



LONELY DREAMERS IN DOSTOEVSKY'S *WHITE NIGHTS* AND SABAHATTİN ALİ'S *MADONNA IN A FUR COAT*: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

DOSTOEVSKY'NİN "BEYAZ GECELER"İ İLE SABAHATTİN ALİ'NİN "KÜRK MANTOLU MADONNA" ESERLERİNDE YALNIZ HAYALPERESTLER: KARŞILAŞTIRMALI BİR ANALİZ*

M. Önder GÖNCÜOĞLU

Yrd. Doç. Dr., Muğla Sıtkı Koçman Üniversitesi,
Batı Dilleri ve Edebiyatları Bölümü, İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Anabilim Dalı,
goncuoglu@mu.edu.tr

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Abstract

Loneliness is a universal phenomenon that individuals experience at some point their lives regardless of their culture. Hence, the concept of loneliness has been repeatedly discussed and analyzed not only by philosophers, sociologists, psychologists, but also by a great number of writers all through history because of its pervasive role in our individual and social lives. While loneliness as a theme, in general, is employed along with the idea of alienation, in Russian literature, it seems to be related to the term of 'superfluous man.' The ideas of dream and love, likewise, have been reflected in many works of art and literature. In this light, this paper, within a comparative framework, analyzes two outstanding works - Fyodor Dostoevsky's *White Nights* (1848) and Sabahattin Ali's *Madonna in a Fur Coat* (1943) - in terms of their main characters' superfluous tendencies diversified by the themes of loneliness, dream, and love.

Öz

Yalnızlık, kültür ayırt etmeksizin bireylerin yaşamlarının belli dönemlerinde tecrübe ettikleri bir durum olarak insan varoluşunun en evrensel temalarından biridir. Yaşamımızın her safhasında etkin bir role sahip olduğundan yalnız belirli disiplinlerin uzmanlarıncı-- felsefeciler, sosyologlar ve psikologlar gibi-- tartışılmamış insanlık tarihi boyunca pek çok yazarın eserine de konu olmuştur. Genel olarak yabancılaşma teması etrafında tartışılmış olan yalnızlık sorunsalı Rus Edebiyatında 'lüzumsuz adam' kavramıyla bambaşka bir veçhe kazanmıştır. Yalnızlık temasına paralel olarak aşk ve hayal temaları da pek çok edebi eserde kullanılmıştır. Aşk, hayal ve yalnızlık kavramlarını merkeze alan bu çalışma Dostoevski'nin *Beyaz Geceler*'i ile Sabahattin Ali'nin *Kürk Mantolu Madonna* adlı eserlerindeki ana karakterleri 'lüzumsuz adam' kavramı etrafında karşılaştırmalı olarak tartışan bir çalışmadır.

1. Exile From Wor(l)d: 'The Superfluous Man' in Literature

Dostoevsky's *White Nights* (1848) and Sabahattin Ali's *Madonna in a Fur Coat* (1943), despite differences regarding the time periods they were written in and their authors' nationality and political demographics, still correspond to one another in how they narrate very lonely lives. Both works primarily capture the routine lives of outcast characters who, while not in tune with their milieus, seem secluded from society, exiled in feelings of loneliness, dreaming of a notion of wholeness missing in their lives. Hence, the theme of love plays an eminent role in their search for that idea of wholeness.

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As a phenomenon loneliness seems to have preoccupied every single individual more or less in the history of mankind, and hence as a theme it seems to have been employed very frequently in literary works in general and in Russian literature in particular from the mid nineteenth century on with the works of Goncharov, Pushkin, Turgenev, and Dostoevsky. While loneliness as a theme in general is employed along with the idea of alienation, in Russian literature, it seems to be related with the term of ‘superfluous man’. In William Harkin’s *Dictionary of Russian Literature* the superfluous man is described as “a hero who is sensitive to social and ethical problems but who fails to act, partly because of personal weakness, partly because of political and social restraints” (373). Although there are some earlier examples such as Pushkin’s Onegin in *Eugene Onegin* (1825), the usage of the term superfluous man began to be used commonly only after the publication of Turgenev’s *The Diary of a Superfluous Man*. Lermontov’s Pechorin from *A Hero of Our Time*, Turgenev’s Bazarov in *Fathers and Sons*, Ivan Goncharov’s *Oblomov*, and Dostoevsky’s the underground man in *The Notes from the Underground* are some of the well-known characters introducing the idea of superfluous man. However, similar to the primary characteristics of Superfluous man, some new literary characters were employed in the early twentieth century as well through the works of Tolstoy, Chekhov and Gorky.

What brings all these characters together under the rubric of the idea of superfluity according to Ellen Chances is that they —“*Eugene Onegin, Pechorin, Rudin, Bazarov, Dostoevsky’s Underground Man, Raskolnikov, Ivan Karamazov, Anna Karenina, Andrey Bolkonsky, many Chekhov protagonists, and certain post-Chekhov* — are linked with one another with their unconventionality when juxtaposed with society or some order” (19-20). However, although they seem to have unconventionality and unconformity in common defining their position as alienated and idle characters, Patterson righteously refuses this generalization by arguing that then “any nonconformist in Russian literature is a superfluous man—*Dostoevsky’s Father Zosima, for instance who doesn’t see as the world sees or speaks as it demands; yet, given his sense of meaning and direction in life, he surely could not be included in the gallery of superfluous men*” (4).

When regarded comparatively, although both of the terms - superfluous man and alienated individual - share some similarities, in Russian literature the idea of alienated and lonely individual introduced as superfluous man is differentiated from the western perception of alienation and loneliness. Superfluous man stands

for a lonely and alienated figure whose cultural conflict between the Western and Russian teachings turns him into a character that is unable to connect with neither Western Europeans nor the Russians. He appears as a literary type who cannot find a place, and also a presence in life. Besides, he is also represented as a figure “unable to connect to those who, like him, are caught between the two worlds. He is incapable of joining them in comfortable self-deceit, and eventually he loses even the desire for human connection” (Hamren 17). The superfluous man, therefore, seems to have no agenda since he has no values positive or negative.

Dostoevsky’s representation of the superfluous man comes to stand for a figure as Pyman posits who “has lost the ground from beneath his (or her) feet, [...] has become a spiritual ‘wanderer’, an ‘outsider’ [...]. Totally withdrawn into self, indifferent to others, amnesiac towards the need for the absolute, the loss of the ‘positively beautiful,’” thereby moving “inexorably from dialogue to monologue to self destruction” (112). The alienation he feels, in this respect, is not only his alienation from the others but also even from the self. However, the superfluous man according to Hamren cannot be conceived of as consistently awe-inspiring or fully human. He, by this token, should be regarded as a disturbing figure, thereby presenting a problem rather than an alternative for the Russian imagination (19).

