THE AESTHETICS OF ISLAM, MODERN AESTHETICS AND THE AESTHETIC FOUNDATIONS OF POST-TANZIMAT TURKISH POETRY

Mehmet SAMSÅÇİ

ABSTRACT

The word of work means - in the literature terminology - "literary works that reveal a poet or writer". For the last 50 years, some researchers or academis start to thing that the text is the main reality. However in the former studies, it has been agreed that literature is a part of the history of civilization and also conisereed as a means to understand the history of nations and civilizations better. Literature has not been examined as a single "entity" by itself but examined and regarded as the memory of nations. This means that literary texts should be reviewed not by an esthetical point of view but by a pragmatical and practical one. But as matter of fact that, the text or work is a result. Because writer’s – who is producter, designer and editor and of the text-the feelings and thinkings determine the work. So all comments will be incomplete with one side, if we don’t know poet’s aesthetic stance and poetics. In this article, firstly we investigated Islamic aesthetic which is commanded to Turkish poem more than 1000 years, and then determined the modern aesthetic, finally analised Turkish poetry’s aesthetic conditions from Tanzimat (1839) to today. In other words this study investigated the basis of Islamic aesthetics that began after the adoption of Islam by Turks, that was slowly distanced from yet never totally abandoned after the 19th century, compared the concept of art defined by Islam and the modern approach, and finally examined the aesthetical condition of Turkish literature that is modern, or at least attempts to be modern.

STRUCTURED ABSTRACT

The foundations of Islamic aesthetics were laid by Mohammad the Prophet of Islam with the declaration of Islam, and the literature of primarily Arabs, Iranians and Turks adopted an Islamic face in a short
while. Arabic, Persian and Turkish literatures created works that are the products of a common alphabet, a common technique, value system and aesthetics for centuries as a result of the same assumptions and perceptions.

This study investigated the basis of Islamic aesthetics that began after the adoption of Islam by Turks, that was slowly distanced from yet never totally abandoned after the 19th century, compared the concept of art defined by Islam and the modern approach, and finally examined the aesthetical condition of Turkish literature that is modern, or at least attempts to be modern.

The greatest emphasis of Islam was “unity,” the unity, total domination, uniqueness of Allah, and Allah’s total exemption from any partnership. Thus, the Islamic arts didn’t permit any discourse that may harm the conception of unity, and Islamic Arts always recognized and introduced Allah as the Absolute Beauty. Islamic aesthetics, and all the works based on this approach tend toward Allah. The beloved is seen as a step on the road to Allah. Nature is not praised for its beauty, but as the reflection of Allah. According to Muslim artists, the world is not a place to design, to change, to build by human hands. Because according to the Muslim artist, since the world was created by Allah, it is already beautiful and has a perfect order. The artist’s function is to see and feel this perfect order and to reach Allah from this understanding. In short, everything is abstract before Allah, and Allah is the sole truth. The aesthetics of Diwan poetry that covered the period between the 13th - 14th centuries and the 19th centuries, and maintained by some poets later, were defined by those principles.

The 19th century was the period when the Westernization movements in Turkish literature accelerated, the abandonment of the absolute Islamic world began, and a religious approach based on rationalism and science took hold with the influence of philosophical movements such as positivism, rationalism and even naturalism. In this period, literature made way towards the naked and obvious truth, and an aesthetic approach based on the worldly, rather than divine, became valid. However, it was not so easy to change 1,000 years of experience, belief and assumptions; thus the new and the old, today and history always walked hand in hand. This period’s aesthetics is neither Islamic, nor completely mundane. However now, it was obvious that the aesthetics of Diwan poetry was no longer relevant.

In the beginning of the 20th century, when the wars, invasions, deaths, migrations and misery increased, the poetry became more practical than aesthetic. In this period, some poets saw poetry as a form of art that has no aim other than itself that should not enter the rule of any ideology, belief or power. However, the fast pace of life, the requirement to motivate and activate the public would force the poet to produce pragmatic works, and would create a complicated aesthetic approach determined by Islamic and nationalist perception but accelerating in line with reality.

As emphasized in the relevant places in the article, in the period after 1923 when the foundations of a new state were laid, movements of development and union with the public sped up, although Islam was not
a determinant but the modern aesthetics that was adopted in Europe could not totally infiltrate in Turkey. Additionally, in the period after 1950, contacts with Europe increased and the breath of modernism reached Turkey. Turkish poets born in wars, witnessed great destruction, who distanced themselves from the society and socialism, who saw what capitalism, urbanization and exploitation, who became more and more lonely, tended towards protestant movements just like their European counterparts.

Modernism places the individual in its center, takes its power from rationalism, science and technology that pushes the concept of God away that rejects tradition, that is querying and denialist. In that respect, all of our poets who produced after 1950 have a more or less modern aesthetic approach. These modern aesthetics is indispensable to comparatively examining the appearances of Islamic aesthetics that reigned supreme for 1,000 years, and to determining the large changes that society and the intellectuals underwent. Because the work itself is a result. What creates this result is the outlook on life, the way of understanding the world, which also determine the aesthetics.

Keywords: aesthetic, aesthetic of Islâm, modern aesthetic, Turkish poetry after Tanzimat

**İSLÂM ESTETİĞİ, MODERN ESTETİK VE TANZİMAT SONRASI TÜRK ŞİİRİNİN ESTETİK TEMELLERİ**

**ÖZET**

Anahtar kelimeler: Estetik, İslâm Estetiği, Modern Estetik, Tanzimat Sonrası Türk Şiiri.

Used to mean “science of beauty” or “philosophy of beauty” in academic literature, as well as daily speech, the etymology of the word “aesthetic” is Greek. The root meaning of the word, which is used as-is in various Western languages, and also in the Turkish language in the same manner, is “sensitiveness”, “sensibility.”

“Aesthetics is derived from either the word «aisthesis» or «aisthanesthai» in Greek. «Aisthesis» means perception through the senses. In this respect, aesthetics is deemed to be a science of information provided by sensible perception and the senses.” (Tunalı, 1996: 13)

While the word aesthetics preserves this original meaning, it is still used in a negative connotation in medical literature as “anesthesia”. As is known, anesthesia is the temporary numbing of a patient’s senses.

As a philosophical sub-discipline, aesthetics aims to define and determine the beautiful; to identify the source, conditions and possibilities of beauty. Since early times, humankind has been interested in the beautiful, and the nature of beauty; even despite the most primitive and harsh conditions during its fight against nature, it has inclined towards the beautiful. When the progress of basic necessities such as clothing, sustenance and accommodation are met, mankind has always aimed beautifying itself and its surroundings. Once one views the art works spanning the prehistoric and recorded historic ages, from the medieval to the modern era, from wall paintings, to contemporary art and architectural structures, one realizes that humankind’s quest for beauty is no coincidence.

