

HUMANITIES INSTITUTE  
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## **MILL / DEGIRMEN** (1944) **RESAT NURI GUNTEKIN** (1889 – 1956)

### **Apropos**

Resat Nuri Guntekin's fourteenth published novel, *Mill*, was first serialized in Yedigun magazine in 1943 and published as a book by Semih Lutfi Publishing House in 1944. In this literary work, the novelist dealt with the decay, corruption and dysfunction of bureaucratic institutions in Ottoman Empire with an ironic style and critical realism. Activities are carried out both throughout the country and the world regarding the alleged earthquake in the fictional town Saripinar. Thus, the decay and corruption in state institutions are explained to the reader through the tragicomic story of Mr. Halil Hilmi. In the following years, the aforementioned literary work of the author was dramatized by Turgut Özakman and staged in four chapters under the title *Saripinar 1914* under the direction of Çetin Öner. Although the narrative generally proceeds through the eyes of heterodiegetic narrator, from time to time it is seen that the narrative progress with homodiegetic narrator by including the internal monologues of the narrative characters. The narrative consists of thirty-one chapter in total and each chapter is numbered with Roman numerals and titled. The real time in the narrative is the period of the decadence of Ottoman Empire and just before WWI.

### **Synopsis**

"Saripinar is a small, charming and poor town in Anatolia. Mr. Omar, one of the important people of the town, invites Qaimaqam, public administration officials and prominent people to a party he organizes with alcohol and belly dancers in his mansion. That night, Mr. Halil Hilmi, Qaimaqam, is injured in the earthquake. Panic-stricken Police Station Commander Mr. Niyazi informs the center that Qaimaqam is seriously injured and that there is extensive damage, many deaths and injuries in the town. On the same day, everyone heard about Saripinar earthquake after exaggerated pictures and news that Chief Clerk of the Municipality Mr. Rifat sent to benefit "Nida-yı Hak" (Voice of Justice) newspaper, of which he was a supporter, were published in the headlines. This incident causes great sorrow in the country. The fact that rival newspapers in Istanbul magnified the incident due to their interest and reported it on the front page of their newspapers for days drew attention to Saripinar and even spread beyond the borders of the country to Europe. Campaigns are organized and large amounts of benefit are collected. The poem written by the poet Selim Shawkat in Istanbul about the Saripinar Earthquake caused great repercussions among the public. First Mutessarif Hamid and then the governor visit the town. Both are surprised by this exaggerated situation. The governor orders qaimaqam and city manager to gather the people in front of the municipality. He informs them that a delegation of British and German journalists will arrive with Prince Shamsattin. He shares with them that the only way out of this situation is to put their heads together and find a solution. A voice from the crowd, Nutty Kazim, says that Saripinar was damaged in the earthquake, that more than half of the buildings were damaged, and that as a state engineer, he will immediately write his reports and start operating when ordered. The engineer, who has the support of the governor, does not wait for formalities after writing his reports and starts to work with a pickaxe and shovel, turning the town into a ruined city in a short time. Prince Shamsattin is saddened to see Saripinar in this state. Seeing the ruined government office, Prince asks if they are working here. Governor points to Qaimaqam Halil Hilmi and says that he is doing his best under difficult conditions despite his illness and being appointed as a substitute. After the visit, the Saripinar Earthquake was once again covered in the national and foreign press. A large amount is added to the money collected. The town gets a new look with the benefit. The "Ottoman Order" sent by the Sultan becomes a source of honor for the patriot Mr. Halil Hilmi" (Yazar 2022, 87-88).

### **People**

<i>Mr. Halil Hilmi</i>	Protagonist of the narrative is the district governor of Saripinar.
<i>Mr. Hamid</i>	Mutessarif who was educated and served in Sublime Porte.
<i>Mr. Omar</i>	One of the richest men of Saripinar.

<i>Najiya</i>	Nadia, a Bulgarian from Kizancik, works as a belly dancer in Saripinar.
<i>Hourshit</i>	Police soldier serving in Saripinar.
<i>Mr. Nousrat</i>	Qaimaqam who served in Saripinar before Mr. Halil Hilmi.
<i>Rifat</i>	Chief clerk of the municipality.
<i>Huseyin Rusuhi</i>	Editor-in-chief of Voice of the Nation newspaper.
<i>Selim Shawkat</i>	He is a poet.
<i>Hadji Fikri</i>	Mudarris and an important scholar.
<i>Mr. Jawdat</i>	Fiscal director of the district.
<i>Mr. Niyazi</i>	Gendarmerie commander.
<i>Nutty Kazim</i>	Engineer working for the state.
<i>Ahmed Masum</i>	Head teacher of Mesrutiyet School.
<i>Ashraf</i>	Provincial officer in attendance and deputizes for Mr. Halil Hilmi's office.
<i>Mr. Rashit</i>	Mayor of the municipality.
<i>Mayor</i>	Governor of the province where the town of Saripinar is located.
<i>Shamsettin Effendi</i>	He is a prince.
<i>Mr. Arif</i>	He is a doctor.
<i>Johannes</i>	He is a pharmacist.

Other narrative characters in the narrative are as follows: Minister of Internal Affairs, Director of Pious Foundations, Mr. Halil Hilmi's wife Melek, Mr. Hamit's wife, Circassian Murad, Dourmouh, Ali Ferdi; a proofreader for Voice of the Nation newspaper, Pock-Marked Resmi; writer and civil servant, Mr. Nicoloy; municipality doctor, Hadji Hafiz; imam, etc.

