you do not want to.

Murat: What will happen?

Sefer: You have a talk with her, master. Just say a couple of words. How dare I tell you what to say? You make the world listen to you. It is a pity. Pretend to say a word.

Murat: How does lying end, Sefer? This is foolishness.

Sefer: Of course, it is. What do women do with intelligence, master... If they are to be a clever shit, would my wife run off to another man? They all are fools...<sup>124</sup>

Tözey has feelings for Murat since she first meets him in the prison. But she gets jealous of every woman who gets in touch with Murat. She tries to get information from the guards but, she does not believe them so, in order to hear the truth from the original source she wants to talk to Murat. However

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Hepimiz kurnazlık ediyoruz... Üç ay yatmamak için idam olmak... Hepimiz budalayız... Hepimiz..."

<sup>123</sup> Topal: lame, cripple.

<sup>124</sup> P.127: - Ben ne yapayım?

- Şimdi, kapıda bekliyor. "Beş dakika gelsin de sonra hiç gelmesin," diye yalvarıyor.

- Ne olacak?

- Görüşürsünüz beyim. İki laf söylersin. Sana ben laf mı öğreteceğim? Sen dünyayı dinletiyorsun. Yazıktır. Yalandan olsa bir laf ediver.

- Yalandan ne çıkar Sefer? Bu iş aptallık.

- Aptallık elbet. Karı kısmında akıl n'arasın beyim... akıllı bir bok olsa, benim karı, başka herife kaçır mı? Bunlar hep aptal...

Murat finds her desire irrational since he is sentenced to 12 years in jail, though Tözey has only one month to stay. He believes that “Tözey’s endeavor is for nothing.”<sup>125</sup>

Another instance for incapability of women from men’s point of view is that; women’s guard Şefika, after having a squabble with Tözey, convinces a male guard, with whom she will run off soon, Derviş<sup>126</sup> Abdullah to report Tözey for breaching of the peace in prison. After it is understood that Şefika is behind this reporting issue, Murat and head guard Mahmut has a conversation:

...

Murat: ... How did he think of matter of Tözey? If I know Derviş, he fails in such a lot lie. Someone must be instructing that moke... I got it... There, here is another gimmick of Şefika Hanım... She had an argument with Tözey. It is absolutely her mind.

Mahmut: You guessed well Murat Bey... She complained me before. She said that “Tözey and Hacı Abdullah are talking to each other in front of the window. I do not want such things to happen.”

Murat: Okay... Well done, head guard... At last, we managed to unite the two matters.

Mahmut: Well, but master, do men obey what women tell?

<sup>127</sup>  
...

Again women are seen as unable to make a rational plan to be accomplished, and superior men solve the underlying incompetence of an unsuccessful attempt.

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<sup>125</sup> P.127: “... Tözey’in emeği hiç demektir.”

<sup>126</sup> Derviş: humble.

<sup>127</sup> P.219: - ... Tözey meselesini nereden akıl etti? Benim bildiğim Derviş, bu kadar yalanı beceremez. Eşşeğe mutlaka bir öğretene var... Anladım... İşte bizim Şefika Hanım’ın bir marifeti daha... Tözey’le ağız dalaşı etmişlerdi. Muhakkak onun akli...

- İyi bildin Murat Bey... Bana da şikayet etmişti. “Tözey pencerede Hacı Abdullah’la konuşuyor. Ben böyle şeyleri istemem.” dedi.

- Tamam... Aferin Sergardıyan... Nihayet iki meseleyi birbirine ekledik.

- İyi ama beyim, erkek kısmı karı sözüne gider mi?

One last instance about women's incapability from men's standpoint is that of a trialogue between Murat, Tözey and a male prisoner Hacı<sup>128</sup> Abdullah. Hacı Abdullah has a short time to be released and before getting married to his wife with common-law, he wants to sleep with his ex-lover, one of the prostitutes in Malatya whorehouse, Tözey's friend, Eplemeli Ayşe. Murat requests from Tözey in the name of Abdullah, to be a mediator between Abdullah and Ayşe:

...

Murat: ... We have a trouble Tözey.

Tözey: Here you are.

Murat: You see Hacı Abdullah?

Tözey: What is wrong with him?

Murat: He fell in love with Eplemeli again.

Tözey: Okay... Hacı, you bark up the wrong tree. Eplemeli is not the old Eplemeli. We all changed. We became smart.

Hacı Abdullah removed his hand from his nose:

Can intelligence be existent for women?

Murat laughed:

Existence of mind is impossible for women. Because holy books say that women is created from rib of men. There is no mind in rib. However, in these times men lost their mind, women took those.<sup>129</sup>

But in this incident something is different from the previous ones. While a man is talking about mindlessness of women, the other one opposes, even if

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<sup>128</sup> Hacı: pilgrim

<sup>129</sup> P.289: - Şimdi bizim bir müşkülümüz var Tözey.

- Buyrun.

- Hacı Abdullah'ı görüyor musun?

- Ne olmuş?

- Yeniden Eplemeli'ye sevdalanmış.

- Tamam... Hacı, sen yanlış kapı çalmışsın. Eplemeli eski Eplemeli değil. Biz hep değiştik. Akıllı olduk.

Hacı Abdullah elini burnundan çekti:

- Karı kısmında akıl mı olurmuş?

Murat güldü:

- Karı kısmında akıl olmaz. Çünkü din kitapları kadınların ege kemiğinden yaratıldığını yazar. Ege kemiğinde akıl yoktur. Lakin, bu devirde erkekler akıllarını kaybettiler de, bizim kaybettiğimiz akılları karılar aldı.

in a sarcastic way, rather than accepting it. As a communist and a nonbeliever, Murat catches a chance to ironize religious belief of, as his name implies his faith, Hacı Abdullah in terms of women's capability-incapability debate. Anyway, though he admits that women are cleverer than men, he does not believe in that as he declares for another situation; "Women are absolutely not better/superior than men."<sup>130</sup>

Sherry Ortner, in her article, in which she summarizes theoretical developments in anthropology since 1960s, cites from Jane Collier and Michelle Rosaldo<sup>131</sup> that; "... gender conceptions in any society are to be understood as functioning aspects of a cultural system through which actors manipulate, interpret, legitimize, and reproduce the patterns... that order their social world" (Ortner, 2010 [1984]).

Along with not discussing if Turkey was at that time a simple society as Collier and Rosaldo indicated at the title of their essay (Politics and Gender in Simple Societies) which this quotation was taken from, I can contend that it was a transition process from a traditional, conventional empire to a modern, revolutionary (at least progressive) republican regime. And, Kemal Tahir represents not only one or two but a few incidents that this citation is valid for our culture too.

We know from the book that at that time in Malatya older men's marriage with underage *girls*<sup>132</sup> is common. In a conversation between Şefika and

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<sup>130</sup> P.94: "Kadınlar, erkeklerden şüphesiz daha iyi değillerdi."