While aestheticians and philosophers have made generalizations and set up standards of beauty; beauty and the beautiful are both relative and subjective concepts. Various figures, accessories, clothes or daily artifacts that may even seem repulsive, odd or unattractive to the modern eye were, in their time, were the most beautiful and graceful of objects. The reality that the concept of beauty changes and cannot be formulated is not only an issue of the differences between ages and different tastes in such eras. The definition of beauty can differ even among people living in the same land and in the same age. Beauty is a concept that is perceived, defined and described differently according to nature, family and national culture, beliefs and ideologies. However, while the French saying goes, “beauty is in the eye of the beholder,” in defining beauty as that which cannot be monopolized and is uncontrollable, one can cite the Turkish phrase “zevk-i selim,” which can be translated as the “ultimate pleasure” or “the ability to notice and taste the beautiful”.

As stated above, the concept of beauty changes according to religions, national culture, political ideology, and philosophical doctrines and schooling. In this respect, aesthetics appears in different forms in German and Indian cultures, again in ancient Greece, and in the philosophies of Hegel or Kant, and indeed in the traditions of Islam and Christianity. In this article the concept of aesthetics from the first descended verse of the Quran and Prophet Mohammad’s first days as the Messiah will be examined; the foundations of Islamic aesthetics will be discussed; and subsequently the basis of modern aesthetics will be studied. Finally, the relationship of Post-Tanzimat Turkish poetry with aesthetics and viewpoints on “beauty” will be elaborated on. (Tanzimat: the word literally meaning reorganization refers to the period of political reforms in the late Ottoman Era).  

1 For different definitions of beauty and aesthetics theories please refer to: Emine Güzel, İslâm Sanat ve Estetigiinin Kur’an Temelleri, Selçuk University, Social Sciences Institute, Department of History of Islam and Islamic Arts (Unpublished Master Dissertation) , Konya 2008, p: 28-105.
Islamic Aesthetics, or Beauty, according to Islam

First and foremost, Islam should be perceived as a religion of “indivisible oneness” that accepts and realizes the existence of a single, unique, monotheistic God, the creator of the universe and all within it. In this regard, the culture and civilization of Islam have been built away from polytheistic societies, pagan cultures and idolater tribes, and has always emphasized the oneness of Allah (God), banning any artistic reproduction of his image. Human, semi-human and animal figures, paintings or sculptures created as art by the polytheistic or pagan cultures, that is the understanding of expressing the material again with a material understanding and shapes, have been excluded and shunned by Muslim artists since the first days of Islam. Although in Islamic culture, which has declared war against idol worshipping, and has harshly reacted against paintings and imagery since the times of Asr-ı Saadet, in other words when Prophet Mohammad was alive, paintings and sculpture have more recently been accepted, and the Muslim artist has chosen the path to abstract, not the concrete. According to such an artist, what really matters is not the form, but the essence, not the body but the soul, not the material but the meaning. Determining and analyzing the differences between realism, perspective-based Western paintings, versus the abstraction-based art of the Islamic miniature that proceeds from the material to the meaning, is both interesting and enlightening. Indeed nakkaş (the painter, or in today’s words, the miniaturist) has always avoided and refrained from the naked truth; he has not depicted the human, the world and objects with their real dimensions. This preference is directly related to Islam’s conceptualization of the world:

“According to Islam, this world is just an imagination; its purpose is to prepare us for the afterlife. The objective of the nakkaş, who fulfills the articles of faith and thus finds peace, is to implicate the exquisite taste of the eternal life he yearns with bright, cheerful colors that make you feel they have been compiled from somewhere beyond this world. Therefore, the nakkaş never intends to spoil our enjoyment with shadows, depth and volume that reminds us of the mortal world. ” (Yetkin, 1953: 34)

Islamic artists who wanted to avoid icons and therefore, imagery and sculpture opted to pursue calligraphy and writing; in other words the word as the most suitable medium for him; thus, a unique “hüsni hat” (calligraphy) tradition; written civilization like nothing else in the world has emerged. As a divine message invalidating and incapacitating all poetry and poets before itself, the Quran, the eternal miracle of Islam, realized its first and most effective move on the Arab nation who demanded and were devoted to poetry and delicate and beautiful words; while itself was not poetry has reached to the highest levels of poetic and miraculous expression (Hence in certain verses Allah has pointed out the unique and unreachable qualities of the Quran). What we are trying to emphasize here is that Islam, which tries to avoid depiction, form generation and the blessing of shapes, has inclined more towards arts that would not violate and offend conditions restrained by İlahi Kelam (the Divine Word) and Hadis-i Şerif (Hadiths).

Of course, the refinement and sublimation of the Eastern-Islamic poetry cannot be solely attributed to the lack-of-development of the plastic arts such as painting and sculpture. However, in the hands of Islamic artists who place a special value and honor to words and poetry, the language has been bent, twisted and tamed as if it were a plastic object.

And what has been achieved with language is not so different from the miniature.

Whereas, when weaving his poetry by observing the universe and mankind, the Islamic poet is not different from a nakkaş or even an architect, because no Muslim artist creates a new world or an alternative world to the existing one. What he does is not building or fictionalizing a new, a brand new world, but recognizing the perfect order and aesthetics of this world, and all those in it, pleasantly singing a chant in celebration of them. (It is an interesting that the word “sanat” (art) in Arabic to
mean “san’a,” in other words to create, and that the Iranian poet, Kemal-i İsfahânî’ was better known as “hallâk-i meânî” (creator of meanings). In the foundation of Islamic aesthetics, there is an admiration of the work of the one and only Creator, who is the creator of all from nothing, who has no equivalent, partner, or before and after. This “bewilderment” has enabled artists to refine a perfect manner, and to achieve grace. Likewise the nakkaş or the music composer, or the artist of paper marbling create works not for the human, but for Allah and present it to Him. It should be remembered that at the same time all arts are linked in a manner reminding the master-apprentice, mentor-dervish relationship with notions of decency and good-upbringing. On this, Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar’s comment that; “Our grandfathers were not building, they were worshipping” is remarkable. (Tanpınar, 2002: 37)

We had recorded above that the stance of Islamic poets towards life and human beings is similar to performers of other arts. All dimensions of a similar “abstraction” are present in classical Turkish poetry (14.-19. Century), which was commenced under the strong influence of Arabic and Farsi, but which ultimately created its own language and style. Poets have never depicted a part of nature, or a human being with its actual shapes, dimensions and appearances, but always steered away from the concrete to the abstract. So much so, that in Ottoman Diwan poetry the age, profession, and even the gender of the “maşuk”, the lover is questionable. It should always be noted that the lover named, praised or humiliated in his presence in a verse, can be Allah, the Prophet, a Sultan, a relative of the poet, or one of the Pashas of that period. After all, the success of the poem is directly related to the tension created by this uncertainty. Like all other medieval literature, Ottoman Diwan poetry is also based on simile, symbolism, metaphor, or allegories; it is essential to ascribe more meaning to fewer words, to say, to refer to, or even to hide more than one thing within one word.

