

THE CONCEPT OF EMPTINESS IN CONTEMPORARY
LANDSCAPE PAINTINGS IN TURKEY

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LANDSCAPE PAINTINGS IN TURKEY

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PLAGIARISM

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ABSTRACT

In this research, the definition and the meaning of concept of emptiness will be explored, and the relationship between the concept of nature and the concept of nature by the effect of sky, mountain, road and sea images in landscape paintings will be researched. In this process, not only landscape painting but also the changing ways of looking at the landscape are included. The aim of the thesis is to examine landscape painting in the context of the concept of emptiness by looking at major artists, groups and exhibitions from a conceptual framework. An artist working in the field of landscapes, regardless of the focus of the subject they are working on, first goes through a mental decision-making process. The artist's view of the landscape and the way they confine it within a delimited frame is subjective. Methodologically, this study is approached from two perspectives. The first is conceptual and the second is practical. Firstly, the conceptual framework on the subject was created and secondly, in line with the data obtained, the concept of emptiness and landscape painting in the course of history were examined formally, spiritually and conceptually in terms of selected painters and their works. The conclusion was that landscape paintings carry meditative elements that relax the mind in connection with the concept of emptiness and involve the viewer with the help of these elements.

Key words: Emptiness, space, landscape, nature, meditate

ÖZET

Bu arařtırmada, boşluk kavramının tanımı ve anlamları arařtırılırken, doğa kavramı ve manzara resimlerinde, gökyüzü, dağ, yol, deniz imgelerinin yarattığı etki ile boşluk kavramının ilişkisine yer verilecektir. Bu sürece, sadece manzara resmi değıl, manzaraya bakışın değıřen yönleri de dahil edilmiştir. Tezin amacı, manzara resmine boşluk kavramı bağlamında, belli başlı sanatçıların, grupların ve sergilerin kavramsal bir çerçeveden bakılarak incelenmesini kapsamaktadır. Manzara resmi alanında çalışan bir sanatçı, odaklandığı konu ne olursa olsun öncelikle zihinsel bir karar verme süreci geçirir. Sanatçının manzaraya bakışı ve manzarayı sınırlandırılmış bir çerçeve içerisine hapsedme biçimi, öznelir. Bu çalışma yöntemsel olarak iki açıdan ele alınmıştır. İlki kavramsal ikincisi ise uygulamadır. İlk olarak konuyla ilgili kavramsal çerçeve oluşturulmuş ve ikincisi elde edilen veriler doğrultusunda tarihsel süreçte boşluk kavramı ve manzara resmi seçilen ressamlar ve eserleri özelinde formal, tinsel, kavramsal olarak incelenmiştir. Manzara resimlerinin, boşluk kavramı ile bağlantılı olarak zihni rahatlatan meditatif unsurlar taşıdığı ve bu unsurlar ile izleyiciyi kendine dahil ettiğı sonucuna ulaşılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimler: Boşluk, espas, manzara, doğa, meditasyon

To my beloved family...



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	i
ÖZET	ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS	v
LIST OF FIGURES	vii
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1. Concept and Definition of Emptiness	1
CHAPTER 2 PHILOSOPHY OF EMPTINESS	3
2.1. The Concept of Emptiness in Eastern Philosophy	3
2.1.1. <i>Hinduism</i>	3
2.1.2. <i>Tao</i>	5
2.1.3. <i>Zen (C'han)</i>	7
2.1.4. <i>Islamic Sufism</i>	9
2.2. The Concept of Emptiness in Western Philosophy	12
2.2.1. <i>Ancient age in the west</i>	12
2.2.2. <i>Renaissance, humanism, and enlightenment</i>	15
2.2.3. <i>From the modern era to present</i>	17
2.2.4. <i>Present time, holistic view</i>	20
CHAPTER 3 THE CONCEPT OF EMPTINESS IN ART AND ITS AESTHETIC REFLECTIONS.....	23
3.1. Emptiness as a Concept.....	23
3.2. Emptiness as Space	32
3.3. Emptiness as Form	37
CHAPTER 4 THE CONCEPT OF EMPTINESS IN ART AND IT'S REFLECTIONS ON LANDSCAPE PAINTING	42
4.1. Landscape and Space.....	44
4.1.1. <i>Planimetric Space</i>	45
4.1.2. <i>Perspective Space</i>	46
4.1.3. <i>Volumetric Space</i>	48
4.1.4. <i>Pyramidal Space</i>	49
4.1.5. <i>Abstract and Tangible Space</i>	50
4.1.6. <i>Classical Space</i>	52

4.1.7. <i>Coincidental Space</i>	52
4.1.8. <i>Irrational Space</i>	53
4.1.9. <i>Space in Chinese Landscape Paintings</i>	54
4.2. Far East Landscape Painting and the Concept of Emptiness	56
4.3. Landscape Painting and the Concept of Emptiness in Western Art	65
CHAPTER 5 THE CONCEPT OF EMPTINESS AND LANDSCAPE PAINTING IN TURKEY	86
5.1. The History Of Landscape Painting In Turkey Through The Concept Of Emptiness	86
5.2. Contemporary Landscape Paintings and The Concept of Emptiness	102
CHAPTER 6 LANDSCAPE PAINTINGS AND THE USE OF SPACE IN FATMA SELİN ÇÖPLÜ WORKS	115
6.1. Introduction	115
6.2. Subject Concept	115
6.3. Form References	116
6.4. Color, Image, and Technique	117
6.5. Development of Landscape Painting	118
CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSION	134
REFERENCES	137

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 Empty and Full	5
Figure 2 Yin yang	6
Figure 3 Enso	8
Figure 4 Black Square.....	24
Figure 5 Black on Gray.....	25
Figure 6 White Painting.....	27
Figure 7 1952, 4'33'' / 4'33''	28
Figure 8 Spatial Concept: Expectations.....	29
Figure 9 The Garden of Earthly Delights	30
Figure 10 An innumerable Multitude which Stands before the Throne, from the Apocalypse	31
Figure 11 Untitled Anthropometry	33
Figure 12 Void Room	34
Figure 13 Descent into Limbo	35
Figure 14 Day and Night	38
Figure 15 Returning Sails Off Distant Shore.....	39
Figure 16 Auspicious Cranes.....	40
Figure 17 Marriage Feast at Cana.....	46
Figure 18 Fishermen on a Mountain Stream	47
Figure 19 Hampstead Heath with Bathers	48
Figure 20 The Madonna of the Meadow	49
Figure 21 Abstract Composition.....	51
Figure 22 Abstract Composition.....	53
Figure 23 Das Schlafzimmer des meisters es lohnt sich darin eine nacht zu verbringen	54
Figure 24 Awaiting the Ferry at the Foot of the Mountains in Summer	55
Figure 25 Returning Late From A Spring Outing.....	56
Figure 26 Awaiting Ferry	56
Figure 27 Stroll About in Spring	58
Figure 28 Five Dynasties Period.....	58
Figure 29 Autumn Colors among Streams and Mountains.....	59
Figure 30 One Thousand Li of Rivers and Mountains	60
Figure 31 One Thousand Li of Rivers and Mountains.Detail.....	60
Figure 32 Sky, Water-Mountain, Soil.....	61
Figure 33 Thirty-six Views of Mt.Fuji - Red Fuji	63
Figure 34 Thirty-six Views of Mt.Fuji	64

