Araştırma Makalesi/Research Article

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF YAŞAR KEMAL'S *THE LEGEND OF THE THOUSAND BULLS* AND JOHN STEINBECK'S *THE GRAPES OF WRATH* FROM A SOCIAL REALISTIC PERSPECTIVE

YAŞAR KEMAL'İN *BİNBOĞALAR EFSANESİ* VE JOHN STEINBECK'İN *GAZAP ÜZÜMLERİ* ROMANLARININ TOPLUMCU GERÇEKÇİ BAKIŞ AÇISIYLA KARŞILAŞTIRMALI BİR ÇALIŞMASI

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Abstract:
Many studies have been conducted on the novels of accomplished American author John Steinbeck (1902-1968). His Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939) is about the rural class's profound economic problems during the Great Depression. Steinbeck's interest in the subject is thought to stem from his own real-life experiences as a labourer before becoming an author. On the other hand, despite the fact that Turkish novelist Yaşar Kemal's (1923-2015) novels have been translated into numerous languages, including English, Russian, French, and Italian, there has been little academic study of them. Kemal, like Steinbeck, supported his family by working as an agricultural labourer. Another thing the two novelists have in common is that they both worked as journalists later in their lives. In his novels, Kemal weaves together Anatolian legends and contemporary reality. *The Legend of The Thousand Bulls* (1976) is about Turkey's last nomadic Turkmen tribes, who are desperately looking for a place to settle and spend the winter. *The Grapes of Wrath* is about an Oklahoma Dust Bowl family's migration to California and the hardships they face after losing their farm. Both novels contain familiar social criticism elements. From a social realist standpoint, this article compares the novels in terms of new beginnings, migration, representation of state authority, and otherness.

Key Words: Yaşar Kemal, John Steinbeck, *The Legend of the Thousand Bulls*, *The Grapes of Wrath*,

Özet:
Başarılı Amerikalı yazar John Steinbeck'in (1902-1968) romanları üzerine pek çok çalışma yapılmıştır. Pulitzer ödüllü romanı *Gazap Üzümleri* (1939), Büyük Buhran döneminde kırsal sınıfın yaşadığı derin ekonomik sorunları konu alır. Steinbeck'in konuya olan ilgisinin, yazar olmadan önce bir işçi olarak yaşadığı gerçek hayat deneyimlerinden kaynaklandığı düşünülmektedir. Öte yandan, Türk romancı Yaşar Kemal'in (1923-2015) romanları İngilizce, Rusça, Fransızca ve İtalyanca dahil olmak üzere çok sayıda dile çevrilmiş olmasına rağmen, bu romanlar hakkında çok az akademik çalışma yapılmıştır. Yaşar Kemal de Steinbeck gibi tarım işçiliği yaparak ailesini geçindirmiştir. İki romancının bir başka ortak noktası da her ikisinin de hayatlarının ilerleyen dönemlerinde gazetecilik yapmış olmalarıdır. Kemal, romanlarında Anadolu efsaneleri ile çağdaş gerçekliği bir araya getirir. *Binboğalar Efsanesi* (1976), çaresizce yerleşip kışı geçirecek bir yer arayan Türkiye'nin son göçebe Türkmen aşiretlerini konu alır. *Gazap Üzümleri* ise Oklahoma'lı bir ailenin Kaliforniya'ya göçünü ve çiftliklerini kaybettikten sonra karşılaştıkları zorlukları konu edinmektedir. Her iki roman da tanıdık sosyal eleştiri unsurları içermektedir. Bu makale, toplumsal gerçekçi bir bakış açısıyla, romanları yeni başlangıçlar, göç, devlet otoritesinin temsili ve ötekilik açısından karşılaştırmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Binboğalar Efsanesi*, *Gazap Üzümleri*, John Steinbeck, Yaşar Kemal, Toplumcu Gerçekçilik

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Introduction[1]

Political and sociological conditions shaped by economic events and developments of the time have shaped literary people's views and attitudes. Among the topics of artistic activities have been rising capitalism and adverse economic conditions for the public, industrialization in agriculture and unemployment, working conditions and oppression, and consolidation of money and power in a group. This article examines social and economic criticism in American and Turkish literature through the lens of social realism. While witnessing their generation's problems, the novelists do not impose a political system. They highlight the possibility of change as well as possible alternatives. Steinbeck and Kemal's works have a sense of realism because they are based on their own daily lives and interviews as journalists. They are successful in reflecting the social realities of their times by emphasising the social aspects of individual experiences.

The Grapes of Wrath was first published in America in 1939. The novel depicts the harsh realities of the Great Depression as well as the difficulties faced by immigrant farm workers. The plot revolves around the anguish of people attempting to deal with the Great Depression forces over which they have no control. The novel received the Pulitzer Prize in 1940, and it also contributed to Steinbeck's Nobel Prize in literature in 1962. This article will primarily focus on the Joad family's migration from Oklahoma to California and their exploitation by capitalist society.

Yaşar Kemal's novel *The Legend of the Thousand Bulls* was published in 1971 and got France's Grand Jury Best Book Award. Kemal narrates the quest of Karaçullu Nomads in the 1950s, who first refused to settle down but were unable to find a pasture to spend the winter. There is no factual evidence about the existence of Karaçullu Nomads, but the presence and extinction of Nomads with different tribe names cannot be refused historically. The nomads of the area, who rejected to settle in the past, now had nowhere to spend the winter. The main concerns of this novel are the clash between official private landowners and nomads, who were the previous non-official owners of the land, and the struggle of nomads to find a piece of land.

Because immigrants and nomads are cheap labour, they are in high demand in California and the Çukurova Plain during cotton and fruit picking seasons. However, the locals regard them as filthy and immoral. Both Kemal and Steinbeck accept social responsibility for reacting to the wrongdoings of their times and the capitalist system. As witnesses to their age and the society in which they live, they do not hesitate to confront the realities of their generation and open their problems to discussion. Steinbeck concludes his novel with a positive image of collective consciousness, whereas Kemal depicts individual interests that come to the fore and lead to the end of nomadic life.