## Extended Storyline

**Mr. Halil Hilmi faints after the so-called earthquake** During the party held at Mr. Omar's house, Mr. Jawdat, fiscal director of the district, feels a tremor, stands up and tells his friends that there has been an earthquake. The guests, who have drunk too much alcohol during the party, cannot fully understand what is being said because they are under the influence of drunkenness. Bulgarian Nadia, who entertains the men at the party by dancing, drinks cognac from Mr. Omar's hand with a spoon. The guests try to understand the cause of the tremor. One of the guests says that there is no tremor and that the tremor sensation is caused by Arab Ziver's cymbal tongs. Qaimaqam Halil Hilmi, one of the guests who had attended the party and had drunk a little too much alcohol, is asked to intervene in the situation. Mr. Halil Hilmi, who served as a mutasarrif in the eastern regions of the country with great dreams, has turned into a daunted bureaucrat over time due to poverty, ignorance and corruption in the regions he served. Mr. Halil Hilmi looks around, wiping his mouth and nose, a gesture that has become a tic for him, as if he is about to take action and do something. When he stands up, Mr. Halil Hilmi, who starts to wobble due to excessive alcoholism, panics due to the tremor he feels and falls to the ground.

**Injured people are taken care of in the morning** The next morning, Qaimaqam of Saripinar Mr. Halil Hilmi wakes up to find himself on a portable soldier's cot in the garden of the government office. Mr. Halil Hilmi asks Police Soldier Hourshit what happened last night and why he is sleeping in the garden and not in his house. Qaimaqam Halil Hilmi was wounded in the head and some parts of his body due to the earthquake that is said to have occurred at night. During the earthquake, he fell to the ground in panic and fainted. But in fact, Halil Hilmi, who was too drunk to walk, fell down and passed out. He himself believes that there was an earthquake and that he fainted due to the panic. It has been more than twenty days since the family of Qaimaqam Halil Hilmi went to his father-in-law's house in Isparta. From that day on, Mr. Halil Hilmi has been sleeping in the bed prepared for him in the government office. The government doctor and Pharmacist Johannes take care of Mr. Halil Hilmi's wounds. There is a rivalry between the doctor and the pharmacist regarding the production and sale of medicine. Other guests who were injured during the party are also in the courtyard of Cinili Madrasa.

**Mr. Halil Hilmi becomes a daunted character due to corrupt bureaucracy** Mr. Halil Hilmi, who is afraid of the outdoors, protects himself with thick clothes even when he is inside the house and takes precautions so that no part of the house remains open. Even when he goes to bed, he takes every precaution to protect himself from the cold. Having worked for years in the eastern provinces where diseases and misery prevail, he has become a cautious character. Mr. Halil Hilmi's wife has been ill for about twenty years. She can hardly carry out even her daily work. Because of her illness, she cannot

get close to her husband and does housework with great difficulty. Mr. Halil Hilmi, who has a very delicate and sensitive constitution, finds it strange that he does not feel any ailment despite spending the night outside. Reflecting back on his youth, Mr. Halil Hilmi remembers that during his years in Beykoz, he and his friends often visited Yusa Hill in the Abraham Pasha Grove and that they had promised to continue visiting this hill from time to time in the future. The deplorable and dilapidated state of the government office and the state buildings was also reflected in the character of the local people. The rottenness and idleness within the state is also reflected in the state of mind of the bureaucrats. Pharmacist Johannes advises Qaimaqam Halil Hilmi to read the romance novel *Ihlamur Altı* (Under Linden), translated into Turkish by Mahmout Shawkat Pasha when he was a student at the Military Academy, to heal his wounds and make feel better.

### **Past of Najiya from Kizancik and her reputation in the region**

In the next episode, Qaimaqam Halil Hilmi remembers that Najiya from Kizancik (Bulgarian Nadia) had had some scandalous experiences with the previous Qaimaqam Mr. Nusrat. He intends to invite her to his office and scold her and in his mind, he designs how he will do it. Mr. Halil Hilmi then writes a complaint petition to a higher authority about Najiya. Naciye's father is a Circassian horse thief. After the Greco-Turkish War, he returned to Saripinar with his wife and children and started selling horses. But one day he lost his life as a result of a shot fired by a village guard. It is rumored that Najiya was actually Murad's stepdaughter and that she was completely Bulgarian. Since it is believed that she is not a Muslim, there is no harm in having her perform as a belly dancer at parties. Having lost her parents at the age of twelve, Najiya's uncle in Bulgaria wanted to take care of her and bring her back to his country. Although an application was made to the relevant authorities, the request was rejected to avoid rumors that Saripinar could not take care of a young girl. From that day on, as Najiya grew older, she began to dance at parties and was protected by important people. It would not be a logical move for Mr. Halil Hilmi to file a complaint and initiate an official action against Najiya, who was protected by local shopkeepers and officials.

### **So-called earthquake news transmitted to Istanbul**

After a while, Gendarmerie Commander Niyazi from İstip and a police soldier enter through the garden gate. The commander, who is often compared to Mr. Niyazi, the hero of liberation, by the locals, watches himself from time to time by looking in the mirror on the wall. Because of the respect shown to him, he considers himself equal to Mr. Niyazi in every respect. Gendarmerie Commander Mr. Niyazi is greeted with applause almost everywhere he goes, especially in Gomulcine. Gendarmerie Commander Mr. Niyazi meets with Qaimaqam Mr. Halil Hilmi and asks for information about the damage caused by the earthquake. According to the first impressions, there is no significant damage or casualties. Other patients who were examined and kept under observation at Cinili Madrasa are also checked. Istanbul is informed about the situation upon the news of Rifat, the Chief Clerk of the municipality. The gendarmerie commander, who is traveling around the region with his dog Bolatin, informs the qaimaqam about this situation. Mr. Halil Hilmi, who greatly underestimates every incident, becomes uneasy when he hears that negative news has been sent to the center about the town he is in charge of. He is surprised that the chief clerk of the municipality has sent news to Istanbul without informing him, and he secretly suspects the chief clerk. He begins to suspect that he is being played a trick on by the city manager.