In this context, arguing the idea of lost, evil and loneliness, Hamren differentiates Western concept of evil from the Russian traditional understanding of evil by exemplifying the Grendel of *Beowulf* which according to him “has been largely subsumed in later Western works by characters who through their façade of glory and complexity suggest that the forbidden fruit might make one like God after all, albeit at a terrible price.” He accordingly posits that in Russian folk culture “the forbidden fruit is more likely to turn one into a beast, or even an insect, than into a god.” The Satan of Milton or Shelley, in terms of Russian literary tenets, should be considered as “strange” (21) because as it is argued by Simon in *Russian Literary Demonism and Orthodox Tradition*, demons in Russian literature are not Miltonic or Byronic, yet their essence is thoroughly nasty (32).

The idea of evilness, pessimism, alienation, and loneliness altogether under the idea of superfluous man comes to represent a figure more as a loser conflicting between the values of the West and the Orthodox teachings. Superfluous man, despite his intellectual potential in analyzing both life and his role within this life, comes to be seen alienated from his society, pessimist in nature and passive in his acts thereby not getting accorded with the teachings of his orthodox-traditional

values, thereby all turning him into an evil figure even like an anti-Christ entity, yet who is not as glorious and powerful as Miltonic Satan.

Superfluous man cannot take refuge in the Western perception of individuality either; he is more apt to get lost in a disastrous end. He, in this respect, is not “*any sort of Romantic, for he is ultimately as incapable of believing in himself as he is of believing in anything else*” (Hamren 24). The productivity emerging from loneliness and alienation known from the superfluous man’s Western counterparts cannot be found in the superfluous types of Russian Literature. In this respect, Camus’s *Stranger* with his intellectual talent of analytical observation and contemplation of social values, local morals and his role in a catastrophic life seems to turn him into a lonely but grandeur figure while the Superfluous man in Russian literature seems to “*know that beneath the flimsy fabric of his soul there is merely an empty space echoing with hollow, mad laughter. And when he ultimately destroys himself, one has to wonder what, after all, was left to be destroyed*” (Hamren 25).

The superfluous man’s loneliness and alienation and therefore his difficulty as Patterson remarks “lie in the failure of the encounter” (4) because the end of encounter comes to mean the end of the soul as well. Patterson referring to Mikhail Bakhtin’s *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Art* argues that dialogical element of a narrative is very similar to the dialogical element performed in life, and quoting from Bakhtin he foregrounds the significance of dialogue for which he remarks that “*two voices*” as Bakhtin has said “*is the minimum for life, the minimum for existence*” (4). It should be noted that according to Bakhtin a person can never be fully known or understood in the world and he conceptualizes this with his concept of unfinalizability suggesting that despite the fact that a person can change; this person cannot be revealed or conceptually finalized. Analyzing Dostoevsky’s work, Bakhtin employs the word polyphony to suggest that understanding cannot be held within a single person nor can it be actualized through a single mouth. Understanding hence requires a multitude of carrying voices, and needs, through a Bakhtinian perspective, a carnival. Carnival in this context enables distinct individual voices to be heard and to interact with each other. Each individual character with a voice speaking for the self and hence distinct from the other selves influences the readers’ perception of each voice imbued with a carnival. Each voice as a revelation of multitude of carrying voices, albeit contradictory and logically inconsistent, inevitably shapes both the character and the understanding. Thus,

the necessity of two voices for the minimum for life and existence suggests that the situation of superfluous man seems to be related with his “monological” perception of his position in his society, rather than the social or political conditions he is exposed to.

The superfluous man’s loneliness can be considered as an “exile from life,” however as Patterson remarks the loneliness or the alienation should be considered as more than an exile from life as *“it is a monological word that fails because it is incapable of evoking a reply that would give it meaning”* (5). His exile in this respect comes to stand for an exile from a discourse. Patterson explains the idea of this ‘exile from a discourse’ as follows: *“The superfluous man’s monological discourse stands outside of any process of becoming, his discourse is confining. Living outside any word that would open up a relation to another human being, he is shut up; imprisoned in his monological word, he is the opposite of the free man. Freedom means being free to become something other than what we are through a capacity for response; it is the freedom to move”* (6). Relating the idea of “monology” to the idea of freedom, Patterson likens the situation of superfluous man to Hamlet’s well known question “to be or not to be” with an example from Goncharov’s *Oblomov*

Oblomov question was, for him, deeper than Hamlet’s question. To go forward meant to suddenly throw the loose dressing gown not only off his shoulders but off his mind, off his soul. Oblomov’s question is, in fact the same as Hamlet’s question, which is one that we all confront: “to be or not to be” is the same as “to be free or not to be free.” Life or isolation? [...] Oblomov the main character has trouble even moving from his bed; Chulkaturin in Turgenev’s *Diary of a Superfluous Man* also presents himself in terms of confinement, writing his diary from his sickbed and gazing upon a world whose spring is out of sync with his own winter season. As for those characters who take up some movement through space—Onegin, Rudin, and Mikhail Lermontov’s hero Pechorin, for example—their wanderings are merely escape attempts, failed efforts to free themselves from idle chat and loose gowns (6).

Superfluous man’s monological discourse becomes his imprisonment where despite his efforts to achieve freedom by mastering his superfluity, he, on the contrary, cannot achieve this freedom sought out from a self-imprisonment. His failure in establishing a dialogical relation to others causes him to have a dialogical relation in his monologues with himself, where he accordingly enslaves himself “in

the confines of his discourse” and which according to Patterson “*becomes the place of his exile*” (7). Considered through “master and slave relation”, his role brings about an imprisonment of himself instead of mastering an Other in an outer dialogical relation. His becoming at a loss for words results in his loss of freedom (7).

Superfluous man is undoubtedly a nineteenth century Russian literary figure who is at odds with both himself and his environment. It however seems that the idea of superfluity became influential to a great number of literary figures which went beyond those of nineteenth century Russian literature thereby surpassing a particular culture of a certain time. Centering around their characters’ superfluous attributes, Sabahattin Ali’s *Madonna in a Fur Coat* and Dostoevsky’s *White Nights* share on this ground some similarities diversified with the themes of loneliness, dream and love.

