The Ottomans inherited the legacy of Islamic civilisation in Anatolia as interpreted by the Seljuchs, and carried it with a new spirit and dynamism as far as the centre of Europe. Following the conquest of Istanbul, this new power, which wisely used the legacy of Byzantine the importance of which the Seljuk Sultanate of Anatolia could not adequately appreciate, established sound relations with those cultures it encountered during its advancement towards Europe. It continued a tradition, praised in the Islamic states for a long time, by taking the important artists of the conquered countries into its side through providing them with attractive facilities.

Immediately after the conquest, Mehmed the Conqueror (Fatih) who had a particular interest in poetry, music and plastic arts, and painting, issued decrees (vermem) to Anatolia and Rumelia requesting the artists ("aşık ve sanayi") and professionals ("hurrem eli") to be sent to Istanbul. Thus, a painting office (Nakshbanı), which was the pioneer of the organisation of "Etk-i Hümayun", was established at palace and the artist known as Baba Nalçığ was appointed as the head of this office. Baba Nalçığ, who was in charge of about a hundred artists ranging from gilders to bookbinders, from calligraphers to painters, was, in a way, an adviser to the Conqueror on aesthetic matters. He was also invited to the Conqueror’s special meetings with distinguished scientists and artists.

Mehmed the Conqueror approached to the cultural heritage of Byzantine in a rather different way than those who surrounded him. Besides, he was closely concerned with the European painting. It was stated in a letter, sent from Istanbul to the governor of Rimini in 1461, that Mehmed the Conqueror requested to employ Matteo de Pasti, the student of Pisanello, in matters as painting and sculpture. Upon the arrest of Matteo by the Venetians with the charge of espionage, Pisanello’s another student was sent to Istanbul probably in the years between 1477 and 1478. The painter Constantino da Ferrara made bronze medallions for the Conqueror. One of the medallions dated 1481 had the Conqueror’s bust portrait from profile on one side. A portrait in the Album of the Conqueror (Fatih Albümü) is also thought to be made by Ferrara due to its similarity with the portrait in this
medallion. In 1479 Gencile Bellini arrived at Istanbul with sculptor Barloromeo and painted various portraits of the Conqueror. Also, it is written in the Manastır-i Hümûyun of Gelişeldoi Mustafa that Nâ'îâčy Sinan Bey who became well known with his miniature called "the Conqueror smells rose" (Gül Kaldırayan Faşih) was the student of Venetian painter Mastorl Pavli.

There were also poets whom the Conqueror enjoyed and wanted to see around himself. In 1472, when he heard that Molla Abdurrahman Cami went to Haij, the Conqueror sent Hoca Abdullah Kirmâni to Aleppo, with a gift of five thousand gold, in order to bring Molla to Istanbul in his return from Haij. This invitation attempt failed, because when Kirmâni arrived at Aleppo, Jamî had already left there. But, the Conqueror insisted to establish contact with Cami, and this time sent an envoy with valuable presents to Herat requesting him to write a book comparing the views of theologians with those of philosophers and sufis. Cami wrote his book entitled Diwâniul Fabîre and sent it to Istanbul, but unfortunately on the days when the book arrived at Istanbul, the Conqueror had already passed away. Cami, who was also respected by the other Turkish Sultans from the Timurids, the Aykoydo and Karakoydo, responded to the Conqueror's concern with a poem in which he passionately praised him.

Bayezid II was also admiring Molla Cami; their letters have clearly revealed the love and respect they mutually felt for each other. In some of his poems, Cami praised Bayezid, and dedicated the third part of his book entitled Silsület-i Zehir to the sultan. According to Latifi Tezkiresi, the poet Behgiri had committed an unforgivable crime and gone to Herat to get refuge from Ali Şir Nâevi. Then he returned to Istanbul after a while with a letter signed by Nevai and Molla Cami, and he was forgiven by Bayezid. Cami was one of the closest friends of Nevai. Like his father, the Conqueror, Bayezid was also keen on art and artists. Bayezid's favourites were poetry, philosophy, astrology, cosmography and mechanics. He was not interested in Renaissance painting as much as his father, but the painting office of the palace continued its activities vividly during the reign of Bayezid.