In Ottoman Diwan poetry, which tries to stay as remote as possible from concrete expressions and naked truths, the decisiveness of Islamic Sufism, which can be expressed as: “Islam’s aesthetic and esoteric interpretation and face” is in question. Islamic Sufism is based on “vahdet-i vücud,” in other words a philosophy of “oneness of being”. Accordingly, no persons or objects claim that there is anyone or anything beyond the Sole creator; Allah. All existence except the existence of Allah is based on cause and effect. And since the only reality, of which the cause and effect is the same, and who requires no other being to be himself is Allah, it is not possible to accept any other “existence” than Him. The expression “Lâ-mevcude illallâh” in Islamic Sufism means exactly this. In this circumstance, in other words, no one other than Allah can manifest or claim a real existence, it makes no sense to be attached to* mortal, “fictitious” people, or to subjects that require the existence of something else to exist. Therefore, there are two types of love in Ottoman Diwan poetry and in the Islamic Sufism perception style that provide its color; “metaphorical” and “real”. Since “mecaz” (metaphor) means “the path taken,” it is a small, but obligatory stage of the path to reality. In either case, the actual and essential absolute reality is Allah. This viewpoint is also determinative in the poet’s regard of the world and mankind. Mankind is valuable; he is “eşref-i mahlukat” (the most honorable living creature), but it is not before or beyond Hâlık (the Creator). If that is the case, mankind is only honorable and gracious because of his proximity to and relation with Allah. Therefore, as in the miniature, it is also futile in poetry to bless humans or humanity. What needs to be done is to abstract human beings from material shapes, to isolate them and to sing the meaning of Him; because in this mortal universe mankind is not related to Allah with materially, but in its meaning. (Redhouse, 1978: 1744)

It is widely argued that the most successfully depicted and manifested field of Islamic aesthetics and Islamic artists is “Ottoman Diwan poetry”. In the verses of Ottoman Diwan poets laden with metaphors, figures of speech, similes, etc. regarding the universe and abstract concepts, some of the most aesthetic examples of Muslim sensitivity, compassion and attention are hidden. So who
is the lover and the beloved of Ottoman Diwan poetry; in other words, who is the object, and what is the subject? Islamic aesthetics can only be truly comprehended by answering and reproducing these questions.

In a more scientific paraphrasing; the poet of Classical Turkish Poetry is the “âşık” (lover) in the most extensive, explicit and accurate meaning of the word. This state of being in “âşk” (in love) (we do not say “feeling” here, since love, beyond feelings, senses and other temporary heartfelt situations presents a more serious and permanent composition), which is not mentioned in the Quran, therefore denied, deemed as an illness, even a perversion by language scholars, (Uludağ, 1991: 14) means everything for the poet of Islamic Sufism. It is the only reality. Each Ottoman Diwan poet claims that he is the most real and loyal; furthermore, that he is the only lover. In this type of poetry, there is only one beloved, but many lovers. Just as an entourage resembling an impassible wall surrounds a sultan or statesmen; there is an obstacle consisting of hundreds or thousands of people surrounding this imaginary lover, which, in the literature of this type of poetry, is called the “rakib” (the rival). This rival is in everyone and everything, except for the lover and the beloved. The friends of the poet, his nanny, the dogs in his neighborhood, even his shadow are rivals. There is love with a lover, beloved and rivals, but neither the nature of this love, nor the identity or the gender of the lover is clear. The Islamic poet is concerned not with the body, material incarnation, object and flesh, but in love and passion for the soul, the heart and meaning. This is why Fuzûlî says;

*Opt to find solace in its vision; heart does not yearn to visâl (rejoin)*

For the one in love; he does not envision the lover anywhere but in his heart and rejects visâl (rejoining), which is considered to be the murderer of love, intentionally and willingly. The poet refrains from all humanly drawings, implications and expressions so as to carry the maşuk (lover) from the matter to the meaning. By this was the material being of the lover becomes ambiguous, as well as its gender. Herewith the lover can be any other woman, or any other man, a sultan or even the Prophet. Let’s support our assumption with an example from Fuzûlî’s immortal piece of poetry, the Water Eulogy:

*O friends! If I perish yearning to kiss (his/her) hand,*

*Make a jug from my dust and serve water to the lover with that.*

*If it was not known that this couplet was taken from a naat (poems praising the Prophet) written for the Prophet, the lover mentioned here might have been considered as any other woman.*

*The manner in which the lover was portrayed in the Ottoman Diwan poetry and its elements of similes and metaphors have been ridiculed quite harshly and in some instances, somewhat unfairly by the 19 century poets where mind instead of the heart, and scientific experience instead of the divine inspiration started to gain dominance. Led by Namık Kemal, the arguments of the intellectuals in this group are focused on Diwan poets’ centuries-long adulation of a lover who bears no resemblance to a human being, moreover resembling a “freak”. From a straight, intentional and superficial perspective, it is certain that a lover in the Ottoman Diwan poetry with the thin waist (like a strand of hair), small mouth (like a dot), sharp dimples (like a sword) eyebrows like a bow, eyelashes like arrows resembles not a graceful human being but a trans-human or a nonhuman creature. However, it is not only a poetic and psychological, but also a social obligation to not to associate or resemble this person whom the poet professes his love to with any human being; as during that period it was incomprehensible for a poet to write a poem to a woman whom the society might have identified or detected. Yet the main issue is much more serious and much more related to*
our subject matter. The point that needs to be emphasized here is the fact that “abstraction” is essential in poetry as in any other Islamic art. In other words, what needs to be emphasized is not the material being of the lover, but its meaning, because the quest and the journey keeps one vigilant. Like Fuzûlî said “the cure to this suffering is actually what kills it” because “love without visal” (rejoining) is the epitome of the cure itself. Like the cleansing quality of the fire, pain also has a maturing quality to it. Therefore, a different tableau of lover, loved one and “hûsn” (absolute beauty), where a quasi-rejoining is yearned for, targeted, however when approached consciously rejected, emerges in Classical Turkish poetry. In Şeyh Gâlib’s work called Hüsn ü Aşk (The Beauty of Love), it should be remembered that Love is a journey to reach to the “land of heart”, that is the hûsn, on a sea of fire in ships made from candles. Coincidentally, in mythology, Odysseus’s mythical journey to Ithaca is also a tale of purification, evolving and maturation.

The situation is the same in other Islamic arts such as calligraphy, paper marbling, gilding, etc. A constant abstraction and escape from realism is also in question in these art forms as well. Because, concrete and solid truth idles the imagination; as a matter of fact it abrogates it completely. Semi or half objects, implied truths on the other hand, stimulate and engage the brain and the soul. This engagement is an obligatory stage, a path to the main privilege.

Finally it is important to point out that in Islam, especially in Turkish-Islamic music and architecture the same unity of existence viewpoint, that is instead of the human, glorification and laudation of the divine is in question. Stemming from understanding and sensitivity, a lightness, an ethereality and a divinity emerges in the music. Architecture, especially if it is religious architecture, is completely an individual field of research and study. By no means competing with nature, not converting or destroying it, contrariwise in the greater sense searching to capture a harmony with nature, that is Allah’s most accomplished work, obeying Allah’s rules and trying to adhere with the order He instigated, for the Turkish-Islamic architecture stone marble and wood, like language, pen and musical notes, are tools used to reach Allah.

