



## Research Article

# Analysis of Turkish painter Turgut Zaim's works using Edmund Feldman's Four-Step Criticism Model

Ahmet Fatih Özmen<sup>1</sup>

Department of Painting, Faculty of Fine Arts, Selcuk University, Konya, Turkiye

### Article Info

**Received:** 10 October 2024  
**Accepted:** 11 Dec 2024  
**Available online:** 30 Dec 2024

### Keywords

Art criticism  
Contemporary Turkish Painting  
Edmund Feldman  
Turgut Zaim

### Abstract

Turgut Zaim is recognized as one of the prominent figures in Turkish painting. His works hold a distinctive place in Turkish art, combining both traditional motifs and modern approaches. Therefore, it is crucial to analyze Zaim's artworks within the framework of critical theory and through universal standards. This study aims to examine Zaim's paintings on a theoretical basis using Edmund Feldman's Four Stage Critical Model (FSCM). Feldman's model consists of four stages: description, analysis, interpretation, and evaluation, providing a structured method for the disciplined analysis of artistic works. The research questions posed in this study are: "How can Turgut Zaim's works be analyzed using Feldman's four-stage model?", "To what extent is Feldman's model effective in revealing the multiple layers of meaning in Zaim's art?", and "How do the elements of traditional Turkish art and modern artistic perspectives coexist in Turgut Zaim's works?". As a research method, the study employs "Document Analysis," one of the qualitative research methods, and selects Zaim's artworks titled "Halı Dokuyanlar I" (Carpet Weavers I), "Ürgüplü Yörükler" (Nomads of Ürgüp), "Yaylada Yörükler" (Nomads in the Highlands), "Yörük Köyü" (Nomad Village), "Yün Eğiren Kadın" (Woman Spinning Wool), and "Halı Dokuyanlar II" (Carpet Weavers II). The rationale behind the selection of these artworks lies in the artist's unique perspective in depicting rural life and Anatolian culture, his ability to reflect social and cultural values through an artistic language, his aesthetic compositions that capture local lifestyles, and his successful integration of traditional motifs with modern artistic expression techniques. Feldman's model was applied in the analysis of the selected works, and the findings indicated that themes such as social realism, cultural identity, and nature frequently emerge in Zaim's paintings. In conclusion, the application of Feldman's model to Zaim's works contributes to the examination of Turkish painting in light of universal values and may serve as a guide for future studies that will employ different theoretical frameworks.

2717-8870 © 2024 The JIAE.  
Published by Genc Bilge (Young Wise)  
Pub. Ltd. This is an open access article  
under the CC BY-NC-ND license



### To cite this article

Özmen, A. F. (2024). Analysis of Turkish painter Turgut Zaim's works using Edmund Feldman's Four-Step Criticism Model. *Journal for the Interdisciplinary Art and Education*, 5(4), 191-204. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14588798>

## Introduction

Art criticism is an approach aimed at understanding the aesthetic and contextual dimensions of artworks. Various models of criticism have been developed to better comprehend artists thoughts, social messages, and aesthetic choices. In this context, Edmund Feldman's Four-Step Criticism Model (FSCM) is an effective method for deeply analyzing artworks and uncovering the layers of meaning behind them (Carney, 1994). Feldman's model comprises four stages: description, analysis, interpretation, and judgment. Through these stages, art critics and viewers can evaluate artworks from different

<sup>1</sup> Res. Asst. Dr., Department of Painting, Faculty of Fine Arts, Selcuk University, Konya, Turkiye. E-mail: afozmen@gmail.com.tr, ORCID: 0000-0002-2497-1894

perspectives, gaining a deeper understanding of not only the aesthetic qualities but also the cultural and social messages embedded within the work (Subramaniam, Hanafi, & Putih, 2016). Within this framework;

Feldman's Four-Step Criticism Model is also widely used as a tool in art education. This model serves as a guide to enhance critical thinking skills among art students and critics (Geahigan, 1998). Feldman conceptualized this criticism model not merely as an instrument for artistic evaluation but also as an educational process. The critique process aims to broaden the viewer's perspective on the artwork and establish a bridge of meaning between the artist and the audience (Geahigan, 1975).

In this study, Edmund Feldman's Four-Step Criticism Model will be employed to examine the works of Turgut Zaim, one of the prominent figures in Turkish painting. Turgut Zaim is recognized as a painter who incorporates traditional motifs and Anatolian life into his works with a modern aesthetic perspective. His paintings uniquely depict folkloric themes, local motifs, and historical events. Therefore, evaluating Zaim's works through Feldman's criticism model will contribute to a deeper understanding of the cultural and aesthetic elements reflected in the artist's creations.

### **A short biography of Turgut Zaim**

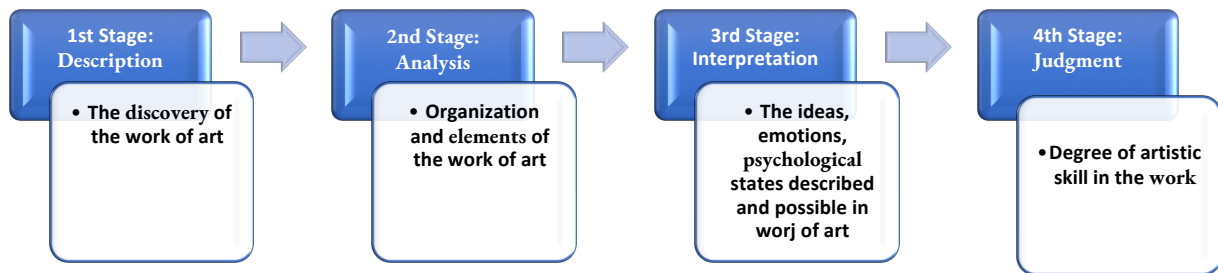
Born in Istanbul in 1906, Turgut Zaim is regarded as one of the pioneers of national and local Turkish painting. After completing his secondary education at Kadıköy Saint Joseph High School, he continued his studies at the Higher Teachers School and the School of Fine Arts (Sanayi-i Nefise Mektebi). To advance his artistic career, he worked in İbrahim Çallı's atelier and, starting in 1932, traveled extensively across various regions of Anatolia. His interest in the lifestyles of Yörük and Aşağ communities significantly influenced his artistic style during this period. The artist, who frequently incorporated national and local values into his works, was deeply inspired by Turkish folklore, which is evident in his creations. Between 1924 and 1928, Zaim pursued his studies in Paris. Upon his return in 1928, he remarked that there was nothing left for him to learn in Paris, a statement interpreted as his distancing from Western art. However, Zaim's stance was not an escape from Western art but rather stemmed from his desire to reflect his own cultural elements in his works. By focusing predominantly on Anatolia in his art, he developed a style reminiscent of folk art and miniature painting, deliberately diverging from Western aesthetics a style he maintained throughout his life (Cam, 2023).