All Ottoman sultans had a special concern for art, and returned from every military campaign with some artists. They protected all of these artists irrespective of their religion and nationality. According to Aşıkzade, Haci İzz Pasha brought some artists from various countries to Bur- sa in the reign of Celebi Mehmet. When Yavuz Sultan Selim conquered Tabriz, all the skillful artists in the painting office of the Safavid were on the way to Istanbul. One should not forget that the movable art works were brought from conquered countries to Istanbul. In fact, by doing so, huge collections were established in the Topkapi Palace. It was surely these fascinating collections that became one of the sources of the development of the Ottoman interpretation of art.

Not only the sultans, but the statesmen of the Empire also were the admirers of art and their attitude was highly generous towards the artists. The Grand Vizier, Mabûl Ibrahim Pasha had brought three statues taken from the Hungarian imperial treasury when the Ottoman military returned from the Mohac campaign, and had the statues to be settled in front of his palace in Arnavut. The statues of Greek gods, Apollo, Hercules and Diana were only idols for the Muslims, and had, indeed, cost the life of one of the well-known poets of the empire. After the statues were erected in the Arnavut, among the people circulated a Persian verse meaning "Two Ibrahim came to Earth; one of them destroyed the idol, the other erected it":

"Düâ Ibrahim améric he-rây-i cihân Yekl hât iberân jâd yekl hât nâ'mân!"

Claiming that this verse, which accused Mabûl Ibrahim Pasha of idolatry, was written by Figa- ni, the enemies of this poor poet initiated a campaign leading to the execution of this innocent man.

II

On the fourth day of the conquest, Mehmed the Conqueror came to St. Sophia (Aya Sofia) where he saw a Janissary removing the mosaics as booby. He prevented the Janissary hitting him with his scythe and said "the buildings are my own property, you cannot destroy them". This was a brave behaviour at that time even for a sultan, since the ban on depiction was in force and the devout Muslims were extremely sensitive on this matter. Therefore, it was reckoned that his concern for Italian painters and letting Gentile Bellini to paint his portrait, if not his prevention of the destruction of the religious pictures at the St. Sophia, were not very liked. Perhaps, while at palace Bellini was making the portrait which were exactly similar to their models, the Conqueror's friend and his teacher Sinan Pasha was writing the following sentences of his Tatar- "The rich, the nobility of Turkey, are satisfied."


Similarly, in the writings of Mevlana, which constitute one of the sources of the Ottoman culture, there is considerable interaction and expressions which contain the core of the issue. Surely at that time, the intellectual Ottomans knew these writings. According to Eftalı Dede’s Manastır-ı Aş- fîn, the painter Ayünkârde in a way fell in love with a vivid picture of Mary and Child Jesus he saw in a church in Istanbul, and severely brought it to Konya. After examining the picture carefully, Mevlana told Ayünkârde: "You are a living picture, and the product of a painter who created the earth, man, and everything on the earth and heavens. Is it right for you to fall in love with a lifeless and meaningless picture leaning beside your creator?"

What could be derived from these unwise figures? The following verses taken from Nesnevî can also be considered as a critique of art: "Efîr inên suretle inân olûsî, Ahmedîv-î Ebûnebulîsî mâne-î olûsî. Derwa şûrûm-î yevîmîn dem inân-î benorc. Bah, sû- rete buvûnsunan inâm îcêmî? O partûk-î renâmî yalhâm camar nûmûm. Yûrû, o mevûlîsuw- cân-êr-îv!"

Undoubtedly Sinan Pasha and Mevlana pronounced a rather different understanding of aesthetic and the perception of reality than those represented by Bellini. This was the understanding which pre- vailed the whole Islamic world for centuries. The Ottoman poets frequently mentioned this idea as well. As Nâiî said, we should have seen "the picture of the world" with a "raptured" gaze, passing
through with “a different viewing”, and should have reached its background:

- İsmüb naküf-i sivar-i âlem-i hadâli
- Hor loriyâ kâr âleme mâlah ile

- Neşri pronounces the same idea in a different way:

- Âlêmi jiçde genj bûn-dûk ol bûrçul ile
- Olnâla âlemâ annâm chësfân meçwela

By the end of the 18th century, the Ottomans began gradually to grasp the reality in a way similar to the artists of Renaissance, but the great master of the Divan literature and the Sheikh of Galata, Galib Dede was insistent on the same view:

- Bûlâ-vec olan âmâb mu'nûbi mêcveleride
- Tawbi Maîtrebud'un bû-khûnûde halâmiter.