Hopes for New Beginnings

The main characters in both novels are dissatisfied with the lives they lead in the beginning, and they either try to seek a new life or turn to prayer. The characters feel displaced, but they desire to find belonging in new routes. While Kemal's characters wait for the magical night of Hıdırellez to wish for a winter quarter, Steinbeck's characters try to save money to start their journey for a new life. Kemal's characters miss their chance for a better future as they prioritize their happiness over social and collective needs. However, Steinbeck is not as pessimistic as Kemal.

At the outset of *The Grapes of Wrath,* Tom Joad is released from prison and heads for his home and family. On his way home, he comes across Jim Casy, the ex-preacher, and Muley. Tom learns that his family has to leave their house and live with Uncle John. The family plans to leave for California. That is why the whole family start to chop

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cotton after the eviction of their house. Losing their home and land to the bank, the Joad Family, from grandparents to grandchildren, become cotton labourers. Muley says:

> Well, they been choppin' cotton, all of 'em, even the kids an' your grampa. Gettin' money together so they can shove on west. Gonna buy a car and shove on west where it's easy livin'. There ain't nothin' here. Fifty cents a clean acre for choppin' cotton, an' folks beggin' for the chance to chop.[1]

Although, understandably, earning 50 cents per hour is insufficient for that job, people are so desperate for money that they must complete the task and accept the payment. Everything is being purchased for more than it is worth, and everything is being sold for less than it is worth. However, California is a paradise, with unlimited access to delicious food at any time:

> Jus' let me get out to California where I can pick me an orange when I want it. Or grapes. There's a thing I ain't never had enough of. Gonna get me a whole big bunch a grapes off a bush, or whatever, an' I'm gonna squash 'em on my face an' let 'em run offen my chin. (83)

Yellow handbills are their main source of employment in California. The Joads have both fears and hopes. They are occasionally sceptical of job opportunities. Ma Joad's fears foreshadow the difficulties they will face in the future. The novel begins with promise, then Steinbeck confronts the readers with reality, and then, in the end, he speculates on the future of immigration; his social realistic point of view indicates the hopeless realities. He promotes a sense of universal community, the shift from I to We by one character, Rose of Sharon. Being the most self-centred character of the novel who just thinks about her baby and her pregnancy, Rose of Sharon becomes the most important indicator of the social change at the end of the novel when she shares the breast milk of her dead baby with a total stranger. Goggans comments that

> likewise, Rose of Sharon's self-centered pregnancy, which includes her chronic inability to look beyond her own physical and emotional response to motherhood, ultimately merges into her transcendental act of communal maternity - the breast feeding of a stranger- at the novel's end.[2]

She gives birth to a stillborn child. The stillborn baby, the breast milk and the starving immigrant have symbolic significance. The breastmilk stands for a communal realm that brings and keeps the community together, while the baby stands for all the immigrants. They were exploited by the society in which they are struggling to live. Steinbeck uses Rose of Sharon to illustrate the necessary societal reform. Due to her husband's abandonment, Rose of Sharon's actions need dedication to something greater than herself. She acts to contribute to society's welfare instead of focusing on her personal sorrow. The despair, hunger and unemployment increase the collective anger. "In the evening a strange thing happened: the twenty families became one family, the children were the children of all. The loss of home became one loss, and the golden time in the West was one dream" (193). Always being on the road, the struggle to make money, and hardships increase the solidarity between the immigrants. They become united in their pain and joy:

> For here "I lost my land'' is changed; a cell is split and from its splitting grows the thing you hate— "We lost our land.'' The danger is here, for two men are not as lonely and perplexed as one. And from this first "we'' there grows a still more dangerous thing: "I have a little food'' plus "I have none.'' If from this problem the sum is "We have a little food,'' the thing is on its way, the movement has direction. (151)

Steinbeck here implies the solution to the immigrant problems. They must unite and develop a sense of community to stop the exploitation of landowners.

In his novel, Kemal takes a completely different approach to narrating the Karaçullu tribe's hopes. Despite being defeated in the war, forced to settle, and exiled, not all Turkomans submit. Those who flee the settlement and go into exile, like the Karaçullu tribe, continue to live their old lives and migrate. However, their land is owned by other Turkomans who have previously chosen to settle and become villagers. They have nowhere to spend the winter. Kemal puts together the reality of the absence of a winter quarter of Turkmens and the myth of a magical night that wishes are expected to come true. It is believed that anyone with a pure heart's wish is granted on

Hıdırellez night. The Karaçullu tribe has three main hopes to find a winter pasture—the wishes on Hıdırellez night, the marriage of Jeren and Haydar, the Master Blacksmith's sword. Haydar expects a collective prayer from the people of his tribe. "All right then, if I see it, I'II wish for you. Whoever sees it this year must wish for the tribe… Are we agreed?"[3] He knows that it is their last chance to have a winter quarter. He warns the tribe's people. "If anyone cheats and wishes for something else, then everything will be spoiled. We mustn't be selfish, hard-pressed as we are" (10). Everyone, however, seeks their own personal happiness. Nobody is concerned about the tribe's collective needs. For example, Kerem, the Master Blacksmith's grandson, wishes for the falcon, which he is obsessed with. "What do I care about land? If I see the water stop, then I'll wish for a baby falcon" (17). He wishes for the falcon, and the wish is granted. First, he has the falcon, then the falcon is captured by a corporal. Kerem regrets that he wished for the falcon many times as his tribe is put on fire. Similarly, Maid Jeren, the most beautiful girl of the tribe, asks for her lover Halil, rather than the land that the tribe needs. "What do I care about land and such. I want my Halil. If I do get this chance, this chance in a million, I can't lose it just for the sake of a little bit of land. It's no use deceiving myself!" (22). Müslüm, who is over a hundred years old, says, "I want immortality, yes, but I want youth as well. What good will it do me to live on like this?" (27). As the people of the tribe focus on their own individual needs, they lose the chance of a piece of land. By bringing the myth and reality together, Kemal emphasizes the need for unity in a tribe. While the migrants in Steinbeck's novel achieve that unity, the people of the Karaçullu tribe cannot, as it is understood from their prayers.