Turgut Zaim is regarded as a representative of a distinctive movement in Turkish painting due to his unique approach and personality reflected in his works. He is not considered a member of either the Independent Painters and Sculptors Association or the D Group. Zaim's artistic perspective emphasizes national, local, and people-oriented elements. Although he traveled to France with the aim of broadening his artistic experience alongside young painters, he did not stay there for long. Upon his return, he stated, "*There is nothing left for me to learn here.*" While this remark initially surprised his contemporaries, it was later understood as a reflection of his desire to move away from Western art and focus on his own cultural values. Zaim consistently found Western art foreign to his sensibilities and sought to create an original artistic language. In his works, he consciously distanced himself from Western aesthetics, uniquely interpreting local themes and blending elements of miniature art with the "naive-purity" concept of folk paintings. Anatolian landscapes, village women, men, children, and rural lifestyles are recurring themes in his creations. A notable characteristic of these figures is their uniformity, reflecting Zaim's admiration for his wife's facial features. The figures in his works are distinguished by their rounded facial structures, slanted black eyes, and date-shaped noses (As cited in Tiryaki, 2018).

### **Edmund Feldman's Four-Step Criticism Model**

Art criticism is an intellectual activity aimed at understanding, evaluating, and revealing the societal value of artworks. The primary purpose of art criticism is to analyze artworks in greater depth, fostering aesthetic awareness in both the artist and the audience, thereby uncovering the social and cultural functions of art. Art criticism facilitates the identification of aesthetic values and the evaluation of artworks within their historical, cultural, and artistic contexts. This process goes beyond perceiving the artwork merely as an aesthetic object; it seeks to understand its intellectual and emotional content and to explore its societal impact.

Edmund Feldman's four-step criticism model offers a comprehensive method for achieving this purpose. According to Feldman, art criticism consists of four fundamental stages. These stages are respectively named description, analysis, interpretation, and judgment (Figure-1) (Geahigan, 1975).



**Figure 1.** Graphical representation of the Four-Step Criticism Model

### First Stage: Description

The description stage involves the objective identification of an artwork's superficial characteristics, namely its visible formal and technical elements. In this stage, the critic must describe only what is seen without expressing personal interpretations or opinions about the work. Elements such as the type of artwork, materials used, colors, composition structure, shapes, figures, and general arrangement are outlined. Effort should be made to use precise and careful language during the description phase. This is because objective and universally agreed-upon descriptions, rather than subjective or exaggerated ones, are essential at this stage. For instance: "three houses," "two people walking," or "one red car standing still" (Gökay, 1998). Questions that can be asked during this stage include:

- What can be seen in the artwork?
- What colors and shapes are used in the artwork?
- How is the composition arranged?
- What figures or objects are present in the artwork?

### Second Stage: Analysis

The analysis stage involves examining the formal elements identified during the description stage and determining how these elements influence the meaning of the artwork. This stage focuses on how the internal structure of the artwork functions and how various elements come together to form a cohesive whole (Boydaş, 2004). During the analysis stage, attention is given to how artistic elements and principles such as composition, balance, symmetry, rhythm, repetition, and contrast are utilized. Key questions at this stage might include:

- Which formal elements are emphasized?
- For what purpose are elements such as color, line, and texture used?
- What effect does the balance or rhythm in the composition create?
- How is spatial depth achieved?

### Third Stage: Interpretation

The interpretation stage is dedicated to uncovering the deeper meaning of the artwork and explaining the thought or emotion the artist intended to convey. The critic makes inferences about what the artwork communicates and examines the artist's intent, its historical context, or its cultural, psychological, or symbolic meanings. The interpretation phase is arguably the most significant step in the critique process. Analyzing the subject matter and formal values of the artwork paves the way for the final judgment. The key here is that the information gathered serves to facilitate the explanation of the primary emotion and message conveyed by the artwork (Karabulut et al., 2008). This stage involves more subjective evaluations, but these must be based on the objective data from the description and analysis stages. Questions that can be asked include:

- What emotions or ideas does the artwork reflect?
- What might the artist be trying to convey with this artwork?

- Are there symbolic elements in the artwork? If so, what do these elements represent?
- How does the artwork reference its era or the artist's personal life?

#### **Fourth Stage: Judgment**

The judgment stage involves providing a general evaluation of the artwork and reaching a conclusion regarding its artistic success. At this stage, the critic forms an opinion about the artwork's place, impact, and originality within the art world. The judgment phase strives to determine the artistic value of the piece based on objective criteria rather than personal assessments. During this stage, the critic discusses whether the artwork is successful, whether the artist achieved their intended purpose, and whether the piece holds artistic significance. This is the final stage of art criticism, where all previously gathered data is utilized (Boydaş, 2004). Questions that can be asked include:

- Is the artwork artistically successful?
- Has the artist achieved the intended effect?
- How does the artwork contribute to the art world?
- How does this artwork relate to similar works in art history?

#### **Problem of Study**

Turgut Zaim's works, which combine traditional Turkish motifs and cultural elements with a modern approach, are noteworthy for study. However, the question of whether a specific criticism model is suitable for every artist and type of artwork remains debatable. Thus, the core research problem of this study is to determine the extent to which Edmund Feldman's Four-Step Criticism Model is appropriate for analyzing Turgut Zaim's works and whether this model is sufficient to understand Zaim's artistic identity and the deeper structure of his works. Within this framework, the study seeks to answer the following questions:

- How can Turgut Zaim's works be analyzed using Edmund Feldman's Four-Step Criticism Model?
- To what extent is Feldman's criticism model effective in revealing the layers of meaning in Turgut Zaim's art?
- How do elements of traditional Turkish art and modern artistic approaches coexist in Turgut Zaim's works?