Figure 35 Landscape 1st century AD Mural.....	65
Figure 36 A Chapter from the Odyssey.....	66
Figure 37 Annunciation to the Blessed Virgin Mary.....	67
Figure 38 Lamentation.....	68
Figure 39 Landscape.....	69
Figure 40 Battle of Alexander at Issus.....	70
Figure 41 Coastal Scene with Cliffs	71
Figure 42 Norham Castle.....	72
Figure 43 Norham Castle, Sunrise.....	73
Figure 44 Riesengebirge	74
Figure 45 Waterloo Bridge, Sunlight Effect.....	75
Figure 46 Waterloo Bridge	76
Figure 47 Wheatfield with Crows.....	77
Figure 48 Segelboot auf dem Meer.....	78
Figure 49 Nature study on the Yellow Stagecoach.....	79
Figure 50 Autumn.....	80
Figure 51 Landscape with Five Houses.....	81
Figure 52 RheinII.....	82
Figure 53 Bahrain	83
Figure 54 Des Herbstes Runengespinst.....	84
Figure 55 Horror Vacui.....	85
Figure 56 Orman ve Geyik	88
Figure 57 Arapkir-Hezende Yolu	91
Figure 58 Şile.....	92
Figure 59 Manzara.....	94
Figure 60 Oran Yolunda Kar	95
Figure 61 Peysaj	96
Figure 62 Le Havre	97
Figure 63 Manzara.....	98
Figure 64 Denizaltı Ve Savaş Gemisi.....	99
Figure 65 Untitled.....	100
Figure 66 Tamais Dağı Üzerinde Güneş.....	101
Figure 67 Alışıldık Manzaranın Hiçliği.....	103
Figure 68 Manzara.....	104
Figure 69 Rise to the Surface.....	105
Figure 70 Sagalassos İzleri	106

Figure 71 Fortyminutes.....	107
Figure 72 Migration.....	108
Figure 73 Nadas (Fallow)	109
Figure 74 Zihin Köşesi	110
Figure 75 Öteki Kıyı.....	111
Figure 76 Geçit	112
Figure 77 Unnamed	113
Figure 78 Huzur Tek Ağaç	114
Figure 79 Trees.....	118
Figure 80 Tree Human.....	119
Figure 81 Mindscape 01	120
Figure 82 Meditate 01.....	121
Figure 83 Emptiness 01	122
Figure 84 Emptiness 02	122
Figure 85 Emptiness 03	123
Figure 86 Ofelia.....	124
Figure 87 Emptiness 04, Oil on Canvas, 90x110cm.....	125
Figure 88 Emptiness 05	126
Figure 89 Clouds.....	126
Figure 90 Cosmos	127
Figure 91 Meditate 02.....	128
Figure 92 Mindscape 02	128
Figure 93 Mountains 01.....	129
Figure 94 Mountains 02.....	130
Figure 95 Mindscape 03	131
Figure 96 Pure Nature 01.....	132
Figure 97 Pure Nature 02.....	132
Figure 98 Pure Nature 03.....	133
Figure 99 Meditate 01.....	135

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Concept and Definition of Emptiness

In this dissertation, landscape paintings will be researched and explored in the context of emptiness through the relationship between the concept of nature and the effect of sky, mountain, road, and sea images. It is believed that by enabling mutual interaction, the concept of emptiness allows us to perceive the transformation between the sky and the earth. This belief is the inspiration reflected in all landscape paintings, especially Chinese landscapes which forms a part of this research where the concept of emptiness defined in the most sublime way. Wang Wei, 1st century Chinese poet, writer and politician, quotes: "a slim brush stroke creates the structure of emptiness, a way to infinite." The concept of inspiration associates with the concept of yin and yang in the philosophy of Tao, with its occurrence, the idea of polarity (opposition) manifests itself (Sky-Earth, Mountain-Water, Far-Near, etc.) on one hand, and on the other hand, Li, that is, the internal laws or internal contours of objects, come into play. The painting, that reaches maturity with these two opposing ideas, is no longer reflecting only the external appearances of objects but reaches to the inner layers and identifies the hidden relationships along these layers as well. Through the creativity process the painter's mind and inspiration accompany the landscape painting.

In the first chapter of the study, starting from Far Eastern philosophies, Hinduism, Tao, Zen, Islam and Western Ancient Greek Philosophies, the different approaches of the concept of emptiness are researched. The course of emptiness from philosophy and physics to the laws of visual design is investigated from the earliest periods to the present. It also has been explored in the fields of philosophy and intellectual history with Antiquity, Renaissance, Humanism, Enlightenment, Modernism and Today's Holistic Approach.

In addition of using the concept of emptiness in paintings by the methods that defined as negative space and white space, its communication and definition in other visual arts and design disciplines are also discussed. Mainly, the space as an active element, such as the earth, sky, and road, used in landscape paintings was inspected, and the examples were emphasized. While examining these examples the principles of

space were reviewed and Emptiness is analyzed as a concept, space, and form through art works.

The second chapter of the research consists of the historical development of landscape painting, far eastern landscape paintings, Chinese landscapes, the relationship between emptiness and perspective in Ukio-e Japanese landscapes, and the effects of the concept of emptiness in Western painting on contemporary art. In the history of landscape painting in Turkey, when we try to interpret landscape painting specifically through the concept of emptiness in Turkey, we encounter a landscape tradition that has been intensified by the influence of Islam; the passion for nature has been reflected in miniatures since the 16th century; and in the following process, it gradually formed the first examples of canvas paintings. In the course of history, the use of landscape as a theme is analyzed in terms of technical, stylistic, and pentural development until 1940s, and from those days to the present, the works of artists in the context of the concept of emptiness and creating works that refer to emptiness within the theme of landscape are exemplified.