### **The wounded are taken care of and the news reaches Istanbul**

Later, the doctor and the city manager are also seen arriving in the garden of the government office. Mr. Halil Hilmi is the first to go to the new office, hoping to see Dr. Arif before noon. Because a field consulting room has been set up near the government office. The doctor, whose face is swollen from albumin, tries to take care of those in need despite all the negativity. Shortly after, Pharmacist Johannes also joins in. A cold rivalry continues between the doctor and the pharmacist. Later, city manager is also included in the group and brings the news that the news sent by chief clerk to Istanbul has spread to the capital. Rifat, a resident of Saripinar, was sent to Istanbul to study law with the financial support of the municipality during the Constitutional Monarchy. He stays with a fellow countryman in a room in Tavukpazari. Having supported Rifat, who worked for a newspaper aligned with the Allies, Mr. Halil Hilmi feels embarrassed and ashamed of the incident.

### **Urbanites try to benefit themselves from the earthquake in the countryside**

After the news reaches Istanbul, Huseyin Rusuhi, the chief editor of Millet Sesi (Voice of Nation), reads the news about the earthquake in Saripinar in the newspaper Nida-yı Hak and contacts his old friend Pock-Marked Resmi, who had managed to get a civil servant position by blackmail during his time as a journalist. News is sent to Pock-Marked Resmi, who teaches French and Calculus at a school. Selim

Shawkat, who will then take the ferry to Besiktas and go home, thinks about the poets who had previously written poems about the earthquakes upon reading the news in Nida-yı Hak. While watching the outside from the window of his house overlooking Kalamis side, Selim Shawkat wants to write a poem about the tragic incident in Saripinar. The poet, who takes Edebiyat-i Cedide (New Literature) as an example, invites poets who write poems within the frame of this movement to his mansion and read their poems, but he could not get the desired reaction from them. Arguing that art should be done for art's sake, the poet decides that he must slum to introduce himself to the public. Remembering the fame, a poet achieved with a poem "Give to the Poor", which he wrote after a previous earthquake, Selim Shawkat decides to write a poem about the earthquake in Saripinar. He finds it appropriate to write this poem in syllabic meter.

### **Conflict between progressives and reactionaries in Saripinar**

On the same day, local notables, civil servants, shopkeepers, pilgrims, hodjas and dervishes come to get-well-visit. Although the local notables do not like Qaimaqam very much, they try to get along with him. There is an obligatory relationship between them. Among the visitors is Mudarris Hadji Fikri Efendi, who is highly respected by the people of Saripinar. While teaching Abdulhamid's princes at Yildiz Palace, he was exiled to Baghdad for calling one of the princes "son of a pig", but his exile ended with the declaration of the Constitutional Monarchy. Engineer Nutty Kazim is a progressive who is extremely devoted to Unionism. He believes that the country cannot develop unless all the sophtas and bigots are purged. His close friend Ahmet Masum, the head teacher of Mesrutiyet School, who was always by his side, agreed with him. Most of Saripinar settlers find Ahmed Masum more dignified and rational than Nutty Kazim. However, Qaimaqam Halil Hilmi knows that the real guide and mentor of Nutty Kazim is Ahmed Masum. Although he seems calm and dignified, Ahmed Masum is a person who is devoted to and believes in Unionist ideals.

### **Alarm is raised upon receiving the news that a medical delegation has been sent to Saripinar**

The next day, while everything was going on with the daily routine and tranquility, the city manager brings the news that a medical delegation has been sent by mutasarrifate and a considerable amount of money has been donated. Qaimaqam, who was sure that an investigation would soon be carried out by mutasarrifate officials, began to grow more worried. Financial aid begins to arrive in the region and the echoes of the incident are heard everywhere. The next morning, Qaimaqam examines himself thoroughly to see if he has any wounds. When he sees the wound on his kneecap that Hourshit shows him, he becomes alarmed. Although the other torn areas have their own patches, there is no patch on that part of his pants. Qaimaqam, together with Gendarmerie Commander, travels to the surrounding villages in an inspection car to prepare a report for mutasarrifate. In the evening, he finds that nothing significant has happened in other areas around Saripinar and writes in his report that only ten people were slightly wounded.

### **Benefit sent to the region is wasted**

In the intervening three days, Qaimaqam is unable to attend to anything else due to his backlog. Pock-Marked Resmi, a History and French teacher at Sancak High School, wants to benefit from the aid sent to the region, but Qaimaqam knows that he cannot be trusted and does not allow him to benefit from the aid. Later, Ahmed Masum, one of the teachers of Mesrutiyet School, comes to the office of Qaimaqam, embarrassed and ashamed. Ahmed Masum tells Mr. Halil Hilmi that instead of repairing the cracks in the school, the needs of the madrasa were met with the aid given to the town. Engineer Nutty Kazim is angry with the commission members for the decision taken and the fact that those in charge did not act fairly and favored the madrasa. Nutty Kazim compares the mudarris of Cinili Madrasa to Ignace de Loyola and criticizes the collaboration of the bureaucracy with the sophtas. At noon the next day, the commission of four convenes under the leadership of Director of Pious Foundations, Fiscal Director of the District, City Manager and Nutty Kazim. Nutty Kazim harshly criticizes the members of the committee for causing the money collected to be spent on the madrasa instead of repairing the school. The other board members try to fend off his requests and arguments with various excuses. The board, which had agreed to donate money to the madrasa without any discussion, starts to discuss the withdrawal of the benefit given to a man who died not because of the earthquake but because of his illness. Another Kosovar muhajir was not injured by the earthquake, but injured himself with a cutter. Because of this, he developed gangrene and lost a limb. Even though the board wants to discuss the withdrawal of the benefit given to the Kosovar muhajir, Nutty Kazim tries to defend their rights by saying that the survivors of the Balkan Wars experiences a different kind of earthquake.