This was the reason behind Bayezid II’s disapproval of Italian painters and architects. Indeed, Leonardo da Vinci’s project to build a bridge across the Golden Horn between Istanbul and Galata should have been disapproved since there was no attempt to realise it. It is also known that Michalengelo desired to come to Istanbul, but he failed to do so. The negative responses to statues in Arnemus erected by Mahbûb Ibrâhim Pasha, who was said to be of Italian origin, must perhaps be regarded as normal. It would be anarchistic to see that the attitude of those who resisted the Conqueror and Mahbûb Ibrâhim Pasha was fanaticism and enmity of art. As we stated above, the sensibility of Italian artists was quite different from the sensivity of aesthetics of the Ottomans which was derived from the Islamic world view, and built on a rich accumulation of thought and art. One of the most important principles of this aesthetics is the ban on picture/depiction which found its essential expression in the great struggle of Islam against idolatry. The boundaries of this ban were drawn by hadîth (the sayings of the Prophet).²

The principle known as the ban on depiction and perceived generally in its crudest sense, is in fact the secondary principle depending directly on the basic principle of Tawhid. There is no doubt that this principle led Muslim artists to escape from the mimetic tendency which is psychological in essence as producing the similarity of the external world, and from the enslavement of the anthropomorphic art. It also motivated their endeavours to seek for the inner nature of the objects, i.e., the invisible beyond the visible. The practical result of this effort is to transform the natural concept into a kind of geometry through the simplification of it. At the end of the permanent action toward “the revert to abstract”, the objects of the visible world become the clichés that reflect the whole by cleansing their individual characteristics one by one, and the forms attain their representative character through changing from particular to general. Even the new form is transformed to the extent that its origin cannot be remembered. This activity is “to take the contingent aspects of the object into brackets”. This activity, which constitutes the “stylisation” and its natural consequence, abstraction, in the Islamic art, is nothing but a reflection of the principle of Tawhid in the area of aesthetic. The Muslim artists tending towards abstraction as an inevitable result of the ban on depiction have found in sifama a very welcomed place for their will to abstraction and enthusiasm. The practical result is the emergence of an art in which no phenomenon is exposed directly, and the inner aim of which is to reach the invisible beyond the visible, the external aim of which is to beautify the world. In other words, it is an art which is inwardly pious, and outwardly purist and profane. Against all its metaphysical background, it is surprisingly at the centre of life. The mihrâb in the mosque, the pots and pans in the kitchen, the harnessing kits of horses, and so on..., all of these are beautified under the same principle.

Since it is found in all heavenly religions, the principle of ban on depiction is considered as universal. Therefore, the deep philosophy behind this principle must not be underestimated by reducing it simply to a prohibition of picture and statue. If it is understood (indeed should be understood) as the prohibition of idolatry, the validity of this ban will never fade away. In this sense, the conception of depiction (tasvîr) includes almost everything extending from icons to idols, from those tyrants who declare themselves as god and impose their arbitrary will on the masses to the idolised money and pop stars. At the same time, this means that as long as they are not idolised, the arts which can be encapsulated in the conception of depiction are left outside the scope of the ban.

Because of the purely religious concerns about not to sin, the Muslim artists initially refrained from the figure or turned it to a kind of picture by making the figure lifeless. However, they gradually understood that the ban on depiction was not a simple prohibition, but a principle on which they grounded a deeply-rooted tradition of aesthetic. At the heart of the whole arts called Islamic art, ranging from architecture to music, poetry to decoration, and calligraphy (hat) to anadrshe, lies a gran
diose metaphysics and a subtle aesthetic meticulously knitted like a lace by the sufs around the principle of the ban on depiction. It would not be wrong to establish a connection between the principle of ban on depiction and the artistic will which directly penetrates towards the object, without wandering around the temporary external façade of figure. The aim is to reach the invisible behind the visible (the uniqueness behind the multitude), and to discover the absolute order/regularity by surpassing the apparent chaos on the surface.