2. Separateness of Togetherness’: *Madonna in a Fur Coat*

Written almost a century after Dostoevsky’s *White Nights*, *Madonna in a Fur Coat* tells the story of Raif Efendi in two parts. In the first part, we are introduced to Raif Efendi who as a translator works in an Ankara bank in the 1940s. Raif Efendi is a nondescript, tolerant man, who accepts life with complete indifference to an extent that he even seems to be indifferent to all insults against him. Raif Efendi is one of those ordinary men that we come across every day in the streets, thereby never drawing our attention. As the narrator remarks: “... *he was hardly an extraordinary man. ...he was rather ordinary ... – no different from the hundreds of others we meet and fail to notice in the course of a normal day. ... He was, in the end, the sort of man who causes us to ask ourselves: ‘What do they live for? What do they find in life? What logic compels them to keep breathing... as they wander the earth?’*” (Ali 1). If we fail to look beyond the surface, he comes to be a person completely indifferent to anything in the life. Then we learn that he endures insults not only at work but also at home. His story is told by a young man who one day begins working as an assistant at the same bank and gets to know about this passive, shy, and silent man. In the second part, this assistant - the narrator of the background story - tells Raif Efendi’s secret hidden inside his black book, including the notes taken ten years ago dated 20 June 1933, about his life in Berlin. By means of his diary, we learn about Raif Efendi more elaborately. Of those very telling days of his in Germany, Raif Efendi comes to represent a character superfluously idle, and alienated not only from his society and family but also from himself.

Raif Efendi leaves his home in rural Turkey to learn modern techniques of soap making in 1920s Berlin. However, Raif wastes his time idly wandering around without having dialogical relations of any sort with others but he is stuck inside the imprisonment of his thoughts and dreams, turning himself into a passive, idle, and lonely person. Last but not least, he becomes a dreamer enslaving himself in the confines of his dreams. As a revelation of his idleness, he even notes in his diary that

It was as if I had forgotten why I had come to Germany. Whenever I received a letter from Father I was reminded of the soap trade and I would write back saying that I was still learning German: very soon, I assured him, I would seek a suitable training college. By saying this, I was deluding both him and myself. The days slipped by, each one much the same as the other. I explored every part of the city. I visited the museums and the zoo. In the space of a few months I had, I thought, seen all that this city of millions had to offer, and this plunged me into despair. ‘So this is Europe,’ I said to myself. ‘Why all the fuss?’ From here it was a short road to the conclusion that the world itself was a place of little interest. Most afternoons I spent wandering through the crowds along the broad avenues, watching men heading home, their grave expressions speaking of important business, or women with vapid smiles and languorous eyes, hanging onto the arms of men who still marched like soldiers (48).

Although his situation may remind one of a Sartrean existentialist understanding of existence, thereby suggesting a pessimist and nihilist perception of the world to some extent, Raif Efendi’s similarity to his Russian counterparts in his aimless wanderings can be considered as superfluous if Patterson’s interpretation of superfluity is remembered: “*Onegin, Rudin, and Mikhail Lermontov’s hero Pechroin, for example - their wanderings are merely escape attempts, failed efforts to free themselves from idle chat and loose gowns*” (6). On this account, Raif Efendi’s wandering the streets aimlessly comes to represent his escape attempts from his own enslavement. Therefore, regardless of the place he wanders through or the people he observes do not make change. Whether it is Berlin, Germany, or Ankara, Turkey, he is captivated in his own monology.

With respect to the idea of ‘Existentialism’ in Turkey, Dirlikyapan argues that “*following the Second World War, Existentialism became a well-known and significant philosophical and cultural movement, mainly through the public*

prominence of two French writers, Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus” (4). She also remarks that influenced by the existentialist movement, “Turkish writers changed their views about realism. They started to exhibit the inner world of the individual in depth. They actively used images, metaphors, different modes of time and space abstractions in order to produce the flexibility in the language that is essential for and well matched with profundity” (4). The literary period that is coming after the 1950s*, according to Leyla Erbil, was therefore the “age of detachment from tradition”. Dirlikyapan argues that as “the techniques such as stream of consciousness, inner speeches, and inner monologues arose at the beginning of the century with such writers as James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, and Marcel Proust; in Turkish literature, these techniques were used actively by the avant-garde generation of 1950s” (6).

Sabahattin Ali’s *Madonna in a Fur Coat* was first written as a series in the “Hakikat” of the late 1930s and published as a novel in 1943. In other words, Sabahattin Ali was productive in the second half of the 1930s and the early half of the 1940s. In the course of this prolific period, he published five volumes of short stories, one novella and three novels. Therefore, when Sabahattin Ali’s life span and the period he wrote in are regarded overall, it can be argued that he, when compared to his literary successors, was under the influence of a literary tradition centering on the idea of the superfluity and melancholy of nineteenth century Russian literature and the idea of alienation of early Western literature. Sevengül Sönmez remarks the authors that became influential to Ali were “Maxim Gorky, Mikhail Sholokhov, Andre Malraux, Dostoevsky, Boccaccio, Edgar Allen Poe, Chekov, Goethe, Schiller, Prosper Merimee, Heinrich Von Kleist, Jacob Wassermann, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, Thomas Mann, Tolstoy, Rilke, Gottfried Keller, Knut Hamsun and Shakespeare” (424-427). Ramazan Korkmaz adds Turgenev, Maupassant, and E.T.A. Hoffman to this list (31).

* Some of the authors wrote after 1950s with a particular concern for alienation as İlhan notes are: “Atilla İlhan’s *Sokaktaki Adam* (1953), Yusuf Atılgan’s *Aylak Adam* (1959) and *Anayurt Otel* (1973), Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar’s *Saatleri Ayarlama Enstitüsü* (1961), Oğuz Atay’s *Tutunamayanlar* (1972), Tahsin Yücel’s *Mutfak Çıkmazı* (1960), *Peygamberin Son Beş Günü* (1992), *Buyuk Söylencesi* (1995), *Vatandaş* (1995), *Yalan* (2002), *Kumru ile Kumru* (2005), *Gökdelen* (2006), Adalet Ağaoğlu’s *Ölmeye Yatmak* (1973) and *Bir Dügün Gecesi* (1979), Ferit Edgü’s *Hakkâri’de Bir Mevsim* (1977), Latife Tekin’s *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* (1983), Vüsat O. Bener’s *Buzul Çağının Virüsü* (1984), Bilge Karasu’s *Gece* (1985), Hasan Ali Toptaş’s *Gölgesizler* (1995) and *Kayıp Hayaller Kitabı* (1999), Hilmi Yavuz’s *Fehmi K.’nin Acayip Serüvenleri* (1991), Orhan Pamuk’s *Kara Kitap* (1990) and *Kar* (2002), Elif Şafak’s *Mahrem* (2000) and *Araf* (2004)” (45).