### **Method**

#### **Research Model**

Survey models are research approaches aimed at describing past or current situations as they exist. A specific type of survey model, the general survey model, involves conducting surveys on an entire population or a sample drawn from it to reach general conclusions about the population (Özmen, 2021). In this context, this study is based on the general survey model and employs qualitative research methods and techniques. To obtain qualitative data, the "Document Analysis" method was applied throughout the research process. The study was conducted using resources from domestic libraries as well as national and international virtual platforms, and the data obtained from these sources were collected and analyzed.

#### **Documents**

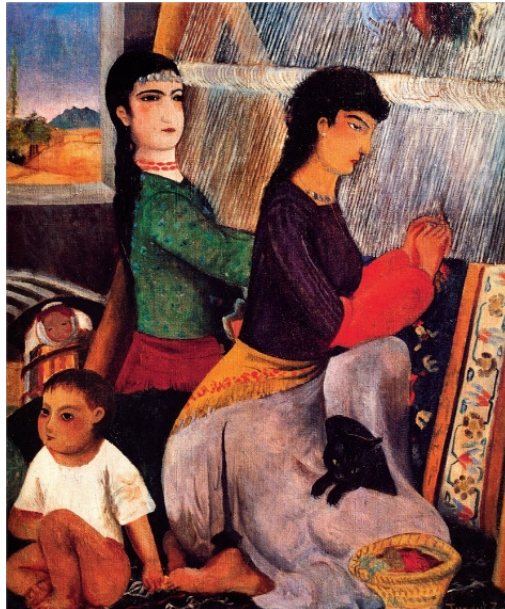
The study uses Edmund Feldman's Four-Step Art Criticism Model (Description, Analysis, Interpretation, and Judgment) to examine the selected artworks. The works analyzed in the study are Turgut Zaim's "Halı Dokuyanlar I" (Carpet Weavers I), "Ürgüplü Yörükler" (Nomads of Ürgüp), "Yaylada Yörükler" (Nomads on the Plateau), "Yörük Köyü" (Nomad Village), "Yün Eğiren Kadın" (Woman Spinning Wool), and "Halı Dokuyanlar II" (Carpet Weavers II). The reasons for selecting these works for analysis include the artist's unique depiction of rural life and Anatolian culture, his ability to reflect societal and cultural values through an artistic lens, his aesthetic composition of local lifestyles, and his successful integration of traditional motifs with modern artistic expression techniques.

#### **Ethics**

Ethics committee approval is not required for this article.

## Results

### Analysis of the Artwork “Carpet Weavers I” Using the Four-Step Criticism Model



**Figure 2.** Turgut Zaim, Carpet Weavers, Oil on Canvas, 40x34 cm, 1940–1950.

**Description:** In Turgut Zaim’s artwork “Carpet Weavers” (Figure 2), a scene reflecting the traditional Turkish lifestyle is depicted. The painting portrays two women engaged in the carpet weaving process, accompanied by a child figure and various objects that stand out as part of the composition. The background features a window through which mountains and green fields are visible, suggesting that the artwork offers a glimpse of both interior and exterior spaces. The clothing and accessories of the figures are adorned with traditional Turkish motifs. The colors used in the painting are notably vibrant. Deep reds, oranges, and greens define the main outlines of the composition, while neutral tones form the background. The facial expressions of the women weaving the carpet are depicted as focused and serious. The intricate detailing of the loom and patterns emphasizes the importance of traditional handicrafts.

**Analysis:** The artwork reflects Turgut Zaim’s effort to emphasize traditional Turkish culture and daily life. The composition is symmetrical and balanced in terms of the placement of the figures within the space. The child figure in the foreground, although not directly involved in the weaving process, suggests the continuity of this tradition as part of family life, hinting at its transmission to future generations. The women weaving carpets, with their meticulously detailed clothing and jewelry, also convey their social status. Zaim’s brushstrokes are soft and intricate, providing the painting with a calm and nostalgic atmosphere for the viewer. The background landscape and interior elements add depth and a sense of three-dimensionality to the artwork.

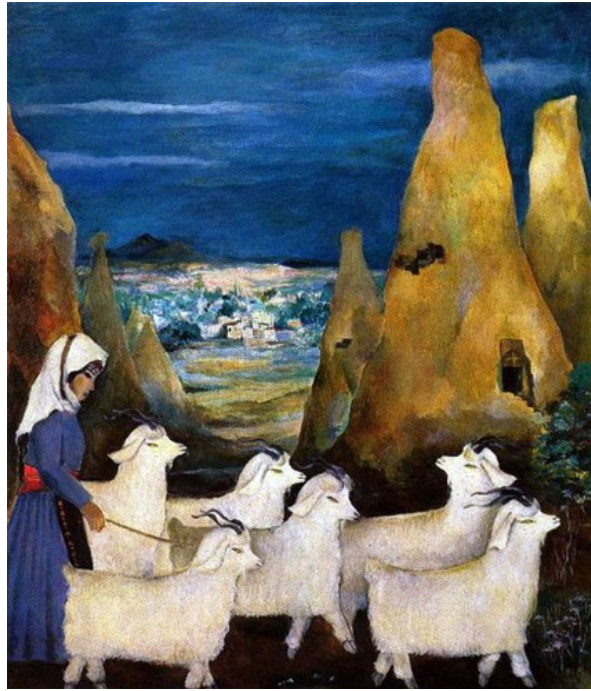
**Interpretation:** In “Carpet Weavers,” Turgut Zaim aims to celebrate the traditional lifestyle and cultural values of the Turkish people. The carpet weaving art, depicted in the painting, is highlighted not merely as a means of livelihood but as a symbol of women’s labor and patience. This artwork emphasizes the tranquility of rural life, the aesthetic value of manual labor, and the productivity of Turkish women. It also reflects the contributions of women to art in Anatolia. The facial expressions of the figures symbolize the seriousness and craftsmanship inherent in traditional handicrafts. The traditional attire emphasizes ethnic and cultural identity, while the carpet patterns can be interpreted as tangible expressions of this identity. In this context, the artwork serves not only as a visual representation but also as a social and cultural document.