Such understanding of art has also precluded both the abuse of art in the name of various powers, and the use of it as a means of propagandas and deception. It is known that the art of depiction is used in the western world as a kind of weapon by social classes and ideologies against each other. This art inevitably either exalts or diminishes whatever it depicts; in other words it is a challenging art. By contrast, the art of depiction which is not the expression of any phenomenon, apart from the above-mentioned aimed, has undertaken the mission to beautify the world. The art in this sense directly takes part in the life; it becomes a phenomenon that is experienced, not gazed.

III

The subject of rising from the beloved beautiful body to the idea of beauty, which was probably first pronounced by Plato in his dialogue Symposium, has been the only theme of almost all love poems written in Arabic, Persian and Turkish. The great love, i.e., the metaphorical love, that is felt by Salaman for Absal, Kayas for Leyla, Jemgid for Hurşid, Nîşînqâla (Bûlbûl) for Rose, (Gûl) and Love (Aysh) for Beauty (Hîn), is a stage of transition that should be surpassed without further ado. As narrated in the Sheikh Galip’s poem called Hîn â Aysh, Love, after overcoming various hurdles, arrives at the citadel of Zati’s-Sâver which is completely
filled up with pictures. This citadel, pictures of which led Love to sigh while gazing them, is the representation of the world. Having succeeded to escape from the citadel of Zatâr-Suvar, that is from the pictures and images, Love reaches the dawn of truth at last. It then realises that it is where it starts, Love is nothing but Beauty, and the Beauty is nothing but Love. Love attains the immortality through Beauty, just as the thirty birds (si-murg) in Attar’s Manâtkâ-y-Tair, have disappeared through Simurg. The only truth is Hikm, that is Beauty. The mission of the artist is to seek for this truth.

In the classical period, every Ottoman artists, irrespective of their ties to sufism, understood beauty in a way that the absolute beauty was the immanent in the visible world. The beauty of rose, for instance, was not a beauty in itself, nor was it living ourselves through rose. The beauty of rose was in fact the reflection of God’s adjective of “beauty” (cemal) in the rose. According to the Sufis, God who is the hidden treasure (kami-i mahfî), had viewed his beauty in the mirror of nothingness, and the first gleam of love provided for the multitude of his names and attributes, thus leading to the creation of the universe.

The well-known God-given hadîth (hadîth-i kutsi) beginning with “I was a hidden treasure” became an aesthetic program in the hands of sufis. God’s wish to be known is love; the beauty of God who liked himself through love is the source of all kinds of beauty. By interpreting the hadîth which reads “God is beautiful, and he likes beautiful”, in this context Ibn Arabi says that the beauty is also the reason and foundation of all loves. ‘The love exists in the kernel of the universe; and it is the initiatory mobiliser in everything; it directs everything towards attainment of “the most beautiful” and “absolute beauty”. According to Mevlana, the movement of heavens is because of love; “if love does not exist, the earth would be motionless” (M, Vb. 3854). The beauty and ugliness of the objects alike are subjective values; nothing can possibly be regarded as ugly, so long as someone turns to it with love. In his book Poétique de l’Ihâm, Ibn Arabi writes as follows: “God’s mercy is for both the beautiful and the ugly. The ugly is beautiful from its own point of view. The beautiful is ugly for latter. There is, therefore, hardly anything in this world that is not ugly according to every single subject. This is also the case for the beauty.” Mevlana says that if an apparently ugly object is viewed from the window of its lovers, it may be understood that the ugliness is not an absolute value: “Do not look at the beautiful with your own eye; see the object sought with the eye of the seeker. Even, borrow from it a temporary eye, a view, and look at its face through that eye.” (M, IVb. 72-73)

In İnâsap-i Kanîl, Abdal-kerim Cîli says that everything in the world concerning ugliness is merely hypothetical, and when the judgement of absolute ugliness fades away, there will remain nothing but the absolute beauty left. A person can perfectly find beauties in the object that is seen as ugly by someone else, simply because the beautiful is what is loved. Hallaj also casts his verdict: “There is no ugly and bad! The Ottoman poets frequently pronounced these ideas. The following verses are just a sample of them.