<sup>131</sup> (Collier & Rosaldo, 1981)

<sup>132</sup> The word is emphasized since being a "girl", in other words women's virginity is crucial to be getting married to a woman. For instance, a father of a convict who abducts a non-virgin woman, tells Murat that; "Girl... If she were a girl... His mother cries not to accept her as bride. I wish he would have murdered our enemy..." (p.35: "Kız... Bir de kız olsa... Anası "Ben öyle gelin getirmem" diye ağlıyor. Düşmanımızı vursaydı... Düşmanımız...")

Murat about head guard's elder daughter Nebahat who is 16 then, Şefika tells Murat that she is aware of his attention towards her. Murat refuses this by saying that "Nebahat is still a child." Thereupon Şefika says that "Child? If she was married on time, she would have two children."<sup>133</sup>

So, men, or in general people, of Malatya refer to women that they are getting pre-matured in order to legitimize child marriages which is against law. Yet, even if child marriages are morally inappropriate now, at that time it seems it is a common part of social order in the rural area. This kind of a gender based legitimization appears in a dialogue between Murat and guard Vahap. Vahap tells Murat how he got married to his wife:

...

Vahap: I abducted her since her father did not allow us to get married. She was 12 or younger at that time.. Girls are evil, master.. They realize especially sexual matters at the age of nine.

Murat: I believe that. When our prophet kissed Ayşe, she was just seven.<sup>134</sup>

...

As it is seen from this dialogue, gender conceptions utilized for shaping social orders are not only parts of the cultural system, they are inherent in religious narrations. Also, later in the speech Vahap says again that; "Woman kind is something like a possession... If you follow her around such, she consents."<sup>135</sup> As it can be seen obviously, gender conceptions of

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<sup>133</sup> P.214-5: - Sonra Nebahat daha çocuk.

- Çocuk mu? Vaktinden evlenseydi iki tane çocuğu olurdu.

The same issue is subjected to a dialogue between Murat and Tözey, too. (p.293: "... Vaktiyle evselerdi şimdi üç tane çocuğu olurdu, sizin çocuk dediğiniz malın...)

<sup>134</sup> P.134: - ... Biz bunu kaçırdık bey... Babası bize vermez... Karı o zaman on iki yaşında var yok.. Kız kısmı şeytan olur beyim.. Hele erkek meselesine dokuz yaşında aklı erer.

- İnanırım. Peygamberimiz, Ayşe Ana'mızı öptüğü zaman kız yedi yaşındaymış.

<sup>135</sup> P.135: "Karı kısmı, mal gibi bir şey... Peşinde çok dolaştın mı, sonunda razı olur."



men in rural area of Turkey in 1940s, amounts to commodification of women.

But this kind of commodification is not peculiar to only men, women also commodify themselves via such discourse:

Speaking of a female victim who is new, convicted from adultery, women's guard Ayşe Ana replies Murat in relation to his question of if the newcomer is beautiful: "She is all right... What do you mean by beauty of a woman? All women have the same name, in the dark have the same taste."<sup>136</sup> By telling something like that, she admits that women do not have idiosyncratic properties, they are all the same just serving as a sexual commodity.

Another instance for women's subservient, objectified situation rendered by men for their own benefit is Murat's words for Hanım told to Ali's mother. When Ali's parents come to visit their son, his mother starts crying as he is behind the bars. Following that Murat tells the mother that: "Why are you crying? There is no place better than here... At least your boy is together with the woman. You would be happy for that. His clothes are being washed, his meal is being cooked."<sup>137</sup> This sentence shows that, even an intellectually developed man, Kemal Tahir accepts and supports the gendered social orders. In other words, contribution of such things like education, experience, knowledge to a person is not enough to change inherent gender conceptions.

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<sup>136</sup> P.13: "Fena değil... Karının güzelliği ne demek? "Her karının adı birdir, karanlıkta tadı birdir." demişler."

<sup>137</sup> P.37: "Kız, neden ağlıyorsun? Buradan iyi yer yok... Senin oğlan, hiç değilse, karıyla beraber. Sevineceksin. Çamaşırını yıkanıyor, yemeği pişiyor."

Commodification of women as mentioned above also leads to what Sherry Ortner<sup>138</sup> “posits that ‘each culture, in its own way and on its own terms’, regards women as ‘in some degree inferior to men.’” (Eriksen & Nielsen, 2001). Indeed, in Karılar Koğuşu whatever happens to women arises from their inferiority. They step out from family home to step in to husband’s house at the age of 12-13. They are not educated, they are not employed. They do not have a social status in the cultural system. They are merely either somebody’s daughter or somebody’s wife and mother. Anyway if a woman works outside her house, men start to talk about her in a malice way. Rumor about women who work in the factory in Karılar Koğuşu indicates this issue: Male convict Hacı Abdullah and Murat bet on whether Abdullah goes to whorehouse after he is released. Abdullah insists that he will not go because everybody outside tells him that “Factory women, drag men away.” In return Murat claims: “Women, who work and earn money, do not easily fall for men.”, and continues by meaning if there were so many factory women after men, Tözey should not be such rich.<sup>139</sup> From this instance we can draw such a conclusion: Inferiority of women to men is basically economical. When they get economically independent, they are not to be indebted to men anymore. This conclusion becomes visible when we look at Tözey, other prostitutes of Malatya whorehouse, and women’s guards mother-daughter Ayşe Ana and Şefika. But the most obvious one is Şefika’s situation. As soon as she starts to work, at first changes her appearance, and then leaves her husband and six children.

Although women gain their economical independency in order not to be inferior to men, there are other “imbalances created and sustained by an

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<sup>138</sup> (Ortner, 1974)

<sup>139</sup> P.104: “Fabrikanın karısı, zorla erkek götürüyor.”. “Çalışan, para kazanan karı, adama kolay kolay aldanmaz.”, “Tözey’in bileziklerine bir bak... Eğer sokakta o kadar karı olsa, bunun açıklıktan ölmesi icap ederdi.”

unjust social order ... that accorded men and women different status and privilege...” (Erickson & Murphy, 2008). While women prisoners, just because of being women, are forced to “hold an oppositional standpoint to mainstream society”<sup>140</sup> for the crimes they commit, men are flattered for the same reason. While women who murder or fornicate are called as “bitch, perfidious, outrageous, hussy”<sup>141</sup> men justify their actions as “A man taking after a bitch in his home is called vagabond”<sup>142</sup> or “Killing a bitch is cleaning.”<sup>143</sup>

Despite all of those male-oriented, humiliating, gender related instances there are complimentary discourses within the book. Nevertheless it is problematic as those compliments are dependent upon androcentric domination. People, especially men, while eulogizing women generally refer to male characteristics. At this point Hanım and Tözey come into prominence. By virtue of death sentence given to the former, and of despite her vocation charitable, gracious, humane side of the latter, they become commendable. For qualifying Hanım, when she learns that she will be executed, corporal says “I did not see such a manly woman.”<sup>144</sup> And when she walks through execution area, male guard Bald Hasan, after her, says “Not every brave fellow man can be such bold. She walked better than us.”<sup>145</sup> For Tözey, because of her generosity, Topal Sefer calls her as

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<sup>140</sup> Lauren Bailey, *Revisiting and Reclaiming Feminist Standpoint Theory: An Approach for Literary Studies* (Bailey, 2013).

