



## TWO DIFFERENT “THE OTHER” IMAGES IN THE TURKISH AUTHOR YAKUP KADRI KARAOSMANOĞLU’S NOVEL *YABAN*

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**Abstract:** As a method whose creator is Sigmund Freud and has been used in many different disciplines since 20th century, imagology, when it comes to literary criticism, locates “the other” in the center of his study area and requires interdisciplinary approach. In this study, first of all, what the imagology is and its working principles will be mentioned, and then two different images which are local and urban people encountered in Yakup Kadri’s novel *Yaban* –it means *wild* in English– will be identified and examined. In the context of prejudices and stereotypes within the scope of imagology, these images belonging to two different social statuses that share the same geography but are constructed as “the other” for each other will be tried to reveal and to analyze with their reasons by using pluralistic method.

**Key Words:** *Yakup Kadri, Yaban, Imagology, Villager, Urbanite.*

### I. INTRODUCTION

The definition of the word image in the dictionary is seen as *what is designed in the mind and is missed, dream, reverie* and also *general appearance, impression* (Türk Dil Kurumu Sözlüğü). However, since the image is a term used in many different disciplines, it is more appropriate to define it for a particular area. So, in terms of literature, according to Serhat Ulağlı, images are *the connotations used by the author to express his own feelings and thoughts* (Ulağlı, 2006, p. 3). Also, Zeliha Nilüfer Nahya describes the image and the functions of imagology as follows: *The image can be defined as a way of thinking that taking its power from social memory, having socio-cultural reflections and including ideas, dreams and judgements of any community or group about any different community or group. Imagology, which involves image studies, manifests itself in the function of satisfying the curiosity towards “the other”* (Nahya, 2011, p. 29).

Dutch comparatist Joep Leerssen, who has important publications about imagology, said in his article *Imagology: History and Method* that: *The ultimate perspective of image studies is a theory of cultural or national stereotypes, not a theory of cultural or national identity. Imagology is concerned with the representamen, representations as textual strategies and as discourse* (Leerssen, 2007, p. 27). So, images are tools of representation, and the main purpose of imagology in literature is to shed light on the mental structure of the society to which the work belongs and to try to illuminate social meanings and their formation with an interdisciplinary approach.

However, not every image has to emerge with an influence that dominates the whole society; it may be consisted of a certain impact on a part of society or just author. In that case, another function of imagology is to act as a mirror within the process of individual interpretation and characterization. From this point of view, it is understood that imagology works with a biographical research by including the life of the author while trying to find out why the images have occurred and how they are shaped in the mind of the writer. Because while the author creates an image for some people in which he has common knowledge, he does this by reinterpreting the social and historical facts belonging to his motherland. Therefore, what is presented to readers is a reality that has formed in the subconscious of the author (See: Ulağlı, 2006, p. 30).

Imagology, which allows both social perspective and individual interpretation to be clarified through image studies, according to Hugo Dyserinck, not only is a field of researching of comparative literature, but also promises *to form a bridge to other human sciences* (Dyserinck, 2003, p. 3). Imagology that is the basis of his study to know the other, to define the other and the self-qualify of a person based on the other, utilizes many different disciplines such as history, sociology, social psychology in this process. Therefore, as Dyserinck also mentioned, imagology requires an interdisciplinary approach when trying to reveal the mentality that led to the image presented by the author.

Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu’s novel *Yaban* published in 1932 was shaped as a result of a number of historical events. The literary work reflects the conflict between urban intellectual narrator and the villagers, so that it contains two different images: The images are people belonging to two different social statuses, even if they share the same environment.

These images and the factors that caused them to be shaped in the mind of the author will be examined by taking into considerations both the literary and social life of the writer and the conditions of the period, and will be tried to explain by using different disciplines.