**Failure to distribute benefit and bureaucratic corruption** With the tragic migration due to the Balkan Wars, many immigrants settled in settlements such as Saripinar, Gaziler and Caybasi. Hearing that the board is helping them, the locals' revolt against this decision and object to helping foreigners who cannot even speak Turkish properly. Nutty Kazim says that the state should help its citizens who had to leave the lands they were born and raised in and migrate due to the Balkan Wars. However, Qaimaqam and City Manager object to Nutty Kazim's demand and resist it. Although it was decided to continue charity work without revealing it to the muhajirs, it was too late. Upon hearing that the board had started distributing benefit again, muhajirs flocked to the municipality. There are serious arguments between the residents and the muhajirs over disbursement of aid. After the gendarmerie intervenes and the muhajirs' belief that they will not receive aid is reinforced, the riots end. However, with the arrival of the aid committee from Istanbul and Mr. Ashraf, Provincial Officer in Attendance, a relative of Mutessarif Hamid, Mr. Halil Hilmi's fears come true. The disarray in the qaimaqam's office and the lack of discipline among other officials immediately catch Mr. Ashraf's attention. By using the excuse of being very ill, Mr. Halil Hilmi justifies to himself the neglect, disorder and lack of oversight in the institution. Having felt deep anger at being sent to a provincial town upon receiving the mandate, Mr. Ashraf's real goal is to take a position in foreign affairs. It would not be right for a well-educated and foreign-language speaker like him to travel around Anatolian towns. Mr. Halil Hilmi, who has always criticized people who aspire to the West and want to go to Western countries, has to be respectful to Mr. Ashraf.

**Mr. Ashraf takes office as acting qaimaqam** Mr. Ashraf, who was appointed as the acting qaimaqam, settles in Mr. Halil Hilmi's office and begins the necessary investigations. Mr. Halil Hilmi, who handed over his office to Mr. Ashraf, is deeply disturbed by this situation. Afraid of losing his office as a result of the investigations, Mr. Halil Hilmi gives up and accepts everything that may happen to him. However, even though Mr. Ashraf says that he will not occupy Qaimaqam Halil Hilmi's office and that he will find another place for himself to work, Mr. Halil Hilmi has difficulty believing Mr. Ashraf. He hands over his seal to Mr. Ashraf just as he had handed over his chair of state. Mr. Halil Hilmi, who was afraid of being dismissed, was in a state of complete submission in every respect. After inspecting the government office, Mr. Ashraf realizes that the building structure is almost collapsed, but he has difficulty understanding whether this is due to the earthquake or not. All the buildings in the region are in almost the same condition as the government office. However, there is no serious indication that an earthquake was occurred in the region.

**Earthquake news spreads** The aid committee that had arrived in the region left the tents in the courtyard of Zincir Inn and the tents remained there for a while without being opened. City Manager Mr. Rashit opens his house to the committee from Istanbul and hosts them in his home. Other newspapers join Nida-yi Hak and Millet Sesi in reporting the so-called earthquake in Saripinar. When it was reported in the news that qaimaqam had died, Mr. Halil Hilmi's family in Isparta thought that he was dead. However, Mr. Halil Hilmi sent a telegram to his family, and informed them that the news was not true. The poem read by Poet Selim Shawkat at Tepebasi Theater surpassed "Give to the Poor" and became the most talked about work in the literary community. Rifat, Chief Clerk of the Municipality, is blamed for the misunderstanding, and Rifat is forced to resign after a while, unable to withstand the pressure.

**Mutessarif Hamid is sent to Saripinar** Mr. Hamid, who had spent most of his life in Sublime Porte and left Istanbul for the first time with the Constitutional Monarchy only after the age of sixty, is an important mutessarif. Living in his mansion in Kalamis, his transfer to Sancak felt like an exile to him. His wife became both mentally and physically ill and needed constant care. Journeywoman Nalan takes care of Mutessarif Hamid. Mutessarif Hamid has also been experiencing some health issues lately. He receives a telegram asking him to investigate the earthquake in Saripinar. Mr. Hamid, who decided to go to Saripinar just as he walked to Istanbul with the Action Army, was received very well. Having received negative rumors and impressions about Qaimaqam Halil Hilmi, Mr. Hamid decides to first meet with other officials and relevant people. When Mr. Halil Hilmi received the news of Mr. Hamid's arrival, he completely vacated his bed and office at the government office. Dr. Arif and others decide to side with Qaimaqam Halil Hilmi and defend him. Because there were some embezzlements in the aid funds sent to the region and those involved in the corruption wanted to protect themselves. A commission was formed, including pharmacists and doctors, as well as an imam, to decide how the aid funds will be used.