In this process, not only landscape painting but also the changing perspectives to the landscape are included. The aim of the thesis is to examine landscape painting in the context of the concept of emptiness by inspecting major artists, groups and exhibitions from a conceptual framework. The artist, working in the field of landscapes, first goes through a mental decision-making process regardless of the subject he is focused. His view of the landscape and the way he confines it within a delimited frame is subjective. Methodologically, this study is discussed from two perspectives. The first is conceptual and the second is practical. Firstly, the conceptual framework on the subject was created and secondly, in line with the data obtained, the concept of emptiness and landscape painting in the course of history were examined formally, spiritually and conceptually in terms of selected painters and their works.

The conclusion was that landscape paintings carry meditative elements that relax the mind in connection with the concept of emptiness. By doing so involve the viewer with the help of these elements.

CHAPTER 2

PHILOSOPHY OF EMPTINESS

In this chapter, the concept of emptiness, with different approaches in philosophy, is investigated and reviewed with references from different sources. The philosophy of emptiness is analyzed through Tao, Zen, Indian Buddhism (Tantric), Brahman, Islam, Sufism in Eastern Philosophy. By examining Western philosophy from antiquity to modernity and from modernity to the present, holistic approach, an attempt was made to create a source in connection between history, myths and arts where the concept of emptiness is used.

2.1.The Concept of Emptiness in Eastern Philosophy

Today, the concept of East and West, though examined differently in academic texts, arise a discussion platform questioning the different perspectives depending on the geographical differences. To create a text layout and a chronological progression, in this chapter, we tried to examine the reflections of eastern philosophies on art, starting with Hinduism and looking at the concepts of emptiness in Tao, Zen Buddhism and Islam through the selected philosophers.

2.1.1.Hinduism

Of all the texts of Mahayana Buddhism, the Diamond Sutra is the most profound and influential. It describes emptiness without even mentioning the word emptiness (sunyata) once. (Kaya, 2018, p.21) In Buddhism, especially philosophers like the Indian philosopher and reverend Nagarjuna, who followed the path of works like the Diamond Sutra, developed and solidified this concept. The Buddhist philosopher Nagarjuna, founder of the Madhyamaka school, argued that all things have the same nature, the same essence, and that this essence is 'emptiness'; the sharing of a common nature means that things lack a nature of their own. Every being has this nature and at the same time lacks it (Nagarjuna's paradox).

All behaviors to make sense lead to the 'same' place, every attempt to make sense bears meaning to this emptiness within this paradox; everything is emptiness. Based on ideas such as 'everything being empty' (sunya), 'nothing fully existing' (vyavahara / samvrti), which form the basis of Nagarjuna's thought, Madhyamaka is

often compared to nihilism and Nagarjuna is defined as a nihilist, but the approach to the idea of 'emptiness' in these two ways of thinking is very different (Garfield, 2002, p.1). Although emptiness contains the meanings of all of them in one way or another, sunyata, which reflects the Eastern perspective on this idea, does not mean 'nothingness' or 'non-existence' as seen in Western thought. Nagarjuna, also the founder of the Madhyamika school, is called the father of Mahayana because he was the first to teach the Mahayana concept of Sunyata (emptiness). The teachings of Buddhism found their place of origin in the Middle East and the Far East, and later in cultures all over the world (Dickerson, 2021, p.231).

The concept of Sunyata, one of the most fundamental backbones of these teachings, is based on the principle of trying not to hold on to anything. Truth is beyond all dualism and oppositions. Chapter V of the Diamond Sutra states that "Every form or quality of phenomena is transient and illusive. And no possession of attributes is no illusion." Those who know the Dharma (all of the Buddha's teachings) should, as if standing on a raft, avoid all utilities and also all non-utilities (Kaya, 2018, p:35). The balance pointed out here is the most valid and meaningful concept applying to all fields. It is also one of the most important principles in art.

Another sacred Indian text, the Prajnaparamitahridaya-sutra (heart sutra), which consists of only fourteen verses (shlokas), states that "Form is emptiness, emptiness is form" and that emptiness and form are inseparable. East Asian Buddhist traditions attach great importance to this sutra, which, although short, has a profound meaning and is regarded as the summary of Buddha's wisdom.

In Indian Buddhism, Nagarjuna, in his theoretical work *The Philosophy of the Middle Way*, created a source of knowledge, faith and history whose influence spread throughout the Far East. According to Nagarjuna,

Saying that 'there is' is some perception of continuity.

Saying 'there is not' is a view of becoming nothing.

For this reason, the wise

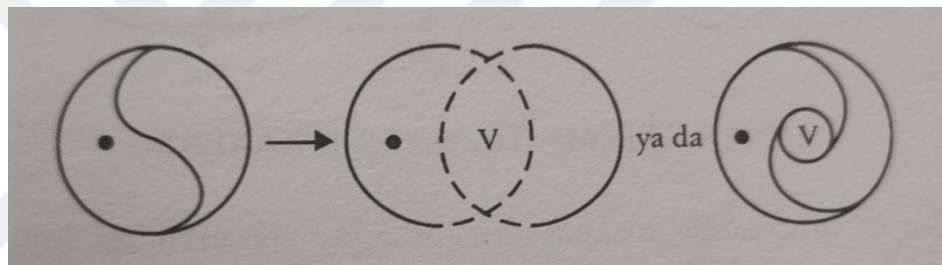
Shall not keep either to being or not-being. (Soysal, 2016, p:124)

2.1.2.Tao

The basis of ontology is defined by emptiness, much like the Taoist philosophy that perceives the universe as emptiness. The philosophical foundations of Tao have been determined by Lao-Tzu and Chuang-Tzu and stand on two pillars, namely the 'self' and the 'image;' the unchanging, the root or the source (i.e., self) and the intimate, which can be perceived with outer appearance without caring much for what is on the 'inside' (i.e. image) (Arıĝ, 2015, p. 10). As the Eastern philosophy prioritizes philosophizing on the meaning of life to reach to the real that lies at the heart of that which 'is,' any endeavor to understand nature through senses is secondary.

Figure 1

Empty and Full



Note. Image taken from Cheng, Empty and Full (2006, p. 65)

The Three Beings from the Taoist optic reflect a harmonious whole of the values that inspire vital Ying and Yang. Emptiness, too, is a part of this whole, self-inspirational and also born out of the central hole which arises by itself. (Figure 1). The original or the initial void is needed for the harmonious functioning of Yin and Yang; it is this very emptiness that bears and guides both sources of inspiration as part of some mutual processuality. With Yin and Yang, it is possible to achieve integrity through opposites. "This theory that defends that everything in the universe as well as in the nature take place within a framework of reciprocity also holds that nothing can remain unmoving and permanent and that they must entertain some relation as part of this absolute process. The power of Yang and the suppleness of Yin provide the causal basis upon which many vital beings can find their order and bear forth another ten thousand in the universe. However, between the 'two things' and the 'ten thousand things', the

'third thing' retains its place. The third being represents the unification of the vital forces of Yin and Yang, as well as the emptiness that lies in between. (Cheng, 2006, p. 64).

