

Is the Peasant the Disadvantaged Party Versus the City-Dweller?

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Abstract

Turkey is a fast changing country with a young population. True, it used to be defined as an agrarian state; but, it is getting urbanized at tremendous speed. This change brings the *citadin* in interaction with the peasant under many possible circumstances. The former usually has the upper hand in this relation and on occasion does not even conceal his contempt for the latter. But the latter sometimes carries off his own victory despite disproportionate disadvantages and absolute deprivation.

Key words: Peasant; Villager; City-dweller/*citadin*; Turkish

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INTRODUCTION

For all the taints of social anthropology here and there, this work falls into the domain of rural sociology in essence. The work's peculiarity stems in the intention to comprise the Turkish countryside in its entirety. So, the whole countryside constitutes the materials in this case. As to the method, with respect to a single village monograph, some ambiguity or controversy may arise when the reader looks at it as an article. Yet, reliance on vast literature survey (in Turkish, English, French and German if I do say so myself) and an evaluation of previous life experience (*Erlebnis*) where a series of

participant observation incidents had spread out, could represent the only possible means enabling the work to go on to completion.

As for data, recalling from mental flashbacks related memories, which gave way to numerous case illustrations on pages, is what approximates the data collection process at best. As a matter of fact, in a sense I had been *gleaning* (*glaner/stoppeln*) data along the course of my past life whenever the occasion presented itself! Now I consider myself lucky as an individual who had been well equipped in the long run to cope with such a study.

It is important to emphasize that I consider myself lucky as an individual who had been well equipped in the long run to cope with such a study. This is because I come from the middle class. Universally this social class possesses certain peculiarities. For example, American scholars point out that the new cults recruit members mostly from the middle classes. Middle class people are more gullible, believing promises of eternal happiness more easily. They also usually crave for integration with a closely-knit group. The street smart lower classes are too worldly and too cunning to be tempted by cult leaders.

In July 2009 I indulged in some travels in the countryside of Eastern Thrace in order to get some new impressions. I tried to collect some artefacts and other objects peculiar to peasants. Those transactions facilitated my interaction with villagers. But the artifacts were worth the trouble per se. Some are scanned and put to the appendix at the end of this dissertation. When the occasion presented itself, I also took photographs.

In August of the same year I also took a trip to the Aegean region, concentrating around *Aydın* and *Denizli* districts. Not owning a car (and not being able to drive) was a handicap. I took minibuses or trains to reach or pass by villages. I returned from *Denizli* to *Edirne* by a direct bus. I was pleased to discover a villager next to me. He had got on the bus in *Isparta* before me. The forty-seven-year-old, moustached, partly bald, stoutly-built man was

from a village in Thrace. I got friendly with him and we became travel comrades for fourteen hours. A former farmer, he later worked for a town bakery and then set up his small roll bread (*Simit*) furnace in his own village. His name is *Ahmet* the Roll-Bread Maker. The man's wife died under a collapsing wall four years ago. His daughter is married to a tea-house owner in the nearby town.

His son has just graduated as an engineer from *Süleyman Demirel* University. All villagers have connections to cities and urban ways and a hundred percent peasant is almost impossible to locate on our day. *Ahmet's* son found an engineering job in private sector in *Çorlu*. Already too busy he gave a proxy petition to his father for him to get the diploma. *Ahmet* got it and put it on his chest in a case underneath his shirt. He was proud to be fetching that precious document, the results of years of sweat and energy. I said he got his son's "*şahadetname*" and explained the obsolete Ottoman word. It is derived from "*şahit*" (witness) and witnesses that his son is a learned man now. He remarked that it is a more meaningful word than "diploma".

Upon my inquiry he said he had done his military service in the Air Force. I said this was an honour which only few lucky men could share. I also pointed out that his nickname should have been Air-Force-*Ahmet* in the village. This is parallel to a nickname like Corporal so and so, which is convention anyhow. He got pleased and said unfortunately such a nickname was not assigned to him in the village.

At first the villager traveler could not give a meaning to my cordial approach and friendly inquiries but soon he accepted me as a travel friend. I could not explain my extra bit of zeal as a Ph.D. candidate working on the theme of peasantry. I was afraid he would not understand my being a student at my age. I then remembered a play by Anton Chekhov, the Cherry Orchard. The plot is about a noble Russian family who sells their estate to a former serf's son, now a successful merchant. A secondary character, Trofimov is a perpetual student getting in and out of the university and the merchant Lophakin always teases him for being a student. On one episode he introduces him to somebody with the exaggerated words: "He will soon be fifty but he is still a student!". I thought about revealing my student identity in a humorous manner, saying "next to you sits a student at the age of a long dead donkey" (*ölmüş eşek yaşında bir talebe*). But I somehow said I was a teacher and that was it. I intend to visit *Ahmet* later in his very village just as a pure friend.

While in the Aegean region, driven by a certain obsession, I deliberately searched for peasant men with plaid towels wrapped around their heads as a remnant of the former *zeybek* culture. This head attire is resembling to but different from the *poshu* worn on the head in south-eastern rural regions. Unfortunately I could not spot a single one. I had seen a few previously as late as in 1990's

around *Manisa* and had stared at them in utter fascination. Alas, times *are* changing!

1. ARROGANCE OF CITADINS IN FACE OF PEASANTS

Peasant-like behaviour patterns usually come into the attention of urban media in the form of aggressive acts like shooting guns in the air in exuberance when gloating over the football victories and the doers got stigmatized with the pejorative newly-coined word "*maganda*". (Former *hanzo* or *keko* seem to be replaced by the new word. The new world connotes a danger which the former ones lacked).

As I remember, in his work *On Productive Soils*, *Orhan Kemal* narrates the adventure of three peasant men who leave together to gain a living. One of them dies of illness. Another, a wrestler, gets tempted by a frivolous woman and gets in trouble. The third, learns the trade of wall construction and returns, more or less a success. On the way back a train official treats him badly empties all his grudge directed to villagers in general.

Many snobby city-dwellers are like him. They despise villagers and somehow show their contempt overtly. Some prefer to conceal their hostile feelings rather than acting out. Perhaps the lightest persecution encountered by a villager is probably mockery. Advocates of villagers in cities are usually re-socialized villagers themselves or their children.

A visiting peasant's situation is mentioned in a somewhat merciless manner in a pun of words (tongue-twister); which is recited with a certain melody in the evenings, on the verge of quitting street games and returning home: "*Let the married go home! / Let the villager go to his village! / And whoever has no home, / Should just enter a mouse-hole!*" ("*Evli evine! / Köylü köyüne! / Kimin evi yoksa, / Siçan deliğine!*").

While I was a junior high school student in *Lüleburgaz*, we had an *Istanbulite* music teacher: *Sezai Bey*. Once he discovered a sticking out nail on his teacher-desk. He attempted to pull it out entirely with his naked hand but could not. To save the situation he began "*one needs the strength of Hercules*"; but he immediately corrected himself and re-said "*one needs the strength of Hadrat Ali to pull out this stubborn nail!*". He might as well have referred to the strength of *Zaloğlu Rüstem*. Village-boys constituted approximately half the class and *Sezai Bey* was too clever to exclude them.

Once focusing his attention to a typically peasant-faced boy he counseled: "*After graduation you should go to Kerpertepe Teacher-Training School. That is appropriate for you*". The way he put it was a bit pejorative (in Turkish *seni orasi paklar*). But his intention was good and he solely wanted the betterment of that student as he evaluated his case.