The second hope to find a piece of land is the sword of Haydar, the Master Blacksmith. Haydar is an heir to the ironsmith lineage; he spends thirty years making a sword. He aims to present the sword to a government official or a landowner and get a piece of land for his clan: "If Kerem's wish isn't granted then I'll find you winter-quarters myself. I will, you'll see. My sword's nearly finished. I'll give it to Ismet Pasha, to Menderes, to Temir Agha, and I'll get land for you in exchange" (36).[4] The desperation for the land is so deep that Haydar even goes to Ankara to present the sword to the İsmet Pasha who was the president at that time and shows little interest in the sword:

> He finds to his great surprise that his sword invokes nothing more than a begrudging admiration and bemusement at the foolishness of an old craftsman who believes that he can exchange it for land, which is a means for the production of exchange-value within capitalism, as the sword is not.[5]

Haydar is a traditionalist who values the past. He has no idea what has happened in the past. In a capitalist, industrialised society, the sword has no meaning. Although it is a work of art created by a holy master blacksmith, it is not a valuable product in a capitalist society.

The last hope of the tribe regarding a winter-quarter is Maid Jeren's marriage. Jeren is in love with Halil, the chief of the tribe. However, another suitor, Oktay, proposes to Jeren. The tribe puts pressure on Jeren to accept the proposal as Oktay's father has vast lands. They hope that if Jeren gets married to Oktay, Oktay's father will give them a piece of land to live on. Oktay has to spend years chasing Jeren as she is insistent on her love for Halil. According to Turkoman custom, the girls of the tribe marry whomever they want. They have to be willing to marry. The people of the tribe stop talking to Jeren as she does not accept to marry Oktay. "No one talks to her, not even the children, not even her brothers… Even the sheep, the dogs, the gracile camels are hostile to her…" (131). She is isolated from the tribe. The tribespeople put pressure on her by telling her Halil is dead; however, she stands firm. She resists for the sake of her love. It is an honour. Headman Süleyman thinks that

> never had anyone in this tribe interfered with their daughters in matters of the heart. No one had ever forced a girl to marry for money or riches or for any other reason. Had they fallen so low, were they lost to all the old values, utterly degenerate? (128)

Despite the tribe's difficult situation, old customs are more important. Jeren elopes with Halil instead of marrying Oktay. On the day of Hdrellez, Halil and Jeren visit their clan because it is customary for the clan chief to spend the night with his people. However, Halil is assassinated by his own people, who are filled with hatred. So, Jeren's

wish for Hdrellez is granted, but she cannot be happy because she prioritises her personal desires over communal ones.

To sum up, all the characters have hopes for the future at the beginning of both novels. Kemal's characters must endure a regretful ending because they are unable to wish for the benefit of their community. Because each of their desires is personal, the entire tribe must suffer. They undermine the tribe's unity by failing to unite during their prayers. However, despite all the negative conditions and struggles, Steinbeck closes his book with Rose of Sharon, which offers hope for the future of migrant populations.

Phenomenon of Migration

For the characters in both novels, the migration process is fraught with uncertainty. The Joad family's first challenge is their connection to their own land. The current land situation in Oklahoma is heartbreakingly back-then: "You know the land's getting poorer. You know what cotton does to the land; robs it, sucks all the blood out of it" (32). Although all of the characters in *The Grapes of Wrath* work hard to leave Oklahoma, Grandpa refuses to leave his homeland when the time comes. Despite their aspirations for a fresh start, the Joads are firmly bound to their country. Even though their land is no longer productive, their identity and home are inextricably linked. Grandpa never wants to leave his house, even if he can find grapes or oranges in California. "This here's my country. I b'long here. An' I don't give a goddamn if they's oranges an' grapes crowdin' a fella outa bed even. I ain't a-goin'. This country ain't no good, but it's my country" (111). Grandpa does not want to lose his loving concern and affection for his environment because the land offers a feeling of security.

Another fundamental problem is that the journey is full of uncertainties. They leave their home without having a certain destination to reach. On the journey, they encounter many obstacles and they are discouraged. They are in purgatory and they do not know what to do:

> But perhaps the most prevalent dimension of in-betweenness in *The Grapes of Wrath* is the negotiation throughout the text between home and homelessness, or home and the unhomely, as the Joads are forced into an historical in-between space, with the home behind them destroyed and the home in front of them unclear and uncertain.[6]

The Joad Family is not sure of what is waiting for them in California. They leave their home but do not know whether they will be able to reach California. Pa says, "What I'm scairt of is we'll run outa money so we can't git there 't all. Here's all us eatin', an' got to buy gas an' oil.'F we run outa money, I don' know what we gonna do" (167). They are not accustomed to automobiles, nor are they used to the technology involved. They are unsure how much money they must spend on oil until they reach California. "When it comes to unfamiliar technology, however, they do not know exactly what to do. The cars, for example, get ruined because of that inexperience."[7] They expensively buy broken and used cars in Oklahoma because they have no other choice. Californian farm labourers who are left without a penny are also forced to sell their cars for nothing. Timothy, a farm labourer, narrates:

> No, we ain't got no car. We sol' our car. Had to. Run outa food, run outa ever'thing. Couldn' git no job. Fellas come aroun' ever' week, buyin' cars. Come aroun', an' if you're hungry, why, they'll buy your car. An' if you're hungry enough, they don't hafta pay nothin' for it. An'—we was hungry enough. Give us ten dollars for her. (293)

Steinbeck depicts the plight of migrant farm workers and frequently refers to yellow handbills used by big farmers to entice the Joads to come to California with promises of work.