Melahat Togar, who was one of those who had been to Germany with Sabahattin Ali, stresses that there are some very salient similarities between Raif Efendi and Sabahattin Ali in terms of their literary likes. She notes that the novels Raif Efendi reads during his stay in Germany are the same as the novels Sabahattin Ali read when he was in Germany (19). Sabahattin Ali was therefore an author who was highly engaged in late nineteenth century Russian literature, and was familiar with the philosophy of superfluity that was predominant in the works he read.

On this note, it is not surprising to see that Raif Efendi is fond of reading, thereby strengthening his vision of selfhood all alone captivated by his dreams. In almost every one of the books he reads he seems to find something of himself. Besides, it is worth noting that the Russian authors in general, Turgenev, in particular, are the most influential for him. He notes in his diary that

A new world had opened itself up to me. I had moved beyond the translated literature of my childhood, in which heroic figures embarked on unrivalled adventures. The books I was now reading spoke of people like me, of the world I saw and heard around me. They spoke of things I had witnessed but not really grasped. Now their true meanings began to emerge. I was influenced most profoundly by the Russians. I read all of the great Turgenev's stories in one sitting (49).

It should be remembered that Turgenev is the author who gave the title "The Diary of a Superfluous Man" to one of his works that included the life, perception, and superfluity of his main character. Moreover, it is worth noting that Sabahattin Ali according to Cevdet Kudret first wanted to give the title "Lüzumsuz Adam" (Superfluous Man) to *Madonna in a Fur Coat*; however, as he did not like the way it sounds in Turkish, he gave it up (qtd in Sönmez 330). Moreover, it is not surprising either that Raif Efendi is fond of reading, thereby strengthening his vision of selfhood all alone, captivated by his dreams.

A lonely dreamer, Raif Efendi is imprisoned in his dreams where, deprived of a dialogical relation to others, he enslaves himself. His dreams therefore become the place of his exile. However, it should be noted that through his notes, we learn that his obsessive loneliness dates back to his childhood: *"I had always been one of those quite boys who preferred dreams to the real world... My greatest pleasure was to sit alone beside the river, or in the far corner of the garden, and let my thoughts waft away. My daydreams were in sharp contrast to real life; they were full of*

adventure and heroic deeds” (43-44). He is such a dreamer that the real women he admires come to his mind in ultimate silence where he makes love with them. He notes this in his diary as follows: *“the only women I knew were the creatures that stirred my imagination. They might feature in the thousand and one fantasies I concocted as I lay under olive trees on hot summer nights, far from material concerns...”* (55).

He also notes that despite his shyness he is pleased to make love to them as his dreams enable him to have such a pleasure that cannot be achieved in real life: *“... when I entertained these women in my mind, I would engineer scenes that even the most masterful lover would have found daunting, and when I imagined these girls’ smouldering lips pressed against mine, it seemed to me an intoxication far greater than anything real life could bring”* (55). Living with the dreams he conducts through the stories he has read since his childhood foreshadows his loneliness he would practice in Berlin.

The loneliness and abandonment that he has been suffering from since his childhood seems to be taken to a further extent with his obsessed romance with Maria Puder in Berlin. During one of his long and lonely wanderings through the city, Raif Efendi sees Puder’s self-portrait ‘Madonna in a Fur Coat’ in a gallery. He expresses how the portrait affected him as follows:

What was it about that portrait? I know that words alone will not suffice. All I can say is that she wore a strange, formidable, haughty and almost wild expression, one that I had never seen before on a woman. But while that face was utterly new to me, I couldn’t help but feel that I had seen her many times before. Surely I knew this pale face, this dark brown hair, this dark brow, these dark eyes that spoke of eternal anguish and resolve. I had known that woman since I’d opened my first book at the age of seven – since I’d started, at the age of five, to dream. I saw in her echoes of Halit Ziya Uşaklıgil’s Nihal, Vecihi Bey’s Mehçure, and Cavalier Buridan’s beloved. I saw the Cleopatra I had come to know in history books, and Muhammad’s mother, Amine Hatun, of whom I had dreamed while listening to the Mevlit prayers. She was a swirling blend of all the women I had ever imagined. Dressed in the pelt of a wildcat, she was mostly in shadow, but for a sliver of a pale white neck, and an oval face was turned slightly to the left. Her dark eyes were lost in thought, absently staring into the distance, drawing on a last wisp of hope as she searched for something that she was almost certain she

would never find. Yet mixed in with the sadness was a sort of challenge. It was as if she were saying, 'Yes, I know. I won't find what I'm looking for... and what of it?' (51).

The image as seen in his words does not solely correspond to the artistic quality of that piece of art. As a combination of all the women he knew from the books he had been reading since his childhood, she even comes to represent an idealized image that Raif Efendi creates in his own dreamland. Her eyes strike him highly where the gaze seems to have a mystical meaning reflecting a profound thought that cannot be deciphered in real world. He, therefore, notes that "her... eyes looked as if they were drawn up in incomprehensible, profound thought; searching with a last modicum of hope for something they'd been assured was impossible to find" (57). This incomprehensible and mystic look highly affects Raif Efendi. He, therefore, visits the gallery to observe her almost every day. His obsession with the portrait represents how the monology he practices in his dreams keeps him away from other people and how it becomes a part of his self-exile:

[t]his painting of the Madonna in a Fur Coat had shaken me- so much so that the very thought of imagining her in such a scene was impossible. I could not begin to imagine it. I could not even imagine sitting beside her as a friend. All I wanted was to stand before that painting for hours on end, gazing into those dark, unseeing eyes. And the desire to do so only grew. I threw on my coat and headed back to the gallery. It was on like that for days. Every afternoon, I would stroll in, pretending to stop to inspect each painting in the gallery, as my impatience grew. For all I wanted was to go straight to my Madonna. When at last I reached it, I would make as if I had noticed the painting for the first time. And there I would remain, until the doors of the gallery were about to close." (56)

Attracted by the image, Raif Efendi is struck by it to an extent that he cannot recognize Maria Puder when she talks to him because he is bewitched by his obsessive dreams in front of Maria Puder's self-portrait. Asking him why he visits the gallery everyday and observes that portrait, Puder seems to be an intruder for Raif Efendi, as she breaks an exile he conducts through his interior silence.