**Judgment:** “Carpet Weavers” is a successful example of Turgut Zaim’s effort to reinterpret traditional life in Turkish art with a modern approach. In this artwork, Zaim presents a sense of order and rhythm to the viewer through both the arrangement of the composition and the placement of the figures. The piece exhibits strength in both aesthetic and cultural values and can be regarded as a tribute to the daily life of Anatolian people, particularly to women’s labor. This work is not only an artistic creation but also a cultural narrative offering insights into the social structure of its time. Zaim’s use of color, depiction of figures, and portrayal of space enhance the aesthetic qualities of the artwork while also



increasing its cultural and historical significance. In this context, Turgut Zaim's "Carpet Weavers" can be evaluated as an artistic reflection of traditional values and cultural identity.

### Analysis of the Artwork "Nomads of Ürgüp" Using the Four-Step Criticism Model



**Figure 3.** Turgut Zaim, Nomads of Ürgüp, Oil on Canvas.

**Description:** In the artwork "Nomads of Ürgüp" (Figure 3), the artist depicts a scene reflecting the rural life and nomadic culture of Anatolia. The painting features a female figure dressed in traditional clothing, accompanied by six white goats. The woman is guiding the goats with a stick, and in the background, fairy chimneys and a village settlement with typical Cappadocian architecture are prominently displayed. The sky, in dark blue tones, evokes a sense of nighttime or evening hours. The white color of the goats creates a striking contrast against the overall tones of the painting, adding dynamism to the scene. The fairy chimneys and characteristic rock formations of Cappadocia beside the figures emphasize the region's geographical features. The composition is symmetrical and balanced, with the orderly placement of the woman and the goats.

**Analysis:** In this artwork (Figure 3), Zaim emphasizes the rural life of Anatolia and the daily lives of nomadic communities. The interaction between the woman and the goats offers a sense of harmony, while the space occupied by the figures and their positions create a remarkable element of balance. The village settlement in the background can be interpreted as a stop for the nomadic lifestyle or as part of daily life. Turgut Zaim's use of color employs vibrant and rich tones to reflect the natural texture of the figures and the landscape. The dark blues of the sky and the yellows and browns of the earth are defining elements of the painting's atmosphere. With detailed brushwork and smooth transitions, Zaim achieves realism in both the figures and their surroundings. Additionally, each element in the painting illustrates the role of the female figure in daily life and her relationship with the environment.

**Interpretation:** The artwork "Nomads of Ürgüp" reflects Zaim's effort to celebrate the rural life and nomadic culture of Anatolia. The female figure, with her traditional clothing and goats, symbolizes the harmony of Anatolian women with nature and their productivity despite the harsh conditions of this geography. Cappadocia's unique landscape and fairy chimneys highlight the distinct identity of the region. While the white color of the goats can be associated with purity and innocence, the female figure is identified with patience and labor. The village settlement in the background may offer clues about the transition from a nomadic culture to a settled lifestyle. In this context, Turgut Zaim combines societal and geographical identities, employing both figurative and symbolic language. The painting expresses the transformation and continuity of the traditional Turkish way of life while presenting a romanticized interpretation of nomadic living.

**Judgment:** “Nomads of Ürgüp” is a significant work that reflects Turgut Zaim’s interest in Anatolia’s cultural heritage and his effort to celebrate this heritage through his art. The painting’s technically successful composition and use of symmetry demonstrate the artist’s mastery, while the use of colors and the positioning of the figures create a natural atmosphere for the viewer. The artwork not only holds aesthetic value but also serves as a cultural document. It effectively depicts the challenges of the nomadic lifestyle and its influence on the environment. Through the portrayal of the natural life narrative using the female figure and goats, Zaim imbues the artwork with social and cultural significance. In this regard, “Nomads of Ürgüp” carries artistic and cultural value as a representation of rural life in Anatolia.

#### **Analysis of the Artwork “Nomads on the Plateau” Using the Four-Step Criticism Model**



**Figure 4.** Turgut Zaim, Nomads on the Plateau, Oil on Canvas.

**Description:** In the artwork “Nomads on the Plateau” (Figure 4), Turgut Zaim depicts the daily lives and social structure of nomads on the plateau. The painting features three women dressed in traditional clothing, along with children and goats. One child sits beside a mother holding a baby, while another child, with a hand to their mouth, gazes into the distance. In the background, a vast plateau landscape filled with mountains, trees, and greenery is visible. Two white goats stand near the women, blending into the natural scenery as integral elements. The women’s clothing incorporates traditional Anatolian motifs and colors. The artwork is predominantly created with bright and vivid tones, emphasizing the vibrancy of nature and the dynamism of rural life.

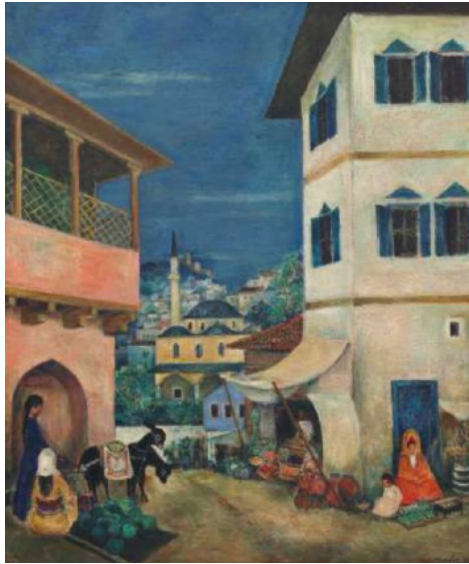
**Analysis:** In this artwork, Turgut Zaim’s interest in the traditional lifestyle of nomads and his deep attachment to Anatolian culture take center stage. The arrangement of the figures brings a sense of order and rhythm to the scene. The varied positions and actions of the female figures depict the multifaceted nature of rural life and the roles of women within it. The patterns and colors in the women’s clothing symbolize traditional cultural identity and the effort to preserve it. The goats carry functional significance as part of the economic and social life of the nomads. The plateau landscape in the background, with its expansive perspective, adds depth to the scene and reflects the harmony between humans and their natural surroundings. The artist’s use of color is particularly striking; vibrant yellows, reds, and greens enhance the cheerful and lively atmosphere of the painting. Additionally, the calmness and naturalness in the facial expressions of the figures evoke a longing for the tranquility of rural life in the viewer.