**Mutessarif Hamid cannot decide what to do about Mr. Halil Hilmi** Finally, Mr. Hamid decides to meet Mr. Halil Hilmi and invites him to his office. Mr. Halil Hilmi explains to Mr. Hamid the plea he had prepared with Dr. Arif. However, Mr. Hamid does not understand anything Mr. Halil Hilmi says, and he does not know what to do since he likens him to his old tutor. Moreover, upon learning that Mr. Halil Hilmi's wife has been ill for twenty years, Mr. Hamid begins to empathize and sympathize with him. Because Mr. Hamid's wife has been ill for a long time. During the conversation with Mr. Hamid, Mr. Halil Hilmi learns that he has never had any children, and realizes that the rumors about Mr. Ashraf being married to his daughter are completely false. Mutessarif Hamid is invited to Mr. Omar's house for dinner. Although he does not want to accept his invitation, he reluctantly accepts it because he knows that Mr. Omar is the second name in the region. Realizing that Qaimaqam Halil Hilmi was a victim of a misunderstanding, Mutessarif Mr. Hamid had a hard time deciding what to do with him.

**Mutessarif's pressure on Qaimaqam** Mutessarif Mr. Hamid, who studied and served in the Sublime Porte for many years, is quite indecisive about what to do about Qaimaqam Mr. Halil Hilmi, whom he has likened to his tutor. What he should do as required by his duty is to dismiss Mr. Halil Hilmi from his post. But Mr. Hamid is not in a position to do this in good conscience. However, Mr. Hamid, who gets sick easily due to his sensitive veins, realizes that the window is open and when he thinks that he is being made sick, he starts to have a go at Mr. Halil Hilmi. Although Halil Hilmi signed some documents the day after the earthquake, he did not deign to send a telegram to Mutessarif Mr. Hamid informing him of the situation in the region. Qaimaqam Mr. Halil Hilmi, who had not acted appropriately in response to the emergency in the region, is cornered by Mr. Hamid with questions. Thinking that he will get into trouble and be dismissed from his post in any case, Mr. Halil Hilmi accepts the accusations. This submissive mood of his causes Mr. Hamid to soften again. Afterwards, Mr. Halil Hilmi offers Mr. Hamid clean water and leaves the office so that Mr. Hamid can change his own sweaty shirt and dry himself.

**Residents complain to Mutessarif about Qaimaqam** On other days, residents take advantage of Mutessarif's arrival to complain about Qaimaqam. The man whose house had been expropriated two years ago for less than its value, the poulder who had been dismissed because he had been caught stealing watermelons from the field, and the woman who saw that he husband who had divorced her with her three children had been dismissed complained to Mutessarif. Upon the complaints, Mutessarif decided not to be lenient with Qaimaqam and take the necessary action. Another complaint is that the goats of some owners had been raiding the fields belonging to others. There are also complaints about the young men of the town hanging around in front of the girls' school, especially at night. Upon these developments, Mutessarif Mr. Hamid wants to dismiss Qaimaqam Halil Hilmi and decides to meet with him for the last time. It is known that on the night of the earthquake, Mr. Halil Hilmi attended the party at Mr. Omar's house and got drunk. Although Mr. Halil Hilmi says that he will accept the complaints and consent to the decision to be made, Mr. Hamid is upset by his situation.

**Before the WWI, foreigners provide financial aid** When rumors of the outbreak of WWI began to circulate in the near future, it became a matter of curiosity which side the battle standard of Mohammed would align itself with. Upon the rumors of the outbreak of the WWI, an influx of travelers, merchants and ambassadors began to arrive in Istanbul. It is reported in Nida-yi Hak that the Muslim of Java and Sumatra sent aid to Saripinar. German, Austrian and Hungarian monarchs offer condolences and financial aid to the Sultan. After a while, London and Paris also sent aid to the region. The parties of the war that is about to start are trying to attract the battle standard of Mohammed to their side. Upon the substantial donations, the Minister of Internal Affairs wishes to meet with the undersecretary to obtain information about the situation in the region. Mutessarif Mr. Hamid and Governor are criticized. It is decided that the governor will go to the region and make inspections, and it is decided that the donations coming from abroad will be used in other areas.

**Governor makes investigations in Saripinar** Rumors that Deputy Qaimaqam Ashraf was staying at Mr. Omar's house and that there is a brawl in the house are discussed in the Mesrutiyet coffeehouse. Upon the rumors rising from the town, it is also said that the governor will pay a visit in the near future. According to Pharmacist Johannes, the reason of the brawl is that Dr. Arif and Ashraf had a fight over Naciye and Mr. Omar, who was jealous of Naciye, kicked them out of his house later that night. It is also rumored that there was an armed conflict in front of Mr. Omar's house. One of the people who is most concerned about the rumors that the governor will visit the town and make inspections is City Manager Mr. Rashit. Mr. Rashit wants to host the governor in his own house. Governor, who arrives in the town, has a sincere conversation with Mr. Omar and tells him that he will

stay at his house. The next day, Governor, who tours and inspects the region, pressures Mutessarif Mr. Hamid and indirectly blames him for his inability to fulfill his duties properly due to his old age and weakness. Arriving at the coffeehouse in the town, Governor conveys his get well wishes to the residents and wants to get information from them.

**Upon the realization that there was no earthquake, concerns arise about the visit that the Prince will make** Speaking to the residents in the coffeehouse, Governor criticizes their laziness. He tells them that it would be better for them to engage in infrastructure and superstructure works and participate in such activities instead of wasting their time playing games in the coffeehouse. During his inspection of the town, Governor, who leaves Mutessarif Mr. Hamid behind, insults and mocks him. As a result of the investigations, Governor, upon realizing that there was no earthquake in the region, ponders what kind of notification he should make to the higher authorities about the situation. Qaimaqam Mr. Halil Hilmi and Mutessarif Mr. Hamid, who were dragged from one place to another during the inspections, prefer to be dismissed from office, thinking that they were being subjected to torture. When they return to the municipality building, they consult on what should be done in the face of the current situation. Meanwhile, Governor receives an important telegram. According to the telegram from the Mabeyn-i Humayun (Lord Chamberlain's offices) Prince Shamsattin Efendi and his delegation would visit Saripinar together with German and British journalists. Upon receiving the news, Governor asks the townspeople to gather in front of the municipality building after prayers at night.