## II. TWO DIFFERENT “THE OTHER” IMAGES IN THE TURKISH AUTHOR YAKUP KADRI KARAOSMANOĞLU’S NOVEL *YABAN*

*Yaban*, the novel of Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, who lived between 1889 and 1974, was published in 1932. The novel contains two different images as urban and rural people. In the novel genre, the author represented the “national literature”, a name used in Turkish literature for the period between 1908 and 1922. Although the literary work was published in 1932, it tells us the period of the Turkish war of independence. While Yakup Kadri wanted to participate in the National Campaign, Atatürk refused the request and said that he had to be journalist in Istanbul. So Yakup Kadri spent this period by writing articles that would evoke the feeling of national consciousness. In the following years, however, he reflected his impressions about this period to his works (See: Argunşah, 2018, p. 227). One of these works is *Yaban*. It is in the form of diary. It conveys to readers that the life of the protagonist Ahmet Celâl, who settled in a village near Eskişehir after he had lost his right arm in the period when he was a soldier. Ahmet Celâl represents the Republican intellectual. The novel, in general, consists of the conflict between urban intellectual Ahmet Celâl and the local people. The main factor in this conflict, which can be seen in all areas of life, is politics. Because, Ahmet Celâl, who was a veteran, defends the National Campaign started from Anatolia under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal, while the villagers cannot understand this movement, moreover, they support the Istanbul government and foreign forces targeting the whole country.

From this point of view in which the self and the other are formed as a result of a mutual interaction and they need each other’s existence for their determinations (See: Özçalık, 2008, p. 3), facing with the people who do not support the National Campaign, in terms of Ahmet Celâl, creates a sense of self. It is seen that the self is the side that can perceive the necessity of the National Campaign and support it. So, the people who think that the movement is not necessary, are also constructed as the other(s).

Looking at the image of the villagers, which was reflected as the other in the work, it can be said that, as many people, the novel shows an attitude against the villagers and the main character, an intellectual, looks down on villagers (See: Moran, 2016, p. 136). As a matter of fact, Yakup Kadri also mentioned this accusation on foreword of the *Yaban*’s second edition published in 1942, and he emphasized that the accusation is unfair with these words: *After reviewing Yaban for the second time, I understand, this is certainly a slander* (Karaosmanoğlu, 2018, p. 10).

The work which started by explaining how Ahmet Celâl came to the village, continues by showing the main character’s efforts to eliminate the insensitivity of the villagers about Turkish war of independence after he understood the mentality of these people. This effort seems correct in terms of sociology, so that French sociologist Gustave Le Bon said, *As the masses are only influenced and excited by exaggerated and excessive emotions and they are only acted in this way, (...) the speaker who wants to increase the influence on them must choose serious claims and fiery words* (Le Bon, 2015, p. 51). However, even if he chose the right method, Ahmet Celâl’s effort would be futile: *I wanted to touch them deeply. I said: "From their rape, our wives' honors, our children's lives, religion, faith, nothing has survived. They are devastating all of the things." And I was telling them some things that explained this situation. Meanwhile, I saw that the mukhtar was sleeping. Mehmet Ali was chiseling a branch of a willow tree with his knife. And Salih Agha was watching the sheep grazing on the far slope* (Karaosmanoğlu, 2018, p. 27).

As it is seen, Ahmet Celâl tried to change their minds of the people, who are the others, and tried to become us, but he was not able to be successful. After this effort did not rise the expected effect, the othering started to be seen intensely.

In the next parts of the novel, there are many things that justify the critical remark of Berna Moran. Because the villagers are underrated and qualified as ignorant people. Ahmet Celâl’s thoughts about this village and the people of the village are as follows: *However, this village is not as safe as a mansion in the middle of a desert. Really, in this village which resembles an old Hittite ruin, how are people different from brokenly sculptures that have just been dug out of the ground?* (Karaosmanoğlu, 2018, p. 32).

With these words written in the main character’s point of view, the people of the villages are reflected as if they are an inanimate being far from the basic feelings and thoughts that are unique to humankind. Another quotation depicting these people with similar negativities is as follows: *These people have not even become a social creature yet. They live like people in the stone age. Those days, the strongest man of the tribe, with a tree ax, would walk up to you, steal your food and take away your wife from your cave, and all of them would seem unavoidable and inevitable to everyone like natural events* (Karaosmanoğlu, 2018, p. 72).

Ahmet Celâl sees the people of this village as the other(s), whom he cannot adapt in any way, because they do not share the same world-view with him and because he cannot live like them. So, Ahmet Celâl, representing the Republican intellectual, and these people were constructed as opposite poles.