> But he says they's too many folks lookin' for work right there now. An' he says the folks that pick the fruit live in dirty ol' camps an' don't hardly get enough to eat. He says wages is low an' hard to get any. (92)

They are warned that the jobs they expect to find in California are illusionary but they have no chance. They must leave their land and begin a new life:

> I'm payin' twenty cents an hour.' An' maybe half a the men walk off. But they's still five hunderd that's so goddamn hungry they'll work for nothin' but biscuits. Well, this here fella's got a contract to pick them peaches or—chop that cotton. You see now? The more fellas he can get, an' the hungrier, less he's gonna pay. (190)

The use of inexpensive labour is at its height. They are only working to be able to feed the family members, not to mention making money and saving. "By the end of the story, half of the original twelve family members are dead or missing. For the rest, California is as far as you can go. The frontier is closed, and they can't go home again."[8] Thousands of families from Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, Nevada and Arkansas are dispossessed for nothing. They are hungry and homeless with their caravans or carloads. They become modern slaves:

> Now farming became industry, and the owners followed Rome, although they did not know it. They imported slaves, although they did not call them slaves: Chinese, Japanese, Mexicans, Filipinos. They live on rice and beans, the business men said. They don't need much. They wouldn't know what to do with good wages. Why, look how they live. Why, look what they eat. And if they get funny—deport them. And all the time the farms grew larger and the owners fewer. (232)

When the Joad family reaches their destination, they discover that thousands of people have seen the same fliers. The handbills are to secure a cheap surplus of labour. Floyd, another farm labourer, narrates his helpless situation:

> I been here six months,'' he said. "I been scrabblin' over this here State tryin' to work hard enough and move fast enough to get meat an' potatoes for me an' my wife an' my kids. I've run myself like a jackrabbit an'—I can't quite make her. There just ain't quite enough to eat no matter what I do. I'm gettin' tired, that's all. I'm gettin' tired way past where sleep rests me. An' I jus' don' know what to do. (256)

By the mid-novel, the immigrants lose their dream of having a plot of land. Even in a bounty land, they cannot put an end to their hunger or poverty. As Gregory states historical truth: "Some people lived in tents, endured long stretches of unemployment, and suffered from shortages of various kinds. There were cases of malnutrition, disease, and even death."[9] The migrant workers head across the country to find work. The new home is expected to be a place of fertility, food would be abundant and readily available. However, the kids are always depicted as hungry while the migrants are starving. "I'm hungry,'' Ruthie whined. "No, you ain't,'' Ma said. "You had good mush'" (438). Ma tries to keep the family together all the time. She is the one who cooks and does the shopping. As Zirakzadeh says, "in California the family confronts a modern, industrialized, impersonal economy that treats wage laborers as expendable pack animals."[10] Another difficulty that the Joads has is when Grandpa dies. They do not know what to do with the corpse. They are required to pay a high amount of money to be able to hold a funeral, but they do not have. They decide to bury him with a note. "This here is William James Joad, dyed of a stroke, old man. His fokes bured him becaws they got no money to pay for funerls. Nobody kilt him. Jus a stroke an he dyed" (143). Although this situation is very strange and challenging for the Joad family, it is a very normal and common funeral tradition for the nomads in Kemal's novel:

> Nomads have never had graveyards, they must bury their dead anywhere as they move from place to place, but Deliboga Knoll is dotted all over with graves for it has been a wintering place for the nomads since time out of mind. (143)

The villagers tease the nomads about not having their cemeteries because they are constantly on the move. However, this is how they live. The biggest phenomenon of the Karaçullu Tribe's migration is that they do not have a destination. Contrary to the Joad family, the Karaçullu people do not know where to camp and spend their winter. The soil and even the smallest piece of land are cultivated, and Yörüks who want to land seasonally are in great trouble. Old Haydar summarizes their helpless situation: "Anyway, what's the good of going down to the Çukurova like this? Will we find a stitch of land to settle on, a hilltop, a knoll, a tussock that isn't already tilled and sown? Where will we go, Süleyman?" (44). They are aware that they cannot find a place in Çukurova. Their former winter quarters are now owned by different villages.

> Where were they to go? Last year already there had not been an acre of untilled land in the Çukurova. These iron machines ate up the earth, swallowed it in great lumps, and in one day a huge tract of land was ploughed and sown. (44)

The second problem is that Yörüks are not as rich as they used to be. The villagers are accustomed to being bribed by Yörüks. Wherever they stop, even for the most barren lands, the villagers want them to pay money which they do not have anymore. Kerem, the grandson of Haydar, says:

> There's no place in the whole wide world they can go to, nowhere at all for them to pinch their tents. As soon as they set foot somewhere it's money, money all the time…Where are they to find so much money? And all for the right to winter on a patch of dry arid land, on an abandoned knoll! (112)

Dervish Hassan says, "how long are you going to stay here? Till the spring, eh? Till May at least" (66). He calculates the amount roughly: "Eight months. Well, for this, for each month you stay here you will pay me a thousand liras. That adds up to eight thousand and not a penny less will I take" (66). Interestingly, they are asked to give money to different people for the same place: "If only I knew to whom that Deliboga Knoll belongs! Everybody's laying a claim to it. The ant on the ground, the fish in the water, even the little children. The whole world claims it for its own" (105). They are so helpless that they take the golden ornaments of women to buy a piece of land:

> So this was the last of their wealth, their women's ornaments… What was the use of it all? Would it not be better for the tribe to break up, for each to go his own way, to find some place to live? But they won't he thought. Dispersion means death to them. They prefer to die this way, slowly but all together. (160)