Figure 2

Yin yang



Note. Image taken from Jaeger, 2017

The Yin and yang is an endless cycle. The dots inside the black and white halves represent the other, as containing a 'seed' of the other. (Figure 2) Without Yin, Yang can't exist, and without Yang, Yin can't exist (Onat, 2018).

According to Eastern philosophy, there is a reality beyond form and it resists any kind of description or explanation. Although it is often said that this reality is formless, empty or void, it should not be perceived as nothingness (Carpa, 1991, p. 378).

The sages of the East preferred the term 'Hsu' for the Tao to emphasize that the emptiness they are talking about is one that has the power to bear forth; not just any void. "In almost all Eastern philosophies, emptiness is held as valuable and important as being itself. These concepts that may seem as opposites are essentially mutually complementary. The being of an object is revealed through the intermediary of emptiness, which is its opposite. These two seemingly opposite concepts are in essence mutually complementary in the sense that one cannot be without the other. This philosophy defends the idea that nothing remains unchanged. It also envisages that all seemingly opposite concepts scattered throughout the universe give birth to one another. As a result, according to this philosophy, emptiness is not 'not-being' but as another being that is exactly opposite. According to the Taoist philosophy, in harmony with the ways of the all-encompassing nature, humans elope from conscience to return to the spirit. Chinese painters have been considered as successful artists to the extent their works could reflect this essence in their landscapes.

2.1.3.Zen (C'han)

From Buddha to Nagarjuna to Kumarajiva, and from there to Tao in China, Chinese Buddhism was formed, and then Zen School was formed as an extension in Japan. These teachings have greatly influenced the field of art. The definition of emptiness in Taoism is replaced by nothingness in Zen philosophy. Everything takes form of emptiness and this is described as Nirvana. The ultimate goal is to reach Nirvana, experience nihilism and disappear. The human mind melts into the whole, disappearing completely. The mind cannot be controlled as it is not a tangible object. There is no one beyond the mind, it is nothingness. If there is anything that can control the mind, it is the ego, which controls only a part of the mind. If one sits quietly and looks deep into their mind, the mind disappears. Only thoughts persevere. Thoughts are existential, but the mind cannot be found. Being free of thoughts, this is inner emptiness. And this comprises the definition of nirvana, the definition of nothingness.

"One starts to divine thinking once s/he attains the level of nothingness and not-being" (Osho, 2011, p. 197). As a result, nothingness in Zen philosophy is the intimate depth of humans only, that is bound by no other aspect. Then, in Art, the artist on the face of his/her painting attains exactly the same condition, and becomes so introvert that is almost hypnotic. This is how life is blown into the very soul of those paintings. This is when the artist spontaneously reflects him/herself on his/her art in his/her purest or the most pristine. Away from perfection and as some value that emerges without any care for plastic value... this is how the work of art is reflected.

Also influenced by these teachings, the Buddhist term for 'the paintings of the finite world,' i.e., Ukiyo-e, was devised during the Edo (Tokyo) period. In their woodprints, as the artists depict the finite, material world they also place an intricate emphasis on the Buddhist perspective on the transient nature of physical being. (Dickerson, Madelynn, p. 230)

Ensō is the name for circles made with broad brush strokes on brass or silk paper with ink that symbolizes the creation of the body and soul liberated from the control of the mind. The term was first used by the masters of the Tang Dynasty of China to define perfection. These circles were also called as the 'circles of enlightenment,' 'Zen circles' or the 'endless circle.' To reach the origin of the word, if one is to consider the two Kanji figures, we encounter such meanings as the 'reciprocal

circle,' or the 'circle of unity.' One of the most widely used symbols of Japanese calligraphy and painting, although *ensō* means a 'circle' in Japanese, it is also inclusive of the condition of 'no mind' that is one of the definitive characteristics of Zen Buddhism (Figure 3).

Figure 3

Enso



Note. Image taken from Artist: Ranzan, (1718-1797)

Even a line drawn on canvas has a very powerful expression. The artist, too, just like a calligrapher, can draw a single line with a single stroke of an almost-dry brush and this line that almost always encompasses the painting asymmetrically gives birth to the void which holds the universal tendencies of time and space intertwined in its embrace, where even all possibilities are realized and die within the un-painted (Polat, 2015, p. 21). The artist's line suffices to link emptiness to eternity. Now, the expression of emptiness in Taoism and nothingness in Zen reveal with a minute intervention. Everything in the universe materialize as part of a movement in emptiness.

Ensō is also a visual expression of the Sutra of the Heart, 'in form emptiness, in emptiness the form.' As reflected in this maxim, while watching an *ensō* one can see the perfectly intertwined emptiness and form, even to the point of inter-complementariness.

The link established between the circular form without any beginning or end and human life is evident, almost to the degree of omnipresence in the rim of the still-nature bowl of the Renaissance, in the fruits arranged in the bowl, in the halos of the figures of saints and angels or in the very zero (0) that describes the sky, atmosphere, the void or nothingness in Hindu philosophy or in Ouroboros, the self devouring serpent

that has grabbed its own tail (which represents rebirth and eternity), in the character of Ixion in Greek mythology, who was doomed and bound to a wheel of fire that is to spin eternally just like Dharma wheel of Buddhism or the mandalas of Tibetan Buddhism that represent the universe, on the very globe on which we live, in other globes and circulars that surround it, on the rim of a coffee cup and finally in the *ensō* of Zen. The Art of Zen can be considered as the purest and the most spiritual form of all arts. In geometry, the circle is considered as the most flawless of all forms and with reliance on the circular movements that make up the cosmos, to analyze these circular movements, it is considered as the root of trigonometry equations in mathematics.

2.1.4. Islamic Sufism

Describing Islamic mysticism in Western languages such as French and English, the word Sufism has also substituted for Islamic mysticism in Turkish after 1980's through translations (Ayverdi, A.2006, p. 2853). While the concept of emptiness is similar in Islamic and Western philosophies, it is evident that they are both influenced from Aristotle. Islamic philosophers, who considered that a definition based on concepts such as time, space, and motion would be correct, also conducted researches on the existence of emptiness. According to Islamic philosophers, the primary matter of debate is whether the universe can be conceived as a finite space and whether there is an emptiness and fullness beyond.