However, Maria Puder and Raif Efendi become very close friends and eventually lovers. Their relationship is more like a close bond holding them together with their personal loneliness. Their dialogue foregrounds a type of love formed

through their loneliness. Asked whether he is alone in Berlin, Raif Efendi cannot reply openly to her open question. Realizing his hesitation, Puder repeats her question in a way that this time reveals more than the question she asks at first: “I mean ... alone ... with no one else ... spiritually alone ... How can I put it ... you have such an air about you that...” To this, Raif Efendi replies: “I understand ... I am completely alone ... But not just in Berlin ... alone in all of the world ... since I was a child...” Holding his hands in hers, Maria Puder likewise says, “Me too... so alone sometimes I feel like I can’t breathe... as lonely as a sick dog” (75). Likewise, Maria Puder seems to be referring to this when she says: “You will see that I am a person living in my head, or rather from the world” (90).

Although the story told through their melodramatic relationship seems to be a story centering around the idea of love, and its incompleteness, both characters can be regarded lonely both separately and together. However, when compared to Raif Efendi, Maria Puder expresses the causes of her loneliness while Raif Efendi himself does not reveal much about the causes of his sense of loneliness. We can only deduce from the story that Raif Efendi suffers from two kinds of loneliness: one is the loneliness he conducts for only himself in his mind enriched through his dreams; the other is a loneliness he is exposed to when he loses Maria Puder. In terms of his revelation of his loneliness he notes in his diary: “When I thought about how few people I’d come to know during my two years in Germany, I was truly shocked. I had never strayed far from Berlin, but I’d been to every museum, gallery, botanical garden, forest, lake and zoo. Yet in a city of millions I had only spoken to a handful of people and only really come to know one” (151).

However, Maria Puder relates her angst and loneliness partly to the atrocities of the world shaped through patriarchal teachings. She, therefore, seems to be frustrated when she remarks that she hates all the men in the world, as they are apt to demand anything from others as if it was a privilege granted them naturally: “Do you know why I hate you? You and every other man in the world? Because you ask so much of us, as if it were your natural right... it’s how men look at us and smile at us. It’s how they raise their hands... It is how they treat us... you’d have to be blind not to see how much confidence they have, and how stupidly they achieve it” (80).

Both lonely and without rest, Raif Efendi and Maria Puder seem to be comrades in their relationship rather than lovers. Making love eventually, a night after a long weary evening, partly because of much drinking, the couple seems to be

resentful of their intercourse, in opposition to the readers' expectation. Maria, feeling herself lost and hollow, tells Raif Efendi that she is not in love with him and adds:

“So I suppose this means that people can only get so close to each other and then they must drift apart, each time they try to take one step closer. I cannot tell you how much I did not want our intimacy to have a limit, or an end. What truly saddens me is seeing how empty my hopes have turned out to be... Now there is no point in deceiving one another... we can no longer speak openly as we did before. We sacrificed it all and for what, why? Nothing at all! In attempting to possess something that was never there we lost something we already had” (121).

Their story goes beyond the typical characteristics of a love story and foregrounds the primary problem of existences steeped in ‘separateness of togetherness’. Despite their reunion, they cannot achieve the expected happiness. On the contrary, Raif Efendi, called back to his homeland because of his father’s sudden death, waits for Maria’s arrival as they agreed before his departure. However, receiving no letter from Maria Puder after some time, Raif Efendi believes that she had lost her attraction to him. Later, it turns out to be the case that she cannot write, as she has died. It is important to note here that although he knows that he will never find her, he also knows that he will keep searching for her, lonely as a dreamer in his dreams. Besides, it is also worth noting that Raif Efendi feels almost nothing when he learns about his father’s death. What he is after seems to be neither Maria Puder nor her love but the camaraderie he feels with her, that is the idea of a partnership in search of freedom from self-enslavement. The narrator likewise remarks at the end of the novel that despite Raif’s death, Raif Efendi will be influential in his life: “... *he’d left his life behind and entered mine. And there he would remain, truly alive - more so than anyone I’d known. Wherever I went, he’d be there at my side*” (167-168). The narrator involved in the same partnership in search of freedom from the self-enslavement makes it a triple camaraderie.

Consequently, *Madonna in a Fur Coat* tells the story of Raif Efendi as a lonely dreamer who, with a self-consciousness of his own superfluity, can be likened to the superfluous man we know from nineteenth century Russian literature. Raif Efendi reveals this as follows:

... life was meant to be lived, as these people were doing. They were taking their share of life, and giving something back. What was I in comparison? What did my soul ever do, apart from gnawing away at me like a woodworm? This gramophone, this wooden inn, this ice-covered lake, these snow-covered trees and this jumbled crowd: they were all busy with the tasks that life had given them. There was meaning in everything they did, even if I could not see at first glance. And I was but the wheel that had spun off its axle, still searching for reasons as I wobbled off into the void. No doubt I was the most useless man in the world. The world would be no worse off without me. I expected nothing of anyone and no one expected anything of me (125-126).

As a dreamer, his monological discourse becomes his imprisonment and his failure in establishing a dialogical relation to others causes him from the very beginning to go deep into dreams enslaving him with his own monologues. His monologues through Patterson's perspective therefore become the place of his exile. He is self-conscious, shy, passive, introverted, not combative, and indifferent to people, fleeing from life, yet with a psychological insight both feeding his dreams and enlarging his exile. Therefore, when he learns in the end that he has sired a daughter with Maria Puder, the only thing he can do becomes the best thing he can do: that is, to maintain the dreams captivating him. After Germany, although he gets married and has children, he still feels the same as what he felt before he went to Germany: *"Can there be another soul wandering this great globe who is as lonely as I? Is there a man wandering alone in this huge world as I do? What is more? I do not remember saying anything to anyone for ten years"* (41). Therefore, the end comes to be akin to the beginning. The story can be likened to a loop that viciously keeps him in his own dreamed exile.