Knowing that bribing is no longer a viable solution to their current problem, they constantly ask each other in great despair what to do and where to land because the Çukurova people regard them as enemies. Haydar, Master Blacksmith, intends to acquire land with the help of his sword. He lives in the past and adheres to old traditions. He is unaware of the activities of the capitalist system. He states:

> I'll do something. I'll go to Adana and find Ramazanoglu. And if that fails I'll go to Ankara and see Ismet Pasha himself. I'll go all the way to Istanbul if needed be. And if that fails too… But I won't accept failure. I'll find a patch of land for the tribe. (118)

The Master Blacksmith, Haydar, is a daydreamer, whereas the Headman, Süleyman, is a realist. He is well aware that the tribe is dwindling. He believes that this is the end of their tribe:

> From two thousand tents to one thousand. From one thousand to five hundred. From five hundred to a hundred. And then sixty. And now… And so like this, we'll dwindle to nothing. None of those who leave come back. We never hear a word from any of them ever again. (198)

The biggest obscurity about the migration is the destination, a winter quarter for the Karaçullu tribe. They do not understand the concept of private property. They believe that all the earth belongs to God:

> We gave their names to all the rivers, to all the mountains, to every single part of this plain. Every stone, every rock, every piece of earth bears the name of a Yörük tribe. Wasn't it all ours? How did they come to claim what is ours. Why? When? From whom did they buy it? How much money, how many sheep did they give to become the owners of our age-old wintering lands? Where were they when we lived in the Çukurova? (200)

They believe that if one's ancestors reside somewhere, she/he also owns it. They find it incomprehensible how they can possess and trade in Allah's land. If the person has a connection with the land, such as giving names or fighting for it, that is all; the land is hers/his. Private property and the capitalist way of life are beyond their imagination. They cannot understand why they must pay for the land which belongs to Allah.

In *The Grapes of Wrath*, there is a similar understanding of land ownership. They criticise the way banks own land even if it is barren and useless. The bank does not fight for ownership of the land. Numbers and papers are insufficient to establish land ownership:

> That's the monster. Sure, cried the tenant men, but it's our land. We measured it and broke it up. We were born on it, and we got killed on it, died on it. Even if it's no good, it's still ours. That's what makes it ours—being born on it, working it, dying on it. That makes ownership, not a paper with numbers on it. The tenants cried, Grampa killed Indians, Pa killed snakes for the land. Maybe we can kill banks—they're worse than Indians and snakes. Maybe we got to fight to keep our land, like Pa and Grampa did. (33-34)

As a result, the characters in both novels face unexpected difficulties during the migration process. In their quests, they are defenceless and desperate.

Representation of State Authority

Both novels are sacrilegious when it comes to political issues. They criticise uncontrolled industrialization and the growing concentration of capital. As a result, both novels are critical of state officials who ignore and ostracise "others." The novelists' attitude reveals their social realist viewpoint. The government's official policies are condemned. The realities of real life are made abundantly clear. It is 'the state versus the people'. These people face no mercy from the state authorities.

The lines about government camps reveal a lack of government assistance during a social emergency. Rose of Sharon does not want to stay there, but she prefers to wash and use it because it does not leak like tents do. Similarly, when Tom requests a bathing area and warm water, the guard mocks him: "Say, who in hell you think you are, J. P. Morgan?" (377). Ma also discusses this with the storekeeper at the camp. Everything she wants to buy is more than its actual price in town. They take advantage of the people. For example, the storekeeper says:

> Yes, it's high, an' same time it ain't high. Time you go on in town for a couple poun's of hamburg, it'll cos' you 'bout a gallon gas. So you see it ain't really high here, 'cause you got no gallon a gas. (374)

The police, gendarmes, and soldiers serve as representatives for the governments and their programs. They do not provide assistance to the people who are in need:

> Well, sir, that'll get you a little mad, but you ain't seen nothin'. People gonna have a look in their eye. They gonna look at you an' their face says, 'I don't like you, you son-of-a- bitch.' Gonna be deputy sheriffs, an' they'll push you aroun'. You camp on the roadside, an' they'll move you on. (205)

They chase immigrants on the roads and do not want them even at the camp on the roadsides: "Mind if we stop here a piece?'' A stout woman, scrubbing clothes in a bucket, looked up. "We don't own it, mister. Stop if you want. They'll be a cop down to look you over''" (202). The same situation was repeated in many dialogues: "Tom, this here policeman—he called us—Okies. He says, 'We don' want you goddamn Okies settlin' down" (215). Even Ma Joad who is the most reasonable character in the novel, is about to lose her temper because of their pressure:

> "They was a policeman here. He says we can't stay here. I was scairt he talked to you. I was scairt you'd hit him if he talked to you.'' Tom said, "What'd I go an' hit a policeman for?'' Ma smiled. "Well—he talked so bad—I nearly hit him myself. (215)

Tom is afraid of getting in a fight with the policemen because of their resentful behaviours. "Gonna look for that gov'ment camp,'' Tom said. "A fella said they don' let no deputies in there. Ma—I got to get away from 'em. I'm scairt I'll kill one'' (215). At the entrance of the camp Tom questions the presence of cops many times as he does not want to get into trouble with them: "Tom's eyes drew down. 'Cops?' he asked. The watchman laughed. 'No cops. We got our own cops. Folks here elect their own cops. Come along'" (286). The police are not present in the camps. They can enter the camps only if there is a problem and they have a warrant. Zirakzadeh comments that "the novel challenges readers' trust in the fairness of the government and maintains that political democracy in the United States is an illusion."[11]

Kemal shares Steinbeck's perspective on how the government is represented in his writing. Gendarmes, forestry guards, and Ottoman soldiers and officers serve as the government's representatives. Turkmens, according to