Al Farabi, one of the Islamic philosophers, defined the concept of emptiness in terms of existence, arguing that the most general concept that the human mind can reach is existence, and therefore it cannot be defined. Al-Farabi classified creatures from the most celestial to the most earthly. Stating that God is the first being that human beings perceive with reason, Al-Farabi argues that air, water, earth and fire are formed as they descend towards the ground, and that these four elements form matter with opposites such as heat and cold in each of these four elements, and that the universe is surrounded by matter and that there is no room for emptiness in this universe.

According to Al-Farabi's conception, the universe is composed of spheres made of simple bodies and that the world is one of these spheres. Describing the world as a part of the moon, Al-Farabi made observations regarding both cosmology and planets. Another philosopher concerned with the concept of emptiness in Islamic philosophy was Avicenna. Avicenna (980 - 1037) approaches the concept of emptiness in an

Aristotelian manner. Avicenna, argues that speaking of emptiness neither inside nor outside of the universe is possible, and that this emptiness can not be considered as a reality. He further states that if emptiness were a reality, it would have to have a boundary, but the size and boundary of the emptiness is beyond mentioning. Although Avicenna did not consider emptiness as an absolute entity, he claims that one can speak of space and fullness, and thus they are acceptable entities. (Arğ, 2015)

Meanwhile, both in Sufism and in Islamic mysticism, concept of emptiness has also been interpreted in relation to the essence and inner self of the human being. "Expressing, what you find through discovery and intuition, through reason" is Ibn Arabî's motto. Through this point of view enables the comprehension of the integration between discovery and intuition with the emptiness. Ibn Arabi is the primary voice for the discipline called 'Waḥdat al-wujūd, Unity of Existence'. The literal meaning of Waḥdat al-wujūd, systematized by Arabî, is the Unity of Existence.

The view that all beings are one and that they are all interconnected comprises the teaching of Unity of Existence. Ibn Arabî could be considered as the closest philosopher to eastern philosophies. A life, without raising the hidden seed in the heart, is deemed as deceptive in Islamic mysticism. One shall neither be appraised as vigilant nor awake until he/she is endowed with the spiritual vision and a radiant heart thus discovering the true self. One shall find oneself within, in order to reach the essence. Ayan-i-Thabita is a concept put forward by Plato and reviewed by Islamic philosophers and developed especially by Ibn 'Arabî. This concept, which was put forward and called 'Ideals' by Plato, shaped as Ayan-i Thabita by the Islamic philosopher Ibn' Arabî, emerged as the Id with Freud and was analyzed as Archetype by Jung, is briefly known as absolute truths, that is, unchanging realities.

As the essence of the grand realm, the al-Insān al-Kāmil (Complete Human) has gathered all the truths in himself. In this case sayings of 'I think, therefore I am' and 'Existence is made up of cognizance', that respectively belong to Descartes and Berkley, are appropriate for explaining the concept of Ayan-i Thabita.

"When everyone is trying to be something, be nothing. Range with emptiness. Human should be like a pot. As the pot is hold by its emptiness inside, human is hold by the awareness of his nothingness." These words, belong to the poet and thinker Rumi, saying that human should be like a pot. As the pot is hold by its emptiness inside, human is held by the awareness of his nothingness' also emphasizes the importance of

realizing the inner essence rather than the physical existence. The costumes worn and the rituals performed during the whirling ceremony (Semah) in Mevlevism are the symbolization of the sufi concepts and related to emptiness.

The reflection of Islamic thoughts is generally embodied through motives and ornaments. These motives and ornaments keep the meanings hidden inside, conveying the concepts to us through symbols. To comprehend it, it is necessary to read and be aware of the symbols through the stories. Islam manifests itself through symbolism and has a lofty effect, away from descriptions and reality. Islam exists in the ideal image that each individual creates in his or her own mind. The emptiness offers the mystical and the story we want to believe in for each of us in a different way. It has similarities with calligraphy.

The importance of Islamic art can be defined as follows; to meet in the light of two divine lights such as head and heart, revelation and inspiration is to create a work of art. Some calligraphers even consider art as a form of worship (Özkafa, 2010, p. 338).

Art focuses on dignifying the human being and seeing the whole (Işık, 2014, p. 402). Seeing the whole is a stride in reaching the truth. As in Islam, wisdom (philosophy) is also substantial in Islamic art. Art concerns about the spiritual, such as religion and philosophy. Nasr expressed as follows:

Although the art of the container or vessel, which emerged from Qur'anic revelation, belongs to the Semitic and nomadic world where Islam universalized positive characteristics, Islamic art is an outcome arising from the manifestation of Unity in the realm of multiplicity. Although partially shaped by certain characteristics, it actually emerged directly from Islamic spirituality (Nasr, 1992, p.16). Islamic Art itself is based on a knowledge that is of a spiritual nature, a knowledge called wisdom or sagesness by the great masters of Islamic art (Nasr, 1992, p.17).

Islamic art is the result of the manifestation of God in the multiplicity realm. Islamic art is not about the objects or matter, since Islam is concerned with spirituality. It mainly concerns with the real. It requires the destruction of matter and the turning towards spirit and spirituality. This is a kind of self-orientation. One must first discover oneself on the path to unity. Islamic art and Far Eastern art are similar to each other in these respects.

2.2.The Concept of Emptiness in Western Philosophy

This chapter includes a review of the early periods of western philosophy, the ancient periods, the concept of emptiness, and references from the philosophers and thinkers who have specifically mentioned this concept to define emptiness.

2.2.1.Ancient age in the west

Examining the early periods of philosophy in the West, it is possible to encounter parallel and complementary views with the Egyptian Alexandrian school. In Western philosophy, the pre-Socratic philosophers, also known as natural philosophers, were concerned with being, becoming and change. The main principle pursued by pre-Socratic philosophers in their search for an answer to these questions comprised of ensuring the unity and coexistence of nature, in other words, the cycle of nature's integrity. Western philosophy has tried to describe the emptiness itself by dealing with the concepts of motion, space and time. Their philosophical objective is to find the principle and unravel the nature of the external world. These philosophers try to perceive the material principle of things, their existence and origins, along with their extinction.