On a May evening in 2009 I was watching a history program on *Haber Türk* television. On one occasion researcher and author *Murat Bardakchi*, an Istanbul-born and Istanbul-bred gentleman, referred to the Ottoman nicknames regarding persons' home-cities. The city's name followed the person's name with a certain suffix, an elongated letter (i). *Bardakçı* promptly gave an example, employing his young co-worker associate professor of history *Erhan Afyoncu* as the subject. He said "*Erhan-ı Tokadı, for instance*". I explained to my mother that *Erhan Bey* comes from *Tokat*. When I saw a thin smile beginning to play upon her lips, only then I came to realize that the elderly program-maker probably caught the opportunity to tease his young colleague in a very subtle manner (as he sometimes enjoys to do so), emphasizing and contrasting each other's social backgrounds.

In a more recent episode of the program *Bardakchi* on one occasion, also stressing the younger age of *Afyoncu*, more bluntly said: "At that time you were in the village running about in short-sleeved trousers". His interlocutor got offended and retorted back: "It is you who came from the village". The elderly journalist swallowed the retaliation and the duel came to a halt. Another topic began to be handled.

Zulfu Livaneli, son of a sub-governor, had his high school education in Ankara College. He once related that he used to take his guitar to school and play the traditional *saz* only at home. In late 1960's it was embarrassing occupation to deal with folk songs and *saz*-like music instruments.

2. RELATIONS ON EQUAL FOOTING

In the third year of my junior high school my desk mate *Ismet* was a village boy. I got the highest grades in painting and drawing course from the stingy-in-grades *Sema Hanım* (and later from the more generous, academy-educated *Muzaffer Hanım*) in the entire school, combined Lycée division included, along with *Sami*, *Hulya* and *Yashar*. (Years later I was to run into *Yashar* when we both became reserved officers; he had studied dentistry). Just before graduation *Ismet* implored me to donate my water-color pictures to him and I accepted; passing him the entire collected works in a file. This was honouring for *Ismet* like stamping our friendship with a solid memento.

Another village boy learned about this from *Ismet's* gloating and resented me for not having given *him* a single painting. He wore a rope-like greasy necktie; so, that evening I picked up a few times from among the collection of times left over by my father after his deserting the house. The next morning I presented the ties to the boy as if giving a "consoling prize" like the National Lottery Administration does when only a single digit does not match to gain the big prize.

In *Çukurova* School of Medicine our Legal Medicine Chair was adjacent to Histology, both on the ground floor. There was a single female assistant there with very dark

complexion ("chocolate coloured" would say the music critique *Sezen Cumhuri Onal*, whose son had been my student once). She had a well-to-do probably a fellaheen family and polite manners and speech. The *brain surgery section* was near to our work places.. One day I was visiting this assistant and *peasant women were loudly weeping just outside the brain surgery section. as it did happen from time to time. I always felt sorry for those people but apparently somebody did not.* The following dialogue followed between the two of us.

She— (uttering the words ostentatiously, almost as if she were courting) "*If only those people could accept death silently! If only they could stop those primitive lamenting funeral songs and wailings!*"

Me— "*What else could they do? Poor beings!*"

She — "*I don't say they should do something, but if all patients' families and kinships let out such improvised crying songs, what is going to become of us; daily witnessing all those scenes? Now, if the wounding occurred at a fight, just you watch then! What a heroic (!) folk literature will follow!*".

3. SELF-PERCEIVED INFERIORITY AND RESULTING RESENTMENT

A city-person is always conscious and proud of his urban origins in front of his provincial counterpart, no matter how high the acquired status of that counterpart may be. On the slightest pretext, this perceived superiority comes to express itself if not explicitly, certainly implicitly.

This instigates a resentment on the part of the villager. But deep inside he accepts the superiority of the other. This may easily transform into an impulse to go forward. Many village oriented people achieve success and wealth (like the wonderful *Nuri Kantar* businessman character). Late Psychiatry professor *Adasal* brought up the concept of collective inferiority complex in one of the books. Villagers have just that vis-à-vis city-dwellers. My father, though an officer, with his peasant origins used to feel crushed before my mother, who originates from a big town. Eventually they got separated and later divorced.

In mid 1970's in a socialist reunion of songs and celebrations in Istanbul a folk ballad singer (*halk şairi*) named *Mustafa Koç* performed his radically composed work in escort of his *saz*. One of the stanzas was: "*Both the mother and the spouse of whom he regards the peasant dirty [deserve to be fucked!]*" ("*Koyluye 'pis' diyenin anasini avradini hey!*"). The verb designating the shameful act was actually left out but implicitly understood. (In mid-seventies some of the folk singers were very much politically oriented, late *Mahzuni Sherif* and late *Âşık İhsani* being two.

One ballad composed by the latter was depicting the torture suffered by political detainees in the Second Department of Security Directorate of Istanbul, then in

Sirkeci district. The absurdly small rooms were called coffin-booths (*tabutluk*). The song went like “*The three of us are confined into one coffin*” (“*Uch kishi bir tabuttayiz*”). In a *rhapsodes’* night held in Istanbul, one certain ballad singer was even bitterly hard towards the blind poet *Veysel*. In his melodious poem he compared him with another name from the same city (*Sivas*), *Pîr Sultan Abdal*, a historical symbol of protest and called *Veysel* an obsequious praise singer of the oppressors: “*Whereas the other performed in palaces*”).

While we were on a visit to my maternal grandmother, my mother once exclaimed “how lucky of me that don’t come from a village! Otherwise I would have to wrap a veil on my face when visiting home, like that other female teacher does!”. Indeed, as Erdentuğ (1959, p.53) specifies, under a subtitle regarding some characteristics of peasants “even in the case where one person has lived for long outside the village, he [she] is morally obliged to observe what tradition dictates; he [she] tries to adapt himself [herself] to the village’s customs by first changing dress upon coming home”.

4. PEASANT OR PROVINCIAL PERSON AS POSSIBLE VICTIM IN URBAN ENVIRONMENT

Villagers are by no means stupid. In fact they are crafty. The peasant’s cunning (*Bauernschlaukeit*) is famous. But, paradoxically, it is their lack of urban experience which makes them prone to be victimized by flimflam men. An anonymous anecdote goes as follows: *The cunning peasant visits the big city for the first time. While he is gaping at a skyscraper with an open mouth, a swindler approaches him and asks him at which floor he is staring at. He must pay so many piastres. The peasant pays six piastres, asserting the authoritarian-looking new-comer that he had been watching the sixth floor. When he is left alone he congratulates himself for his alternative gain. In actuality, he had been staring at the tenth floor!*

This vulnerability vis-à-vis swindlers extends out to all provincial people including town-dwellers. But they take the lesson experience. They may even get too cautious once being a victim. My father originates from a Thracian village. When I was a child my father was an army captain. For a time, he was also in charge of a twin company as the acting commander. A new conscript was complaining about his swollen, aching legs and my father assured his well-being, exempting him both from training and toiling in the barracks.

After leaving the other company, an inter-companies running contest was held by the battalion. Among the other officers he was watching the competition. The winner proved to be a familiar face, that same conscript who “had troubles with his feet”. Boasting off with raised hands in his victory tour, he noticed my father and immediately began to limp! My father let it go unnoticed.

But in his fury, I and my sibling were scapegoats at the house, for quite a long time. Everything we said was cross-checked. The change money we brought back from the bakery was carefully counted and so forth.

I used to know a female intern doctor, who was a relentless enemy of beggars. (Feeling my annoyance about that fixation of hers, once in a letter addressed to me she wrote: “*Go to the same pool, order a glass of tea, light a cigarette and think about me. If beggars ever come nearby, dispel them; don’t permit them to disturb your sweet meditating mood!*”). She obviously had a reason for that negative attitude against beggars.

Upon her arrival from Anatolia into the big city for registration of a faculty of medicine as a boarding student, she had an incident. A shabby-looking woman at the gate of the research hospital of the faculty quickly told her a bitter illness story and asked for charity. In her joyful mood of a happy new medicine student, she gave her a considerable lump sum of money, thus reducing her own allowances.