Kemal, bribe Ottoman officials in order to maintain their nomadic lifestyle. The Ottoman soldiers grant the Yörüks access to the mountains in exchange for gold: "Shiny bright gold pieces came to light and flowed into the palms of Ottoman officers in exchange for freedom from the prison of the Chukurova Plain" (40). Gold is not the only way to bribe government units. Tribes have to offer their girls too:

> Beautiful nomad maidens were also offered to Ottoman soldiers. One girl could open the road to the mountains for a whole tribe. Many are the ballads and lamets of these Yörük maidens married off against their will to Ottoman soldiers. They are still sung among the nomads, along with the bitter epic of their defeat. (41)

The importance of the gold and the girls are stated repeatedly in the novel: "But for the gold and the girls there would have been not a single nomad left to wander the mountains and pitch his tent nowadays" (41). However, the Yörüks are not as rich as they used to be and now they are in a difficult position. The novel is full of laments and reproaches against the Ottoman officers who forced Turkmens to settle: "O Allah, sharpen the Turcoman's sword. Blind the Ottoman's eye" (39). They also believe that the Ottoman Empire collapsed as the Empire persecuted Turkmens:

> The Ottomans had been bred out of the Turcomans, of the same blood, their bonds were of the closest, and yet hadn't they ruined the Turcomans, cut themselves from their own stem? Much good it had done to them, for in the end they had lost all their vast empire. They had earned the curse of the poor man, of the friend, of the father, the mother, the curse that is worse than all, for it will take effect slowly but surely. (174)

Even the forest guards work for the government and force the nomads. They make excuses to disturb Turkmens. The forest guards accuse the Turkmen goats of destroying the forests which is their natural habitat:

> That spring and summer a thousand troubles assailed the Karaçullu tribe on Aladag Mountain. The forest guards gave them no quarter. They had but to see a stray goat and they would raise hell. A broken bough off a tree and the police would be upon them like black thunder. The many bribes, the lamb-feasts offered to the guards were of no avail. (42)

The Karaçullu tribe is unable to find suitable land to spend the winter. Landowners and villagers ask them for money wherever they stop. Even for the same location, they are repeatedly asked to give money by different people. As a result, the land becomes a source of contention between villagers and nomads: "Everything had begun when the villagers attacked them one day in the Çukurova. A few policemen were lending a hand too as they pulled down the tents and even set fire to some of them, laughing uproariously all the while" (58). After the villagers set fire to the Yörük tents, Halil, the chief of the tribe, burns Arif Ağa's village that night and takes the blame on himself. However, the tribespeople are flogged mercilessly. They break the back of Old Sultan, Halil's grandmother. Another woman named Maid Suna is raped and she commits suicide then. They are continuously beaten for a week. So, the image of the police is not a desired one. In the end, the tribe's people are so desperate that they even try to buy their own land:

> The long and the short is that we've got to buy back Akmashat, the home of our fathers, with money. There's no way out. They've set up a government, but it's their government. The soldiers, the police are theirs. They have aeroplanes that fly in the skies, tractors that rend the earth, trucks, fire-eyed trains, palaces, cities where a man can lose his way, they have cannons and guns. They have everything. We'll never get the better of them. (46-47)

They do not have enough money to purchase their former winter quarters. As a result, the tribe's members are constantly at odds with both locals and government agencies.

The police captain says: "As if we've nothing better to do than bother with you people, year in year out! It's our job to maintain law and order here" (208). By bribing them, the policemen protect the villagers from the nomads. Because of their nomadic lifestyle, Turkmens pose a security risk. The police captain asks the tribe once more to leave the empty spot where they are causing trouble by fighting with the villagers. Süleyman, the headman, inquires as to where they should go. The Kaymakam intervenes: "It's not for us to find a place for you to stay. Go anywhere you like. You're free citizens in a free democratic state, free to go and come wherever you choose" (208). As a result, Steinbeck and Kemal both prefer to criticise government policies. They reflect social realities and expose

the wrongdoings of various government agencies. It is obvious that they maintain power through the use of repressive state apparatus such as the police.

Otherness

Both Kemal and Steinbeck indicate segregation in society. While the social stigma in Steinbeck's novel causes Californians to look down on the Okies, that in Kemal's work causes the villagers to degrade the nomads. 'Yörüks' and 'Okies' are the main expressions that are used to insult others by villagers and Californians. In both novels, the land gives the characters a sense of identity and belonging. Both novels highlight how people interact with the place. Upon losing their lands, they cannot answer the question 'where do I belong?' Although the Okies are migratory, they are part of the social landscape which is divided by the borders. However, people from Oklahoma are not welcomed in California. They become the working slaves of capitalism. They are deprived of basic human rights. The insulting word 'Okie' is explained in the novel in a very distinctive way:

> Well, Okie use' ta mean you was from Oklahoma. Now it means you're a dirty son-of-a-bitch. Okie means you're scum. Don't mean nothing itself, it's the way they say it. But I can't tell you nothin'. You got to go there. I hear there's three hunderd thousan' of our people there— an' livin' like hogs, 'cause ever'thing in California is owned. They ain't nothin' left. An' them people that owns it is gonna hang on to it if they got ta kill ever'body in the worl' to do it. (206)

Some other explanations for the word 'Okie' can also be found in the novel: "They said, These goddamned Okies are dirty and ignorant. They're degenerate, sexual maniacs. These goddamned Okies are thieves. They'll steal anything. They've got no sense of property rights" (283). Despite the fact that they are the same people from the same country, separated only by borders, Okies are accused of everything negative. The novel is full of hints that they are unwanted: "Well, you ain't in your country now. You're in California, an' we don't want you goddamn Okies settlin' down'' (214). They are even categorized as 'not human' in the end:

> Well, you and me got sense. Them goddamn Okies got no sense and no feeling. They ain't human. A human being wouldn't live like they do. A human being couldn't stand it to be so dirty and miserable. They ain't a hell of a lot better than gorillas. (221)