**Interpretation:** The artwork “Nomads on the Plateau” (Figure 4) presents an aesthetic representation of rural life and nomadic culture by Turgut Zaim. The painting elevates the daily lives and societal roles of nomadic women on the plateau. The inclusion of women and children together emphasizes the importance of family structure and solidarity. The woman holding a pitcher can be seen as a symbol of water and fertility, while the woman holding a child in her arms symbolizes motherhood and protection. The third woman, seated on the ground and engaged in a task, represents productivity and labor. The goats are included as indicators of a natural lifestyle and the close relationship between

humans and nature. Zaim's artwork not only depicts a natural scene of life but also reflects the effort to preserve the social structure and cultural identity of Anatolia. Each figure in the painting symbolizes the harmony between nature and humanity as well as the rich cultural fabric of Anatolia.

**Judgment:** The artwork can be considered a product of Turgut Zaim's successful artistic approach to portraying the rural life of Anatolia and nomadic culture. The piece carries both aesthetic and cultural value. The balanced placement of the figures and the setting provides a natural and sincere atmosphere to the scene. Zaim's use of color creates a strong expression in both the figures and the landscape, successfully reflecting the vitality of natural life. The artwork is not merely an artistic creation but also serves as a document of rural life. For this reason, "Nomads on the Plateau" should be regarded as a significant part of Turgut Zaim's effort to immortalize Anatolian culture and traditional life through his art. The artist's ability to construct a cultural narrative through female figures and natural scenes renders this piece valuable both artistically and culturally.

#### **Analysis of the Artwork "Nomad Village" Using the Four-Step Criticism Model**



**Figure 5.** Turgut Zaim, Nomad Village, Oil on Canvas, 50.5x60 cm

**Description:** In the artwork "Nomad Village" (Figure 5), Turgut Zaim depicts a traditional village scene. The painting features two-story houses with typical Turkish village architecture and people engaged in their daily activities in the village square. On the right side of the painting, a woman dressed in red is seated on the ground with a child figure beside her. In the middle ground, another figure is seen carrying market goods with a donkey. The street between the houses symbolizes the social aspects of village life and the movement within the community. In the background, a mosque minaret and other village structures stand out, providing insights into the religious and social structure of the village. The sky is painted in a deep shade of blue, adding a nighttime or evening atmosphere to the scene. The walls of the houses are in light tones, with a balanced use of dark and light colors throughout. The composition achieves harmony and balance through the thoughtful placement of figures and architectural elements.

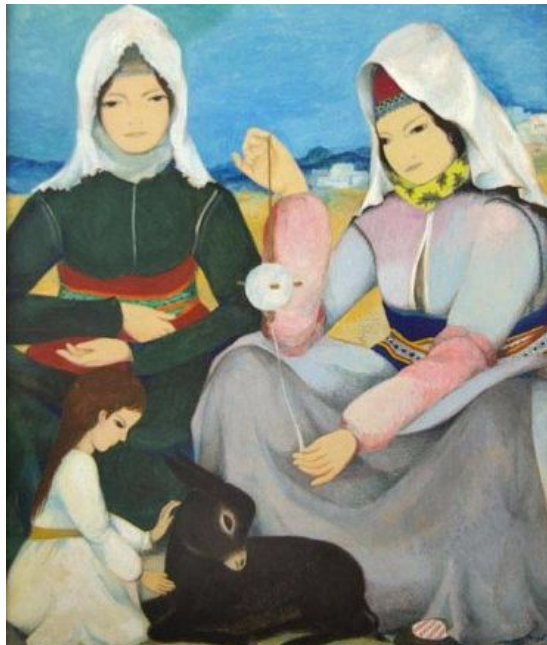
**Analysis:** Turgut Zaim's "Nomad Village" reflects the social and spatial structure of rural life and traditional village culture in Anatolia. The placement of the figures emphasizes the daily routines of village life and highlights the function of the village square as a social center. The women engaged in various daily activities underscore the role of women in rural society. The wooden details and architectural style of the houses reveal the structural characteristics of traditional village homes and the aesthetic sensibilities of village culture. The perspective allows the viewer to experience the scene at eye level, offering an intimate glimpse into village life. The use of color enhances the serene and peaceful atmosphere of the scene. The combination of blue, green, and earthy tones reflects the harmony between nature and human life. The mosque in the background signifies the importance of religious structures and cultural identity within the village. In this work, Zaim carefully renders architectural details and the interaction of figures, presenting the viewer with a multifaceted composition of village life.



**Interpretation:** This artwork reflects Turgut Zaim's aim to immortalize the daily rituals and social fabric of rural life through art. The village scene depicted in the painting represents the transition of nomads to village life and serves as a portrayal of settled living. The dominance of female figures in the scene highlights the productive and social roles of women in the rural societal structure. The marketplace and village square are depicted as essential spaces for trade and social interaction within the community. The central position of the mosque minaret emphasizes the significance of religion and traditional values in village life. In this regard, the artwork goes beyond simply depicting a village scene; it examines the structure, traditions, and way of life of a village community through an artistic lens. The use of colors and composition creates a natural atmosphere, celebrating the tranquility of village life. The overall mood of the painting conveys the intimacy and safety of village life while also emphasizing the simplicity and order inherent in this way of living.

**Judgment:** The artwork "Nomad Village" is a significant piece that demonstrates Turgut Zaim's ability to present rural life and village culture with an aesthetic language. The balance of composition, placement of figures, and architectural details introduce the viewer to the multilayered structure of village life. The artist's successful depiction of the relationship between the setting and the figures enhances the cultural and artistic value of the piece. The artwork brings together the traditional village lifestyle of Anatolia, its social structure, and the elements that define this structure. Zaim's use of color and the portrayal of figures provide the viewer with a sense of the natural flow of rural life and its unique order. In this regard, "Nomad Village" can be evaluated as a reflection of Zaim's effort to document traditional culture through artistic expression. The artist's aesthetic perspective on village life and his attention to detail further strengthen the artistic value of the work.