Here the issue is, with the consideration of the Hadith “Allah is the beauty, He loves the beautiful”, steering towards the beautiful but always knowing that the real beauty is Allah and it is from Allah. In Islamic aesthetics the genuine beauty is Allah. In Islamic faith it is believed that Allah has “99 Beautiful Names” (Esmâü’l-Hûsnâ). Although just the name “hûsnâ”, meaning “beautiful” is sufficient to summarize the point perfectly, “El-Cemîl” (the most beautiful one, the source of all the beauty) being one of the 99 Beautiful Names is quite a striking reality. In summary, whatever the medium is all Islamic art forms are based on the same aesthetics, and the same depiction of the universe and the same concern. Sole Existence is Allah, the essence is Allah, He is the source of beauty, in all the works created, Allah and His masterwork the universe will be glorified and anything which may drive a person away from Allah will be rejected.

Modernism and Aesthetics / Aesthetics of Modernism

Meydan Larousse defines the lexical meaning of the word modern as “applicable to the present time, to the present age, or relatively to a recent period, appropriate to the present age, new” (Larousse: 66) and René Guénon simply describes modern as “the movement foe of tradition” (Guénon, 1990: 229)

On the other hand modernization derived from the word modern is according to the analytical approach “a universal process of change in society, the entirety of these processes”; according to the historicist approach “in Post-Renaissance and Post-Reform period in Europe, secularization process and the birth of capitalism”; and according to another approach “the aggregation of a series of plans and polices consciously implemented to change a society towards societies, which are viewed as
being more developed in some certain prospects by the leaders and the elite of some developing counties”.

The word modern and what it associates carried different meanings from society to society and even from century to century within the same society. While for some societies the word is used to denote the last stage reached from the past to the future or the near ages, a stage of social and national development; for other societies the meaning covers persons, formations and movements which are untraditional, ostracizing the tradition, or standing against traditions. The concept of the modern in addition to being a word comprising a life style, a system of values, a preference or a stance against life, has also been used as an adjective regarding art works. Therefore, modern literature, modern architecture or modern painting phrases readily came into circulation.

In Turkish and in Turkey, the word modern is generally used for works, period and persons who and which went beyond the traditional lines, ostracized tradition, or who took a stance completely opposite to it, in other words conformed with the third part of Smith’s description cited above. Westernization movements that accelerated after Tanzimat but which had backgrounds in older days have been characterized as “modern” movements and hence the literature emerged after 1850’s, have been labeled as modern literature. In this manner, all innovative movements were expressed as modern, or modernism. Expressly, modernism in Turkey in general ended up corresponding to holding up the West as an example, and Western understanding and stance, in short, Westernization.

Modernism, according to one understanding, is derived or reproduced from the word “modu” (today). Therefore, everything applicable to the present time, appropriate to the aesthetical and intellectual understanding of the present time is modern according to this information. The word “asrî” (contemporary) we saw used for the novels of Peyami Safa and Reşat Nuri, was replaced with the word modern. In this meaning modern is used for the ones which are applicable to the century of Westernization. In other words, everything and every person concurring with the movement of the century is modern. However, if post-modernism is being discussed today, we have to accept the fact that modern, or modernism has been surpassed, and that these concepts have been moved beyond. Still it does not seem possible to differentiate concepts like tradition-modern-post-modern from each other with bold lines. While tradition as a concept owes itself to modern and modernism, to be discussed, as a matter of fact, while the modern is a concept by itself, the modern person and modern movements in all are attached and connected in a way to the tradition. Similarly post-modernism reveals itself as a modernism-centered movement starting with its name. Despite the fact that post-modernism judges the modern, according to one understanding it is one move ahead of modernism.

While discussing these concepts, another bracket that should be opened is the fact that the meaning of the words modern and modernist are totally different from each other in actuality. Modern, is a person, or a society who, and which accepted all its perspectives and personalized all its virtues without any pressure, enforcement or imposition. Being modern is the expression of knowing modern exactly and accepting it in every aspect. However, modernist is the one pursuing the essence of the modern and he is the one who is in the effort of knowing, understanding and accepting it. Here, there is a difference as in a distinction of a phase, reaching to a destination or still being on the way. Therefore, as it is in Turkey, a person or a country who and which choose the West and the Western values as a target is not modern, but modernist. At this point in Turkey, it is necessary to state that all kinds of movements in the country are not modern, but modernist.

---

movements. Another aspect of the case is the fact that concerning the current situation of the world, not only Europe, but all eastern societies are modern in a way. Because it is impossible for the people to escape from the age we live in or to be out of it. Orhan Pamuk, in an interview published at a later time states that “All of us are a part of the modern this way or that way”. (Pamuk, 1995: 32) According to this point of view, since they live in the modern times everybody is modern, but not modernist.

Another meaning of the word in Turkish it denotes “civilizing”. Modernism in Turkish at the same time corresponds to being civilized. This concept is rather related to technological advancements and equipment and objects which are the products of these developments. Usages such as modern household appliances, modern weapons, etc. are examples of this. However, this usage, in other words ascribing a meaning to the word in this manner, that is equating being civilized and being modern together is inconsiderate, inaccurate and even precarious. Because civilization expresses an order of beliefs and morals, (Özakpınar, 2009: 42) it indicates a stage. A Chinese, an Indian or an Anatolian civilization can easily be cited. Hence today it became clear that civilization and the West or Westernization cannot be considered as the same.

As is evident, like the tradition, the concept of modern too, can have more than one meaning, which may conflict or vary vis-à-vis other people and their stances against life, their beliefs and their ideologies. While the same word can be used to denote, for instance comfortable and new equipment in the daily life, it is also being used as a term or as a sense of art or as an art movement, referred many times by different disciplines. In the same time a person who has chosen Europe, the European life style and its system of values as an example and purpose can be modern with every type of demeanor and behavior from clothing to interior decoration, and to the manner in which they live. The word modern and its derivatives used more with this meaning, somewhat imprecisely and randomly in Turkey, present an erratic structure as emphasized.

Modern art first and foremost, is an art bringing the human, the individual and in a broader sense “the now” to the forefront. Its first foundations hinging upon Renaissance and Reform movements, which are essential in modernism and can be taken back as far as the times when the rule of the Church, which designed the states and the lives of the societies for centuries was terminated, the dominance of now or today over tradition and the preferences of humankind over the rules of God. In this circumstance a new window was opened in front of the European and later in front of the people of other geographies; and instead of the persons who received their references from religion, religious books or priests, an actionist type emerged who wanted to perceive and redesign the universe from scratch and who excluded religion in this process. The new human, who learned the source and the nature of almost everything by the virtue of technological advancements, and who was about to win his battle against the nature, started to develop a new aesthetics. With this new aesthetics Ancient Greek, which was ostracized, forgotten, or made to be forgotten was rediscovered and the human-centered viewpoint of Ancient Greece where even its gods were presented in the shape of humans became the inspiration to this new movement. Hence, the aesthetics of modernism are based on this humanist foundation.