Kendî hürmet kânsiz âlemlerde peygâm eylemler Çıgm-i âşkdan âlündi hâne tenâmûl eylemler

Gâmiî sên âşyn-i hürmet tezârlı eylemler
Öz enâmîly eylem-i âşkdan tenâmûl eylemler

Yunuslu Nâzî

Sâretâ şeirî nişâres râyî-i zihînindeyez
Lîk ma’âlîk-i fâlîl-i Huktemiidenteyez.

Uslul

Yar kenûnî gîremiş êzîne îçh-lîd eylemiş
Süret-i îçhâd-i hâmînîn bir ma’âlîker gürû

Lâlîrî

IV

The new era when the external world begun to be depicted as seen by the human beings, that is Renaissance, marked a radical breakaway from the understanding of art developed alongside the Christian dogmas. As a matter of fact, no religion reduces the reality to the boundaries of sensual world, on the contrary this world is seen as a transitory stage that must be surpassed without further ado. In the doctrine of pantheist (Vahdat-i Vâlasî), which is the extreme interpretation of Twelvîrî principle, even the existence of this stage of reality is not accepted (Îs mevude illa hûz; it is nothing but a shadow or an illusion. Spreading in Persia and Anatolia especially with the influence of Ibn Arabi, this doctrine completely removed the curiosity of Muslims about the external world whose reality is denied, and directly guided them to the inward aspect of the phenomenon, to the invisible behind the visible.

The subject that was formulated in the question of “where are they?” (ûbi sàrt), and was spread in the medieval Christian culture, was a different expression of the same consciousness, and it was pronounced by countless varieties of aesthetic. Umberto Eco summarises this subject as follows: “Where are the giants of yesterday, where are the splendid cities, where is the wealth of arrogant men, where are the signs of powerful men?”. The similar texts can also be easily found in the Ottoman literature. Yunus’ poems with the repeated words (redîd) kuma and yarım, and the section of Si- nam Pasha’s Tescârî-nâmâ which begins with the words “Kuru el mûlîh-i êlem ve selatin-i rien ahmet” of Sa’îdir-Kerm-i cihatmî, of hürmet-i yûsif center, of gên-der-başm-i gênîn-i-hajemler, are the texts in which this feeling is literally expressed. In this sense, the following couplet of Yunus is particularly important:

Yunus askîlismi bunda mâlîkî sûret hêgvensîl
Mîlîk sûret becîyîler kuma topkârvên yarım

A deep grief prevails these texts which pronounce the mortality of life and triumph of the death, simply because man himself is mortal; “this world is left to nobody” (Yunus Emre). Thus, the attachment to ephemeral beauties is a deception; we should tread a path toward the inner beauty, and in the last analysis to the ultimate beauty. In his Hâgrîzî, Na- bi was saying as follows: Obûa dibülî-i sûret zim-バー

Kadîcî çatîl-i ma’nîye gezîr

“Journeying to wisdom” (ma’nîye gezîr) is in a way to recapture the aesthetic value on metaphysical ground. The beauty of the external world is, in fact, a reflection of ultimate beauty, i.e. a reflection of divine beauty (sema). For classical Muslims, particu-
larly Sufis, every kind of beauty was creating a sort of ecstasy of mystic unity with God. In other words, the essence of the aesthetic pleasure was derived from the comprehension of the metaphorical relations between the object and cosmos. It also stemmed from the realisation of the ontological reflection of the absolute beauty in the concrete object. This beauty that affords pleasure was not separated from the values of the right, the good and the useful.

V

The transitory character of this world, and even its acute perception as a dream and a design drawn on the water (naksiz-berid) were clearly reflected particularly on the Ottoman interpretation of the Islamic civilisation and on the structures of towns. The Ottomans, who refrained, as far as possible, from the ostentatious architecture of houses, viewed the stone buildings as the attempt to construct tyrannical (şekillili) houses and “to anchor on the world”. With such stony materials can be constructed only the eternal values such as mosques and schools (medreses), charities, public baths, and the buildings which were devoted to charities. Ottomans would want the temples to be “Allah’ın yürüyüşüne ve sıfatıne adanmış inanılmaz inanlıdı veler” (Quran, XXIV, 16), that is, they should combine and reflect all the beauty in their structure. The mosques were in a sense “the storage of the beauty”; architecture, music, poem, oratory, calligraphy, ornamentation, adornments, stone carvings, ornamental inlaying, engraving done with a pen (kalem-işti), the art of coloured glass, carpeting, etc., were all combined in the mosque, and complemented each other. Indeed, just as in Medieval Europe, there were those in the Ottoman world who opposed to the construction of the ostentatious temples.