Thirty steps away, another woman did the very same thing, thereby “shaking off” her *naïveté*. She immediately returned to the first woman to re-claim her money, which she could not recover (When I mentioned all this to my mother, following our frustrated separation, in need of some consolation; my mother was merely amazed at and impressed by the girl’s resoluteness to go back and recover her pocket-money, instead of acquiring an attitude like “it was just a mistake and let bygones be bygones”). I fell victim to a foot-in-the-door¹ technique once. Returning from my (Thracian) home, I was on the verge of transferring to another municipal bus in *Eminonu* district of Istanbul to get to school (Robert College Lycée Division). I was a boarding scholarship student and I had only one lira (Turkish money unit) left over that Sunday afternoon. Near the bus station, at the courtyard of the *Ottoman mosque* dominating the square; all of a sudden; a smiling, dark complexioned youngish woman held a small tin vessel full of corn grains before me and requested me to spread it on the ground for the pigeons to pick up.

The price was written on the can: One fourth of a lira, the same amount as the student bus fare. I took the vessel (the cap of a glass jar) and offered its content to the pigeons. But the woman hastily threw up three more measures (or to be more precise, half-measures) of grains to the pigeons without my consent and obviously “for my sake” and thus, in a sense, she came to “deserve” a whole

¹ “Foot-in-the-door” approach involves asking for a small favor and incrementally obtaining much bigger ones. “*When individuals commit themselves in a small way, the likelihood they will commit themselves further in that direction is increased*” (Aronson 1992, p.189). Confidence artists know this and abuse it. The reverse technique is equally effective. It is the face-in-the-door method (asking for a big favor and settling for a smaller one). A child who demands to borrow his friend’s bicycle may very easily obtain his lollipop candy instead. Giving away the lollipop will appear like an insurance document for the bicycle in the eyes of the bicycle-owner.

lira (all of my money) with that *fait accompli*. The shy and provincial boy I was, I had to walk all the way to my school, in two hours.

5. THE OVERCAUTIOUS PEASANT IN CITY ENVIRONMENT

The villager is mistrusting and cautious in his dealings with the city-dwellers. Anything modern looking scares him off easily like a fancy shop, for instance. In my junior high school summer vacations I used to work as a tailor apprentice in *Lüleburgaz*. This job² prevented me from swimming—tragic drowning incidents did occur from time to time—in the creeks, loafing around and getting involved in street fights etc. as my mother put it. The crushing majority of the customers were villagers. This, I suppose, my boss owed to the shabby appearance of his rented shop. It was nearby *Sokullu Mosque* and considered to lie in a historical section (*Asar-I Atika*) of the big town. Even a repairing activity was subjected to official permission.

My Boss, Craft Master *Ismail*, was an elegant looking man resembling Lyndon Johnson in his face but his humble attitude served him well in not discouraging the villagers from coming. (He was an “inside-groom”, living in his dominating wife’s big house, which must have entrained him not to affect patronizing manners; he was a well-informed man, reading and even cutting off chronicles of *Çetin Altan* from his newspaper).

One time he left the shop for a visit to relatives and for a few days he “appointed” me as the acting boss in charge. The full-time journeyman (*Geselle*) had quit and the part-time journeyman could not be held responsible. Following his instructions written on paper, I handed some finished works to customers and received the specified money, in the mean time. A peasant then came to ask for his ordered trousers. I had given away a pair with about the same size

² When my wife gets angry with me she teasingly uses this apprentice title of mine as a trump to demean me but I just laugh it off. I remember my boss *Dr. Belli* once got angry with his colleague, Pharmacology Professor *Firuz Bey*. He again relied on his psychiatric interpretations when he said behind his back in fury “in his childhood in *Menemen* he had worked for a restaurant, inviting customers to hot delicious beans and rice at the door of the shop; this is why he is still misbehaving in his social relationships”. I also remember the autobiographical novels of *Elia Kazan*, narrating his paternal uncle’s immigration to America.

To gain the ship fare, *Stavros*, after leaving *Kayseri* for Istanbul, had worked as a porter for a time in *Tahtakale*. In America he started as the errand boy of an Armenian carpet merchant. He kept coming and going to Anatolia, arranging shipments of carpets. When he made a mistake, the indignant boss always started the cables with an addressing formula like “*hamal*, listen to me and take the following order”. (*Stavros* happened to be in *Izmir* just at the time of the rescue of the city by the Turkish forces. He squeezed himself into a passenger ship again as a porter, carrying the load of a foreign passenger. This was the best incremental way to safety, allowing him to take slow but impatient steps *tuc tuc tuc* in the direction of the ship).

and color to another customer before his arrival; so, for a moment I got confused and mumbled about a mistake. The villager bitterly smiled and threatened to go to police. This was the first such threat I was confronted with in my life. In his insecurity, taking me as a deceitful city-boy, that is what he just did to me. After a short desperate search I located and submitted his order and he apologized.

6. ADMIRING AND EVEN VINDICTIVE PEASANT

My wife, Istanbul-born and Istanbul-bred, sometimes turns down my knowledge of foreign languages with a harsh attitude. Then I wisely find an excuse to exaggerate my more humble provincial aspect to mitigate her anger. Just after the meal, for instance, turning a *ritual insult* towards myself I say: “So you fed the village bastard full!” (*koy pichini doyurdun*). She keeps mute but I know she gets delighted, feeling elevated in contrast. (Maybe thanks to the author *Elif Safak*’s novel titled *The Father and the Bastard* the word in Turkish does not sound so obscene any more).

I remember visiting my father’s village as a whole family in my childhood, when a peasant boy took his mirror and began to reflect light on our faces. My father, always reluctant to break hearts (and for that manner a lenient, kind, fatherly figure³ towards the soldiers under his command unlike many other fellow combat officers) did not scold him on my mother’s instigation but patiently instructed the boy to be more welcoming and polite. The boy behaved himself right away.

The peasant boy’s first reaction was like that of the Taurus boys stoning the window panes of the passing by trains, in animosity towards urban power. When the railroad directorate undertook a project to offer them free trips, the action came to a halt. In America some luxury hotels have happy hours during which the prices of drinks in sink to regular levels. Such measures give respite to lower income groups and mitigate their antagonism, as compared to wild capitalistic insistence. In the novel

³ After his (obligatory) retirement as a major from the army (during the 1960 coup), for a time thanks to his distinguished certificate from the Army School of Languages, my father gave English courses at *Alpullu Junior High School* and especially favored peasant students. One of his favorite students, with a very dark and grave face, was commuting to school daily from *Temren* village of *Hayrabolu*, farthest away than any other student’s home.

At the end of the academic year he had a few failing grades but my father vigorously defended him at the general assembly of the teachers and got his grades corrected to passing limits. To convince fellow teachers, he even resorted to humor. He said to them “How could you ever dare flunk this burgeoning *Lumumba* of the future?”. The assassinated black leader of Congo were yet fresh in memories. About two decades later, overhearing the word *Temren*, his village, from a passenger in a municipal bus in Istanbul, I asked about *Ismail Kurt*. His compatriot said he was now a policeman stationed somewhere in the east of the country.

Grapes of Wrath, Steinbeck makes speak a character about the Californian gardens. If the money paid to security people to prevent eating of the fruits by the pickers were to be added to wages, the wages themselves would have gone up considerably. (In a Friday speech in a mosque a clergy once said: If a man offers a glass of milk to his neighbor after feeding his family with milk and if that neighbour still prays for the death of that cow, what an awful human being he is!)⁴

I experienced another similar incident. Following my father's retirement we had just moved from Istanbul to the very small town of *Alpullu* and rented a house in the far-flung flood-houses neighbourhood with no electric lamps. My crowded classroom had a mixed character since it was the only third grade section. Then a new teacher (also female) got appointed and all the "riffraff" in the opinion of some (whoever they was or were) were "decanted off" to the new-comer's newly opened section. Now all students left over were children of shop owners or sugar plant officials, teachers, policemen, health officials, train station officials etc.. This represented the highest social standard cross-section there and then. But we were a morning class and the section became a noon class. On my mother's instigation I volunteered for the noon class.⁴ I had to care for my small brother *Muazzam*. My elder brother (a year senior to me) was a noon student but he pretended indifference and had an independent character.