Thales, (Thales 624/623 BC - 548/545 BC) as he was one of the first philosophers, is referred to as the father of philosophy and science. He was significant both for considering water as a first principle and for trying to explain nature using rational hypotheses. He looked for the causes of natural phenomena in nature rather than in anthropomorphic gods. He built a bridge between mythological explanations and rational explanations. After Thales, his students Anaximander and Anaximenes followed the same line. According to Anaximenes, Thales' main substance '*water*' is replaced by '*air*'. Thus, unlike Anaximander, he limits the primary substance by identifying it with a particular substance. But it is clear that Anaximenes believed in the existence of different degrees of moisture condensation, each corresponding to densities characteristic of different forms of matter. When *matter (aer)* is most evenly distributed, it forms the invisible air of the atmosphere. As a result of this condensation, the '*matter*' first turns into mist or clouds, then into water, and finally into solid materials such as stones and soil, and becomes visible to the eye. He thinks of '*air*', which he considers to be the main substance, as filled with the power of God. He identified

human breath, the air that's inside our body, with the principle that gives life to human beings, the human *psyche*. The concept of the soul is first encountered in Anaximenes. Anaximenes, who said "*All living things have souls*", was the first philosopher to distinguish between the dead and alive (Frisinger, H. 1971 p.p. 1078-1081).

It can be seen that Heraclitus (535BC- 475 BC) was influenced by Anaximander and Pythagoras in his main doctrine of the conflict and unity of opposites. He was also influenced by Anaximenes in his doctrine of the soul. To quote Heraclitus: "From fire all things originate and all things return to it again in a process of eternal cycles. This world-order [Kosmos], the same of all, no god nor man did create, but it ever was and is and will be: everliving fire, kindling in measures and being quenched in measures (Çakmak, 2005, p.29). According to him, everything comes into existence and disappears in a never-ending cycle.

According to Parmenides (515 BC - 460 BC), who spoke of the concept of emptiness as an existence rather than an absence, there is nothing changing in the universe. Reality, that is, 'being', is 'one' in the absolute sense, permanent, continuous, uncreated, indestructible; it is eternal and everlasting, there is no movement or change in it. "Being is existing, nothingness or the non-existent does not exist," says Parmenides. Only beings can exist in thought, and non-beings are unthinkable. This leads to the proposition that the world we live in is a world of appearances. The distinction between appearance and reality on the ontological plane, and between the rational and the sensible on the epistemological plane is thus put forward. Dialectics, in the sense he developed it, is a method of thinking in terms of concepts alone. In his work, which consists of a long poem, the first part deals with the truth and the second part with the world of illusion. The sensory world produces illusions. There is something unchanging, unbounded, undivided behind the appearance, but this cannot be directly deduced from the perception of the phenomenal world. The everyday perception of the visible physical world produces illusion (Parmenides calls it *doxa*). The reality of the world is based on 'One Being'. In the first part of this poem, which can be called the first expression of metaphysical thought in the Greeks, Parmenides tries to prove that the ideas of multiplicity, change and limitation are contradictory for the mind; and in the second part, he tries to explain what is the realm of appearance, that is, nature, which is in a state of constant change and flow (Sunar, p.20).

Empedocles (494 BC) is one of the most prominent philosophers with his findings on the existence of nature. According to Empedocles, emptiness does not exist. Everything in nature comes into existence and disappears in a cycle of transformation. All the elements that exist - air, water, earth, fire - come together in different proportions and then separate. They exist through their aggregation. And disappear with their segregation. He proposed that the forces that mix and separate the elements were called love and strife, respectively.

Democritus argued that there were two elements: Fullness and Emptiness. One was called Being ('that which is') and the other was called Nothingness ('that which is not'). That which is full or solid Exists, whereas that which is empty or sparse is Non-existent; (thus, if there is a void, then the void is not nothing, therefore there is not the void); and these things have materialistic causes."

He suggests that atoms flow in a straight line as long as they do not encounter any obstacles. Democritus says "The real principles are merely atoms and emptiness, everything else is an idea, an appearance." (Marx, p:23) Gorgias is an important philosopher in the development of Nihilism and skeptical thought. He argued that the attempt to know existence, which is the basic problem of natural philosophy, is meaningless and he tried to prove it. In his thought, it is neither possible for a being to exist, nor to be known, nor to be communicated to another. The famous *triple argument* is an accurate representation of Gorgias' relativism and skepticism: Nothing exists. Even if something exists, nothing can be known about it, and even if something can be known about it, the knowledge cannot be communicated to others. Aristotle (384-322 BC) rejects emptiness by saying that in emptiness, there is no movement, no distinction, on the contrary, there is stasis and therefore no change. According to him, space is not a precondition for relocation. In his work *Physica*, while explaining the impossibility of emptiness, he mentions that everything in nature itself is indexed to filling the spaces and that the state of filling the spaces exists in human instinct as well as in nature. Epicurus (341 BC-270 BC), on the other hand, says that emptiness exists and that atoms are constantly moving in different directions. And accordingly, he explains fate: "Some events are determined by God's immutable destiny, some by coincidences beyond our control, and some by our will." Thus, the free will of human beings is grounded in natural philosophy. (Ağaoğulları, 2011, p. 155,) The view and questioning of matter by the philosophers of natural philosophy, and their arguments questioning existence and

non-existence in relation to the concept of emptiness, suggest that they exhibit a very positivist approach. In this context, the paintings and drawings they made in that period have the same positivist approach.

2.2.2.Renaissance, humanism, and enlightenment

Beginning in the 15th century, the renaissance and reform movements and developments in the fields of thought, philosophy and art showed progress by believing in the superiority of human reason and talent. From the Renaissance onwards, human beings became independent, capable of determining their own future, and living their lives as individuals. In the 15th century, the Europeans realized that the religious and traditional values of the Middle Ages were not enough to improve themselves and live better, and sought to replace them with new values. Instead of the God/religion-centered explanation of the universe, society, and human beings of the Middle Ages, it expresses a human-centered explanation of the universe, society, and the individual. Thus, instead of the heavenly God, the earthly city; instead of a religious cosmology, a physical cosmology; instead of a society/state order in which human beings are seen as servants, a society/state order in which human beings are recognized as individuals/persons began to be accepted. This change has not only occurred on an intellectual/theoretical basis, but has also manifested itself in the factual/practical field.

In the Age of Enlightenment, the new man was equipped above all with the courage to use his own reason. Based on Descartes' view "I think, therefore I am", The Enlightenment is an extension of an era that believed that the new human being should be equipped with a characteristic that first and foremost demonstrates the courage to use one's own reason. Thus, man has begun the journey of interpreting his inner journey and coming to terms with himself. The issue of existence turned into a questioning of one's own existence and a quest for meaning. Human beings have endeavored to define and understand the lack of meaning within themselves.

The German philosopher Kant puts it this way: Enlightenment is the liberation of man from a state of immaturity into which he has fallen through his own fault. This immaturity is the inability to use one's own intellect without the guidance of another. It is man's own fault that he has fallen into this immaturity, the cause of which is not to be found in reason itself, but in the man who is unable to show the determination and

courage to use his reason without the guidance and assistance of others. Have courage to use your own reason!" became the motto of the Enlightenment (Bozkurt, 2000, p.17).