<sup>141</sup> Kaltak, kahpe, rezil, aşüfte

<sup>142</sup> P.189: “Kahpeyi evde besleyene hovarda derler.”

<sup>143</sup> P.103: “Orospu öldürmek temizliktir.”

<sup>144</sup> P.46: “Ben bu kadar yiğit kadın görmedim.”

<sup>145</sup> P.396: “Değme babayığit erkek öyle cesur olmaz... Bizden iyi yürüdü beyim.”

“manly, master woman.”<sup>146</sup> Hacı Abdullah, in a conversation with Murat, says for Tözey that; “You call him bitch... But not every man can have her courage.”<sup>147</sup> In another dialogue again between Hacı Abdullah and Murat, Hacı lauds her as “bully woman.”<sup>148</sup>

But while men equate women to themselves when eulogizing them, they posit women below animals in hierarchical public order as disparaging them. Hacı Abdullah, for Tözey: “Is not she a bitch master, she forgets someone in two days if she does not see. She is worse than an animal... Dog, however, recognizes its owner after many years...”<sup>149</sup> Again Hacı Abdullah, this time for another prostitute, says “She is something like a bear.”<sup>150</sup>

These are only some of the instances chosen from many other ones indicating male-dominated/androcentric discourses. As men are visible in the public space, they shape the cultural life. So, as a cultural institution language becomes a male-dominated area as well as the other ones, like religion in a given instance. In 1940s, in Turkey, especially in rural areas, owing to women’s confinement into domestic life brings male-oriented hierarchy together. But Kemal Tahir although displays male-dominated discourse, gives women excluded from society, especially criminal women who are invisible twice, their voice in his narration and thus contributes in a way to standpoint theory’s literature.

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<sup>146</sup> P.79 yiğit karı, ağa karı

<sup>147</sup> P.100: “Lakin bey, sen orospu dersin... Lakin Tözey’in yüreği değme erkekte yoktur.”

<sup>148</sup> P.132: kabadayı karı

<sup>149</sup> P.130: “Orospu değil mi beyim, iki gün görmese unuttur. Hayvandan beter... Köpek, halbuysa, kaç sene geçerse geçsin, sahibini tanır...”

<sup>150</sup> P.182: “Ayı gibi bir şey.”

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSION**

This thesis is based on a critical analysis of a realistic-factual “fiction”, *Karılar Koğuşu* by Kemal Tahir, in terms of anthropological approaches consisted of literary, reflexive, interpretive and standpoint through the method of “thick description”. The main subject matter of the study is to reveal hierarchical structure between female prisoners of the 1940s given in the book. Apart from the main subject, other dimensions that affect the interrelations within the prison are the secondary concerns of the thesis. Therefore, the analysis section is divided into four subtitles, each of which surveys the hierarchical structure from a different perspective. While evaluating these perspectives my aim was to expose the variables that have effect on hierarchical positioning of residents of Malatya Prison in the first half of the 1940s.

The research method that I conducted on the book to analyze it differs from the mainstream, conventional anthropological study. While the latter includes an actual fieldwork by means of participant observation to gather data from the field, my study is composed of a rather virtual one depending upon thick description, elaboration of the underlying aspect of actions of individuals through very detailed interpretations. While making interpretations, the above mentioned anthropological approaches contributed to generate a starting point.

Through interpretive anthropology, by virtue of the focal points of my study, human behaviors/actions within a cultural institution, I managed to comprehend the meaning intrinsic to them, as culture and behavior/action are intertwined. In other words, I utilized interpretive anthropology in order to understand according to what the residents of the prison act and attribute meanings to those actions. Thus, I involved in reflexive anthropological approach since every interpretation comprises of reflexivity.

With the postmodern anthropological era, reflexive and interpretive, experimental ethnographies brought literary inclinations with them. Blurred boundaries between ethnographic and literary narrations provided an opportunity to expose the expressions of social and cultural life, individual actions within cultural institutions and their evaluations in the literary “fictions”.

As I agree with that “... more powerful and inclusive understanding of society and culture can only be achieved by studying the cultural representations and experiences of, and practices associated with, women” (Erickson & Murphy, 2008) I chose woman prisoners as the subject of my study since they are lack of representing themselves. In addition to being excluded from patriarchal public space just because of their gender, being a female criminal confine them to marginalized, non-privileged status. Standpoint approach engages in this point; by means of vocalizing women’s lived experiences, letting them speaking on their own terms, it renders managing to interpret meanings underlying in their behaviors possible.

In this manner, as Karılar Koğuşu allows me to analyze it from the points of these approaches was a comprehensive choice. Besides its literary

anthropological qualification its attainment to illuminate many social and cultural situations of its time in terms of hierarchy and power relations is striking.

Kemal Tahir, in his book, mentions not only social/cultural positions of the characters he gives place, also emotional and psychological feelings of women who have their own standpoints in a cultural institution. Although he abstracts himself from the book, Murat as he represents himself in it enrolls the events that happen. Owing to this multidimensional content of the book, it becomes convenient for several readings.

As Murat is the main character of the book his status within the book has a significant position. That is why I would like to start the conclusive evaluation with him: Murat's devotion to behave well, to help as much as he could, and to think and speak well of other prisoners involves "welcoming those others into his own understanding of the world" (Spivak, 1990). Such a good thought, namely "being benevolent or sympathetic towards 'others', is thus a reduction of their difference and an inscription of sameness" (Mutman, 2006 ). By treating so, Murat eliminates hierarchical situations and balances statuses between him and other prisoners. But the same benevolence and sympathy towards female prisoners create a hierarchical dimension that posit them.

Apart from Murat's position, the first and main outcome of my study is the factors of female prisoners' hierarchical situatedness. On the contrary of my expectation, especially owing to the lack of narration of crime's effect on the hierarchical structure in the book, I found that the crime they commit is the least effective reason. This affects the superficial thoughts about themselves but it is not determinative. But, the punishment they receive

against the crimes they commit has a prominence on determining the actions. Also educational status, as they are all illiterate, does not affect their positions. Their age does not have any role, as well. As a matter of fact, depending upon the social dynamics, while young women are valuable older women are deprived of respect. The two prominent points that render women superior to one another are; firstly, to what extent Murat's attention they attract, secondly economic welfare and political power they have. Especially a prostitute, as she supposed to be hierarchically inferior due to her occupation, has the most superior position within her relations both with the other prisoners and the administrative part of the prison. As she has a great amount of money in comparison with other women, and she has acquaintances in important positions, she is in a rather privileged position. Also the internal settings of the prison constitute a different perception of honor that cause to evaluate Tözey's situation distinctively from the outside. Since the whole population within the prison comprise of criminals who are accused of immoral/dishonorable actions out of the public rules, the residents posit her according not to her immoral/dishonorable occupation. Although she is sometimes considered by means of her prostitution, they rather handle her due to her personality characteristics which positions her hierarchically superior. Another woman who has an influence on both convicts and the civil servants is the subsequent women's guard due to political power she gained through her job. Also, her utilization of her own sexuality and guile in manipulative manners, render her both powerful in order to acquire what she wants but at the same time posits her inferior in comparison with others in moral terms.