One evening after class dismissal, on the way home, two peasant students from my new class "took us prisoners" and brought us to a nearby harvested field for a talk in "captive audience". (I consulted with my big brother and we decided to agree, warding off possible violence since no brute force was employed in the beginning but seemed imminent in case we did not comply). They questioned us for about twenty minutes and listened to the replies with the utmost curiosity. What were Istanbul girls like? Did we have darlings there? What meals did we eat there (and here?) etc. (Like a *Stocholm* syndrome I later got friendly with those peasant students).

7. TRIBUTE TO PEASANTRY: THE PEASANT CARRIES OFF HIS OWN VICTORY!

The peasant who had always been described as despicable, lazy, filthy, shrewd, cowardly, ignorant, backward and deserving whatever other ignoble adjectives; does

⁴ An army officer's son moving place to place, I was already experienced in changing classes. But even before I did it on a voluntary basis too. This would be my second chosen plight in vertical social mobility. In *Beshiktash*-Istanbul I was in the class of the "nobility" but; for the sake of becoming a noon student to aid mother in looking after the baby; I told our young, good-looking, steel-rimmed spectacled teacher *Necla Hanim* about my transfer wish. She acclaimed me as a hero daring to do that. The noon class of elderly *Hadiye Hanim* proved to be full of children of door-keepers, peddlers, itinerant weekly marketers and whitewashers.

overcome; at least in certain given circumstances; as it is presented with a lot of case histories in this very section dedicated entirely to his enduring, suffering person and noble memory!

7.1 Peasant as a Subject of Art

As the wife of a Soviet culture minister puts it while referring to a Turkish Painting Exhibition in Moscow, villages in early Republican era constituted a theme to work on even for the Turkish painters: *Among the primitive styled works, Turgut Zaim's tableau depicts scenes about village customs. Namik İsmail, an impressionist, describes various aspects of rural life in his work named "Villagers Bathed in Vigorous Turkish Sun". In his work titled "Greek Officers", Painter Mahmud chose his topic as the capture of a Turkish village by the enemy* (Bobnova, 1938, 2003, pp.291-292).

Peasantry constituted a vivid topic for bizarre-loving painters all over the world. In a historical novel by Olden (1978, p.62) featuring Edgar Alan Poe as a hero, when half of the city were formed from ugly, cramped tenements housing miserable immigrants. In a rich New York house, we run into a citation to "Pieter Bruegel the Elder, a sixteenth-century Dutch artist in oil".

You could smell his peasants and barnyard animals, you could touch their clothing and skin! The first painting showed peasants shearing sheep in front of a thatched cottage. The second showed three men in coloured doublets and thigh-boots, hands tied behind their backs and hanging from a gibbet.

7.2 The Peasant's Natural Environment is Healthier

In the modern world (including Turkey recently) there is a growing nostalgia for a return to the countryside for the sake of peaceful days. As a character (a lawyer leaving urban Arizona for some two hundred miles due north) in a novel of Elia Kazan (1974, p.95) puts it there is the real undisturbed life. "I'd rather see a rattler in the morning than most of my clients; a coyote sounds more brotherly than anything I hear in the city; and I don't know a friendlier sound than the one my cows make when they come in at the end of a day".

7.3 Peasants Have Their Own Celebrities

Today in Turkey some prominent novelists like *Mahmut Makal*, *Fakir Baykurt*, *Talip Apaydın* (his daughter Su was a student in my university but I found out about it afterwards), writers like the prolific pedagogue *Cavıt Binbaşıoğlu*, academicians like professor of education management *İbrahim Ethem Başaran* former graduates of village institutions. Important people stemming from villages are impossible to count! The third president *Celâl Bayar* came from the village of *Umurbey*, *Gemlik-Bursa*. In his testimony he insisted on his museum's location in his village. (I visited the beautiful green coastal village and the museum eight years ago). *Hacı Ömer Sabancı*, a peasant boy from *Kayseri*, built an industrial empire.

7.4 A Peasant-Like Person Can Be Admired by Townsfolk

An alert, charismatic but nevertheless village-like or provincial move on the part of a person; on occasion can emerge as the impressive role-model action in contrast to the submissiveness of a dull, spiritless citizen.

I was once getting prepared to cross *Bagdat Caddesi* in Istanbul at *Kiziltoprak* district and was in obvious hurry. The traffic was heavy and I began to get impatient on the pavement. Nearby was a middle-aged elegant gentleman, who was obviously long conditioned to wait for the green light without any complaint whatsoever. Finally the green light flicked and the two of us began to walk. On the way I gave him a sidelong glance and couldn't help saying, half to him and half to myself: "*It will be peasant-like attitude; but I would rather f...ck⁵ such an avenue!*" Suddenly the man looked up at me with open respect and admiration. For a moment I was indeed proud of my practical formation leading to my deep-rooted provincial background.

7.5 A Man From a Village Is More of a Family-Father

Many allusions are made to the merciful heart of the peasant. We might as well elaborate some. To begin with, the villager is more merciful to and more protective of his own children. (Sometimes fights break out because of children). The villager even spoils his children, especially sons. In cities, more often fathers are usually stern with the discipline of their sons.

I remember a religious festivity day when I woke up early and went straight to my father. Relying on the importance of the day to come nearer to him in all respects I grabbed his hand to kiss it and put on my forehead in the customary respect sign. My father was in his pajamas. He did not let me abuse the day to slacken the parental discipline and said to me: "Well, good but can't you do a proper timing instead of kissing my hand just when I was about to itch my ass?"

On a summer vacation I took a job as interpreter on a petroleum drilling firm just outside the village of *Karakavak*, near *Hayrabolu-Tekirdag*. One day the overzealous watchman caught a 13-year-old village boy near the rig. (I did my best to mitigate his fears; I felt ashamed in the name of the company). The tower-chief warned the boy not to come near any more. Displaying a lot of moral courage, the father of the boy later came to the rig to ask accounts. The first thing he said was that his son was a junior high school student and no less than that!

The man especially went after an Italian geologist. The boy said he had threatened him with a gun. The Italian used his sense of humour to save the situation.

⁵ I was not so vulgar as to use the actual Turkish equivalent verb in its full vernacular form. Rather, I softened the verb by saying "*sin kaf ederim*". ("*Sin*" and "*kaf*" are the Arabic counterparts of the Turkish consonants "s" and "k" respectively, in the Ottoman scripture. Only an educated person at a certain age is familiar with this usage). S.Ç.

Brandishing an iron machine piece in his hand he said "This is my gun". He finally retorted to an Arabic expression which he had picked previously elsewhere on the deserts and said "*elhamdulillah*" (thank God), stretching his now bare hand for a cordial handshake. Only then the villager was appeased.

At the age of eight, my leg broke and I stayed at *Shishli* Children's Hospital for ten days with my leg in a cast (We were yet in Istanbul then). One day my father came and brought me fruit and comic strips and went. A sick peasant boy in my age in the same ward came to me and expressed his astonishment over our cold, official father-son relationship. (Obviously somewhat envious of a just retired officer's son) he said that he was the precious son of his father. His father always patted him and embraced him as if he were baby, he explained! His father would not just leave a material present and then go away like mine did, the boy emphasized.

7.6 A Rich Villager Who Knows How to Impose Respect

When I was a tailor apprentice, a peasant customer, a half-bent, thin, worm-like man with frog eyes entered the shop and was received with exceptional care by our craft master. They had coffee together. After man left, the craft master turned to his two journeymen (*kalfa*) and said. "This man surprised me the other day when he talked about his last trip to Istanbul. Gee, I would never think he would do it!"