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), also known as the pioneer of the German Enlightenment, first investigates the conditions of knowing, or rather what the human mind can and cannot know, with the idea that rationalist and empiricist views alone cannot lead one to scientific knowledge. In his book *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant, in line with the tradition of the Enlightenment, makes a critical analysis of human reason in order to show the difference between metaphysical knowledge and scientific knowledge. Thus, it shows how and according to what criteria scientific knowledge and non-scientific knowledge are distinguished from each other by revealing the limits of the knowledge that the human mind reveals independently of experimentation and the knowledge that it reveals depending on experimentation. It determines the possibilities, principles, limits, and criteria of pure reason, which is the source of scientific knowledge. Kant's aim is to establish the unity between modern science and philosophy by creating philosophical foundations of knowledge for Newton's physics, and he assigns this task to reason. The same developments move in a parallel manner in art.

The Enlightenment period, which Western civilization reached in the 18th century, actually builds on the intellectual and social changes of the Renaissance period, which saw a break with all the ideas and beliefs developed in the Middle Ages. Let us draw on the thoughts of three philosophers of three nation-states that shaped western thought and the western human type in the 17th and 18th centuries. The first of these was the English philosopher and politician John Locke (1632-1704).

Locke argues that the human mind is innately contentless like a blank slate (*tabula rasa*) and that all knowledge is acquired later through experience. What is meant to be said with this theory of knowledge is this: Human beings can create all kinds of knowledge on an empirical basis through their own reason (Çüçen, 2020).

Voltaire (1694-1778), one of the French thinkers greatly influenced by John Locke, attempts to re-explain man, society, the state, and the universe with a deistic understanding of God. According to Deism, God exists and created the universe but does not intervene in its affairs. People are therefore free to determine their own lives, to organize society and the state, to do science, etc. This is where reason comes into play, because human beings, as intelligent beings, have the power to know and manage both society and nature. According to Voltaire, man is the only creature capable of

thinking and free will. Therefore, man has the capability to overcome his own ignorance. As within the root of all evil is the individual who does not use the faculty of understanding and lives in ignorance. There, what must be done is to help one enlighten by providing the means of information.

2.2.3.From the modern era to present

In the late 19th and 20th centuries, the term existentialism became the focus of major philosophers. The quest for existence also questions the concept of emptiness, absence, and nothingness. Soren Kierkegaard, although he had not used the term himself, is considered as the first existential philosopher as he shared the thought which instates that the philosophical thought does not start with the subject which thinks, but with the human object which does, feels and lives, despite the deep doctrinal differences within themselves. Kierkegaard then infers the responsibility to bear life with meaning with ambition and graveness does not rely on the society or religion; but on the individual and individual alone (Cauly, 2006).

He tried to methodologically structure modernism, objectivism and rationalism. Along with modernism, this independence and individualization brought the issue of existentialism and alienation. Modern psychology puts the emphasis on individualization and sets forth that different senses and meanings attached to them by the individual comprises a complex perception process. From the start of the twentieth century, Albert Einstein (1879-1955) brought emptiness from its passive structure to an active position by having classical physics abandon the absolute space and time and adopt relative space and time.

Another thought laid in between the dilemma of existence and the void, Nihilism, relates to both axiology and existentialism. Nihilism defends that all information in epistemology is an illusion; that there are no values determining the human actions in axiology; and that there is nothing in ontology. Nihilism, which derives from the word 'nihil', meaning 'nothing' in Latin, is divided into many spesific branches today. But with its most popular description, it is a philosophical thought which defends that all is devoid of meaning and value

There Heidegger states, "Maybe, space is closely related to the characteristics of space itself and therefore is not a mistake, but an emergence." (Aktok, Bal, 2010, p.112). Heidegger denies asking the question of existence to describe nihilism, value

and that which 'exists'. Heidegger thinks that the human being's relation to existence must be freed from subjectivity. Although *Being and Time* was a rebellion against the philosophy of the subject, after Heidegger had completed it, he would nonetheless find its starting point 'subjective' as the work relied on the understanding of *Dasein*. He tries to overcome this subjectivity with the history of existence. The reason for the need for a destruction in order to answer the question of the meaning of being is the need to relate to the historical interpretation of a philosophical concept when trying to understand it. Because every era names the existence with a different name, and tries to understand it within the boundaries of that description. This way, it shakes the philosophical heritage and unifies this historicity in a continuum (Yıldırım, 2019).

Sartre, following Heidegger in many respects, defines existence in two ways: existence for itself and existence in itself. He defines and uses nothingness in quite different ways, such as external and internal nothingness, epistemological nothingness, and emotional nothingness. Of these different 'nothingnesses', the one receiving focus is the inner nothingness that arises in the fact that it refers to the consciousness of human beings, to the void that separates human beings from beings in themselves. Nothingness, in this regard, emerges as the nothingness within oneself, the emptiness one tries to fill with actions, thoughts and perceptions (Cevizci, 2019).

Much less transcendental views of emptiness can be found, for example, Sartre, in *Being and Nothingness*, sees nothingness as a fundamental part of being as being cannot escape nothingness. "Nothingness is the questioning of being through a being; that is, precisely for the consciousness, or for itself. Nothingness is the unique and the sole possibility of existence. Since nothingness is the absence of being, it can only exist through being itself." (Sartre, 1958, p. 79) Nothingness is a state of absence. Nothingness itself does not have Being, but is sustained by Being. Sartre disagrees with Hegel on the argument suggesting that Being and Nothingness are opposites, or opposed as thesis and antithesis, respectively. Nothingness is not the opposite of being, but its successor.

Freud and Adler analyzed the existential emptiness in human beings by studying neurology and the structure of the brain, and tried to analyze the concept with the help of psychoanalysis. In his book *Man Search for Meaning*, Viktor Emil Frankl, the founder of Logotherapy, called the 3rd Vienna School after Freud and Adler, argues that the most important psychological problem of human beings is the lack of meaning

in life and existential emptiness. The term 'logotherapy' is a combination of the Greek words logos, meaning 'meaning', and therapy. Logotherapy assumes that life exists potentially in all circumstances, even under the worst conditions. According to Frankl, humans can withstand even the worst conditions imaginable through resisting and struggling. However, in order to hang on to life, one must have a reason that will make life and death meaningful. Individuals whose lives are dominated by a sense of meaninglessness are deprived of the consciousness of meaning, and are caught in a sense of emptiness in their inner world, that is, existential emptiness. At this point, Logotherapist's role is to help people find meaning and purpose in life, or to make the existing spectrum of meaning conscious and visible.