The novel indicates the multiple cultures that co-exist in North America. The coexisting cultures edging each other that are divided by borderlines imply the difference between the Okies and the Californians: "Greeted with the slur 'Okies' as soon as they arrived, these internally displaced people, rather than receiving aid and protection, are subject to anti-migrant attitudes that mark them as "foreign" and as racial others":[12] According to Michael C. Steiner, place-based identity appears to be especially important in a country that spans a continent:

> Regionalism implies both the systematic study of areal variations and the sense of identity that persons have with a portion of the earth which they inhabit….. Place-related identity would seem particularly necessary in a country that sprawls across a continent.[13]

There is no single national culture and there is change. The slur 'Okies' categorized white Americans as non-white by exposing them to several difficulties that racial groups had to endure for years. The disempowerment of farmers resulted in a group of people that can be both exploited and threatened:

> Additionally, in the short term, the Dust Bowl migration shows the strength of the governmental logic that links citizenship to whiteness and American-ness while denying the claims of all migrant workers regardless of race, since California laws, corporations, and local communities created new categories—turning U.S. white people into nonwhite, immigrant "Okies"—rather than acknowledge their rights and citizenship.[14]

So, within the same country, two different categories of people were created on purpose. The migratory people of Oklahoma were treated as 'others'. Steinbeck poignantly narrates the exploitation of the Okies by the police, banks, and landowners. As Siler notes, "in the novel, the banks and land companies are portrayed as 'monsters' that devour the land and leave the people desolate who had worked on it for generations:"[15]

> The Bank—or the Company—needs—wants—insists—must have—as though the Bank or the Company were a monster, with thought and feeling, which had ensnared them. These last would take no responsibility for the banks or the companies because they were men and slaves, while the banks were machines and masters all at the same time. (32)

Other words used by government officials or Californians to look down on Oklahomans are Russian, communism, and bolshevism. They are accused of being 'red' when they want to protect their rights: "You goddamn reds is all the time stirrin' up trouble" (334). Tom is one of the characters who accept these revolutionary accusations: "Don't you go a-sassin' me. I 'member you. You're one of these here troublemakers.'' "Damn right,'' said Tom. "I'm bolshevisky.'' "They's too damn many of you kinda guys aroun'" (192). Oklahomans who protect their rights are labelled as red or troublemakers: "You fellas don't want ta listen to these goddamn reds. Troublemakers—they'll get you in trouble" (264). Steinbeck's social realistic point of view can also be tracked from the accusations of communism for those who defend their rights intrepidly.

The idea of place related identity can also be found in Kemal's novel. The winter quarters of Yörük's are sold or settled by other Yörüks who choose to settle down years ago. The Bey of Horzumlu says, "for ten days we've been like this, on horseback, without finding a place to spend a single night. Birds, beasts and men, they hate us all in this Çukurova" (124). Kaya compels the idea of agriculture and settlement-related enmity between the villagers and Yörüks:

> However, Turkey and Çukurova are now acting with a rational and pragmatic logic. The soil is now processed by machine. Therefore, even the smallest areas are cultivated, and the living space of the Yörüks who want to settle seasonally is shrinking. The hostility of the villagers and landlords to the wild Yörüks, whom they see as the "other", becomes intolerable.[16]

Interestingly, it is repeatedly stated in the novel that the villagers who are now Yörüks' enemies are also Yörüks who simply prefer to settle down. Yörük people are apparently looked down on by villagers who were previously Nomads as well. The Yörük people are cast as the 'other' in their own land by their own people. The reality is displayed by Headman Süleyman:

> We're doing nothing but oppress each other in this Chukurova. It is a matter of the sword hacking away at its own scabbard. Those who have gone from us are tearing at their own sheath. Take Sakarjali Ali. Five years hence, if we do last that long and pass by his village, he'll be the first to chase us away, stick in hand. And the first to strike at us too. (200)

In his article, Dirlik uses the term 'barbarian' to explain the concept of other with the following words: "An outcast from society, the total outsider, for whom there is no refugee or acceptance, except in the total abandonment of the identity that was the cause of estrangement in the first place; in other words, by cultural extinction."[17] Although the Yörüks try to spend their winters in their father's land, they have to fight with formerly settled Yörüks who are now settled villagers:

> Again they would find no place to winter in Çukurova. Again the inhabitants of the plain would attack them with their dogs and horses wherever they happened to pitch their tents. Again they would be killed, their daughters abducted, their caravans driven over the muddy roads under the rain. (36)

As they flee their homeland, Yörüks must fight with villagers. The Corporal accuses them repeatedly: "not only guilty, but playing high and mighty too! Coming and settling by force on people's land and then showering them with bullets!" (91). According to the government units, the Yörüks are the cause of all troubles. The Corporal keeps on murmuring: "I'm sick and tired of you people. And so's the Government and the whole country. Sick and tired! Why, you've turned this peaceful Çukurova plain into a battlefield! What kind of a nuisance are you? Robbers? Bandits?" (91). A villager narrates why Yörüks are flogged with so-called reasons:

> They never have any land at all. They're always on the move, settling here and there on other people's lands and spoiling their crops with their flocks. They kill people too and steal things. That's why they get flogged in police-stations and their women are always being taken away from them. (139)

With his sword, Old Haydar is unable to find land for his tribe. He says, "they're dying over there with every passing minute at the hands of those cruel Çukurova people" (238). And his grandson Kerem naively comments that "but for some reason, they beat us cruelly in police stations" (140). Kemal reveals the social reality through the lines of a village boy. The boy notes that "and as for being beaten up in police stations, it's because they have no one to defend them. No government, nothing" (139). The government does not defend Yörüks; it rather suppresses them.