One of the remarkable outcomes of the study is, despite the intensive male-dominated discourse and women's confinement in domestic space and invisibility within the public space, superiority of two women over gender-



biased society. As a matter of fact, especially considering that time period, in a sexually restrained society such like Turkey, superiority of sexually powerful two women may also be understandable.

Male-dominated discourse also found a place in my study as it manifests hierarchical positioning of men against woman. The consequences are quite predictable but have significance since they exhibit dominance of men on language as a cultural institution as well as the other continuities of culture.

Subsequent significant outcome of the study is one that I did not intend to examine but, since it had a great place within my research area, *Karılar Koğuşu*, ended up as a subtitle in the analysis: ethnicity/religious identity. Really an extensive ethnicity/religion bias is explicitly exposed throughout the book. As this biased discourse is given in a hierarchical frame, I dealt with it in these terms.

One last deduction to mention about here is the effect of notion of amnesty within prisoners. Though possibility of amnesty finds a place for itself in the book, it does not contain a dominant place. However, since “the novel of prisons is also a novel of hope” (Gagnier, 2011), and since hope is a universal perception and feeling independent of hierarchical concepts such as gender, race, ethnic and/or religious identity, welfare, education, et cetera, *Karılar Koğuşu*, as a novel of a prison, can be handled, as a matter of course, a narrative of equality of humanity. In spite of the hierarchical situatedness of all of the characters within the book, they all share the same hope: expectation of amnesty in order to be free.

After all these comments, I must admit as a conclusion that, I would have handled *Karılar Koğuşu* in terms of numerous issues as “almost anything

can be encompassed by the term *anthropology*, as long as it is thought about anthropologically” (Darnell & Gleach, 2002); but instead I tried to shed a broad light by means of commentaries that reflects the truth within Karılar Koğuşu.

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## TURKISH SUMMARY

Bu çalışma; yazınsal, düşünümsel / öze dönüşlü, yorumsal / açıklamalı ve bakış açısı / perspektif yaklaşımlarından oluşan antropolojik teoriler ve derin betimleme metodu kullanılarak, Kemal Tahir'in Karılar Koğuşu adlı gerçekçi-olgusal kurgusunun eleştirel analizine dayanmaktadır. Çalışmanın ana konusu, kitapta bahsi geçen 1940'lı yıllardaki kadın mahkumlar arasındaki hiyerarşik yapıyı ortaya çıkarmaktır. Ana fikrin yanı sıra, cezaevindeki karşılıklı ilişkileri etkileyen diğer ölçütler tezin ikincil ilgi alanını oluşturmaktadır. Bundan dolayı, çalışmanın analiz bölümü dört alt başlığa ayrılmıştır ve her biri hiyerarşik yapıyı farklı bir bakış açısıyla incelemektedir. Bu bakış açılarını değerlendirirken amaç; 1940'lı yılların ilk yarısında Malatya Cezaevi sakinlerinin hiyerarşik konumlanmalarında etkisi olan değişkenleri ortaya koymaktır.

Bu çalışma için kitap üzerinde analiz yapabilmek amacıyla yürütülen araştırma yöntemi; ana akım, geleneksel antropolojik çalışmalardan farklılık göstermektedir. Ana akım antropolojik çalışmalarda sahadan veri toplamak amacıyla katılımcı gözlemcilik tekniğinden yararlanılan fiili saha çalışması mevcutken, bu çalışma çok detaylı yorumlamalar yoluyla bireylerin davranışlarının altında yatan boyutları ayrıntılandırmaya dayalı derin betimleme yönteminin kullanıldığı, ilkinde göre sanal sayılabilecek bir araştırma içermektedir. Yorumlamalar yapılırken, yukarıda sözü edilen antropolojik yaklaşımlar çalışmanın başlangıç noktasının oluşturulmasına katkıda bulunmuşlardır.

Yorumsal / açıklamalı antropolojik yaklaşım aracılığıyla; kültürü oluşturan adalet olgusunun bir parçası olan bir kurumdaki (cezaevi) insan davranış ve eylemlerinin oluşturduğu çalışmanın odak noktaları sayesinde, kültür olgusu ile davranış ve eylemler birbirine geçmiş olduğu için; bu davranış ve eylemlere özgü anlamların kavranması sağlanmıştır. Başka bir deyişle, cezaevi sakinlerinin neye göre eylemde buldukları ve bu eylemlere anlam yüklediklerini anlamak için yorumsal / açıklamalı antropolojik yaklaşımdan yararlanılmıştır. Böylece, her yorumlama / açıklama düşünümsellik / öze dönüşlük içerdiğinden, düşünümsel / öze dönüşlü antropolojik yaklaşım da çalışmada kendine yer bulmuştur.

Post modern antropolojik dönemle birlikte, öze dönüşlü ve yorumlayıcı deneysel etnografi metinleri edebi eğilimleri de beraberinde getirmiştir. Bu eğilimler sonucunda; etnografik metinlerde sadece bilimsel bulgular ve objektif gözlemler değil, yazarın sübjektif yorumları, sahada yaşanan korku, endişe, ümitsizlik gibi duygular da kendine yer bulmaya başlamıştır. Hatta kimi metinler günlük (örnek olarak Michael Taussig'in "Law in Lawless Land" adlı eseri ve hikaye (örneğin Nancy Lindisfarne'ın "Şam'da Raks/Dancing in Damascus" adlı eseri) tarzında kaleme alınmaya başlanmış, hatta kimi etnografik metin yazarı antropologlar (örneğin Edward Evan Evans-Pritchard, Margeret Mead) kendilerini aynı zamanda edebiyatçı/sanatçı olarak nitelemeye başlamışlardır. Etnografi metinleri ve edebi anlatılar arasındaki sınırların bu şekilde bulanıklaşması, yani bu iki türün metinlerinin iç içe geçmesi; yazınsal "kurgu"larda (Burada kurgudan kastın Clifford Geertz'in ifadesinde olduğu gibi uydurulmuş değil, biçimlendirilmiş anlamına gelmesi gerektiği göz önünde bulundurulmalıdır.) sosyal ve kültürel yaşamın, kültürü oluşturan kurumlardaki bireylerin eylemlerinin ifade edilmesi ve bunların değerlendirmelerinin ortaya çıkarılmasına olanak sağlamıştır.