This villager, just after a good harvest took his family to Istanbul. For a week they attended the show business night programs at then famous *Çakıl* Casino at *Aksaray*. Upon first arrival the headwaiter ignored or even despised the looks of the lot. But he was loaded and the dough began to talk for itself (*kaymeler oynadi*). The headmaster realized very soon whom was worthwhile good service. He left the *papion*-tied businessmen's tables and concentrated on the table of that heavy tipper from the second night onwards.

7.7 A Villager Can Make a Better Soldier Than a Citadin

When I was a lieutenant on guard one night I was taking the row call and a private was absent. This was trouble, announcing a sleepless night for the whole battalion. I asked the corporal in charge who it was. "Ozlem Pinch from Istanbul" came the reply. We marked him absent and lingered for a while, in hope that he will show up late. An hour passed and his absence became a certainty. "Any news?" I asked the corporal. A heavy accented private from among the ranks answered for him: "He must have deserted, my commandant; we might as well call him '*pich*' instead". (With one letter omitted it happens to mean 'bastard'). Everyone laughed. I could not help laughing either. The name got embedded in my memory.

Before that in a military institution I served as a librarian in twin assignment with the rank of sub-lieutenant under major Ural. One day new furniture arrived to be

replaced with the old. Man power is scarce in headquarters and other institutions in contrast to troops. Besides, recruits from more elite social layers end up there for the service. The major could obtain two soldiers with difficulty. One complained that he quit university and here he was carrying loads. The other said he was subject to bronchitis since childhood and unsuitable to carry weight. The major sent them away impatiently and asked for two others. Only one arrived from the support services platoon. He said he thought some type-writing was the task. The major drove him away in a rage and came close to a nervous breakdown: "Isn't there a single soldier?" he yelled. "A strong, robust, coarse (*balta*) dear peasant boy with calloused hands, for God's sake?". He, I, and the other sub-lieutenant *Güven*, we three carried the new equipment up the stairs!

7.8 The Proud-Villager Is His Own Master

The peasant, especially if owner of some land though very small in size, is different from the labourer and even the small officials in his immense pride! He does not like to get orders! He does not want to accept things and stay grateful. On the contrary, he seeks to offer and help. My travel friend from the return trip from *Denizli* is a representative one in that respect. In *Aydın* bus terminal our driver gave a fifteen-minute break. Entrained from a few days ago I quickly took him to the terminal grocer and seated him to a table.

The seller boy recognized me. I bought a kilo of fresh figs, washed them under the tap in the shop and brought them in a borrowed plate for the enjoyment of both of us. Later at the second break near *Ayvalık*, this time for half an hour, *Ahmet* insisted on treating me to soup and bread and I had to give in. He chose the tomato soup and I the vegetable soup. *Ahmet* started with the holy opening word "*Bismillah*" (with the name of *Allah*) and spooned his soup with good appetite and without affectation and he wiped the remaining smear from inside the bowl with a morsel of bread held by three fingers.

He then mentioned about the praying beads which he bought for his 87-year-old mother-in-law. So he was in touch with her after his wife died. This humanly attitude moved me deep inside. I just realized that I was bringing no gifts for anybody from my travel. I plunged into the souvenir shop and bought decorative olive oil soap clumps, intending one for my mother-in-law. I took *Ahmet* as a role model.

7.9 A Villager as a Fair Play Role Model in Sports

In our junior high class section in my senior year we had a classmate, *Ali Aydın* from a nearby *Alévite* village. In gym class during warm up sessions before the teacher's arrival, he would stand on his hands and walk on —this reminds me of the closing scene in the movie *Trapeze* when the two acrobats, played by Burt Lancaster and Tony Curtis, walk away on their hands on the street into distance — considerable strips of land like forty meters!

Despite his unpretentious character his talent was recognized and one day a group leader arranged a wrist game for him during a break in our section. His opponent came eagerly from the other section. *Tuncay* had been practicing weight-lifting in his town house garden for some years. He was very muscular and somewhat claiming. His ear drums were partly damaged from birth though.

The two teen-agers put their arms in position on the empty teacher's table and began the sideway push motion but neither could stick the other's forearm on the surface despite minutes passed. The first bell rang for students to enter the classrooms. The group leader playing the role of the referee announced a draw and separated them. I then noticed that *Tuncay*, his eyes bulging and bloodshot, hit with the back of his open hand on *Ali Aydın*'s chest once, twice out of pure reflex! *Ali Aydın* pretended to look into distance. He did not get provoked. The second bell rang for the teachers and *Tuncay* retreated to his own section and the matter was over.

Some years later I reflected about this match in retrospect after I came across a true story written by *Haldun Taner*. *Ali Aydın* was like the unforgettable character, *Hacettepe* Club's gentleman player *Ases*. *One can not call Ases tall. He is more like a small stature man. But in a collision he does not fall. He who collides with him does. Ases plays for his team, not for the spectators. I have never seen another football player in better control of his own anger. Ases' lungs are like bellows. His father is a plumber. His mother does laundry. His sister has TB. Why am I so obsessed by him? Why did I write about him? This is not a football story. He represents one my own elements inside me* (Taner, 1971, 2006, pp.141-142, 145, 152).

Can [Bartu] had just returned from Italy and he was all cheeky. He was undergoing his most impertinent days. His team played with *Hacettepe*. *Ases* made futile all of *Can*'s attacks and *Can* grew furious. He fell down because of his own mistake. He stood up and slapped *Ases* before all those spectators. *Ases* raised his hand, to retaliate, we all thought. But no, he calmly gripped *Can*'s wrist to prevent another slap. That was all. The referee came running. Could he dare to throw *Can* out? *Ases* left the wrist he had been squeezing but *Can* kept rubbing his wrist until the end of game (Ibid.).

7.10 A Compassionate "Villager"

While I was a boarding student at Bosphorous University, a student from another university once approached me on the terrace and asked if I knew a certain student from *Antalya*. I said "sure I know; if you just sit in the canteen for a few minutes, I'll go call him for you". He gave his name and said: "I wonder if you are a country boy". I got upset and most probably looked somewhat puzzled. The cultural climate of the Bosphorous campus was quite different from the rest of Turkey. It was an "ivory tower" with its own norms and value judgments.

There, being a hick (*hanzo*) was the worst stigma for a student. Especially students coming from the provinces

were constantly preoccupied with such ideas and were always over-anxious to disprove their possibly alleged hickish ways! My peer was quick-minded and he quickly added the following explanation: “Because you are as humanistic as any village boy could ever be!”. I went all the way to dormitories and notified his friend of his arrival.

7.11 Some Wise Village Men Love Foreign Politics

Some elderly Turkish peasant men like to discuss politics in coffee shops. Even in former days they used to listen to the big lamp-operated radio sets in serious mental concentration of the recent political news. The coffee house has always been a place of free-reigned talk and unconstrained debate historically both in cities and villages:

For the famous historian, Naima (1652-1715), political discussions concerning public policies, state affairs, and public administrators formed a significant part of coffeehouse conversations (1968, 1221). According to D. Ohsson (1791, p.82) observations, young idlers spent the whole day in coffeehouses talking about the latest news and state affairs. Coffeehouses had a remarkable role in facilitating public debate. Authorities aware of the disruptive potential of rumor, perceived coffeehouse conversation as a threat to the social order and tried to control or suppress it (Komecoglu, 2005, p.9).

Poet *Behçet Kemâl Çağlar*, our Turkish Literature teacher in high school, one day talked about a diplomatic excursion he had participated in years ago. During the early years of the World War II a group of German⁶ delegates had an Anatolian tour to get an idea of the thoughts of the countryside about the war.