#### **Analysis of the Artwork "Woman Spinning Wool" Using the Four-Step Criticism Model**



**Figure 6.** Turgut Zaim, Woman Spinning Wool, Oil on Canvas.

**Description:** In Turgut Zaim's "Woman Spinning Wool", two women dressed in traditional Anatolian clothing and a child are depicted. At the center of the composition, a woman is shown spinning a ball of wool, while another woman sits on the ground in a calm posture. The child figure is portrayed petting a black goat or donkey. The women wear white headscarves and dresses adorned with traditional motifs. One woman's clothing is in green tones and dark colors, while the other wears attire in light pink and blue tones. The facial expressions of the figures are depicted as serious and focused. In the background, a light blue sky and a vaguely depicted landscape are visible. The patterns and details on the women's clothing highlight the aesthetic value of traditional Turkish handicrafts and rural life.

**Analysis:** This artwork demonstrates Turgut Zaim's ability to artistically represent the traditional roles of Anatolian women and the daily rituals of rural life. The act of spinning wool by one of the women emphasizes the importance of the production process and women's labor. Wool spinning is a part of the daily tasks of women in Anatolia and one of

the primary production activities in communities engaged in agriculture and livestock. The seated positions of the women and their proximity to one another symbolize family unity and solidarity. The child figure petting the goat or donkey reflects the close relationship between humans and animals, portraying interaction with nature as an integral part of life. The use of color and the arrangement of the figures highlight both the aesthetic and symbolic aspects of the painting. The women's clothing, adorned with traditional motifs, reflects a sense of identity and belonging. The light blue tones of the sky add a tranquil and peaceful atmosphere to the artwork, while the focused expressions of the figures emphasize the seriousness of daily labor.

**Interpretation:** The artwork "Woman Spinning Wool" reflects Turgut Zaim's intention to highlight the productivity and labor-oriented roles of Anatolian women. The figure of the woman spinning wool symbolizes the continuity of traditional crafts and handiwork and the societal value of this labor. The woman's intense focus while spinning wool conveys a message about the meticulousness and care required for such work. The child figure represents the transmission of this labor and tradition to future generations, emphasizing the sustainability of cultural practices. The act of spinning wool, as a fundamental stage of production, underscores the significance of domestic work and crafts in societal life. The natural setting and elements in the painting celebrate the purity and simplicity of rural Anatolian life. The women's traditional clothing reflects their cultural identity and societal status. In this context, Turgut Zaim artistically portrays the significant roles women play in social life and their contributions to the rural economy.

**Judgment:** The artwork "Woman Spinning Wool" is a successful example of Turgut Zaim's effort to immortalize rural life and women's labor through an artistic approach. The painting is valuable both aesthetically and socially, as it elevates women's labor and offers insights into the societal structure. The arrangement of the figures and spatial composition provide the viewer with a sense of natural tranquility and inner peace. The depiction of the women and their facial expressions add an internal seriousness and focus to the painting. Turgut Zaim presents traditional Anatolian life and the role of women within it as both an artistic and cultural document. The harmony of colors and the placement of figures enhance the aesthetic quality of the artwork and strengthen the artist's approach to traditional life. In this context, "Woman Spinning Wool" carries both visual and cultural significance as an artistic expression of traditional life and labor.

#### **Analysis of the Artwork "Carpet Weavers II" Using the Four-Step Criticism Model**



**Figure 7.** Turgut Zaim, Carpet Weavers II, Gouache.

**Description:** Turgut Zaim's artwork "Carpet Weavers", created using gouache on canvas, reflects the daily life of traditional Anatolian women engaged in carpet weaving. The painting depicts a woman weaving on a traditional loom and another woman sitting beside her. The woman working at the loom is shown wearing a white headscarf, a dark-

colored top, and a light-colored skirt. The woman beside her is depicted in a blue dress and a white headscarf. The women's traditional Anatolian clothing reflects the regional essence and cultural heritage. In the foreground, a baby wearing a yellow sweater draws attention, sitting on the ground and playing with an object. On the right side, a large red water jug serves as a symbol of traditional life. The background features green-toned trees and a tent structure. The composition presents a scene where women's labor, traditional crafts, and family life intertwine seamlessly.

**Analysis:** In this painting, Turgut Zaim elevates the carpet-weaving process of Anatolian women into an artistic form. The placement of the figures brings the carpet-weaving activity to the forefront, while the woman and child figures nearby serve as symbols of the continuity of family life. The patterns on the women's clothing and the motifs on the carpet loom reflect Zaim's emphasis on traditional designs. The woman weaving is depicted as intensely focused on her task, indicating that carpet weaving is not merely a livelihood but also a cultural value. The woman sitting beside her, with her posture and attire, represents patience and tranquility, symbolizing a sense of waiting. The baby figure serves as a symbol of traditions being passed on to future generations. The tent in the background is a symbolic element pointing to nomadic culture and the challenges of a migratory lifestyle. In terms of color usage, Zaim balances dark and light tones effectively, allowing the scene to integrate both interior and exterior elements harmoniously.

**Interpretation:** In this artwork, Turgut Zaim exalts the productivity and cultural significance of Anatolian women through the art of carpet weaving. Carpet weaving has been a centuries-old tradition in Anatolia, particularly sustained by women. This painting approaches the weaving process as a social and cultural ritual, portraying women's labor and patience with an artistic sensibility. The woman sitting nearby and the child symbolize the continuity of family and society. Zaim interprets the act of weaving not merely as an economic activity but as a means of transmitting traditional values and identity. The child figure suggests the inheritance of these values by future generations, while the woman weaving is portrayed as an artisan shaping the collective memory of her community. The tent in the background can be seen as a reference to the deep-rooted history of nomadic culture and the Yörük way of life. The women's clothing and postures represent both seriousness and dedication to their work, as well as a strong connection to traditions.

**Judgment:** The artwork "Carpet Weavers II" is a significant part of Turgut Zaim's effort to celebrate traditional Anatolian culture and women's labor through artistic expression. The detailed depiction of the carpet-weaving process and the meticulous design of the women's clothing highlight the artist's emphasis on cultural values. By aesthetically reflecting the societal and cultural roles of women, Zaim underscores the historical importance of traditional crafts in art history. The placement of the figures, the harmony of colors, and the composition enhance the artistic value of the painting while successfully conveying its symbolic meanings. The loom and the woven motifs symbolize the continuity of both economic and cultural heritage. The tent and surrounding details in the background carry traces of traditional nomadic life. In this sense, "Carpet Weavers II" is not only an aesthetic work but also a narrative that immortalizes the productivity and societal values of Anatolian women through art.