Paul Erickson ve Liam Murphy'nin "Antropolojik Teori Tarihi (A History of Anthropological Theory)" adlı kitaplarında geçen "... daha güçlü ve kapsamlı toplum ve kültür anlayışı ancak kadınların kültürel temsili ve deneyimleri ile kadınlarla ilişkili uygulamalar üzerine çalışmakla elde edilebilir." (Erickson & Murphy, 2008) cümlesinden hareket ederek; kendilerini temsil etmekten yoksun olan kadın mahkumlar çalışma konusu olarak seçilmiştir. Kadınlar, ataerkil toplumsal yapıdan kaynaklanan toplumsal cinsiyet kurallarına bağlı olarak sadece cinsiyetlerinden dolayı kamusal alandan dışlanmanın yanı sıra, hem kadın hem mahkum olarak marjinal, aykırı, önemsiz, herhangi bir ayrıcalığa sahip olmayan bir konuma hapsedilmektedirler. Antropolojik bakış açısı / perspektif yaklaşımı da bu noktada devreye girerek; kadınların yaşanmış deneyimlerini dile getirmek, kendileri adına konuşmalarına olanak tanımak yoluyla, kadınların davranışlarının altında yatan anlamları yorumlamayı olanaklı kılmaktadır.

Post modern antropolojik teori ana başlığı altında toplanan tüm yukarıda sözü geçen yaklaşımlar ile araştırma metodu olarak kullanılan derin betimleme; çok sesli ve çok anlamlı özellikte olmaları sayesinde okurlara kendi yorumlamalarını yapma olanağı sağlamaktadır. Hepsi sübjektif yansıma ve betimlemeleri kabul etmekte ve bunlardan yararlanmaktadır. Hepsi etnografik metni kurgu olarak ele almaktadır. Düşünümsel / öze dönüşlü antropolojik yaklaşım yazarın metnin içinde yer almasını sağlamaktadır. Yazınsal / edebi yaklaşım metne sanatsallık ve öznellik katmaktadır. Bakış açısı / perspektif yaklaşımı Max Weber'in "nispeten ayrıcalıksız, marjinal hale getirilmiş ve yabancılaştırılmış" olarak ifade ettiği sınıfsal tabakalaşmanın alt kısmında yer alan bireyleri metinle tanıştırmaktadır. Derin betimleme ise bu antropolojik yaklaşımlar demetinden detaylı bir anlam meydana getirmektedir. Böylece, deneysel ve

dođal olarak gözleme dayalı bir antropolojik çalışma olanaklı kılınmıştır. Ayrıca bu çalışmada, yine yazınsal, düşünömsel / öze dönüöülü, yorumsal / açıklamalı ve bakış açısı / perspektif yaklaşımlarından oluşan antropolojik teoriler ve derin betimleme metodu benimsenerek ve uyarlanarak genel bir antropolojik yorumlama ve betimleme yapılmaya çalışılmıştır.

Antropolojik teorilere dair sözü edilen sorunsallığa rağmen bu çalışmada yukarıda bahsi geçen teorik yaklaşımlar sayesinde teorik çatı oluşturulmuş olmasına rağmen, yoğun bir teorik okuma yerine açıklayıcı ve eser üzerinde yapılan gözlemleri destekleyici bir teorik çerçeve çizilmeye çalışılmıştır. Bu teorik çerçeve, olgusal antropolojik anlatı olarak ele alın Karılar Kođuşu'nun öze dönüöülü / düşünömsel ve detaylı yorumsal / açıklamalı analizinin elde edilebilmesi için yeterli olmaktadır. Bu çalışmada, yukarıda bahsedildiđi gibi gözleme dayalı, deneysel bir antropolojik yöntem benimsendiđinden başlangıç noktası için destek alınan teorik yaklaşımlar çok sofistike bir şekilde ele alınmadıđının belirtilmesi gerekmektedir.

Karılar Kođuşu, sözü edilen antropolojik yaklaşımlar ışığında analiz yapılabilmesine olanak vermesi açısından uygun ve kapsamlı bir seçimdir. Edebiyat antropolojisine dair özellikler taşımasının yanı sıra, yazıldıđı döneme ait birçok sosyal ve kültürel durumu (hiyerarşı ve iktidar ilişkileri açısından) aydınlatmaktaki başarısı dikkat çekicidir. Bu nedenle araştırma alanı olarak ele alınabilmesi açısından da uygun bir seçim olduđu söylenebilir.

Araştırma alanı seçiminin esasına ek olarak, Don Handelman'ın da belirttiđi üzere, “yapılan kavramsal seçimlerin çođunlukla etnografik malzemeye dayalı olması, teorik konum seçiminde de dikkatli olunması gerektiđini hatırlatmalıdır” (Handelman, 1994). Bu çalışmanın odak noktası, kadınların



işlediği suçların nedenleri ile ilgilenmekten çok kadın mahkumlar arasındaki hiyerarşik yapılanmayı meydana getiren faktörler ve kadın mahkumların cezaevinin diğer sakinleriyle ilişkilerinde hiyerarşinin rolü olduğundan, araştırma sorusunun suç antropolojisi teorileri açısından ele alınması ve bu bağlamda tahlil edilmesi pek de mümkün görülmemektedir. Ek olarak, suç, kadın, hiyerarşi gibi kavramlar daha çok sosyolojik teorilerin ilgi alanına giren konular gibi görünmektedir. Antropoloji teorileri ise bu kavramlarla ilgilendiğinde, bu daha çok “ötekileştirme” üzerinden mümkün olmaktadır. Bu çalışma boyunca yapılmak istenen; Marilyn Strathern’in de vurguladığı gibi araştırma konusunun ele alınmasında “antropolog olmayan okuyucuya ulaşabilme” (Strathern, 1995) ve derdini ilgi alanı antropoloji olmayan okuyucuya da anlatabilme başarısına ulaşmak olmuştur. Yine Strathern’in bir başka makalesinde yazıya döktüğü gibi; “antropolojik araştırmada geçmişle bağlantıyı koparma geleneği uzun süredir var olduğu ve bu yüzden antropolojik teorilerin kısa ömürlü olma eğiliminde olduğu” (Strathern, 1987) savından hareketle, ele alınan teorik çerçevenin yeterliliği bir kez daha vurgulanarak çalışmanın ana kısmı olan analize konu Karılar Koğuşu’ndan bahsetmek yerinde olacaktır.