The protagonist of the novel otherizes the people of this village not only because of the political reasons, even if this constitutes the main point, but, as mentioned earlier, this othering is related to the whole lifestyle and also applies to women. This situation was written in the novel with these words: *In Anatolia, the women of villages are so deprived of lightsomeness, coyness and seductiveness that I guess if I sleep with one of them, I will not feel anything* (Karaosmanoğlu, 2018, p. 35). However, the reason why these women are like this is very simple; *Because they are active in livestock and production in traditional and rural areas that are based on agriculture* (Tezcan, 2000, p. 232), namely, since they are more busy with daily works that require physical strength, their concern, personality and appearance are naturally different from urban women.

In the work, the definitions for the people of this village, which are reflected as the other(s) from narrator’s angle are not limited to these. This village are located as the other for Ahmet Celâl also in terms of beliefs. Sheikh Yusuf who comes to the village every year, heals the villagers by praying. Sheikh Yusuf is sacred for the villagers. But when Ahmet Celâl asks how the Sheikh do favor and to who, he cannot get a specific answer. Apart from that, the people of this village also respect the superstitions about the foreign forces: *[The woman believes that] those who attacks us are not enemy armies. They are saints with green turbans, so that a Queen that named Europe sent them to save us from the gangs.*

*And the Queen will become Islam after saving us.*

(...)

*Does she believe me if I say all of these things are lie? Which words help me to show her the truth? There is a huge distance between me and her. How can I get past the distance and reach her?* (Karaosmanoğlu, 2018, pp. 121-122).

Regarding such superstitions, Mehmet Bilgin Saydam argues that what triggers beliefs is the possibility of insecurity and the need to know, and the move, which develops accordingly, is fiction and accepting that fiction as real (See: Saydam, 2018, p. 32). This is exactly what is seen in the quotation. The people of this village do not know or accept the truth that Ahmet Celâl knows, and accordingly they create their own fictional world, and in this case, they become the other(s) that are irreconcilable for Ahmet Celâl. This narrative about superstitions presented by Yakup Kadri is based on the aim of reflecting the reality of village. The novel *Yaban* is a pioneer. Because the movement of the



romanticism of village which has been seen in the literature field since early years of Republic, after this novel, replaced by the reality of village (See: Gündüz, 2018, pp. 460-461).

And, since the otherness cannot be seen as unilaterally, the more the people of this village are the other(s) for Ahmet Celâl, the more Ahmet Celâl is the other for these people. At the beginning of the novel, this was reflected with a short dialogue between Ahmet Celâl and Mehmet Ali as follows: *It has been a few weeks since I came here. I asked Mehmet Ali:*

– *Why are the women running away just from me?*

– *Because you are wild, sir.*

(...)

*One day... one day, will I be able to prove to them that I am not “wild”? The blood in my veins is the same as theirs. We speak the same language. We have walked in the same historical and geographical ways. Can I prove that we are the servants of the same God! The same political destiny and the same social ties have connected us to each other with a closeness like brotherhood, motherhood and fatherhood* (Karaosmanoğlu, 2018, pp. 25-26).

As it can be seen, also in the people of this village when someone came from outside, a sense of self and the other occurred as mentioned before. These people totally became us and Ahmet Celâl was seen as the other. Of course, this is not specific to this village, there are always and everywhere a sense of self and the other, what changes is just the people that the senses indicate to.

Ahmet Celâl who is regarded as the other by the villagers and emphasizes that he cannot think like them even if he manages to live like them (See: Karaosmanoğlu, 2018, p. 68), says the following about his situation in the village: *A few days ago, while I was hiking, I stumbled on a tin can. I stopped and looked. This was a tin can that came from America and there was a name of something in English on it. Which traveler left the tin can here? I do not know, how long it has been here. I bent down with a strong interest, took it my hand, I looked and I saw something that I used to see before.*

*In this village, I am just like this tin can* (Karaosmanoğlu, 2018, p. 69).

As it is understood from this quote, which is emphasized the deprivation that one of the definitions of a province or rural area, the more the tin can from America is the other for villagers, the more Ahmet Celâl is the other and *the meaning of the intellectual in the world of Anatolian villagers is “wild”* (Gündüz, 2018, p. 408). As mentioned before, this picture that includes two different images, the Republican intellectual and the people of the village, who are the other(s) for each other, was deliberately constructed by the writer Yakup Kadri to reflect the reality of village. And in the novel, the gap between the intellectual and the village people is clearly depicted as follows: *I understand better day by day: Turkish “intellectual” is a strange and lonely person in this vast and desolate world that called as Turkish country.*

*A loner? No; A strange creature is better. Imagine such a person that it is unclear what race of his. The more he moves towards the bottom of his country, which he considers as the motherland, the more he feels that he is faraway from his own root.*

(...)