**Houses are destroyed, and the Prince and his delegation are convinced that there was an earthquake** In the meeting attended by names such as Director of Pious Foundations, Fiscal Director of the District, City Manager and Nutty Kazim, consultations are held on what should be done. When the prince realizes that there is no earthquake in the region, the thought that everyone will lose their jobs and be severely punished causes anxiety. While no one proposes a solution, Nutty Kazim steps forward and presents his solution to the board. Nutty Kazim says that many houses and buildings in Saripinar are dilapidated and that they can make some of them worse with a pickaxe. The reports will be prepared as requested. Finding Nutty Kazim right, Governor demands that the proposal be implemented as soon as possible. After a while, Prince Shamsattin Effendi and his delegation arrive in the region. Prince, who had never seen any village other than a few ones in Istanbul, was deeply saddened by the sight he encountered. All the houses and buildings in the area are in a dilapidated condition. Foreign newspapers are of the same opinion as Prince. Nutty Kazim shows the delegation from Istanbul the places they need to see. After the delegation that visited the so-called earthquake zone returns, benefits were provided to the region again. Thanks to the benefits provided, Saripinar is revitalized and the welfare level increases. All buildings are renovated and even an ornamental pool is built in the town square. Saripinar takes an important place in the world press. Qaimaqam Mr. Halil Hilmi, who was afraid of losing his job, is awarded the gold Ottoman Order for continuing his duty despite being injured during the earthquake.

## Theme

*Degradation* In his novel named as *Mill*, Resat Nuri Guntekin ironically describes the decay and corruption in the administrative institutions of the Ottoman Empire during its dark age. The dysfunction and decay of state institutions were revealed after the earthquake that was said to have occurred in a small town called Saripinar just before WWI. The government office and the municipality building in Saripinar have fallen into disrepair and have been destroyed. Since the condition of the buildings and structures in the villages was quite bad even before the alleged earthquake, it is not clear whether it was really an earthquake or not. Mr. Halil Hilmi, the protagonist of the narrative, has worked as an administrator in the eastern provinces for years and due to the poverty, incompetence, indifference and various impossibilities he has encountered, he has turned from an idealist into a frustrated administrator. It is seen that bureaucrats, who characterize the other settlements outside Istanbul as a kind of exile duty, turn into frustrated characters in time and seek solutions to save their own fortunes. The decay in the personalities and will of individuals is reflected in society and state institutions. It is seen that bureaucrats who care about their personal fortunes and who are capable of all kinds of corruption in order to rise to a better position lead the state to decay and eventually to its destruction.

*Fear* In Resat Nuri Guntekin's short novel named *Mill*, the reasons for the decline and collapse of the Ottoman Empire are examined through a fictional and tragicomic narrative. When an earthquake is thought to have occurred one night in the town of Saripinar, Mr. Halil Hilmi, the district

governor of the town, becomes worried and does not know what to do. After the investigations in the region show that no buildings were damaged, he concludes that there was actually no earthquake and that they only had too much to drink during the party attended at night. When a city official reports the so-called earthquake to the newspapers in Istanbul, the incident, which is of no importance, becomes a big deal. Saripinar earthquake is covered in local and foreign newspapers. Thereupon, a huge amount of benefit started to be donated to the region. Mr. Halil Hilmi, who is afraid that the false news will be revealed and the truth will be learned, does not know what to do. The superior-subordinate relationship in society and bureaucracy is based on fear. Subordinates are afraid of superiors and the respect of subordinates have for superiors is based on fear. Fearful bureaucrats begin to lie and magnify the lie in order to save their own fortunes. However, the earthquake disaster, which is based entirely on lies, comically leads to the development and progress of the region.

*Revolt* Although the society and bureaucracy in Resat Nuri Guntekin's *Mill* are subjected to deep decay and corruption, an enlightened section of society emerged with the declaration of the Constitutional Monarchy. In the narrative, the narrative figures who are enlightened and criticize the reactionary order are Engineer Nutty Kazim and Teacher Ahmed Masum. The two, who have a Unionist awareness, criticize the order of Sophtas. They want the benefits given to the region due to the so-called earthquake to be used for schools and those in need, not for madrasas and sects. As an engineer, Nutty Kazim is given the task of building the new order. After the destruction of the structures of the old order due to the earthquake, he builds the structures of the new order. Ahmed Masum, a teacher, is tasked with raising public awareness and building new people. With the declaration of the Constitutional Monarchy, they believe in and protect the values that the revolution has brought to the country. Acting with a Unionist awareness, they try to take society forward and ensure that it catches up with the age.

## Character Analysis

**Halil Hilmi** (Closed/Social/Unconscientious/Emotional)

Mr. Halil Hilmi, the protagonist of the narrative, worked as an administrator in the eastern provinces of the Ottoman Empire for many years. He eventually became qaimaqam of the town of Saripinar, and while he acted with an idealistic consciousness in his first years in office, he turned into a frustrated statesman over time. Mr. Halil Hilmi, who has completed nearly twenty years in his profession, is from Istanbul and often reminisces about his youth in Beykoz. He seeks to find an opportunity to return to Istanbul and serve there. His wife, who has been ill for a long time, is with her children at their relatives in Isparta. The weakening of Halil Hilmi's intellectual and psychological world weakens him physiologically and made him ill. He has a weak and sensitive constitution. With his passive personality and indifference, he reveals the cause of the decay in the Ottoman bureaucracy. Mr. Halil Hilmi is a character full of regret, fear and frustration.