Karılar Koğuşu, Kemal Tahir’in üzerinde çalışmaya fırsat bulamadan ölümünden bir yıl sonra, 1974 yılında ilk baskısı yapılmış, notlar halinde, tamamlanmış ve kurgulanmış olmayan bir anlatıya sahip bir kitaptır. Kemal Tahir; 1938 yılında, askeri isyana tahrik ve teşvik suçundan, kardeşi Nuri Tahir ve Nazım Hikmet’in de aralarında bulunduğu, komünist olarak bilinen kişilerle yargılanması ardından 15 yıl hapis cezasına çarptırılmış ve 1938-1950 yılları arasında 12 yıl süreyle Çankırı, Malatya, Çorum, Nevşehir ve Kırşehir hapishanelerinde yatmıştır. Karılar Koğuşu da 1942-1944 yılları arasında yattığı Malatya Cezaevi’nde tuttuğu notlardan oluşmaktadır. Kemal Tahir’in; toplumsal gerçekçi bakış açısı ve bir

edebiyatçı olmasının yanı sıra bir sosyal bilimci olarak da değerlendirilmesinden ötürü, kendi öz yaşamından hareketle kaleme aldığı ve bir romandan çok zorunlu olarak yürütülmekte olan (mahkeme tarafından hapis cezasına çarptırıldığı için) bir saha çalışmasına dair notları andıran Karılar Koğuşu; sosyal bilimler açısından taşıdığı değerden dolayı bu antropolojik çalışmaya konu olmuştur. Karılar Koğuşu, yazarın Malatya Cezaevi'nde bulunduğu yaklaşık iki yıllık sürede hapisanede yaşadıklarının ve diğer mahkumlarla ilişkilerinin yanı sıra hapisane sakinlerinin geçmişleri ile o döneme ait tarihsel, toplumsal olaylar ile Kemal Tahir'in bu olaylar hakkındaki değerlendirmelerini de içermektedir. İkinci Dünya Savaşı'nın eşiğinde ekonomik sıkıntılarla boğuşan, bir yandan da çağdaşlaşma hareketlerine devam etmeye çalışan genç ülke Türkiye'nin içinde bulunduğu durum ile ülkenin doğusunda bulunan bir şehir olan Malatya'nın ve Malatya insanların kesiti hem tarihsel gelişmeler hem de toplumsal olaylar ışığında ortaya konmaktadır. Bu noktada Karılar Koğuşu; yazıldığı dönem olan 70 yıl öncesinden günümüze kadar devam eden gelir dağılımındaki adaletsizliğin yarattığı toplumsal eşitsizlikler, kız çocuklarının küçük yaşta evlendirilmesi, insanların cahilliğinden kaynaklanan toplumsal sorunlar gibi konulara da ışık tutmakta, ülkenin geçen 70 yılda pek de değişmediğini gözler önüne sermektedir.

Karılar Koğuşu romanı ile Kemal Tahir, Sherry Ortner'in bahsettiği üzere; “kıyıda kalan insanların bakış açısını alarak, kendi kültürel çevresinde bile, bilinen şeylerin ötesinin de öğrenilmesini sağlayan, kendini kendi kültüründen insanları tarihin aktif temsilcileri ve özneleri olarak gören bir konuma yerleştiren” bir pozisyon alarak “antropolojinin insan bilimlerine belirgin katkısı”nda rol oynamaktadır (Ortner, 2010 [1984]).

Sezai Coşkun'un Kemal Tahir için hazırlanan bir biyografi derlemesinde söz ettiği gibi, “Türk halkının realitesini ifade etme çabası içinde, toplumdan elde ettiği manzaralara dayanarak yorumlar yaptığı”ndan hareketle (Coşkun, 2004), Kemal Tahir'in Karılar Koğuşu anlatısının sosyolojik olduğu kadar antropolojik açıdan da ele alınabilmesi mümkün görünmektedir.

Kemal Tahir'in, özellikle hapisten çıktıktan sonra kaleme aldığı ve Osmanlı toplumu üzerine kurguladığı çeşitli romanları akademik ve edebi çalışma ve incelemelere sıklıkla konu olsa da Karılar Koğuşu'nun bu tür incelemelere pek de konu olmamış olması dikkat çekici bir noktadır. Karılar Koğuşu'nun, yazarın yine Malatya Cezaevi'ndeki bu kez erkek mahkumları konu edinen Namuscular romanı ile birlikte, diğer romanlarının aksine tamamlanmamış ve yazarın kendisi tarafında düzenlenmemiş olması, bu yüzden dolayı Kemal Tahir'in başlangıçta tuttuğu taslak halindeki notların yayınlanmış hali olması bahsi geçen inceleme eksiğini sebebi olarak ele alınabilir. Fakat, notlarında özellikle kadınlara vurgu yapmış olması, bu anlatıyı değerlendirmeye değer kılmaktadır.

Kemal Tahir romanlarında yer alan kadın karakterler, farklı yönleriyle, bir elin parmaklarını geçmeyecek sayıda akademik çalışmaya konu olmuş olsa da, kadın mahkumlar hiyerarşik konumlandırılmaları ve karşılıklı ilişkileri açısından ele alınmamıştır. Böyle bir bakış açısına sahip bu çalışma ilgili literatüre metodolojik bir katkı sunma olasılığına sahiptir.

Kemal Tahir kitabında yer verdiği karakterlerin sadece sosyal ve/veya kültürel konumlarından söz etmekle kalmamakta, ayrıca toplumsal kültürün bir parçası olan bir kurumda kendi bakış açılarına göre hareket eden karakterlerin duygusal ve psikolojik durumlarına da vurgu yapmaktadır. Karılar Koğuşu kitabı, Kemal Tahir'in kendi yaşadığı cezaevi deneyimi

sırasında tuttuğu notlardan oluştuğundan dolayı kendisi de kitaptaki ana karakterlerden biri olmasına rağmen, kendini kitaptan soyutlasa da, Murat karakteri kendisini temsil ederek olayları aktaran kişidir. Sosyal, kültürel, duygusal, psikolojik boyutlara yer veren içeriğinden ötürü Karılar Koğuşu, edebiyat antropolojisi dışındaki alanlarda da okumalar yapmaya ve üzerinde çalışılmaya uygun bir eser haline gelmiştir.

Kemal Tahir'i temsil eden Murat karakteri dışında kitaba adını veren karılar koğuşundaki kadın mahkumlar hem kitabın baş kahramanlarını hem de bu çalışmanın ana konusunu oluşturmaktadırlar. Bu yüzden bu noktada, karakterleri tanıtmak önem taşımaktadır:

**Aduş:** Kadın mahkumlardan Kürt Gevre'nin dört yaşındaki, küçük esmer kızı. Dışarıda babasıyla beraber yaşayan üç kardeşi ve annesinin geçimini sağlamada cezaevindeki diğer mahkumların kendisine verdikleri paralarla katkıda bulunuyor. Türkçe'yi Murat'tan öğreniyor.

**Ayşe Ana:** Kadın koğuşunun gardiyanı. Kocasını vefat ettikten sonra evin geçimini sağlıyor. Çalışmayan ve kendisini para için döven bir oğlu ve kendisinden sonra gardiyana olan bir kızı var. Karıları çalıştırma adeti getirdiği için İsmet Paşa'ya dua ediyor. Yüzündeki halep çıbanını iyileştirmek için doktora gitmek yerine boyadan çamura kadar çeşitli "ilaç"lar deniyor.