On that trip one peasant turned to the interpreter and said: Tell *Chelebi* the following: We are peasants. We don't know much about microbes. But we don't drink water from a pool whose bottom is not visible. Now, the bottom of that pool is yet invisible”. *Behçet Kemal* embellished the proud air of the peasant who did not condescend to look at the faces of the Germans, taking only the interpreter as his interlocutor. He said that not a single diplomat could have given an equally effective reply!

⁶ Both factions were in fact eager to win Turkey as an ally. The British party won over towards the end of the war but *Ismet Pasha* the president was too wise to commit Turkey into an engagement and kept temporizing to the end. In the beginning of the war *Franz von Papen*, the German ambassador, was working his way frantically in Ankara. Germany's trump was to emphasize the alliance in the previous world war (a disaster for Turks in result). The relationships of the later Ottomans with the German military steadily grew stronger.

Cetin Altan, in his autobiographical novel (the French version's title is *etroite surveillance*) narrates his memories about his pasha grand father, who speaks German fluently with his guests. He had been trained in Germany as a young Ottoman officer. While preparing his *pavillon* for the reception of the German guests, the pasha engages in a frantic search for the missing small bust of Wilhelm II, a former souvenir of his days in Germany. The entire household get to work and finally they discover the tiny statue in one of the toilets. The pious grand mother had dumped “*that profane idol*” there once and forgotten all about it.

7.12 A Village Man Envied by a Fonctionnaire

A city-dweller may get jealous of a villager easily when a comparison occasion comes up. Years ago, my younger maternal uncle had driven to his parental house in *Luleburgaz* in his newly bought automobile. He wanted to sacrifice a ram to commemorate his car. He, his elder brother, I, and my aunt's son drove to a nearby village in the same car and went around until we could fix the purchase of a ram.

The first sheep barn we came across made us jovial with the look of its well-fed lambs. But the owner was away on a trip and his brother said he was not liable to sell his animals in his name in his absence. Then my elder uncle turned around to us and said: “You all see that? The cunt-of-a-peasant (*amcik koylu*) went on a trip, which I can not possibly afford to do, a chief government official as I am!” His brother smiled and put him off. “The man is just free to go wherever he feels like!”

7.13 A Villager as a “Correction” Provider

One day while changing the glasses of my horn-rimmed glasses in an obstetrician's workshop, the obstetrician got to talk with his visiting friend. The conversation drifted to his military service. The *Istanbulite* man had his service in *Sivas* in late 1970's. When he first arrived at his unit, a corporal met him as the acting commandant (The non-commissioned-officer was away for a short duration). The corporal, an obvious peasant man asked the obstetrician about his hometown. He proudly replied: “I am Istanbul-born and Istanbul-bred!”

The corporal said: “One can see that! Snobbism is dripping off your bloody face!” Then he said: “Go to that senior private over there and get registered, then pick up your equipment!” The young obstetrician gave the corporal a menacing sideways glance and began to stagger towards the directed direction. The corporal yelled from behind: “Don't walk, but run, you bastard! Run, or else I will fuck you without spit!” [without lubricating my prick with saliva].⁷ (This “ingenious” swearing format is not

⁷ This narration is interesting in two other respects. Firstly, he told all of it in a casual, matter-of-fact way, without a sign of grudge! He nearly meant “I was a spoiled, rebellious youth in need of some correction and it did me good”. Secondly, while many ex-conscripts only embellish their heroic deeds in the service omitting unpleasant memories, this obstetrician confessed to his demeaning experience. Dr. Belli, as an associate professor of (forensic) psychiatry, used to converse with us at the chair, referring to all walks of life and throwing in psychiatric interpretations usually from a Freudian outlook. One day on a certain occasion he said “if they eloped me to a mountain top I would never ever talk about it”.

“If circumstances really pressed me to publicize such an event^(*) at most I would perhaps say something like ‘they attempted to rape me’ and go no further than that. “But if the same thing happened to *Zeki Muren* [the famous singer was yet alive] he would probably eagerly talk about it or even broadcast it” he added. (As a matter of fact, modern science of Victimology talks about the secondary victimization a victim of a sexual offence would suffer when her case is brought to open even if confined to the circle of official authorities).

classical at all; it was perhaps coined by somebody and quickly got into mode in those years and then fell into oblivion). The peasant, relying on his single red stripe on his arm, took the upper hand and made much of this opportunity face to face an Istanbul youth.

7.14 A Peasant Defying a State Prosecutor!

Black Sea people are known to be very proud, hot tempered and also spiteful (*rancunier*) when they are wronged by others. Dr. *Belli*, narrated an incident in the town of *Borçka*. He features as a secondary hero in the story while a peasant features as the main hero. *Belli* was in his young days then, serving as the unique practicing physician of the district. A young peasant man had been shot dead by the rival feuding faction.

The state attorney had been on very bad terms with Dr. *Belli*, always provoking him and causing him trouble. The dead man's father earnestly requested *Belli* not to cut open the body in the autopsy. The doctor conceded, merely measuring the depth of the bullet's *trajé* by intruding a wire into the wound. But the nasty attorney appeared before him, swinging a piece of chain in his hand in an insulting manner and told him in a patronizing manner to "pierce open that carcass" ("*desh shu leshi !*").

The doctor immediately confronted the state attorney with the dead man's sorrowful father and quoted his demeaning words in regard to the young dead man. The attorney blushed and got prepared to mumble an indirect diverting thing but the doctor insisted straight to the point: "Did you or didn't you utter these very same words? Did you or didn't you?" The entrapped attorney now found it hard to deny his own words and just kept silent. For a moment the dead man's father kept moving his fiery look from one man to the other. Finally he formed his opinion of the truth of the doctor's statement.

Then he deliberately and slowly spoke to the attorney through a harsh, bitter, guttural voice while rotating the whites of his sleepless bloodshed eyes: "Mr. Attorney, Mr. Attorney, one more dead person from the same household wouldn't count more on this affair and I tell you that I bone (f*ck) your elegant wife for those words!". The doctor's resentment was assuaged and the powerful state attorney had no choice but putting up with the swear word of the middle-aged peasant! (*Belli* left this district for his military service. He ran into the attorney's family a few years later in Ankara when he undertook studying psychiatry. The incident was not even alluded to when they talked for a few minutes on foot).

7.15 A True Story of Achievement

Finally here is a wonderful success story of a peasant boy, born in 1938 in the village *Belemedik* of the county of *Karaisali* in *Adana*. *Mehmet's* father died when he was six. His mother died when he was ten. There was not a school in the village. When he reached the age of fourteen, a boarding primary school was opened nearby,

recruiting students from a total of ten nearby villages. An uncle took him there for registration. The director said "Do you confused this place with an army headquarters building? Who is this grown-up, anyway?" The boy said he had learned some reading from a cousin but he could not write. They gave him a reading exam and registered him to the second grade, skipping the first grade. When April came they had their summer vacation (much earlier than the city schools).

The director told him that he would soon turn fifteen and be expelled in accordance with the written law. Only one solution was possible. He should get his official age altered with a court decision. The same uncle went to the county and consulted a somewhat educated relative. They went to the city club, where all the officials and notables gather and talked to the judge about an age alteration. The judge first asked if they were after a delay of the military service for the future (The conscription age is twenty and males get drafted then).

They explained the schooling problem. The judge gave his consent and taught the procedure. The next day they went to a petition-writer and got a petition typed. They came to a court hearing with two witnesses from the village. The claim was that *Mehmet* was born in 1941 but he took the birth certificate of a dead older brother. His claim got approved. They issued him a birth certificate indicating his new age.

The boy graduated from the primary school in three years. For further schooling he applied to the non-commissioned-officer school in Mersin. His friend got accepted but he was rejected for having an age alteration in his personal history. Another choice was boarding Mechanical Apprentice School under *Yıldız* Technical University in Istanbul. He won the exam in *Adana*. He also took the entrance exam to the state boarding junior high schools and won. His teachers recommended the second choice. He got assigned to *Denizli* in the Aegean region, *Adana* boarding schools being full to bursting. First the fellow students thought he was a new teacher. The female Turkish teacher appointed him as the head student of the classroom.