*Indecisive* Although he defended various ideals at the beginning of his career, he turned into an indecisive and skeptical bureaucrat over time: "Qaimaqam was a man who enjoyed long, deep conversations on issues. If only they didn't want them to come a conclusion at the end! (Guntekin 2017, 6).

*Indifferent* During his career as a district governor, which he started with great expectations, he turned into a frustrated and uncaring character due to the shortcoming and corruption he encountered: "He was a standard administrative man; in his professional life, he had always taken it as a rule of administration to downplay incidents. Even in the face of divine disasters such as hail, earthquakes, forest fires, floods, etc., which are beyond human responsibility, he would not change this rule, no matter what" (Guntekin 2017, 28).

*Lifeless* With his career in the countryside, his private life is quite routine and sedentary: "The first night he was surprised to find himself alone in this room; several times he was startled to wake up by a sound like his wife's moaning and to find her place empty next to himself. But as days went on, he had strange awakenings (like the miller who wakes up when the mill stops suddenly). (...) This was a different and brand-new life for him" (Guntekin 2017, 18-19).

*Fatalist* During the long years he worked in the provinces, he began to attribute poverty and shortcomings to fate: "Mr. Halil Hilmi, completely surrendered himself to fate, was sitting on his bed

like a circumcised child who had completely let himself go, missing the golden amulet on his skullcap, responding to those who asked about his wounds with words that gradually became shorter and shorter, like doctor's report, and listening to the conversations around him..." (Guntekin 2017, 45).

*Well-intentioned* Despite all the negativity, poverty, deficiencies and corruption, he endeavored to maintain his goodwill: "In his twenty-five years of administration, he had never once laid his eyes on a woman's face. It was not that many with chador, veiled (nurses), many peasant sisters who pinned their intentions under their noses did not pass in front of this table. But he never looked at their faces, and tried to compensate for the effect of his gaze by making an animal growl in his voice" (Guntekin 2017, 19).

*Reproachful* The disaster he faced had made him willing to pay the price by losing his job, but he rebelled against being subjected to practices resembling torture: "Isn't this cruelty, brother? I understand you are going to fire me... It's not like you're going to hang me... Why are you making me crawl on the streets at night with a big fuse tied to my tail?..." (Guntekin 2017, 118).

*Pragmatic* He tries to win the sympathy of the governor who has come to inspect the region and the office: " – I have forgotten Karakulak. I have become unaware of the runlet water I drink here, but it is important for you. In the village of Yoruk, two hours away from here, there is water as good as Istanbul water. It is not popular because it is far away. But don't worry. I will get it from tomorrow. We can't make out honorable guest drink runlet water" (Guntekin 2017, 102).

*Desperate* When the false news about an earthquake in the region causes a great repercussion, he finds himself in a very difficult situation: " – Dead mice feel no cold, doctor. There is not a hope in a million for me" (Guntekin 2017, 132).

#### **Hamid** (Closed/Social/Unconscientious/Emotional)

Mr. Hamid, who was educated in the Sublime Porte and worked as a civil servant there for years, lives in a mansion in Kalamis with his elderly and sick wife. He is keen on writing dates with abjad system, solving riddles and writing poetry. Although he had been married for thirty-five years, he had no children. When he starts to work as a mutessarif, he is assigned to investigate the earthquake in Saripinar in his sixties and to investigate the district governor. Since he is old, sick and has a sensitive constitution, he gets sick easily. Servant Nalan mostly takes care of him. Mutessarif Mr. Hamid's weak personality is also reflected in his physique and state of health. Mutessarif Mr. Hamid resembles Mr. Halil Hilmi in every respect to his tutor, so he hesitates to take the necessary actions regarding him. He pities Mr. Halil Hilmi and shows weakness. Mr. Hamid, like Mr. Halil Hilmi, is afraid of his superiors and obeys them without question.

*Furious* He becomes extremely angry when the necessary actions have not been taken while interrogating Qaimaqam Halil Hilmi: "Mr. Hamid's voice became thinner and thinner. 'Why is it so?' he cried out, his voice cracking like a bowstring struck with a pestle. His eyelids stretched and elongated. In their gaps, narrowed to the size of matchsticks, two bewildered lights slid here and there with the fluidity of two bolt drops, and seemed to flow from the tails of the eyes, which were pointed upwards" (Guntekin 2017, 94-95).

*Regretful* He regrets having cornered Mr. Halil Hilmi, whom he sympathizes with and likens to his tutor, and pushing him with his questions: "Although he understood very well that it was not right to show a soft face to Qaimaqam after this scene of aggravation that seemed to have put everything in order, he could not restrain himself. He tried to say a few words to appease Mr. Halil Hilmi and he couldn't help but overdo it. The two old men almost hugged each other's neck in tears" (Guntekin 2017, 96).

*Fair* Mr. Hamid, who grew up in Sublime Porte and served there for years, stands out as a fair person: "He kept saying that Mutessarif was like and abjad, a useless and untouchable aristocrat of Sublime Porte who stinks and does no good to the living or the dead, until he was tired of saying it" (Guntekin 2017, 114).

*Closed* Having grown up in Sublime Porte and having served there for years, he never left Istanbul and devoted himself solely to his work and his wife: "Mutessarif was a Sublime Porte

gentleman who left Istanbul for the first time after the declaration of Constitutional Monarchy, at the age of sixty, and a curiosity patient who had been living for years on Phosphatine pudding cooked by his old Servant Nalan's own hands" (Guntekin 2017, 81).