**Hubuş:** Hükümete ve cumhurbaşkanına sövmekten 14 aya mahkum, tek kadın "siyasi suçlu". 55-60 yaşlarında, daha önce üç kez evlenmiş ve bu evliliklerinden altı çocuğu var. Dördüncü evliliğini, 30 yaşlarında, yakışıklı, mesleği yaşlı kadınların parasını yemek olan bir adamla yapmış. Ölen üç kocasından kalan mirası yemek üzere Hubuş'la evlenen adam o hapse girdiğinde yeniden evlenmeye kalkışınca, serbest bırakılması için Murat aracılığıyla "padişah ve halife" oduğunu sandığı İsmet Paşa'nın kuzenine mektup göndermeye uğraşiyor.

**Sıdika:** Kavga ettikleri sırada sopayla vurduğu kaynanasını kazayla öldürmekten üç yıla mahkum. Cezası kesinleşmeden önceki en büyük korkusu asılmak. Akılsızlıkla pervasızlık arasında geçen bir ömrü var. Biraz etine dolgun olsa tavuğa benzeyecek ama şu an için bir şeye benzemiyor.

**Gevre:** Kavga sırasında komşusunun, kalçasından ısırarak suretiyle, ölümüne neden olmaktan iki yıl hapis cezasına mahkum. Aduş'un annesi. Hiç Türkçe bilmiyor. Bütün fakir, köylü kadınları gibi çok yıpranmış. Hapishanedeki diğer mahkum kadınların çoğunun aksine kardeşçe bakan gözleri var. Ayakları çıplak.

**Nafia:** Zina nedeniyle üç aya mahkum. Çok güzel ve mağrur bir duruşu var.

**Hanım:** Komşusunun oğlu olan genç sevgilisiyle kocasını zehirleyerek öldürmekten idam cezasına mahkum. İki çocuk annesi. Güzel gözlü, cilveli bir kadın. Yüzünün parlaklığı ve dudaklarının kırmızılığı insanı hayrete düşürüyor. İdam cezasının temyizi için Murat arkadaşı Nazım Hikmet vasıtasıyla Ankara'da bir avukattan yardım talep etse de başarılı olamıyor.

**İnci:** Hırsızlık nedeniyle 22 güne mahkum Çingene karısı. Her gün cezaevi avlusuna gelen kocası seslenmeden dışarı çıkmıyor.

**Tözey:** Hakaretten bir aya mahkum. Mesleği orospuluk. Çirkinliğini belli etmeyen mutlu kadınlardan. Kendi evlerine orospuluk yapan evli kadınların 40 yaşına gelseler beceremeyecekleri, ancak vesikalı cinsin iyisinde rastlanan güven verici bir ciddiyeti var.

**Şefika:** Kadın koğuşunun gardiyanı Ayşe Ana'nın ölümünden sonra onun yerine işe başlayan kızı. 40 yaşlarında, evli ve altı çocuk annesi. İşe girmesini sağlayan Murat'a karşı mahcup ve minnetini sürekli ifade ediyor. İşe başlayıp para kazanmaya başlayınca ilk iş kocasını terk edip erkek gardiyanlardan biriyle kaçıyor. Daha önce de üç kez evini terk etmiş.

Çalışmanın ana konusunu oluşturan ve yukarıda kısaca anlatılan kadın karakterlerin yanı sıra Kemal Tahir'in anlatısında erkek ve kadınlardan

oluşan bir çok başka karakter daha mevcuttur: hapishane müdürü, başgardiyen Mahmut, sonraki başgardiyen Ali, diğer erkek gardiyanlar, çeşitli kademelerde görev yapan asker ve bürokratlar, kadın gardiyanın ve kadın mahkumların kocaları, oğulları, babaları, sevgilileri, erkek ve çocuk mahkumlar, Malatya genelevinin Tözey'i ziyarete gelen diğer sermayeleri, erkek mahkumların ve gardiyanların karıları, anneleri, "dost"ları, başgardiyen Mahmut'un üç kızı; Selime, Hidayet ve Nebahat ve daha niceleri...

Murat, kitabın ana karakteri olduğundan, kitaptaki konumu da önemli bir nokta oluşturmaktadır. Bu nedenle, sonuç değerlendirmesine onunla başlanması uygun görülmüştür: Murat'ın kendini diğer mahkumlara iyi davranmaya, haklarında iyi düşünüp iyi konuşmaya ve elinden geldiğince yardım etmeye kendini adanması; Gayatri Spivak'ın dile getirdiği gibi "kendi dünya anlayışına diğerlerini kabul etmek" (Spivak, 1990) anlamını içermektedir. Böylesi iyi bir düşünce ve niyet, yani Mahmut Mutman'a göre "diğerleri'ne karşı yardımsever, cana yakın ve anlayışlı olmak farklılıkları azaltmak anlamına gelmekte ve böylece benzerlik ve aynılığı tescil etmektedir" (Mutman, 2006 ). Böyle davranarak Murat, hiyerarşik konumları ortadan kaldırmakta, kendi konumu ile diğer mahkumların konumları arasında denge kurmaktadır. Çünkü aslında; romanda mahkumların ve gardiyanlar, cezaevi müdürü gibi diğer cezaevi sakinlerinin kendisine seslendiği gibi İstanbullu olması (yani batıdan, büyük şehirden geliyor olması), siyasi mahkum olarak adi suçlu diğer mahkumlardan ayrılması, aldığı eğitim ve yaptığı iş (yazarlık) gibi faktörlerden ötürü diğer mahkumlardan farklı ve üst bir konumda yer almaktadır. Fakat Murat'ın kendisi ve diğer mahkumlar arasındaki konum farkını dengelemek için yararlandığı yardımseverlik ve cana yakınlık, kadın mahkumlar arasındaki

hiyerarşik yapıyı oluşturan ve bu kadınların kendilerini konumlandırmalarına neden olan faktörlerden biri haline gelmektedir.