The school gave him room and board and a suit to wear every year. In summers it was now possible for him to get clerical jobs in *Adana* factories. (Formerly he was a child hoer on the cotton fields in summers. He used to walk a few miles carrying his own hoe on the shoulder to the cotton fields. The wage was one-third of the adult wager and he had to work hard to keep the job. Labour was in abundance and the field owners quickly dismissed those who did not do satisfactory work).

Three years passed and he graduated. He went on to the boarding high school division in *Denizli*. When he graduated he took the university entrance exams and his grade was high enough to enrol any study, including Medicine. At that time Turkey was in need of Agricultural Engineers and immediate scholarship was granted only

for that study; (for others a delay was in question) so, he chose the Aegean Faculty of Agriculture.

Upon registration they told him that this Faculty graduated master engineers in five years; but *Ankara* and *Erzurum* counterparts graduated engineers in four years. Used to the Aegean region he opted for the longer way. *Mehmet Bey* is now a retiree of a district directorate of agriculture. His son is an officer; his daughter is a bank manager; his wife is a retired teacher (and a secondary cousin of mine).

CONCLUSION AND DEBATE

Dunleavy rejects any spatial⁸ reference for the terms urban and rural, claiming the loss of clear-cut rural life style for today. True, agriculture was the basis of rural ways and agricultural employment now much shrank in proportion. But agriculture preserves its high local importance and social relations emanating from the days of agricultural dominance are still at work in our day. Even the rural labourers are different from those in industrial areas (paraphrased from *Cater & Jones*, 1992, p.207).

Indeed, the peasant, even in rural wage position at least does not sink below the bread line. Initial source of food, that is, cereals, is grown by his efforts. Despite all kinds of possible deprivation nobody literally starves in a village. A proverb says “has anybody ever seen a starved person’s grave?” (“*ach mezari goren var mi?*”). Plain bread is available for all except for some famine years. Besides, peasants are merciful and altruistic to feed any hungry person without a fuss. If there is a simple-minded village-idiot somewhere around, they collectively take care of him too.

Let alone the compassionate Turkish village communities, it seems that even the midst of a European peasant environment used to be quite suitable for poverty-stricken members to get by and somehow survive, if only thanks to gleaning cereals from the harvest places. A marvelous poem in English (whose poet is not indicated) dealing with this theme appears in a century-old grammar

⁸ Some truth is to be detected in this claim. On one hand; a city person goes and lives in a village as a teacher, doctor, geologist, archeologist etc. and stays a city person. On the other hand; Istanbul born-and-bred gentlemen and ladies probably rightly complain about the invasion-like rush of provincials into the city and feel as if they were a minority suffering a displaced precarious locus in their own place. I read a book (by H.J. Gans) titled *The Urban Villagers!* (It is about Italian-Americans. On the first page the honorable name and last name of *Dogru Ergil* is stamped and it is all the more precious to me for that reason. The second-hand book dealer who sold the book to me a decade ago in Ankara said (with a serious facial expression) that the professor’s first wife had dumped the book in front of the store along with some others).

book.⁹ Little girls in shadders collect the left over grains. They try not to be tempted by the colorful flowers since they know that old grandma is waiting in the cabin for the “loot”. The poem goes as follows:

“*Through the stubble to and fro, / Mark the little gleaners go, / Radiant, rosy as the morn’, / Seeking for the scattered corn; / Glad some most when they espy / Where the ears the thickest lie. / See the merry gleaners go, / Through the stubble to and fro*”.

“*Damp with dew is all around, / But they know their harvest ground / Richly will repay their toil, / And they’ve nothing on to spoil. / They’ve no fear of any hurt, / Sodden shoe or draggled skirt: / Thus the little gleaners go / Blithely, briskly to and fro*”.

“*Here and there a poppy red / Tempts them with its flaring head/ Nearing to the hedge, they see / Many a favourite blooming free / But the flowers they dare not stay; / Gleaners must not yield to play. / So the busy children go / Through the stubble to and fro*”.

“*When they’ve done and take their wheat / Up into the village street, / Glad will be poor grandam dear, / As their brimming arms appear; / And her praise with her surprise: / This they picture as they go / Through the stubble to and fro*”.

The urban wage, however, when out of work, faces a real threat of hunger in the literal sense of the word. It is just for this reason that communists furtively despised peasants while for the sake of tactics they paid him lip-service in hyphenated “worker-peasant” clichés. Looking from the opposite angle of approach, it is again just for this reason that the peasant can not be so easily abused and mobilized for actions subversive to the established order.

The argument reminds one of a poem by *Orhan Veli Kanik*: The street cat says to the butcher’s cat: “We can not get along. Yours is a wet dream while mine is about

⁹ The book was written in 1919 by Adrien Baret. The title is: *La deuxième année d’Anglais à l’usage des élèves*. On the thirty-first edition on pp. 83-85 the sentimental poem is given in full text with the French translation as follows: “*A travers le chaume çà et là, / Regarder aller les petits glaneurs, / Rayonnants, roses comme la matin, / à la recherche du blé répandu / Joyeux surtout quand ils aperçoivent / [l’endroit] où les épis gisent le plus épais. / Voyez les joyeux glaneurs aller / à travers le chaume çà et là*”.

“*Tout est humide de rosée alentour, / Mais ils savent (que) leur terrain à moisson / les paiera richement de leurs pleines, / et ils ne portent rien qui puisse s’abîmer / Ils ne craignent pas de se faire mal, / de mouiller leur souliers ou de crotter leurs jupes: / Ainsi les petits glaneurs vont / gaîment, vivement çà et là*”.

“*Par ci par là un coquelicot rouge / les tente avec son éclatante tête; / en approchant de la haie, ils voient / maint (fleur) favorite fleurissant en liberté, / Mais pour des fleurs, ils n’osent pas s’arrêter / Les glaneurs ne doivent pas se laisser aller à jouer. / Aussi les enfants empressés vont à travers le chaume çà et là*”.

“*Quand ils auront fini et porteront leur froment / Jusque dans la rue du village, / contente sera la pauvre grand’mère chérie, / Quand leur bras débordants paraîtront, / et les yeux tout ouverts d’étonnement diront sa louange ainsi que sa surprise: / C’est ce qu’ils se représentent en allant / à travers le chaume çà et là*”.

meat". The other retorts back: "So, you are talking about hunger. You must be a communist then. You must be the culprit of all those crimes of arson; what a pig you really are!"

Statistics [from the Second Development Plan] display that; city-centers increase in size and number; on one hand; while people tend to choose to live in big cities on the other hand (Tutengil, 1984, p.163). *The fact that even at the moment, two-thirds of the population of Istanbul (Turkey's biggest city) is made up from "those who were born elsewhere"; is the hardest evidence that Istanbul is invaded by "provincials". No doubt, this invasion will continue with a growing acceleration in the years to follow. The funny thing is, the affirmation of "being an Istanbulite" is also very common among those who had moved to Istanbul from outside* (Kongar, 1992, p.55).

The topic taken up to study proved to be more complicated than it was at first sight. On one hand; no doubt nowadays many areas can best be described as "shaded regions" in terms of human behaviour. The black-and-white contrast which used to define the city-village dichotomy appears to have long vanished.

It is said there was a time when the Istanbul gentleman and the lady was really representative of their "sorts" and eagerly chosen as role models in manners and speech by the few on-comers (higher education students and officials and the in-the-process-of-formation bourgeois comprised of enriched artisans moving in). It is also asserted that now the coming floods sweep over and impose their own norms on to Istanbul instead.