For example, in the XVII century Kâzımzadeğiller who opposed to the recting of the Quran and to the turning of the dervishes and the whirling dancing in the dervish lodges, and even attempted to keep just one minaret in, and demolish the other minarets of, the Selânit mosques, on account of more than one minaret being heresy. On this issue which was discussed by Kâtip Çelebi in his Meşâ-i Hijârî, there is much information in Târîh-i Nâme as well.

At the top of the conditions which created the bewildering structure of the Ottoman-Turkish town was the Islamic way of living. The collection of buildings designed as the architectural complexes composed of mosques, schools (medreses), primary schools, well-being, etc. constituted the distinguished characteristics of the Ottoman towns, particularly in Istanbul, and both determined the directions of the formations and the appearances of the towns and defined them physically. In particular, internal and external courtyards of the Selânit mosques functioned at the same time as the grand squares.

The Ottomans, showing all their might and ability in the architecture of the complexes, looked for creating an harmony in the structure of the classical towns to continuously remind the inability of the transitory vis-a-vis the eternal. The use in houses of such materials as timber, lime and brick almost-always which are less durable in comparison to stone, looks affected from the warning of the verses “Siz box ukûk yeve kir almânet buna adîl bıq yelde mi ufq egerse? Elde felâ-werhem ummânâh ahêler adâmın meiniizi?” (Quran, XXVI, 128-129). These verses, which meant to oppose to the architecture as the show of power and authority, also set the principles for the Ottoman sovereigns and statesmen to spend their authority in competition for the sake of charities. In the classical age, it can be seen that even the palaces were extremely modest buildings in comparison to the palaces, castles, etc. of European kings.

The Ottoman towns, to the extent they were distanced from the nature in their architecture, were integrated with the nature in their life, emerged and developed as a natural extension of climatic conditions and physical geography. Even such towns as Istanbul which existed before, developed, after a while, in line with the characteristics of this aesthetic. Also the structures of the Ottoman towns, looking ex temporarily, in other words being devoid of geometry of the old Greek, Roman and European towns, were the products of a conscious choice. It is impossible to see any single straight street, and any two buildings exactly similar to each other: an infinite richness in the appearance and an unmatchable view. Except for the monumental works of art such as the Salânit mosques, the Ottomans, who almost never exceeded the human vision, created extremely friendly towns, composed of shadowy narrow streets with grape-vines on the trellis, the street corners with trees here or there, the gardens based on the principle of neither imitating nor intervening the nature, the cafes shadowed under various trees, and fountains. Furthermore, the Ottomans put their imprint in those towns which were formed in the past, by injecting a brand-new identity to them.

Tress, viewed as the complementary parts of the architecture, provided balance and harmony between the nature and buildings added to the nature. Therefore, the Ottoman-Turkish towns, when looked at from a distance, look at the natural extension of land on which they were built. Indeed, because generally wood is used in the architecture of houses, they were automatically linked to the nature. As long as the climate conditions were available, almost all of the Ottoman towns, primarily Istanbul were adorned with grass gardens and melon gardens throughout. Along with the names “garden” and “melon garden”, and the multiplicity of streets, districts, and wards with the names “trees” and “flowers”, are all clear evidences showing the old identity of Istanbul.

Big excursion spots (picnic areas) and private gardens of the Sultans aside, almost all of the houses had a small or a big garden, adorned by a few fruit trees, chestnut trees or plane-trees. Plane trees, cypress trees, chestnut trees, wild-chestnut trees, ash trees, cherry trees, linden trees, bee trees with red leaves, few eucalyptus trees, pine trees, maple trees, cedar trees, each of which was located as monuments in the front sides of the mosques or medresse, of the fountains, squares, picic areas, were all the natural parts of Istanbul’s spectacle. All these trees, each being a monument itself, reflected a special meaning for those living around, and provided literally a style of life for them. In addition, they, adorned with mythologies, the stories of the saints, etc., became somehow sacred, thus untouchable.