However, the excitement of this new life, new world, and new human did not last long and thus this modernist movement, which had gained its strength from the technical and technology, soon became some sort of a disappointment. Technology produced by the new mankind by the means of cutting out and blocking out God from the mind and the equation, took the very man who produced himself captive, and furthermore caused mass deaths and massacres with the weapons it had built. After witnessing the bankruptcy of the several centuries-long optimistic efforts of philosophers and artists of the Enlightenment age, and after realizing that he came to a dead-end, mankind at the beginning of the 20th century departed towards protest movements such as Dadaism, surrealism and
post-modernism, and since he became dismayed by the exposed face of the life, has generated a new abstract, non-figurative art form. This was also an expression of a new search for freedom:

“First impressionist painters departed from the traditional and naturalist art and by refusing the artist to be attached to a particular subject matter, they set “the color and the shape free.” ......... Arising just before the 1914 war, rapid development of the abstract painting assertively discarded modern art from traditionalist, naturalist and academic arts. For that reason abstract art name has been given to the modern art as tradition in general.” (Muller, 1972: 13)

What modernism brought to humankind, or rather in a more accurate expression, what it took away from him has constantly increased the objections and insurrections of intellectuals and artists alike. After facing massacres and tragedies starting from the beginning of the 20th century, but more so after the Second World War, what modernism exposed the world to clearly came to light. Thus, many protest and avant-garde movements which ostracized modernism, modern consciousness and modern philosophy and arts came to realization. Since these movements and their objection to modernism have exceed the limits of this study, we put the matter to a rest here, and prefer to question the reflections of modern aesthetics and modern arts on Turkish poetry.

On Modern Turkish Poetry, or the Modernism of Turkish Poetry

Kenan Akyüz, one of the most distinguished scholars of Post-Tanzimat (1839) Turkish Literature, did not shy from naming his work that investigates Turkish Literature between 1860 and 1923 "The Outlines of Modern Turkish Literature. (Akyüz, 1995: 270) However, it is only possible to talk about modern literature through modern works. In that respect, post-1850 Turkish literature can only be considered 'modern' in that it sometimes deviates from the traditional line. And that deviation is relative too, since the poets and authors who produced in the second half of the 19th century are half-rooted in tradition. This duality manifests itself in the language of poems as much as in their form in the early years. The early authors and poets of the new period in literature have gone through the difficulties of creating a new literature using old language and forms. The novelties or changes in the language are very important in understanding the qualities of the momentum of the modernization of Turkish poetry. Şerif Aktaş says the following concerning this point in our study:

"Islam is central to the values that organize life in the Ottoman Empire. Literary Aesthetics and literary life form according to the possibilities, wishes and understanding of the cultural circle that is created around this religion. Thinking about language outside the cultural circle of the society it belongs to is just an illusion."3

Abdulhak Hamit, and the Intermediary Generation and Servet-i Fünun, people who wrote with the courage that he imparted them were obviously outside the scope of traditional structures and discourses. However, this is not enough to consider their works "modern". As stated above, most of these persons and groups were only partially outside of tradition. First of all, language, which is the soul of a literary work is an instrument that reaches out from tradition, past and culture.

Modernism is based on the individual, and the individual's freedom and uniqueness. Individuality in literature manifests itself as an author who writes without assuming the mantle of a representative, mentor or guide, and who wants not a congregation who expects to be educated and illuminated, but an individual who wishes to discuss, think and question. A modern writer says "I" instead of "we" and speaks to a reader who has his own assumptions, denials, attitudes and stances; not to a group. Orhan Pamuk states that, if we approach the subject in this manner, even Ahmet

---

Hamdi Tanpınar is not "modern" in at least many of his works. In that respect, it becomes impossible to talk about this kind of modernism and modern literature for a very long period of our literary history. However, this may not be a deficit in those who wrote in that period, but an obligation. It is normal for an author who feels responsible for what happens, for political and cultural deformation to put aside individualism and dedicate his pen to the society. As being modern is not an unquestionable gauge of the success of a work, not being modern is also not a quality that indicates failure and low value.

With regard to modernism, we have to consider the Servet-i Fünun people as an exception in the early periods of the New Turkish Literature. Because, they made a bolder and sharper move than the three generations before them (Tanzimat 1st Generation, Tanzimat 2nd Generation, Intermediary Generation), and even literary groups that came 50 years later. They gave the existing language a brand new appearance since they couldn't invent a new language; they attributed new meanings to words, made very striking and unexpected associations with words, and left "meaning" to the reader just like modern art wants to do.

If we look back and examine the trio that is considered the first generation of New Turkish Literature, Şinasi, Ziya Paşa and Namık Kemal, we observe that almost all the works of these three poets contain statements that reject tradition and traditional thought, thus all kinds of traditional form and language. Şinasi, after going to France as a student and being exposed to new works, new ideas and people who represent the new thought, started looking at the world with a new set of eyes; began questioning and forcing the belief systems before him, introduced new concepts to Turkish poetry or associated old terms and concepts with brand new meanings. The facts that he called the great innovative statesman of the period, Mustafa Reshid Pasha a "prophet of civilization", called the age that he lived in the "golden age," stated that the laws that the Pasha made will put the Sultan in his place are modernist moves on their own in terms of rejecting the tradition. But maybe the most important is the statements of Şinasi concerning the identity and personality of love in poetry. In Şinasi's poetry, the centuries-old uncertainty of love finally comes to an end, and the "woman" becomes crystal clear with all her soul and physiology.

However, Ziya Pasha, although he had a completely classical upbringing, as his connection with the French language increased, as he learned more about the new life in Europe, and especially as he entered into a political struggle against the Sultan and system with Namık Kemal abroad, he would warm more and more to new ideas and contribute a previously unseen philosophical depth to Turkish poetry. What's important, what we tried and will try to emphasize through this article is that the aesthetics or poetics that the early representatives of New Turkish Literature were not outside Islam, but very different from traditional Islamic thought and art. It is because, for example, the place of the intellect in classical thought and literature is determined. Islam doesn't reject the intellect, it even holds the one with an intellect responsible for their actions, and Qur'an always orders people to use their minds but holds them off from trying to understand everything with their minds. Because, since the mind, as a thing of creation, cannot encompass the Creator, that is impossible. The mind can only understand and grasp as much as is given to it. However, Şinasi and Ziya Paşa, and Sadullah Paşa, who entered the history of literature with a long poem called the 19th Century, reflect a serious rationalism, and a concern to understand existence with the mind. Ziya Paşa always forces some boundaries in certain parts of his poem Terci'i Bend, which is thick with philosophical thoughts and.

---

4 a.g.m., p. 38ff.
5 We stated what Golden Age is above. (M. S.)
6 For the contributions of Şinasi to the renovation and modernization of Turkish literature, see: Mehmet Kaplan, “Şinasi’nin Türk Şirinde Yaptığı Yenilik”, İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Türk Dili ve Edebiyat Dergisi, Vol. 2, İstanbul 1946, p. 21-42.
struggles, although he always repents before Allah. He forces some topics, concepts or issues with mind, but in the end he feels impotent and seeks the protection of Allah.