3. *White Nights* imbued with Madonna's Fur

Fyodor Dostoevsky as a hallmark in nineteenth century Russian literature does not simply portray the Russian society; he goes beyond time barriers to reflect both the complex nature and the complicated situation of implicated modern man. His fiction can be conceived of as the reflections of any man that is at odds not only with his environment but also with himself as an outcome of outer causes. Therefore, it is not surprising that his works have influenced not only his successors in Russian Literature but also other writers from various cultures to emerge in the twentieth century. Influencing a great number of literary figures after

him, Dostoevsky himself was influenced by some as well. As Martinsen remarks: “[H]is most obvious Western predecessors were Thomas De Quincey, Edgar Allan Poe, Alfred de Musset and Jean- Jacques Rousseau; his most obvious Russian predecessors were Nikolai Karamzin, Nikolai Gogol, Mikhail Lermontov, Alexander Herzen, and Ivan Turgenev” (261). As noted herein, Dostoevsky’s characters with superfluous tendencies were keen practitioners of a certain kind of isolation, suggesting a continual nonconformity throughout their lives. They live in tiny and distastefully furnished rooms set in cheap neighborhoods. “We recall Raskolnikov’s ‘coffin’, ‘the crowded pigsty’ of the Marmeladov family, the underground man’s ‘mouse hole’, the room of the narrator of the classic *White Nights*, ‘into which a different sun shines’, and Makar Devushkin’s corner of a kitchen” (Fanger 200-201).

Similar to Raif Efendi’s constructing and developing his dream-lands in his cramped hotel room, the narrator of *White Nights* takes refuge superfluously in his dark grungy room. Without rest and enslaved in his mind, the narrator of *White Nights* defines his room as follows: “For two evenings I was puzzling my brains to think what was amiss in my corner; why I felt so uncomfortable in it. And in perplexity, I scanned my grimy green walls, my ceiling covered with a spider’s web, the growth of which Matrona has so successfully encouraged” (2). Alienated both from society, family and even themselves, Dostoevsky’s characters are imprisoned in their monological word.

Dostoevsky’s novella *White Nights*, written in 1848, almost a century before Sabahattin Ali’s *Madonna in a Fur Coat*, tells the story of its narrator and protagonist known only as “the dreamer.” Similar to *Madonna in a Fur Coat* where we learn about Raif Efendi’s story dating ten years before it is explained, we learn of the lonely dreamer’s story of *White Nights* that also took place fifteen years ago.

Despite its complicated tones embedded in its plot structure, *White Nights* on the surface seems to be like a simple love story where the downhearted young narrator on his way home one evening comes across a seventeen-year-old young girl, Nastenka. He rescues her from a drunken man hoping to take advantage of her. Lonely and introverted, he who has thus far avoided human contact, particularly with women, immediately falls in love with Nastenka. Gaining her confidence, the narrator gets a chance to see her the next evening. They see each other four nights, during which the narrator falls even more deeply in love with her. On the fourth night, Nastenka’s lover, of whose love she has serious doubts,

returns from Moscow and takes her away. The following morning the narrator goes back to his dingy room where he recounts what has happened to him.

The story is centered on the idea of how the lonely dreamer is ensnared by the fantasies he creates and nurtures through interior monologues. Similar to Raif Efendi of *Madonna in A Fur Coat*, the dreamer narrator wanders the city streets idly and lives his life in his own mind. He lives in Saint Petersburg and suffers from loneliness; his dreams, imbued with loneliness, become his place of exile. From the very onset of *White Nights*, the similarity between its main male character and Raif Efendi is noticeable in terms of their loneliness. Both characters in this respect, suffering from loneliness, yet with a self awareness of their situation, cannot find any vital purpose in life to pursue.

The authors of both works - Sabahattin Ali and Dostoevsky - travelling to Western Europe and returning to their homelands with displeasing memories regarding the Western perception of individuality, seem to represent their characters not being akin to the individual types of the Western type of the modern individual. Their dreamers are more like self-exiles from any kind of personal discourse that would repurpose their lives becoming whole, despite their attempt to develop an alternate becoming in their dreams.

Both Raif Efendi and the narrator of *White Nights* wander aimlessly in the streets. Although they are in need of companionship and at some points of their lives hold onto the idea of love that may bring about a remedy for their loneliness, neither of them can change his destiny in the end. Their shared tragedy seems to be related to characteristics of superfluity. Both seem to be passive, timid, introverted intellectual types. While they are dissatisfied with life, they seem to be indifferent toward undertaking any aim to change it, preferring to live in the world of dreams. While life creates different events and situations around them, these situations cannot help them break their ties, thereby further ensnaring them in their own self-exile. By means of daydreams, dreams, and passivity, they guide themselves through a maze of interior monologues rendered with realms of fantasy.

At the very onset of *White Nights*, the narrator reveals his loneliness in a way very similar to Raif Efendi's confession regarding his loneliness: "*It suddenly seemed to me that I was lonely, that everyone was forsaking me and going away from me. Of course, any one is entitled to ask who 'every one' was. For though I had been living almost eight years in Petersburg I had hardly an acquaintance*" (1). Although he lived in St. Petersburg for eight years, the narrator comes to be

someone without friends, and yet not worry much about this. Likewise, although he knew Berlin almost with its all dead-end streets, Raif Efendi writes self-consciously a very similar note in his diary: *“When I thought about how few people I’d come to know during my two years in Germany, I was truly shocked”* (151).

Typical of a superfluous man, the narrator of *White Nights* seems to have a self-awareness of his own situation that causes him to suffer from loneliness; however, he nonetheless seems overly busy reworking his monologues to find a way to rescue himself from his self-imprisonment: *“I felt ashamed, mortified and sad that I had nowhere to go for the holidays and no reason to go away. I was ready to go away with every wagon, to drive off with every gentleman of respectable appearance who took a cab; but no one - absolutely no one - invited me; it seemed they had forgotten me, as though really I were a stranger to them!”* (3). He therefore turns back to practice what he seems to be doing best: wandering all alone to maintain his interior monologues, which while keeping him busy at the same time, hurls him in the endless tours he takes in the streets: *“I took long walks, succeeding, as I usually did, in quite forgetting where I was, when I suddenly found myself at the city gates”* (4).