**Table 1.** Analysis of Turgut Zaim's artworks using the Four-Step Criticism Model

<b>Work Title</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Analysis</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>	<b>Judgment</b>
<b>Carpet Weavers I</b>	A scene reflecting the traditional Turkish lifestyle is depicted. Artwork features two women engaged in the carpet-weaving process, accompanied by a child figure and various objects that stand out as part of composition.	The artwork reflects Zaim's effort to emphasize traditional Turkish culture and daily life. The composition is symmetrical and balanced. The women weaving carpets convey their social status through their clothing and jewelry.	It aims to celebrate the traditional lifestyle and cultural values of the Turkish people. The art of carpet weaving is highlighted as a symbol of women's labor and patience.	The artwork demonstrates a strong stance in terms of both aesthetic and cultural values. It can be regarded as a tribute to the daily life of Anatolian people, particularly to women's labor.
<b>Nomads of Ürgüp</b>	The scene depicts rural life and nomadic culture. A female figure dressed in traditional clothing is shown surrounded by six white goats. Fairy chimneys and a village settlement with Cappadocian architecture stand out in the background.	In the artwork, Zaim highlights the rural life of Anatolia and the daily lives of nomadic communities. The interaction between the woman and the goats offers a sense of harmony, while the positioning of the figures within the space creates a striking element of balance.	The female figure, with her traditional clothing and goats, symbolizes the harmony of Anatolian women with nature and their productivity despite the challenging conditions of this region.	It is a significant work that reflects Turgut Zaim's interest in Anatolia's cultural heritage and his effort to celebrate this heritage through his art.
<b>Nomads on the Plateau</b>	It depicts the daily lives and social structure of nomads on the plateau. Women dressed in traditional clothing, children, and goats are featured in the scene.	It highlights Zaim's interest in the traditional lifestyle of nomads and his deep commitment to Anatolian culture. Varied positions and actions of the female figures depict the multifaceted nature of rural life.	The artwork elevates the daily lives and societal roles of nomadic women on the plateau. The presence of women and children together emphasizes the importance of family structure and solidarity.	The artwork can be considered a product of Zaim's successful artistic approach to portraying rural life and nomadic culture.
<b>Nomad Village</b>	A traditional village scene is depicted. Painting features two-story houses with typical Turkish village architecture and people engaged in their daily activities in village square.	It reflects the social and spatial structure of rural life and traditional village culture in Anatolia.	The village scene in the painting represents the transition of nomads to village life and serves as a portrayal of a settled lifestyle.	The artwork is a significant piece that demonstrates Zaim's ability to present rural life and village culture with an aesthetic language.
<b>Woman Spinning Wool</b>	In the artwork "Woman Spinning Wool," two women dressed in traditional Anatolian clothing and a child are depicted. One woman is spinning wool, another is seated on the ground, and the child is portrayed petting a black goat.	The artwork demonstrates how the traditional roles of Anatolian women and the daily rituals of rural life are addressed through an artistic lens.	The figure of the woman spinning wool symbolizes the continuity of traditional crafts and handiwork, as well as the societal value of this labor.	The artwork "Woman Spinning Wool" is a successful example of Zaim's effort to immortalize rural life and women's labor through an artistic approach.
<b>Carpet Weavers II</b>	The artwork features a woman weaving a carpet and another woman sitting beside her. A baby figure is depicted sitting on the ground, playing with an object in its hands.	The artwork elevates the carpet-weaving process of Anatolian women into an artistic form. The patterns on the women's clothing reflect Zaim's emphasis on traditional motifs.	In this artwork, Turgut Zaim celebrates the productivity and cultural significance of Anatolian women through the art of carpet weaving.	The artwork is a significant part of the effort to celebrate traditional Anatolian culture and women's labor through an artistic lens.

### Conclusion and Discussion

Edmund Feldman's Four-Step Criticism Model (description, analysis, interpretation, and evaluation) has been assessed as an effective method for uncovering the layers of meaning in Turgut Zaim's art. This model has enabled an in-depth analysis of the cultural and societal messages embedded in Zaim's works, going beyond their formal characteristics. In particular, Feldman's model has provided a multifaceted framework to understand how Zaim balanced traditional motifs with modern artistic approaches.

Various evaluations and interpretations of Turgut Zaim's art offer important insights into his unique artistic vision. As a painter who integrated local life in Anatolia and folkloric elements with a modern artistic perspective, Zaim holds a



distinctive place in Turkish painting. Researchers describe Zaim's approach as a "representative of local art" and emphasize his impact on Turkish art (Yazkaç, 2018). In this context, Zaim's use of color, composition of figures, and spatial arrangements stand out for their ability to present traditional and modern elements together (Erdem, 1995).

From another perspective, Zaim's stance against Western-style art further solidified his unique identity. While the Early Republican art scene often leaned toward adopting Western influences, Zaim opposed this trend by prioritizing local motifs (Tezcan Kaya, 2009). From this viewpoint, Zaim emerges as an advocate for Anatolian folklore and local values in modern Turkish painting. However, some critics find his approach limiting, arguing that his lack of influence from modernist movements hindered his artistic development (Burunsuz, 2024).

On the other hand, Turgut Zaim's participation in the *Yurt Gezileri* (Country Excursions) is regarded as a significant experience that shaped his art. These trips enabled the artist to closely observe Anatolia, allowing him to reflect local culture and rural life in his works. During this process, Zaim's paintings frequently depicted the daily life and folk culture of rural Anatolia with an aesthetic approach. According to Hanay, Zaim's observations during these trips led him to consciously focus on local themes, providing him the opportunity to elevate Anatolian people as artistic symbols (Yazkaç, 2018).

Turgut Zaim's art also bears traces of traditional miniature painting. As Tezcan Kaya observes, Zaim's works prominently feature characteristics of miniature art, such as the unique perspective, the arrangement of figures in space, and the emphasis on symmetry. These elements demonstrate how the artist incorporated local motifs into his works without abstracting them in the Western sense, instead processing them with traditional aesthetic values (Tezcan Kaya, 2009). This approach reveals that Zaim's works represent historical and cultural continuity, reinterpreting local motifs through a modern artistic language.