The greatest and most influential poet of his time, Namık Kemal, also generally tries to build novelties within old forms. He aims to build the manifest, the poetics of New Turkish Literature with his various articles. Namık Kemal has his signature beneath pragmatic works that he calls "edebiyat-ı sahiha" (real literature), that address the real life and that offer solutions for various political and social problems. He is as good a theoretician as he is a good practitioner. Although this great romantic poet-author who destroys the "beautiful" and the concept of beauty of Classical Turkish Literature, who bases its measures, values, foundations on real life, real feelings and real humans deviates from the modern stance and perception because of his overly social and sentimental attitudes, it is obvious that the march of Turkish literature towards the "new" accelerated with him and his influential power and inspiration. Namık Kemal, who believes in technology, western urbanism, and "development" in its broadest sense, who was very interested in politics, and tried to establish a constitutional monarchic system in the Ottoman Empire in line with the requirements of the period, experiences serious dualities because of his extreme love and sensitivity for the History of Islam and Islam's leading figures. Namık Kemal is an intricate character who was a part of all the movements of the period such as Ottomanism, Turkism, Westernism and Islamism. His aesthetics is based on benefit and thus is very far from modern aesthetics. In addition to all these, Namık Kemal, in terms of the war he wages on tradition, traditional form and aesthetics, has an important place in the Turkish modernization history. However, this place is not a modernist position that precludes the text, that rejects extra-textual structures and institutions, and that accepts the text as the sole reality. His modernism may arise from his enmity toward tradition and his dedication to a new, technical, urban life. Otherwise, all of Namık Kemal's works contains an Islamic attitude and discourse, and Islam values the individual's conscience as much as the congregation's soul, it seeks what is beautiful, what is beneficial to humankind. And this pushes away the modern perception.

The political vein of poetry that we witnessed in the generation before suddenly weakens with Adbulhâk Hâmid, Recaizade M. Ekrem and Muallim Naci, who constitute the second generation of Tanzimat. Hâmid greatly encourages hedonists of the time with his high-voltage poetry, and movements that completely reject classical pleasure, maddening old literature enthusiasts. Hâmid writes with a freedom and courage never seen in Turkish poetry before, and values such as love, woman, death, soul, existence, non-existence and Allah obtain very different faces. His vocabulary consists of relatively heavy, intense, striking words and exhibits a structure that praises and prioritizes modern aesthetics and individualism. Hâmid rarely uses the word "we" that modernism dislikes so much and constantly rejects. Yes, he was interested in history but that history was not national, it was an "exotic" and distant history so loved by 19th century romantics. Moreover, all of his works more or less contains Islam and Ottoman themes. However, these are not addressed as the society of the period expects or wants. Additionally, we always see unexpected, incomprehensible images and discourses in Abdülhâk Hâmid's works. Summarizing, we can say that although Hâmid has an expression and attitude that deviates far from the tradition, it would not be right to expect him to be modern in an age when modernism and modern aesthetics were not completely established. In addition to all these, Hâmid is also the person who opened the curtain on the actual renovation period that we call Servet-i Fünun. Considering that the 19th Century Ottoman state bureaucracy and social

---

7 For a study of Namık Kemal's place in our modernization history, see Mehmet Devrim Topses, “Niyazi Berkes’in Türk Modernleşmesine Baksımda Namık Kemal’e Yönelik Eleştirisi”, Sosyoloji Konferansları, No: 46, İstanbul -2, p. 65-73.
life went on with a pretty conventional structure, his moves in a society that is very closed and
doubtful of novelty greatly encouraged those who came later.8

Hâmid’s close friend, Recaizade Mahmud Ekrem is also in almost the same position. Adapting a new life, wishing to dress like Europeans and placing the utmost care upon this in his private life, Ekrem is not a good poet, but a good teacher. His work, *Talim-i Edebiyat* (Literature Lessons), is the first European rhetoric book in Turkish Literature. Ekrem attempts to explain how modern literature is, and should be with examples, however his poems are weak, ineffectual and overly sentimental. His novel, *Araba Sevdası* (Car Love) is the novel that uses techniques such as mind flow and free association for the first time in Turkish literature, satirizes the foolish positions that wrong and unrooted westernization puts people in (Ekrem didn’t criticize westernization, but wrong westernization). Although Ekrem used old and traditional forms and old language in his early poems, he later lets himself flow with the novelties. Ekrem who also produced theatrical plays, a completely European form of art, is a modernist, but not modern.

The other great representative and teacher of this generation (2nd generation of Tanzimat), Muallim Naci, despite writing very beautiful poems in a new, simple language, is attached to old tastes and was considered a fortress for that taste in his period. Naci is an Eastern poet in style, tone and lifestyle.

In the history of Turkish Literature, there is a generation of authors and poets who produced works during almost 15 years between Tanzimat and Servet-i Fünun, published newspapers and magazines, attempted to combine Turkish Literature more strongly and dedicatedly with European Literature, and Prof. Dr. Mehmet Kaplan calls this generation the “Intermediary Generation.” They didn’t revolutionize literature, but with the tens of magazines they published, the Intermediary Generation contributed to the establishment of a new literature with new tastes, new feelings in their poetry and novels by creating a new literature and a new readership. They produced works between the beginning of the 1880s, and the year 1896, considered the beginning Servet-i Fünun literature, and their modernist aspects was associated with their rate of deviation from the traditional. Actually this applies to all the periods of Turkish Literature up to the 20th century.

Also known as Edebiyat-i Cedide (New Literature), Servet-i Fünun Literature is the name of a new class of local authors and poets that congregated around the magazine *Servet-i Fünun*, thus a kind of “aristocratic literature club” that emerged between 1896 and 1901. Led by Cenab Şehabeddin and Tevfik Fikret in poetry, and Halid Ziya and Mehmed Rauf in novels and stories, and laying the foundations for an individualistic literature previously unheard of, their works actually left the congregation behind, and established a poetic climate accommodating individual emotions and ideas, and the individual’s own sufferings.9 Regarding modern literature, the term “aesthetic autonomy,” used more and more recently, can be applied to Cenab Şehabeddin, one of the period’s poets. During his long life, he was always engaged with poetry and wrote thousands of poems. For Şehabeddin, literature only exists for itself. Between the debates of “art for art’s sake,” versus “art for society’s sake,” Cenab always sided with “art for art’s sake.” For him, literature is not in the service of any idea, thing, belief or ideology so this “autonomy,” this freedom are concepts very close to modernism. Cenab is also a Muslim poet, and wrote many texts concerning his belief outside his poems, but his poetics and aesthetics contain Europe, rather than Islam. The aesthetics of Cenab, and generally Servet-i Fünun has Europe as its basis. This is reflected in the woman, nature and divine issues that

---

8 For the most striking and original information on Hâmid’s life, personality and works see Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, XIX. Asr Türk Edebiyat Tarihi, Yapı Kredi Yay., İstanbul 2006, p. 449-528.
9 Although we focus on poetry in this article, we should also note that Halid Ziya produced truly modern novels with his works called *Aşk-i Memnu* and *Mavi ve Siyah*. So much so that Halid Ziya is considered “the father of modern Turkish novel” in the history of Turkish Literature. Even novelist who produced novels 100 years after him, call him a master.
are his poetry's objects. Servet-i Fünun's references are from the West, and Western. Issues such as what the poem is, its aims, subject and object are always discussed according to Western sources in Servet-i Fünun.