As a revelation indicating how he is exiled in his own monology confining him in an exile, Dostoevsky foregrounds the narrator’s loneliness with interior monologues where he talks to the houses in the streets he walks through, and the personified houses speak to him as well: *“Good-morning! How do you do? I am quite well, thank God, and I am to have a new storey in May,”* or, *“How are you? I am being redecorated to-morrow;”* or, *“I was almost burnt down and had such a fright”* (2). In another instance, referring to one of those houses, the narrator seems to be upset with what he learns from his friend [the house]: *“Suddenly last week I walked along the street, and when I looked at my friend I heard a plaintive, ‘They are painting me yellow!’ The villains! The barbarians! They had spared nothing, neither columns, nor cornices, and my poor little friend was as yellow as a canary”* (2). Similar to Raif Efendi, the narrator of *White Nights* comes to represent a lonely dreamer. The title of the novella already includes the sub-note that it is “a sentimental story from the diary of a dreamer.” The common ground of each of these fantasizing characters rests on his being a lonely dreamer enslaving himself in the existence of a non-existent dialogical relationship.

The events that potentially seem to provide them with an opportunity to free themselves from their own enslavement also look very similar. While Raif Efendi's relationship with Maria Puder seems to be an attempt to rescue him from his confining dreams, in *White Nights* the narrator's relationship with Nastenka likewise can be perceived of as a vain attempt to find a remedy for his loneliness. In their early twenties neither of them have had any relationship with a woman in reality as they are highly engaged in their dreams where there is no room for a real relationship.

After an encounter of each with a young woman - Maria Puder in Raif's story and Nastenka in *White Nights* - their failure in establishing a bond with the outer world seems to be very alike. Raif becomes bewitched with Maria Puder's 'Portrait', and in *White Nights* the narrator becomes attracted to Nastenka. They look very similar in their attempts to build a bond with reality by chance. Coming across the portrait his *Madonna in a Fur Coat*, and coming across Nastenka by a river, the narrators, despite these women's rescuing potentials, cannot achieve the freedom to let them free themselves from their own enslavements. They are such dreamers that they have no idea about having a real relationship with others. In *White Nights*, the narrator's words reveal his captivity in his dream lands: "*I am a complete stranger to women; that is, I have never been used to them. You see, I am alone ... I don't even know how to talk to them. Here, I don't know now whether I have not said something silly to you*" (6-7). The narrator in *White Nights*, in this respect, is similar to Raif Efendi and can only have his relations with women in his dreams. The narrator's dialogue with Nastenka indicates his captivity in his dreams as such: "Oh, if only you knew how often I have been in love in that way." "How? With whom?" asks Nastenka, and to this the narrator reveals his role as a dreamer: "*[W]ith no one, with an ideal, with the one I dream of in my sleep. I make up regular romances in my dreams. Ah, you don't know me! It's true, of course, I have met two or three women, but what sort of women were they? They were all landladies, that*" (7). On a critical note, Nastenka's reply could be regarded as an intentionally determined utterance by Dostoevsky, suggesting the reminiscent of the superfluity of such a character. Learning that the narrator is captivated by his dreams, Nastenka therefore appeals to him: "*Don't be vexed; I am only laughing at your being your own enemy, and if you had tried you would have succeeded, perhaps, even though it had been in the street; the simpler the better*" (8). Being an enemy of his own, the narrator's superfluity in this respect is justified by Nastenka's reply. The superfluous man at odds with both

life and himself is reminiscent of Nastenka's identification with the primary characteristics of a superfluous man.

As lonely dreamers, Raif's and the Narrator's obsessions with the dreamed, desired, and also objectified and fetishized images of the female character seem to have similarities as well. Similar to Raif's obsessive trips to the art-gallery to see his *Madonna in a Fur Coat*, the dreamer narrator in *White Nights* seems to be obsessed with Nastenka's presence in his dreams. He therefore cannot stand not dreaming of Nastenka:

I am a dreamer; I have so little real life that I look upon such moments as this now, as so rare, that I cannot help going over such moments again in my dreams. I shall be dreaming of you all night, a whole week, a whole year. I shall certainly come here to-morrow, just here to this place, just at the same hour, and I shall be happy remembering to-day. This place is dear to me already. I have already two or three such places in Petersburg. I once shed tears over memories ... like you (9).

Similar to Raif Efendi's story, the narrator's story in *White Nights* seems to be beyond a love story as he is after a kind of camaraderie he feels with Nastenka. The narrator's obsession with her foregrounds a similar idea of a partnership seen in *Madonna in a Fur Coat*. Like Raif Efendi, the narrator seems to be searching for a freedom from his self-enslavement. Soon after he achieves an opportunity to talk to her, the narrator implies this: "*Who knows, perhaps, you have reconciled me with myself, solved my doubts!*" (11). Alienated both from his environment and himself, the narrator seems to be suffering from loneliness similar to the one Raif Efendi suffers from. Reminiscent of the dialogue about the idea of loneliness between Maria Puder and Raif Efendi, a very similar dialogue between the narrator and Nastenka is easily noticed when Nastenka seems to be puzzled by the narrator's answer suggesting that he has no history of his own:

Tell me your whole history. 'My history!' I cried in alarm. 'My history! But who has told you I have a history? I have no history'. 'Then how have you lived, if you have no history?' she interrupted, laughing. 'Absolutely without any history! I have lived, as they say, keeping myself to myself, that is, utterly alone - alone, entirely alone. Do you know what it means to be alone?' 'But how alone? Do you mean you never saw any one?' 'Oh no, I see people, of course; but still I am

alone'. 'Why, do you never talk to any one?' 'Strictly speaking, with no one' (10).

In terms of his self consciousness with respect to his superfluity, the narrator also confesses his role in the world with his self-definition of himself as "a type" in his dialogue with Nastenka: "*Do you want to know the sort of man I am? ... In the very strictest sense of the word.*" "*Very well, I am a type!*" (13). Nastenka asks him with laughter: "*Type, type! what sort of type?*" Then the narrator self-consciously defines what he means by defining himself as a type: "*A type? A type is an original, it's an absurd person!*" I said, infected by her childish laughter. "*It's a character. Listen; do you know what is meant by a dreamer?*" His self awareness of his being a lonely dreamer is foregrounded with his note that as a dreamer he is not a 'human being': "*The dreamer - if you want an exact definition - is not a human being, but a creature of an intermediate sort. For the most part he settles in some inaccessible corner, as though hiding from the light of day; once he slips into his corner, he grows to it like a snail, or, anyway, he is in that respect very much like that remarkable creature, which is an animal and a house both at once, and is called a tortoise*" (14). Self-conscious of his own exile in his dreams, the narrator in *White Nights* in this respect comes to be similar to Raif Efendi who is indifferent to people, and fleeing from life yet with a psychological insight both feeding his dreams and enlarging his exile.