Murat'ın konumundan ayrı olarak, çalışmanın ilk ve temel sonucu; kadın mahkumların hiyerarşik konumlandırılmışlıklarını etkileyen faktörlerdir. Çalışmanın başlangıcındaki beklentinin aksine, özellikle kitapta işlenen suçun hiyerarşik yapıya etkisinin anlatımının eksik olması dolayısı ile, mahkumların işlediği suçun niteliğinin hiyerarşik yapı üzerinde pek etkili olmadığı ortaya çıkmıştır. İşlenen suç kadın mahkumların birbirleri hakkında yüzeysel düşüncelerinin oluşmasına etki etmektedir fakat bu belirleyici unsur değildir. Fakat, işlenen suçlar karşılığında alınan cezalar davranışların belirlenmesinde önem taşımaktadır. Bu açıdan bakıldığında idam mahkumu Hanım'ın göreceli bir üstünlüğü vardır çünkü diğer mahkum kadınlar idama mahkum bu kadından çekinmekte bunu zaman zaman dile getirmektedirler. Ayrıca, kadın mahkumların tamamı eğitimsiz ve cahil olduğu için, eğitim seviyesi de hiyerarşik konumu etkileyen bir faktör olmanın uzağındadır. Mahkumların yaşının da herhangi bir rolü yoktur. İşin aslına bakılırsa, toplumsal dinamiklere bağlı olarak, genç kadınlar kıymetli görülürken yaşlılar saygıdan yoksun bırakılmaktadır. Kadın mahkumları birbirlerine üstün kılan iki önemli faktörden birincisi; Murat'ın ilgi ve dikkatini ne kadar üzerlerinde topladıkları, ikincisi ise sahip oldukları ekonomik rahatlık ve politik güç olarak ortaya çıkmaktadır. Özellikle Tözey, bir fahişe, mesleğinden ötürü diğerlerinden aşağı bir konumda yer alması beklenirken, gerek diğer mahkumlarla gerekse cezaevi çalışanlarıyla ilişkilerinde en üst konumdadır. Diğer kadınlara oranla büyük miktarlarda paraya sahip olması ve önemli pozisyonlardaki tanıdıkları sayesinde diğer mahkumlara göre daha ayrıcalıklı bir pozisyona sahiptir. Ayrıca, cezaevinin dahili tesisi cezaevi dışındaki namus kavramından farklı bir algı oluşturduğu için; Tözey'in cezaevinde, mesleğinden ötürü dışarıda

konumlandırılmasından farklı bir deęerlendirmeye tabi tutulmasını saęlamaktadır. Hapishanenin tüm nüfusu, kamusal kurallar dıřında ahlaksız ve/veya namussuz davranıřlarla suçlanan mahkumlardan oluřtuęundan, cezaevi sakinleri Tözey'i ahlaksız / namussuz mesleęine göre konumlandırmamaktadırlar. Her ne kadar, bazen mesleęine baęlı olarak deęerlendirilse de, cezaevi sakinleri onu hiyerarřik aıdan üstün kılan kiřilik özelliklerine dayanarak ele almaktadırlar. Hem mahkumlar hem de cezaevi memurları üzerinde etkili olan bir dięer kadın ise kitapta yer alan ilk kadın koęuřu gardiyanının ölümünden sonra onun yerine geen ve aynı zamanda onun kızı olan řefika'dır. řefika'nın hiyerarřik üstünlüęü; yaptıęı iřin ona saęladıęı politik gücü etkili bir řekilde kullanmasından kaynaklanmaktadır. Ayrıca, cinsellięinden, kurnazlıęından ve hilekarlıęından kendi çıkarları için başkalarını kullanmak için faydalıyor olması; istedięini elde etmesi aısından onu güçlü kılarken aynı zamanda ahlaki aıdan dięerlerine kıyasla daha ařaęı bir pozisyonda konumlanmaktadır.

alıřmanın dikkate deęer sonuçlarından biri; erkek egemen söylem ve baęlam ile kadınların evsel alana hapsedilmesi ve kamusal alandaki görünmezliklerine raęmen toplumsal cinsiyet önyargılarıyla dolu toplumda iki kadının hiyerarřik üstünlüęe sahip olmasıdır. Aslına bakılırsa, özellikle kitabın yazıldıęı zaman aralıęı göz önünde bulundurulursa, Türkiye gibi cinsel aıdan bastırılmıř ve kısıtlanmıř bir topluma sahip bir ülkede, cinsellikleri bir řekilde kendilerini güçlü konumlandıran iki kadının (Tözey; cinsellięini kullanarak yaptıęı iři sayesinde ekonomik güç kazanarak, řefika; cinsel kimlięini manipölatif olarak kullanması sayesinde arzuladıklarını elde ederek) varlıęı anlaşılır sayılabilmektedir.



Erkek egemen söylem, erkeklerin kadınlar karşısındaki hiyerarşik konumlanmalarını ifade ettiğinden; ayrıca bu çalışmada kendine bir yer bulmaktadır. Erkek egemen söyleme dair bulgular tahmin edilebilir olsa da, bu tip bir söylem kültürü oluşturan diğer karakteristik özellikler kadar dil üzerindeki erkek üstünlüğünü ortaya koyduğundan önem taşımaktadır.

Bu çalışmada incelenmesi amaçlanmayan fakat araştırma sahası olan kitap Karılar Koğuşu'nda kendisine geniş yer bulan bir başka önemli sonuç ise analiz bölümünde bir alt başlık olarak son bulmaktadır: etnik ve/veya dini kimlik. Kitap boyunca etnisite ve din önyargısı gerçekten yoğun bir şekilde ve açıkça ortaya konmaktadır. Bu önyargılı söylem hiyerarşi çerçevesinde kitapta yer bulduğundan çalışmada da bu açıdan ele alınmaktadır.

Bu çalışmada sözü edilmesi gereken son bir çıkarımı ise af kavramının mahkumlar üzerindeki etkisi oluşturmaktadır. Her ne kadar af olasılığından kitapta söz ediliyor olsa da, bu konu ağırlıklı bir yer işgal etmemektedir. Bununla birlikte, Regenia Gagnier'in makalesinde yazdığı gibi, "hapishane romanları aynı zamanda umut romanları" olduğundan; umut ise toplumsal cinsiyet, ırk, etnik ve/veya dini kimlik, ekonomik koşullar, eğitim düzeyi gibi hiyerarşik konumlanmalara neden olan faktörlerden bağımsız, evrensel bir kavram ve his olduğundan; Karılar Koğuşu, bir cezaevi anlatısı olarak, haliyle, bir eşitlik ve insanlık anlatısı olarak ele alınabilir. Zaten kitapta sözü geçen tüm mahkumlar, hiyerarşik konumlandırılmalarına rağmen, aynı ümidi taşımaktadırlar: özgürlüklerine kavuşabilmek amacıyla af beklentisi.

Yapılan çalışma hakkında yukarıda yazıya dökülen tüm açıklama, yorum ve görüşlerin ardından sonuç olarak denilebilir ki; Regna Darnell ve Frederic Gleach'in makalelerinde söyledikleri gibi "antropolojik açıdan düşünüldüğü sürece, neredeyse her şey antropoloji terimi kapsamında ele alınabilir."

(Darnell & Gleach, 2002) cümlesinden hareketle, Karılar Koğuşu çok çeşitli konular açısından ele alınabilirdi ise de, bu çalışmada kitapta yer alan gerçekleri yansıtan yorumlar aracılığıyla konuya ışık tutmak tercih edilmiştir.

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### YAZARIN

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Bölümü: Sosyal Antropoloji

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1. Tezimin tamamından kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir.
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