After the Servet-i Fünun period closed in 1901, a short interruption occurs in terms of novelties in Turkish poetry, but before long, in 1909, another society that perpetuates Servet-i Fünun in many respects emerge: Fecr-i Âti. (The Dawn of Future). The group that emerges with a manifesto and qualifies poetry as "individual and honorable" to gain an important momentum towards pure poetry, and one of its members, Ahmet Haşim, achieves great success in terms of modern aesthetics. Haşim is inspired only by the poem itself and removes ideas, ideologies and beliefs from poetry. Influenced by symbolists such as Henri de Regnier, Verhaeren and Rodenbach, Islam is not a determinant in Haşim's aesthetics. Like all symbolists, Haşim is interested in inspiration, the mysterious, the unseen beyond the seen, and also reflects mysticism. Actually, Haşim wrote a text poeticizing a time determined by Islam, called "Müşlûman Saati" (Muslim Time/Clock) and for him, nature and what it makes the individual feel are essential but that nature, is not a nature that takes him to Allah. But the Qur'an presents the ground, the heavens, the universe with all its cosmography, as a sign, a proof of Allah.10

Yahya Kemal, who was the greatest founders of Modern Turkish poetry at the beginning of the 20th century, took most of his references from the Ottomans, the taste and aesthetics of Ottoman centuries, although the language, technique and structure of his poetry opened new horizons. He is thus, considered a kind of neo-classicist. Yahya Kemal organized the Turkish poetic language that became increasingly simplified for 50 years before him and approached the language of the streets (Servet-i Fünun poets disturbed this chronology, reversed the simplification, and wrote with old and heavy words with high musicality), could establish a simple yet noble linguistic mechanism. Yahya Kemal was a new, original poet in terms of feeling and defining the poetry, and his technical references were mostly French poets. Feeding on the poetry of great poets such as Verlaine, Baudelaire, Verhaeren, Rimabud, Jose Maria de Heredia, Henri de Regnier and Malharbe, Yahya Kemal handled poetry more in terms of music rather than in terms of meaning, didn't abandon verses and meaning, and especially aruz, the Oriental meter, but didn't sacrifice his poetry to technique or meaning. The poet who had a relatively modern attitude in terms of language, technique, structure and poetic architecture, obtained his semantic material largely from history and tradition. For him, the most individualistic issues such as nature, woman and even death are sociological and national. Nature -for example Istanbul, with Bosporus and its landscape- is beautiful because it is borrowed from our ancestors and handled with a national soul and taste for centuries; woman, because it reflects the Turkish soul and language; and death, because it is in the country. All these mean deviating from modernism that prioritizes individualism, that rejects history and historical experience, that doesn't accept any given system that is always skeptical, critical, and even denialist. Yahya Kemal, who has an exceptional memory and considers a person alive, only as long as he can imagine, is a modern in terms of poetic technique and structure, but anti-modern in terms of the themes of his poems and the way he handles these themes. His aesthetics is an aesthetics that is inspired by the Orient and an Ottoman-style Islam, but formed with a modern technique as stated above. One of the two founders of Modern Turkish Poetry, Yahya Kemal, lived until 1958, and did write as long as he lived. However, large breaks in Turkish political history occurred until 1958, and that was reflected in poetry. Now, with a general outlook, we will examine these periods and their conception of aesthetics.

The Period between 1911 and 1923

This was the period when Turkish literature gained a completely "nationalist-idealist" character. The New Language movement initiated by Ömer Syefeddin and his friends allowed the "simplicity in language," long sought with individual efforts until then to become more conscious, systematic and collective. Experiences such as the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913, World War I between 1914 and 1918, the Turkish Independence War between 1919 and 1922, dragged the poets to a language that the people could understand, and to a literature addressing the people, and that aimed to encourage, motivate and enlighten them. Thus, the poetry of this period should be considered and examined as a poetry inspired by Islamism and Turkism. Approaching this national, sensitive poetry in terms of "aesthetics" is futile, and even wrong.

The Aesthetic Situation and Position of Turkish Poetry between 1923 and 1950

Actually, the Turkish literature in the Republican Era is considered to start in 1923, the year in which the Ottoman State fell and the Turkish Republic was founded, and the first period is held to continue until 1940. The next period is between 1940 and 1960, and the next is considered to be between 1960 and 1980. The period after 1980 is considered contemporary today. However, we wish to continue with a period classification based on 1950, that signifies the "transition to a multiple party democracy," and which is vital in Turkish political history. It is because the real modernization movements took place after 1950.

As stated above, the period between 1919 and 1922 was a period when the Turkish people fought for their existence and honor. Turkish people who did not recognize the Ottoman rule that was forced to sign a slavery agreement in Sèvres following World War I, started a war of independence under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal and won this war at the end of 1922, the invaders were chased out from the country, and finally on October 29, 1923, the Republic was declared and a new state born from the ashes of the old was founded. This period of war, the efforts to establish the foundations of the new state and introducing new principles to the public and making them adopt these principles naturally reflected on literature. Although controversial, nationalist literature emerged in the period following 1923, and Anatolia became almost the sole theme of it. Although in contrast to idealist tendencies that ignored beauty such as Yedi Meş'aleciler (The Seven Torchbearers), movements that emphasized the aesthetic structure of poetry were observed, no really major change was felt until 1940. In 1940, a "Garip" ("Strange") movement began with the leadership of Orhan Veli. The Garip poets were very serious in their objection to the music-based conceptions of Haşim and Yahya Kemal that held the poem above all else. They collect the language of the poem from the street; they chase the sultanate, elegance, nobility and kindness from the poetry. They try to establish a literature that belongs to everyone, that doesn't allow any large and noble cause to infiltrate, that completely focuses on living, and taking pleasure from life, that reflects the feelings of the "small man". This is the determinant of their aesthetics. Born and raised in war, moreover, starting to write poems under the bombs of World War II that spilled blood all over the world, this generation loathes, or at least distances itself from life, history, technology, religion, philosophy and thousands of years of human experience. With its structure featuring irony, parody, satire, humor, rejecting consciousness and adopting surrealism, the aesthetics of this poetry is not very far from modern aesthetics. The other poets of the period those lie beyond the Garip movement such as Cahit Sıtkı, Ahmet Muhip Dranas, and the Futurist who adopted the communist ideology, Nazım Hikmet, are not so different in this regard.

Necip Fazıl, who continued to produce his works as a great ideological activist in this period is a real exception. In his early years, Necip Fazıl wrote verses as bohemian as Baudelaire, filled with fears, anxieties and obsessions, and gained an Islamic perception after 1935. In his poetry written in
simple Turkish and the oldest meter of Turkish poetry, the syllable meter, Islam is the determinant. In one of his poems, Necip Fazıl defines art as "the search for Allah," and the rest as "child's play," and only feeds on Turkish-Islam sources after this period for his aesthetics.

The Actual Starting Point of Modern Poetry: The Second New and Later

How and when the Second New movement emerged, who struck the first spark, who constituted its initial members, and even if it still exists are controversial issues, but nonetheless, this is a movement that completely embodies modern aesthetics in Turkish poetry. (Since Garip movement is considered the First New, the movement that started producing its first products after 1955 was called Second New. However, all the generations since 1850 had a tendency and movement towards the new.) Considered to have begun with the poetic movements of Oktay Rifat (one of the Garip poets), but actually constituted by İlhan Berk, Turgut Uyar, Edip Cansever, Cemal Süreya, Sezai Karakoç, Ece Ayhan and Ülkü Tamer, the Second New Movement fed on European existentialist philosophers and authors such as J. P. Sartre and Heidegger, again from existentialist and cubist painters, especially surrealist poets and novelists, and the works of Dadaists who produced in the second half of the 20th century.