Having been in exile in their monology of control galvanized by their dreams, both the narrator in *White Nights* and Raif Efendi idealize these women as gift that they had been dreaming of for a long time and therefore they look familiar to the men when they come across them. Raif Efendi expresses his familiarity with this idealized woman when he sees the first time the portrait of Maria Puder as follows: "*I had known that woman since I'd opened my first book at the age of seven - since I'd started, at the age of five, to dream*" (51). Likewise, the narrator in *White Nights* expresses his familiarity as follows:

I am like the spirit of King Solomon when, after lying a thousand years under seven seals in his urn, those seven seals were at last taken off. At this moment, Nastenka, when we have met at last after such a long separation - for I have known you for ages, Nastenka, because I have been looking for someone for ages, and that is a sign that it was you I was looking for, and it was ordained that we should meet now (16).

The women dreamed as rescuers become the common ground upon which the narrator and Raif Efendi live. However, their attempts to free themselves by breaking their monologies through dialogues built around their relations with these women's real physical presence in their lives seem to fail in both narratives. Their dreams are unreliable. Confessing that he has always lived lonely in his dreams, the narrator in *White Nights* foreshadows his inability to free himself from his own exile. Startled by the narrator's confession, Nastenka asks: "*Surely you haven't lived like that all your life?*" The narrator, confessing emphatically, replies: "*All my life, Nastenka ... all my life, and it seems to me I shall go on so to the end*" (20).

In Raif Efendi's relation with Maria Puder, they seem to be comrades rather than lovers. That is why particularly Maria Puder becomes resentful of their intercourse, feeling that they have jeopardized their intimate partnership. Similarly, in *White Nights*, Nastenka prefers the narrator's camaraderie rather than his role as a lover in the relationship. She therefore remarks, although she is wrong, that she likes him so much more because the narrator is not in love with her: "*I like you because you have not fallen in love with me ... God sent you to me. What would have happened to me if you had not been with me now? How disinterested you are! How truly you care for me!*" (35).

Moreover, thinking that her lover will not return, Nastenka feels disappointed, and after she learns that the narrator loves her in contrast to what she has expected, she makes up her mind to become a couple with the narrator: "*Here with me, for you have not repulsed me as he has, for you love me while he has never loved me, for in fact, I love you myself ... Yes, I love you! I love you as you love me; I have told you so before, you heard it yourself - I love you because you are better than he is, because you are nobler than he is, because, because he ...*" (45).

Similar to Raif Efendi and Mari Puder, Nastenka and the narrator cannot achieve the expected happiness despite their dream of living happily together. Raif Efendi is called back to his homeland because of his father's sudden death and from then on, he regains his position as a lonely dreamer enslaving himself in his own monology. Likewise, the return of the mysterious lover in *White Nights* can, in this respect, be likened to the news informing Raif Efendi that he should move back to his homeland where he feels the same as what he felt before he went to Germany; lonely, introverted, and a dreamer. On this account, receiving a letter from Nastenka informing him in agony that her lover has returned and that she will marry him, the narrator inevitably finds himself in a position very akin to what it

was like at the very beginning. Similar to what happens at the end of *Madonna in a Fur Coat*, the last paragraph of *White Nights* comes to be akin to the beginning where we see that the story like a loop keeps the dreamer-narrator in his own dreamed exile:

I suddenly pictured my room grown old ... The walls and the floors looked discoloured, everything seemed dingy; the spiders' webs were thicker than ever. I don't know why, but when I looked out of the window it seemed to me that the house opposite had grown old and dingy too, that the stucco on the columns was peeling off and crumbling, that the cornices were cracked and blackened, and that the walls, of a vivid deep yellow, were patchy (51).

He therefore envisions his changeless future as follows: “*Either the sunbeams suddenly peeping out from the clouds for a moment were hidden again behind a veil of rain, and everything had grown dingy again before my eyes; or perhaps the whole vista of my future flashed before me so sad and forbidding, and I saw myself just as I was now, fifteen years hence, older, in the same room, just as solitary*” (52). Terras remarks, when Nastenka returns to her former lover:

What is left ... is the empty shell of a man ... the Dreamer of fifteen years after is none other than the Underground Man who is after all nothing but a disillusioned romantic forty-year-old. While true romantic dreamers (e.g., Anselmus in E.T.A. Hoffmann's tale *Der Goldene Topf*) retire into a world of fantasy and eternal bliss (i.e., go out of their minds), Dostoevsky's are left to the despair of slow decay in a life that is as empty spiritually as it is physically revolting (87).

4. Conclusion

Consequently, although the narrator in *White Nights* knows that he will never reach Nastenka, similar to Raif Efendi's search he also knows that he will keep searching for her, lonely as a dreamer in his dreams. The common ground for these two anti-heroes emerges as the fact that their search is beyond the idea of a need for love. Theirs is more about the idea of a camaraderie they feel with these women. In other words, it is the idea of possibility in search of freedom from self-enslavement. Their loneliness in this respect is not a loneliness that they are punished by the external world, but it is the loneliness they have been bound up with since the time they discovered that theirs is an eternal struggle to search for freedom out of their internal world.

Superfluous man can perhaps justly be regarded characteristically as a nineteenth century Russian literary figure in conflict with both himself and his environment. It is a conflict that is significantly related to historical, political, and sociological characteristics of a certain geography and literary culture. The superfluous man hence embodies a particular problem that was tearing apart a particular culture at a particular time. Despite the fact that this presence was born in Russia in opposition to an understanding of modern Western individuality, superfluous man however seems to have affected a great number of literary figures surpassing those of nineteenth century Russian literature. The idea of Superfluous Man seems to have gone beyond its birthplace and touched upon some common atrocities felt and narrated by a great number of literary figures regardless of their time or place. The complicated emotions of man's spirit seem to have been narrated similarly in various literary cultures under the influence of the concept of superfluous man. It is not surprising, in this respect that Albert Camus begins *The Fall* with Lermontov's epigraph that "A Hero of Our Time, gentlemen, is in fact a portrait, but not of an individual; it is the aggregate of the vices of our whole generation in their fullest expression"[†] This is where Sabahattin Ali's *Madonna in a Fur Coat* shares similarities with Dostoevsky's *White Nights* in terms of their main characters' superfluous tendencies.

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[†] "La Chute" and "A Hero of Our Time" by Marilyn Koenick Yalom. Yalom points out that the quotation from Lermontov, not to be found in the French original, appears on the title page of the English translation of La Chute: 1

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