Le Corbusier, the French citizen born of Swiss, known as one of the greatest architects of the XX century, came to Turkey first time in 1911, and made observations in Edirne, Istanbul and Bursa. Describing the Ottoman architecture with such poetry expressions noted under his drawings as “the melody of rather noble forms”, “the past, present, future, and unchanging elegy of the Primitives”, “eternal forms of pure geometry”, Le Corbusier found not only the architectural buildings, but also the structure of the Ottoman towns extremely
impressive. He also described Istanbul as the haven of the earth, unlike New York as the catastrophic city. Some of the notes in the notebook of the famous architect who remembers the Turkish saying that "the person grows trees in the place where he builds house", are as follows:

"Istanbul is a garden of fruit trees; whereas our cities are stone quarries."

"The houses of Istanbul were surrounded by trees: the impressive friendship between the human and the nature."

"There are trees everywhere in Istanbul, in the middle of which rats the noble examples of the architecture; trees make us relaxed in terms of both psychological and physical health."

Istanbul itself was an aesthetic environment for those living in this city. The Europeans of the XIX. century who were affected by the pictures, perceived this magnificent city as the bastion of aesthetic object. The engravings who exceedingly described the beauty of Istanbul are the products of this perception.

VI

On the basis of all the arts which would be put within the context of "Islamic Art", lay the willing to create abstraction. This willing, because standing tight against description, also constitute the principle to keep away the work of art from all the selfish ambition and psychology. That is, the artist goes as far as to hide his identity and sometimes even its signature. To the extent the work of art is kept away from selfishness, so much it expresses so powerfully the human dimension in a universal framework. Although one can deduce from here that there is no chance for selfish style and it is impossible to produce an original work of art in such an understanding of art based on this understanding, it depends on what is understood from the style and the original work of art.

The original work as we understand today is the work which does not copy in any way the other works, but stands as the first in itself, and thus highly dependent to the identity of the artist. Nevertheless, each of the traditional arts in which the person was put into parenthesis as an independent identity, became an handicraft art in time. "Taking the position of (seminik), and "taking on a form of (seminik)" the accumulation produced by the artists before them are kinds of handicraft (huild). Moreover, many of the works of art is the product of not one person, but a co-operative work of several people: those making the design, those using the ruler, and those making the coloring etc. are different persons. Even in poem, there are some varieties which we can count as the product of "handicraft" such as tahmin, lazit, tazmin, and nizmre. The poet has a more or less limited number of metaphors set, certain meters and forms; the calligrapher has certain principles and even forms etc. to which he must meticulously abide by. The production of an "original" work by sticking to such an understanding of art so surrounded by the traditions is really very difficult, but not impossible. A amateur who desires to work in any form of art knew that the path he started would include a long period of apprenticeship, and, in order to survive, he had to wrestle against the giants. Puslül said in the introduction of his divan in Persian that because the poets before them were such people with high understanding and deep thinking, they could express the best words and use the most sensitive meanings which are useful for the form of gazel; they left nothing for those succeeding them, and goes on as follows:

"A person should know all of their writings, so that his laboriously produced works should include no meanings mentioned in the previous works. There were such times that I had tasted the bitterness of the shackles through the nights, bad written a word breathtakingly. When the morning set out, seeing that I wrote the same verse with other poets, I threw all of what I had written out. There were such times that I, thinking through day and night, would produce a word which was not produced by anybody else. But as a result of such reactions that "this word is not understandable, so it cannot be used in the face of the masters and not to be tolerated", that word lost its credit in my eyes, and more, I could not write it down on a paper. What a pity! The word was not written because it was used before, and the unused word is not written because it was not used before."