In the era of the Democrat Party that ended the single-party system in the 1950 elections, migration from villages to cities accelerated, twisted and non-systematic urbanization increased, Turkey was increasingly engaged to the capitalist system, and thus the inconsistencies increased and the literature gained a protesting attitude. Accused by Socialist - Realist poets such as Atilla İlhan for being disconnected from society, the Second New poets who were actually quite populist adopted a modernist discourse. In this discourse, the poem was no longer the property of everyone, and became opaque to people who did not have knowledge about mythology, history, philosophy, sociology and even theology (we should note the verses of Second New poets apart from Sezai Karakoç that quoted the Old and New Testaments), who were unprepared before the poem, who expected meaning. To a critic saying that "your poetry is much closed," Edip Cansever replied meaningfully by saying, "actually it is yourself who is closed to poetry." This poetry abandoned the traditional discourse and the attitude that consecrated all kinds of meanings defined by history, religion and all meta-narratives. What the Second New poets, who fed on the atonal music of the period and the surrealist painting and cinema objected and even became enemies with was "order." Since language is part of the order, its transmitter, and even the builder and in a sense both its producer and product, the Second New breaks the language with a modernist approach. The "orderly" syntax of Turkish is upended. All these are brought by the modern condition, perception and aesthetics. This poetry is an abstract, civilian, protestant and denialist poetry. And it is considered modern with these aspects.

The only poet inspired by Islam among the Second New poets was Sezai Karakoç. Karakoç summarizes his poetics and even his political-literary attitude with the concept "resurrection," and seeks the salvation of Turkey, of the Eastern geography and even of humanity in "resurrection" in this difficult period when everything is entangled, blurred, vaporized, and when humanity got stuck in a dead end. With a modern language and technique reminiscent of Yahya Kemal, he builds a poetry that takes its power and references from the past. In a sense, the pole of the conservative Turkish intellectuals who met again and made peace with their past after 1980, Sezai Karakoç's attitude towards poetry and his technique is modern, but his poetry is anti-modernist. Beautiful, and thus aesthetics for Karakoç is Islam, and Islamic.

It may be argued that the Second New poetry movement still continues to this day. Although humanity has seen the deficits and dead-ends of modernism, and entered post-modernist era, the poets reaching to our day from the Second New movement, adopted and perpetuated the protestant
and civilian attitudes of this poetry movement. Beyond all these, the Second New movement that used all the gains of humanity with complete freedom, that enriched its poetry with the narrative and discourses of mythology, epics, philosophy and theology, are still lighting the way for contemporary poets who distanced themselves from mono-centrism, adopted variability, and who are not satisfied with the scientific, rationalist and determinist structure of modernism. However, as Turkey donned a politically conservative-spiritualist mantle at the beginning of 21st century, poets were influenced as much as the rest of the society. Islamic sources were revitalized, and thus, an obligatorily modern but conservative class of poets that denied modernism emerged.

Conclusion

The foundations of Islamic aesthetics were laid by Mohammad the Prophet of Islam with the declaration of Islam, and the literature of primarily Arabs, Iranians and Turks adopted an Islamic face in a short while. Arabic, Persian and Turkish literatures created works that are the products of a common alphabet, a common technique, value system and aesthetics for centuries as a result of the same assumptions and perceptions.

This study investigated the basis of Islamic aesthetics that began after the adoption of Islam by Turks, that was slowly distanced from yet never totally abandoned after the 19th century, compared the concept of art defined by Islam and the modern approach, and finally examined the aesthetical condition of Turkish literature that is modern, or at least attempts to be modern.

The greatest emphasis of Islam was "unity," the unity, total domination, uniqueness of Allah, and Allah's total exemption from any partnership. Thus, the Islamic arts didn't permit any discourse that may harm the conception of unity, and Islamic Arts always recognized and introduced Allah as the Absolute Beauty. Islamic aesthetics, and all the works based on this approach tend toward Allah. The beloved is seen as a step on the road to Allah. Nature is not praised for its beauty, but as the reflection of Allah. According to Muslim artists, the world is not a place to design, to change, to build by human hands. Because according to the Muslim artist, since the world was created by Allah, it is already beautiful and has a perfect order. The artist's function is to see and feel this perfect order and to reach Allah from this understanding. In short, everything is abstract before Allah, and Allah is the sole truth. The aesthetics of Diwan poetry that covered the period between the 13th - 14th centuries and the 19th centuries, and maintained by some poets later, were defined by those principles.

The 19th century was the period when the Westernization movements in Turkish literature accelerated, the abandonment of the absolute Islamic world began, and a religious approach based on rationalism and science took hold with the influence of philosophical movements such as positivism, rationalism and even naturalism. In this period, literature made way towards the naked and obvious truth, and an aesthetic approach based on the worldly, rather than divine, became valid. However, it was not so easy to change 1,000 years of experience, belief and assumptions; thus the new and the old, today and history always walked hand in hand. This period's aesthetics is neither Islamic, nor completely mundane. However now, it was obvious that the aesthetics of Diwan poetry was no longer relevant.

In the beginning of the 20th century, when the wars, invasions, deaths, migrations and misery increased, the poetry became more practical than aesthetic. In this period, some poets saw poetry as a form of art that has no aim other than itself, that should not enter the rule of any ideology, belief or power. However, the fast pace of life, the requirement to motivate and activate the public would force the poet to produce pragmatic works, and would create a complicated aesthetic approach determined by Islamic and nationalist perception but accelerating in line with reality.
As emphasized in the relevant places in the article, in the period after 1923 when the foundations of a new state were laid, movements of development and union with the public sped up, although Islam was not a determinant but the modern aesthetics that was adopted in Europe could not totally infiltrate in Turkey. Additionally, in the period after 1950, contacts with Europe increased and the breath of modernism reached Turkey. Turkish poets born in wars, witnessed great destruction, who distanced themselves from the society and socialism, who saw what capitalism, urbanization and exploitation, who became more and more lonely, tended towards protestant movements just like their European counterparts.

Modernism places the individual in its center, takes its power from rationalism, science and technology, that pushes the concept of God away that rejects tradition, that is querying and denialist. In that respect, all of our poets who produced after 1950 have a more or less modern aesthetic approach. These modern aesthetics is indispensable to comparatively examining the appearances of Islamic aesthetics that reigned supreme for 1,000 years, and to determining the large changes that society and the intellectuals underwent. Because the work itself is a result. What creates this result is the outlook on life, the way of understanding the world, which also determine the aesthetics.

REFERENCES


Guénon, René, (1990), *Niceliğin Egemenliği ve Çağın Alâmetleri*, (Çev: Mahmut Kanık), İst., İz Yay.


Muller, Joseph-Emile, (1972), *Modern Sanat*, (Çev: Mehmet Toprak), İstanbul, Remzi Kitabevi


Tunalı, İsmail, (1996), *Estetik*, İstanbul, Remzi Kitabevi

**Turkish Studies**  
*International Periodical for the Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic*  
*Volume 11/20 Fall 2016*


Meydan Larousse, Modern md., c. 14, s. 66.

Citation Information/Kaynakça Bilgisi