*Traditional* He gathers the traditionalist elements and qualities of the period in his personality and represents them: "Mr. Hamid was very fond of writing dates in abjad system and solving riddles. For this reason, he used to write his own ciphers, and occasionally he would pass the time by writing some famous couplets in code. Because he had numbers in his head, he read the governor's telegram more easily than ordinary writing" (Guntekin 2017, 82).

*Emotional* He finds it difficult to take punitive action against Qaimaqam, whom he likens to his tutor: "Mr. Hamid already felt a warmth towards this man who resembled one of his old tutors with his rough face, graying beard on both sides and slightly hunched shoulders. The longing for Istanbul and Karakulak that he noticed in this fellow countryman who has been living in Anatolia for twenty-three years added to this a sweet sense of compassion" (Guntekin 2017, 92).

*Frail* He has a sensitive personality and constitution, both spiritually and physically: "The gentle veins of Mutessarif! After catching a cold in Mr. Omar's garden, Mutessarif coughed a little and his nasal passages burned, so he did not leave the house for the second day and received Mr. Halil Hilmi in his pajamas in his bedroom" (Guntekin 2017, 90).

*Obedient* He obeys the orders and desires of his superiors without question: "As the governor had requested, Mr. Hamid had sent several encrypted telegrams a day, reporting the results to the government hour by hour. But neither he nor the aid delegation was allowed to return to sanjak yet, even though there was no more work to be done" (Guntekin 2017, 102).

#### **Nutty Kazim** (Open/Social/Conscientious/Rational)

Nutty Kazim, who works as a state engineer in Saripinar, is a Unionist narrative character who believes in the Constitutional Revolution. He is an enlightened narrative person who believes that the biggest problem of the society and the state is pietism and defends the progressive values of the period. "He is honest, intelligent, educated and hardworking. However, his unnecessary and excessive talking and his crazy actions lower his value in the eyes of the public. "He is a "doer" type. He is in favor of innovation. He criticizes everything that belongs to the past without fear" (Yazar 2022, 104). "The active initiatives of Nutty Kazim, who has the idea of rebuilding the ruined town with the money sent and giving money to those in need, are met with caution by Qaimaqam and those around him. Nutty Kazim aims to operate the rusty wheels of bureaucracy in his own way. Engineer Kazim, who is active by nature, sees being close to Mutessarif and Governor who come to the town as "sycophancy" and does not get too close to them. (...) With his ability to direct the flow of events, Engineer Kazim is the embodiment of the inner voice of Mr. Halil Hilmi, the protagonist" (Kanter 2008, 407).

*Progressive* Engineer Nutty Kazim, a Constitutionalist and Unionist, represents the values of the modern world: "Nutty Kazim was an enthusiastic and unrestrained lover of innovation who explained all the disasters of history with the mindset of sophtas and pietism" (Guntekin 2017, 46).

*Liberal* He fights against pietism, which traps the country in darkness and is the biggest to liberation: "This country cannot be saved unless we destroy the madrasas and make the turban of the sophtas a halter around the necks of animals!" (Guntekin 2017, 41).

*Schizoid* He fights for the values and principles he believes in and defends without hesitation and without backing down: " – My child, this Kazim is really a very intelligent, well-read man, and there is no doubt that he has a pure heart. But still and all, he is a lunatic madman. He attacks everyone and everything in public. The way things are going, something will surely happen to him. You are a young boy just out of new school... If you follow him, you will be on fire with him... There is no use regretting it later..." (Guntekin 2017, 47).

*Nutty* He is characterized as crazy, especially by those who want the status quo to be preserved and maintained in order to protect their own interests: "It was this syphilis ulcer-like Ahmed Masum, who in reality was dragging him into all kinds of madness and filth, even though in

appearance he seemed to be following behind him like a shadow. Like his name Ahmed Masum (Innocent), his face was also deceptive at first glance (...)" (Guntekin 2017, 47).

*Rational* He advocates rationalism, one of the enlightenment values of the West: " – Well, there has been a small earthquake... Listen to rumors now... "Sir, what would happen? Morals have deteriorated, women have opened up... Schools are teaching anthems instead of hymns... God is punishing the city with this earthquake disaster." But what kind of justice is this, if there are criminals, let Allah punish them... What does He want from the whole city? Does it befit God's justice to throw the baby out with the bathwater..." (Guntekin 2017, 48).

*Insubordinate* He never submits to the ruling and superior classes and becomes a spokesperson for the progressive order imagined to be built in the future: "It's only up to me to know this. Did you get the joke, gentlemen, even if you say "no," I will defend the theory of a strong earthquake to the end" (Guntekin 2017, 100).

*Smart* He has the intelligence to skillfully find solutions to existing problems: "If it is not said that there was an earthquake in such a town, where can it be said? You mentioned that there were big financial donations for Saripinar. Considering the magnitude of our disaster, these donations would not even be a drop in the bucket. I am a state engineer. Order me, right away tomorrow, I will give you the list and report of hundreds of buildings that must be evacuated immediately because of the health risk" (Guntekin 2017, 139).

*Conscientious* He takes responsibility for the revitalization of Saripinar and the recovery of the residents from the current negative situation: "The biggest burden of the job was on Nutty Kazim's shoulders. Governor's trust had turned him into a strange dictator. He issued reports that some buildings in visible places should be demolished immediately, and without waiting for the formalities to be completed, he took action with many men with pickaxes and shovels" (Guntekin 2017, 140).

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