*Is there the same gap between villagers and literates of all countries? I do not know! However, the difference between an Istanbulite literate person and an Anatolian villager is greater than the difference between a Londoner British and Punjabi Indian* (Karaosmanoğlu, 2018, p. 36).

This has been mentioned before: The novel is exposed to some critiques by many people regarding the boasting of an intellectual, looking down on the villagers, etc. But the quotation which also was in foreword of the novel's second edition, clearly shows that the picture was not constructed to despise Anatolian villagers, on the contrary, it aims to reveal the real situation and of course to change it by utilizing the social function of literature: *The reason for this, the Turkish intellectual, is you! What did you do for this wrecked country and poor people? You had sucked their blood for years, for centuries and then you threw it on arid lands as a pulp, and now you say that you have the right to disgust them.*

*Anatolian people had a soul, you could not penetrate it. They had a head, you could not light it up. They had a body, you could not feed it. There was a land in which they lived! You could not teach to cultivate. You left them in the hands of brutish emotions, ignorance, poverty and scarcity. They lived like a weed between arid soil and dry air. Now you are here with a sickle in your hand. But, what did you plant before and what do you harvest now? These dead nettles or these thorns? Of course, they will hurt your feet. Here is bleeding your all and you are grimacing from pain. You are like a cat on a hot tin roof. But, what suffers you is your fault, exactly your fault* (Karaosmanoğlu, 2018, pp. 110-111).

From the beginning of the novel, there were some negative adjectives for people of the village, and they were otherized by Ahmet Celâl that is the main character. But, since otherness cannot be unilateral, Ahmet Celâl was also presented as the other for villagers and he was given a name *yaban* (wild) that is also the title of the novel. By this way, the gap between the Republican intellectual and villagers was clearly showed to readers; however, it was said in the end of the novel that who is in charge of this situation is intelligentsia. As a matter of fact, this is personally one of the determinations of the provinces. Since the provinces, which means *outside* in the dictionary (Türk Dil Kurumu Sözlüğü), cannot be defined as the provinces by insiders and a center is necessary to be defined it as the provinces, the determinant of the provinces and provincials is personally the center: *What determines the provinces is not itself. It is the relationship with another force than itself, that is, the relationship with the center, and even directly the center. We are talking about not only a political center, but also the center that has many other associations; Because, the emotion of deprivation, which prevails on the provinces, occurs as a result of the center that always thrusts itself forward magisterially. Whatever the center means, the provinces experiences the nightmare of being secondary of it* (Çiğdem, 2018, p. 104).

As mentioned before, if the determinant of the provinces and provincials is the center by leaving it as secondary and cannot being penetrated to its soul as written by the author, what changes it is also center.

Eventually, it can be said that by writing *Yaban* that includes two different images and by making this Anatolian village intolerable for an intellectual, Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, who is a writer with national consciousness and the spirit of Kuvayımilliye (Turkish Nationalist Forces), aims to reveal the real situation of Anatolia and Anatolian people, to show this situation to intelligentsia through their own eyes, and to lead up a social transformation.

### III. CONCLUSION

In this study which is on *Yaban* written by Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu that was one of the writers of the Republican Period, firstly, it was defined what imagology is, what the aim of imagology is, and how the imagology works. Then, it was determined the other images belonging to two different social statuses as Republican intellectual and Anatolian villagers. And by utilizing different disciplines, with a pluralistic approach, it was tried to reveal why these images were created in view of the fact that both writer's literary life and the conditions of the period.

In the novel which was presented the deep gap between intelligentsia and villagers from the diary of the novel's protagonist Ahmet Celâl, on the one hand, it was said that the village resembles a ruin and the people of this village are like primitive beings and they believe superstitions, and the Republican intellectual Ahmet Celâl is so different and superior than the villagers in many aspects; on the other hand, Ahmet Celâl was seen as strange, wild and the other by the villagers.

In the context of these two different images, in this novel which reflected the conflict between intelligentsia and villagers, it was showed to readers who is in charge of the situation of the village and villagers is also intellectual class. Consequently, it was revealed that by creating these images and by presenting the reality of village with some events and situation in this village through the eyes of Ahmet Celâl who is one of the people belonging to intellectual class, the author aimed for a social transformation.

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