The Yörüks now realise that their land is no longer theirs. They do not have money to purchase their own land. They have no hope. Cengiz assesses the novel that "Yaşar Kemal illustrates how the structural changes brought by the capitalist modernisation/ urbanisation of the country result in the disappearance of nomadic culture in Anatolia."[18] They do not have the money to buy land and all the land is owned by capital owners:

> They have created a new cruel world, a world that is a hell both for them and for us. Yes, that's how it is now. This huge town isn't ours any longer. It belongs to the rich, to the Aghas, to the Kayseri merchants. Everything belongs them. (184)

Historically, the Turkmens forget the mountains and animal husbandry, and start to cultivate the land after they are forced to settle down by the government:

> This farm belongs to me. Oktay could lease some of the land on a share-cropping basis, yes, but not to Yörüks who are relatives of ours and know nothing at all about farming. I won't have people who are related to me now, working on my land as share-croppers or mere labourers. (274)

Oktay Bey's father Hassan Agha accepts the idea that Yörüks and the villagers are relatives, but Yörüks are the 'others' as they do not understand farming. That is why he does not want any Yörüks on his farm.

Lastly, the ones who defend themselves and work for their tribe also are called communists just like in *The Grapes of the Wrath*. Halil, the tribe's chief, calls for jihad to reclaim their rights during a tribal meeting. Upon this call, one attendant says he just talks like a democrat and adds:

> But you've forgotten something. You didn't say a jihad against the communists.' 'What communists, idiot?' the long man said as he sat down. 'You find communists in towns, not under tents.' 'That's what you think,' the others rejoined. 'Top communists live in tents. (103)

The word 'communist' becomes a slur to blame people who defend their rights. In both novels, the people are divided into groups and suppressed. They become 'others' who are not wanted or approved by the rest of society.

Conclusion

Both novels map out the crucial phases of industrialization in agriculture, the adverse effects of capitalism, consolidation of money and power in a group in the United States and Türkiye respectively. The sentimental but thought-provoking manner of the novels causes accusations of pro-communism. However, the novelists just put forth the pains and realities people must endure. The felt experience of reality adds to the power of the novels. Both novels directly point to concerns regarding historical and cultural problems. Both Kemal and Steinbeck demonstrate historical truths by recreating them in fiction using the people's native language, which adds to the novels' sense of realism. In his open-ended novel, Steinbeck highlights the importance of the commitment to a larger realm than the self through Rose of Sharon. In a supportive way, Kemal specifies how a tribe disappears because of preferring the good of the self over the good of the larger realm. Steinbeck forces his readers to think and act while Kemal makes them look back to history and take lessons. Both novelists do not dictate a political system while reporting the problems of their age. They point out the possibility of change and possible alternatives. The novels urge the readers to explore the possible economic and sociopolitical systems.

[1] John Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath* (Penguin Books, 2006), 46. Further references to this will be given in text.
[2] Jan Goggans, "Houses Left Empty on the Land: Kepping the Postcolonial House in 'The Grapes of Wrath'," *The Steinbeck Review* 7, no.2 (2010):40.
[3] Yashar Kemal, *The Legend of the Thousand Bulls*, trans. Thilda Kemal (London: Collins and Harvell Press, 1976), 10. Further references to this will be given in text.
[4] Ismet Pasha was Turkey's second president and Menderes was Turkey's prime minister from 1950 to 1960.
[5] Arif Dirlik, ""Like a Song Gone Silent": The Political Ecology of Barbarism and Civilization in Waiting for the Barbarians and The Legend of the Thousand Bulls" *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies*, vol. 1 , no. 3 (1991): 344.
[6] Frank Eugene Cruz, "'In Between a Past and Future Town': Home, The Unhomely, and '*The Grapes of Wrath*,'" *The Steinbeck Review* 4, no. 2 (2007): 61.
[7] Renata Lucena Dalmaso, "'Modern Monsters,' Old Habits: Nature, Humans, and Technology in John Steinbeck's The Grapes of Wrath." *The Steinbeck Review 12*, no. 1 (2015): 32.
[8] Mike O'Connell, "An American Farmer Looks at 'The Grapes of Wrath,'" *The Steinbeck Review* 6, no. 2 (2009): 57.
[9] James N Gregory, "Dust Bowl Legacies: The Okie Impact on California, 1939-1989," *California History* 68, no. 3 (1989): 77.
[10] Cyrus Ernesto Zirakzadeh, "John Steinbeck on the Political Capacities of Everyday Folk: Moms, Reds, and Ma Joad's Revolt," *Polity 36*, no. 4 (2004): 597.
[11] Zirakzadeh, "John Steinbeck on the Political Capacities of Everyday Folk," 616.
[12] Abigail G. H. Manzella, "The Environmental Displacement of the Dust Bowl: From the Yeoman Myth to Collective Respect and Babb's Whose Names Are Unknown," in *Migrating Fictions: Gender, Race, and Citizenship in U.S. Internal Displacements* (Ohio State University Press, 2018), 98.
[13] Michael C. Steiner, "Regionalism in the Great Depression," *Geographical Review* 73, no. 4 (1983): 432.
[14] Manzella, "The Environmental Displacement of the Dust Bowl," 69.
[15] Carl R. Siler, "Using 'The Grapes of Wrath' to Teach the Great Depression," *The Steinbeck Review* 2, no. 1 (2005): 41.
[16] Muharrem Kaya, "Binboğalar Efsanesinin Mitolojik Bir Yorumu," in *Geçmişten Geleceğe Yaşar Kemal*, ed. Süha Oğuzertem (İstanbul: Adam Yayınları, 2003), 123.
[17] Dirlik, "Like a Song Gone Silent," 322.
[18] N. Buket Cengiz, "A Tribe is Burnt to the Ground: Reading *The Legend of the Thousand Bulls* as an Advocacy of Cultural Integrity," *Istanbul Anthropological Review – İstanbul Antropoloji Dergisi*, no. 2 (2022): 12.

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