On the other hand, especially among the young generation peasant-like vestiges —the good ones as well as bad ones since it is important to distinguish between the two—have almost disappeared. Thus, a clear-cut dichotomy of village versus city or at least big city versus province seems possible. Many examples can be brought up:

Already a decade ago a female student of mine in an Istanbul school had gained extra credit from me being the only one in class to know the meaning of *Kepenek* (coarse shepherd cloak) (It was a common rule I had instigated that "you gain extra credit in that teacher's class if you prove you know something which nobody else in the class knows" as one female student once explained to a new-comer in the first row).

When I was a prep student at Robert College Lycée Division, literature teacher Münir Aysu gave us a (non-credit) fill-in type of general culture exam, which he had prepared himself for his own curiosity as he expressed it. Three of the questions are embedded in my memory since they, in my opinion, were particularly interesting in differentiating between city and province boys. (At the time the girls had their own division at Arnavutkoy nearby).

One of those three questions required us to give the name of the famous female spy who had worked for the Germans during the First World War. Another asked the

name of the special saddle-creature the Holy Prophet had mounted on his journey to ascend the heavens. Still another asked the name of the special leather trousers worn by oil wrestlers.

After the exam, outside of Albert Long Hall (the clock tower building), we all came together to discuss and pool our efforts to attain the correct answers. Boarding boys from provincial Anatolia (many of them scholarship students) were amazed at the difficulty of the first question while for the day students (from Istanbul that is) the reply "Mata Hari" was only a piece of cake. For the other two questions it was just the other way around. The replies "Burak" and "Kispel" were no problem for most of the provincial boys.

Mustafa, my classmate at the same school, had been a scholarship student at Gaziantep Private College¹⁰ (like Enver) —neither could get an exemption from spending a preparatory year; though on the first days in the dormitory Mustafa once complained: "I don't know how come I made the mistake of coming here and messed up (*Bok Ettim!*) my good previous [British?] English!" and caused everybody to burst into laughter— before his arrival. Anyway, once in the painting and drawing class good old Mustafa had made a picture of the earthen heating furnace (*Kumbet*) in his grandparents' village house and showed it ostentatiously to all his Antep classmates. Neither the teacher nor the other students could not make out what such a thing was. It was not a metallic coal or wood stove, so what was it?

Delaney (1991, p.257) who studied a village in 1980's writes the following interesting passage in her book: "A friend in Ankara was teaching a course on rural sociology at Middle East Technical University and conducting a survey of 'fringe' villages around Ankara. As a comparison she asked if she could bring her class to survey our more remote village. [When the class arrived] for many of the students, it was the first time they have ever been to a real village".

Maybe the classification above as 'fringe' and 'real' villages is very true and meaningful. Villages just in the periphery of a city have changed their characters and resembled more and more to neighbourhoods of the city. *Hadimköy* in Istanbul is an example. A boarding student, Enver mentioned just above, once noticed that many *quartiers* in Istanbul had the suffix *-Koy* in their names like *Bakirkoy*, *Yeshilkoy*, *Safaköy*, and *Alibeykoy*. A day student noticed this "discovery" only then for the first time and got astonished. Those urban centers were sheer villages long long ago.

¹⁰ Up to early 1980's a private *kolej* was a high school or a junior high school combined with a high school, where no prep class existed. The difference from the state schools was a more weighted English course, usually ten hours per week rather than three. *Shishli Terakki* and *Kultur* were such schools with the *kolej* standing. Only foreign schools, *Galatasay* and the state-owned *Maarif* Colleges (later so-called Anatolian Lycées) had prep classes even then.

Let us also note that the first of those four consecutive places, one of the most crowded administrative districts in downtown Istanbul means different things for a peasant and a full Istanbulite. The former suddenly remembers the mental hospital there but the latter does not even think about it when the name is uttered.

The old generation used to refer to this institution as the lunatic asylum. The older ones even referred to it by the name of the founder as *Mazhar Osman* (1884-1961). He is the founding psychiatrist. Being “crazy” was a fearful thing¹¹ for people long ago and this term stigmatized all psychological disorders or even problems whatsoever.

Regarding transformation of villages nearby the cities; *Berkes* (1985, p.175) predicted such an outcome for a village about fifteen miles from Ankara at the time of his research: *It appears that a change in structure will go on with acceleration and this village will stop being a village in the sense that we know; it will be a slum area resembling Mamak quartier, where city labourers and petty officials will live.*

Let us reduce the issue to a mathematical representation of sets and subsets. Red, white and pink regions all are all present as subsets of an encompassing main set. The pink region has enlarged with time. The formerly thickest red region now got thinner. The formerly very narrow white region thickened but it also got to be somewhat pinkish in certain areas. For that matter, the red region itself got some white sprinkles spread across. This metaphor with colors and simple graphs best describes the half-a-century-long course and the existing situation regarding respective rural-urban relationship in Turkey.

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¹¹ In a slum area coffee-shop in Istanbul a village-originated man with a heavy accent once said to his card-playing mates in self-important airs: “Listen to this very famous diction: ‘Rather than taking advantage of a lunatic, it is better to offer oneself to a sound-minded person’ Have you ever heard this before?”. Of course he said the diction in heavy vernacular style, using the dirty words involved. The proverb emphasizes the value of intelligence and the horror felt about insanity. It also reflects the importance attributed to virility as they understand it. As Delaney (1991, p.50) records with reference to *Dundes, Leach* and *Ozkok*; even in a perverse relationship the active role is valued while the passive role is devalued.

APPENDIX: SOME VISUAL MATERIAL



Figure 1
A Thracian Peasant Woman With a Dignified-Facial-Expression, Selling Her Own Garden's Products at the Weekly City Market (Photo by the Author—S.Ç.).



Figure 2
An Aegean Quilt-Making-Shop. The MAJORITY of the Customers Come From Villages. Peasants Hate Blankets and Fabricated Bed Coverings; But They Like Traditional Woolen Quilts, Instead. Until Recent Times Quilts Were All Homemade. Nowadays They Usually Buy Them; But at Least, They Can Order Them According to Their Own Specifications, Especially to Build Up Dowries For Young Girls (Photo by the Author—S.Ç.).



Figure 3
Thracian Village Houses (Photos by the Author—S.Ç.)



Figure 4
Thracian Sheep Herds (Photo by the Author—S.Ç.).



Figure 5
Elderly Peasant Man on Walk (Photo by the Author—S.Ç.).



Figure 6
A Peasant Woman in Her Loud Floral Dress (Photo by the Author—S.Ç.).



Figure 7
A Lighter Popular Among Peasants (Scanned by the Author—S.Ç.)
(Those Old-Fashioned Gasoline Lighters Never Get Broken)



Figure 8
The Turkish Monopoly Used to Produce Snuff (Smokeless Tobacco-Powder) Besides Cigarettes. Tobacco-Addicts in Villages Had a Hard Time to Obtain Snuff, Since It Was Not Readily Available at the Village Shops; so They Had to Stock Their Orders, Beforehand (Scanned by the Author—S.Ç.)

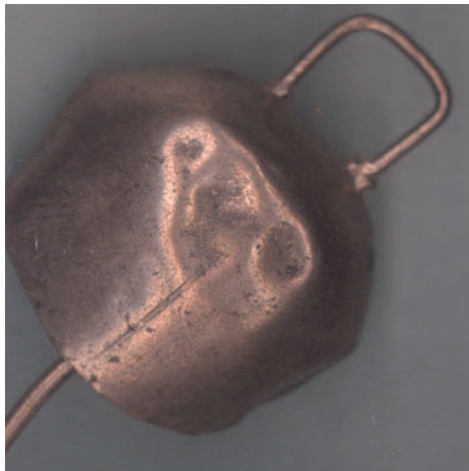


Figure 9
If A Sheep Gets Lost, The Bell Clings From Its Neck and the Shepherd Finds His Sheep Easily (Scanned by the Author—S.Ç.).