The original work demanded by the tradition was very clearly shown in Puslül's above explanation: The first condition is that the artist should know and grasp the works before himself. The poet should find such words that should be both used and unused before. Only that artist who is able to make such a delicate differentiation can qualify, and his produced work is accepted as "original". The work which is produced by using more or less the same material, and which does not both repeat and deny the one before itself. That is the one meaning of "seminik" (variety of illusion) and the evolution happens by deepening towards inside. The power of the divan poem stems from here; there it was reached unbelievable sensitivities in botanical and geometrical decorations. The "condensed" (mitekka) richness in the tunes of the classical music cannot be heard by a Westerner. If the originality is looked for here, the proposition that the new and original work was not produced in Islamic art, would lose all its meaning. Necmeddin Oktay, one of the last bejarum (master) with the Ottoman identity, could instantly, in the first glance, diagnose, with almost one hundred percent of correctness any writing, its calligrapher and date. If there was no style, and the artists did not repeat insensibly the ready forms given by the tradition, that would not be possible.

The Ottomans required the originality in other areas too. For example, the Ottoman musicians would not accept the rehearsal of a work if one sticks to the notes of the composition and does not contribute any interpretation to, and stress the details of, the work. Just as the rehearsed of those works of art which are performed in front of the audience such as Karahige and Otruyami is enriched with different jokes each time, because there is no written text, each brand-new play in music would gain a new identity in the musical work. The freedom of interpretation during the performance is also important as the indication of the extensiveness of the "seminik" principle which we see in all the Islamic arts in general.

The following should be particularly stressed: Just as there are no two same trees, two same flowers, two same leaves, there can be shown no two mosques, two streets, two houses, two ornamental inlaysings, two storages, two carpets and so on which are exactly similar to each other in the world of the Ottoman aesthetics.

VII

Traditionally, the work of the poet was the most difficult one: as indicated above, he had to show all his masterfulness in a couplet composed of two verses, and had to say something new but not to go out of the existing imaginations within a metaphoric system whose borders are more or less predetermined. He had only one alternative to show his creativeness: That was renew. What he did was not different from an artist who beautified a section with anharus by abiding to certain principles and using the same motives. Just as each letter used by the calligrapher had rules, each word used by the poet had certain meanings and associations. To say the meaning unsaid before necessita-
The history of the dissolution of the Ottoman world of aestheticism coincides with the history of Westernization. What we saw when we turned our eyes to the West was not a West continuously changing in its internal dynamics, but a West which was clumsy and will no longer change. Nevertheless, Europe was running after, with an endless ambition, the newer targets without stopping in any station. When we started to view the nature like the Renaissance artists had done, the camera was about to be invented. This strange machine used the realism based on the naked eye. Thus, while the European artists who were freed from the captivation of the nature looked for new ways, attacking on the primitive and Eastern cultures like hungry wolves, we were trying to copy the nature amicably. We needed time to discover the aesthetic dimensions of the world we left behind and

1. The Prophet Abraham is the symbol of both innovators and arche- tists because he imperatively destroyed the idols of his father Abimelech and built the Kaaba, 1973.
2. There is no verse in the Holy Quran that prohibits depiction. The frame and picture expressed by the word “mimâr” are used in dif-
ferent meanings depending on the attitudes of people. The pro-
phet Abraham asked his father and his nation: “What are those im-
ages, to which ye put so ardently devoted?” (K.S.31/32) in an-
other verse, the same word “mimâr” is used in the sense that the
Prophet Solomon ordered his artists to make一幅s, images, and
housed as huge mosaic, therefore it is used for the artistic pro-
cucts that are not made for the purpose of worshipping (K.S.31/32).
3. I was a hidden woman. I wished myself to be known, to be known in the world.
4. According to Taurus Bay, after entering in his palace the Composer climbed up to the dome of St Sophia and having viewed the tur-
cet (conference) for a while, he closed with a grid the following Persian couplet: “People who renounced the xan Kaissis gave them another
man-owned the lad’s Efendim.” (In the palace of K怡ra, now a spa-
ter is to be done keeper. In the palace of Abimelech, now an oil is to
be sold for five sous a day’). See Taurus Bay, Taurus Efendi,Fes-
5. That verse by Yebra Bayal is interesting: “Ayyı Pıra’nın deş-
ilde, bir kaşık yapım.” (Newspaper)
7. Ankara be Birsen Döngüş Jil, 4. Bula bula bu kolkolde bir hey
sadı inn.