In light of these perspectives, Zaim's art is revealed to possess a multi-layered structure and a unique position within Turkish painting. In summary, Zaim's effort to integrate local values into a modern artistic understanding demonstrates the aesthetic and cultural depth of his work. His development of a unique style in opposition to Western art movements positions him as a pioneering artist who successfully combined local and modern elements in Turkish painting.

## **Recommendations**

### **For Further Research**

In this study, Turgut Zaim's artworks were analyzed using Edmund Feldman's Four-Step Criticism Model. For future studies, it is recommended to analyze Zaim's works by incorporating other art criticism methods alongside Feldman's model. In particular, approaches such as psychological, sociological, or feminist criticism could provide deeper insights into how Zaim depicted female figures and reflected social and cultural values. Additionally, themes of gender, identity, and modernization in Zaim's works could be explored more comprehensively. Studies focusing on these topics could shed light on the processes of cultural transition in Turkish art.

### **For Practitioners**

Turgut Zaim's artworks often depict the rural life of Anatolia, nomadic culture, and traditional values through an artistic lens. For anthropologists, Zaim's paintings can be considered artistic interpretations of the cultural identity and lifestyles of Anatolian people. For anthropological studies, these works may be examined as visual documents carrying symbolic meanings related to nomadic culture and rural life.

Zaim's depictions of female figures and the social structure of rural life, when evaluated from a sociological perspective, provide rich insights into gender roles and the social dynamics of rural communities. Sociologists can analyze the representation of women's labor, productivity, and the rural life cycle in Zaim's works within the context of societal change and the preservation of traditional structures. In particular, examining how women are portrayed and their social roles can contribute to understanding the reflections of social structures in art.

Edmund Feldman's Four-Step Criticism Model is an effective method for structuring artistic evaluation and criticism processes. In this context, it is recommended that art educators use this model to develop students' artistic thinking and

critical analysis skills. Critiques conducted on Turgut Zaim's artworks can help students in the field of art education understand how to integrate local cultural elements with modern artistic techniques.

### Acknowledgment

In this article, the artistic works of a highly significant artist such as Turgut Zaim were examined, and no ethical committee approval is required.

### Biodata of Author



Ress.Asst. Dr. **Ahmet Özmen** graduated from the Painting Department of Selçuk University Faculty of Fine Arts in 2013. He completed his Master's with Thesis and Doctoral studies in the Painting Department of the Social Sciences Institute at Selçuk University. Özmen continues his academic and artistic work at Selçuk University Faculty of Fine Arts, Painting Department. He has participated in numerous national and international juried, invitational, group, and solo exhibitions with his works.

**Email:** afozmen@gmail.com **ORCID:** 0000-0002-2497-1894

**Academiaedu:** <https://selcuk.academia.edu/AhmetFatihÖZMEN>

**Researchgate:** <https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Ahmet-Oezmen-7>

### References

- Boydaş, N. (2004). *Introduction to Art Criticism*. Gündüz Publishing.
- Burunsuz, M. (2024). Analyses of folkloric elements in the works of Turgut Zaim as a representative of local art understanding. *Art and Design Journal*, 1(33), 73–91.
- Cam, G. (2023). *An analysis of Turgut Zaim's paintings depicting daily life*. Master's thesis. Hitit University, Çorum, Türkiye.
- Carney, J. (1994). A Historical Theory of Art Criticism. *The Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 28(1), 13.
- Erdem, A. (1995). *The artistic personality and perspective of Turgut Zaim*. Master's thesis. Uludağ University, Bursa, Türkiye.
- Feldman, E. B. (1994). *Practical art criticism*. Prentice Hall.
- Geahigan, G. (1975). Feldman on evaluation. *The Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 9(3), 29–35.
- Geahigan, G. (1998). From procedures, to principles, and beyond: implementing critical inquiry in the classroom. *The Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 39(3), 293–308.
- Gökay, M. (1998). *The Application and results of art criticism according to the unified art education method at the secondary level*. Doctoral dissertation. Selçuk University, Konya, Türkiye.
- Karabulut, N., Karakuzu, M., & Konca, Y. (2008). Pedagogical criticism methods in art education. *Atatürk University Kazım Karabekir Education Faculty Fine Arts Institute Journal*, 21, 87–111.
- Özmen, A. F. (2021). *The theme of doves in contemporary Turkish painting art*. Doctoral dissertation. Selçuk University, Konya, Türkiye.
- Subramaniam, M., Hanafi, J., & Putih, A. T. B. (2016). Teaching for art criticism: incorporating Feldman's critical analysis learning model in students' studio practice. *Malaysian Online Journal of Educational Technology*, 4(1), 57–67.
- Tezcan Kaya, G. (2009). Iconographic analysis in islamic depiction art. *Turkic World Studies*, 183, 451–458.
- Tiryaki, K. (2018). *Contributions of İbrahim Çallı, Neş'e Erdok, and Turgut Zaim to Turkish Art and an analysis of their works in terms of subject, form, and content*. Master's thesis. Giresun University, Giresun, Türkiye.
- Yazkaç, P. (2018). An evaluation of anatolian folklore and nomadic life in Turgut Zaim's paintings. *Idil Journal*, 7(1), 1031–1041.

### Visual Bibliography

- Figure 1.** Boydaş, N. (2004). *Introduction to Art Criticism*. Gündüz Publishing.
- Figure 2.** <https://sanattarihplatformu.com/yoresel-turk-resminin-kurucusu-turgut-zaim444.html>.
- Figure 3.** <https://sanattarihplatformu.com/yoresel-turk-resminin-kurucusu-turgut-zaim444.html>.
- Figure 4.** <https://sanattarihplatformu.com/yoresel-turk-resminin-kurucusu-turgut-zaim444.html>.
- Figure 5.** Cam, G. (2023). *An Analysis of Turgut Zaim's Paintings Depicting Daily Life*. Master's thesis. Hitit University, Çorum, Türkiye.
- Figure 6.** <https://sanattarihplatformu.com/yoresel-turk-resminin-kurucusu-turgut-zaim444.html>.
- Figure 7.** Cam, G. (2023). *An Analysis of Turgut Zaim's Paintings Depicting Daily Life*. Master's thesis. Hitit University, Çorum, Türkiye.