Carl Gustav Jung defines existence in terms of consciousness. The shadow archetype, which also influences art and literature, is neither absolute good nor absolute evil. Jung highlights the importance of uprooting the very being of shadow from the unconscious to expose it to the conscious. Unless this is done, the individual might project their shadow complex, leading to miscommunication and deep wounds in the soul. Based on his numerous researches on religions and traditions, he believes that the journey of transformation, which he refers to as individualization, is the mystical heart of all religions. Some journey where one finds him/herself and also finds divinity... Maybe it was such a journey that, in contrast to Freud's objectivist view of the world, and as Jung held individual human life one with the universe, his pantheism might have led him to believe that spiritual experience is indispensable for us to be complete (Jung, 2021).

Reflecting the crises in modern culture, the texts of prominent existentialist writers such as Nietzsche, Heidegger and Sartre portrayed the modern situation and the human being through the emptiness within: suffering and death, loneliness and shudder, guilt, conflict, spiritual emptiness and insecurity, the void of absolute values or universal contexts, a sense of cosmic absurdity, the fragility of the human mind, the human condition teetering on the brink of a tragic impasse.

Artists such as Rauschenberg, Rothko and Fontana have been influenced by these authors.

2.2.4. Present time, holistic view

Today, art is intertwined with the media in all its fields of production. It uses the media to exist and galleries, fairs and museums use the media to convey new productions to the public. The language used provides a source for all new definitions. The concept of emptiness is also affected by these definitions. To begin with a quote from Lyotard, "It is not possible to believe and theoretically justify that there is a single truth, a pure reason, a universal position of life, a single and universal direction of history, and progress." The issue of language has always created a problem and contradiction in the definition of all concepts. Here we come across an emptiness, an unknown. The slippery slope of postmodernism constantly confronts us with this emptiness. In his article called *The Sublime and the Avant-Garde*, Jean-Francois Lyotard writes about what art must do to deal with what cannot be shown. In art, we expect one thing to occur (for example, painting a picture) and then something else (another color, another picture) to occur after. Still, we tend to forget that nothing might happen. The possibility of nothing happening is often associated with a sense of concern. What can be a negative feeling can also be positive (tension, welcoming the unknown). This contradictory feeling paves the way to the romantic notion of the sublime (experiencing horror and pleasure simultaneously). Throughout history, the negative dialectic "is it happening?" has often been wrongly translated as expecting a mythical subject or identity, e.g. "is the prophet coming?" According to Lyotard, artists have the ability to accurately represent this feeling. Art cannot show what cannot be represented, however, it can signal the existence of the unrepresentable through negative representation or abstraction. There must always be an unrepresentable surplus from which the work of art cannot provide relief, for example, solely through a pleasant form (Lyotard, Morley, 2010, p. 27-41).

The problem with Lyotard's view is the premise that art should not directly approach the unrepresentable. Pointing to this, he strikingly associates his words to the biblical command not to depict God. Referring to abstraction as the best option, he returns to a new form of iconoclasm. The proximal emptiness provides more space to think about eternity. This attitude is also present in many protestant churches, but also in some early modern art, for example in Malevich's black square. But on closer inspection, the square, which can be seen both as a black square on a white background

and as a black hole surrounded by a white border, is in fact reminiscent of Anish Kapoor's *Descent into Limbo*, comprising of nothing, but also an enormous space.

The important thing is that at a given moment one arrives at illusion. Around it one finds a sensitive spot, a lesion, a locus of pain, a point of reversal of the whole of history, insofar as it is the history of art and insofar as we are implicated in it; that point concerns the notion that the illusion of space is different from the creation of emptiness (Miller, 1986, p.140).

What role can art in the emptiness we have to deal with? Baudrillard evaluated this through the concepts of hyper-reality, explosion of meaning, and hot-cold event relationship in accordance with the simulation theory. According to Baudrillard, hyper-reality is the vanishing of the line between reality and fiction. "Knowledge devours the content, communication and sociality it produces, destroys meaning and, contrary to innovation, literally puts the social into a hazy absence of knowledge" (Yumrukuz, 2016) In accordance with these concepts, it is only appropriate if we evaluate Baudrillard's media theory within the framework of the ideas of the German theorists of the Frankfurt School, T. Adorno (1903-1969) and M. Horkheimer (1895-1973). These theorists argue that culture and art have been commodified and have lost their essence in the capitalist reproduction chain for the continuation of the economic system. Individual consciousness is controlled by media ideologies, resulting in subject and object becoming interchangeable. At this point, Adorno and Horkheimer argue that Enlightenment has led humanity to barbarism. Similarly, Baudrillard, in his semiology theory, mentions that the media produces illusions in the manipulated subject (the mass). However, unlike the theorists of the Frankfurt School, he attributes the passivity of the mass to the mass' desire for entertainment and pleasure rather than the existence of a dialectical process between media messages and the audience. Kenneth similarly argues that "hyper-reality is fundamentally created through media entertainment such as Las Vegas and Disneyland" (Kenneth, A. 2011, p. 310).

Here, in present time, we are stuck amidst a production craze that seeks to fill in every inch of any empty space without leaving any room. This is some place -space- where everybody produces all kinds of ideas and materials about anything and this is a very crowded, thick-foggy place where the right thing is defined through mere indicators. Advancements in technology, artificial intelligence and developments in

neurology, today, allow us to see how our brains relay and retain messages and how we make decisions. However, examining parts of our brain as standalone components not always suffices to have a full grasp of the whole story -not even at this level of development. Only with a more holistic approach can one really appreciate observing how all the parts work together. As a matter of fact, one of the earliest debates in the field of neurology focused on whether the brain is homogeneous and cannot be further fragmented, or whether certain functions are localized in specific cortical regions. Nowadays, researchers recognise that certain parts of the brain act in certain ways, but these separate parts interact with each other and work together to create and influence different functions. Therefore, we can conclude that each human being is neurologically similar in terms of certain characteristics, but there may be differences in the concepts they perceive and give meaning to with all their senses. This may lead to the conclusion that we all possess distinct spaces in understanding and perceiving.

Contrary to all the discourses in philosophy that have so far opposed the metaphysical narrative, the fact that the Higgs boson was discovered in 2012 brought a new perspective to matter and space. Humans faced the fact that there are still unknown things. Metaphysical studies persist in this context. Modern physics state that everything came to existence from nothing, so it is possible that the universe emerged from the void (Close, 2009 p.p.1-23).

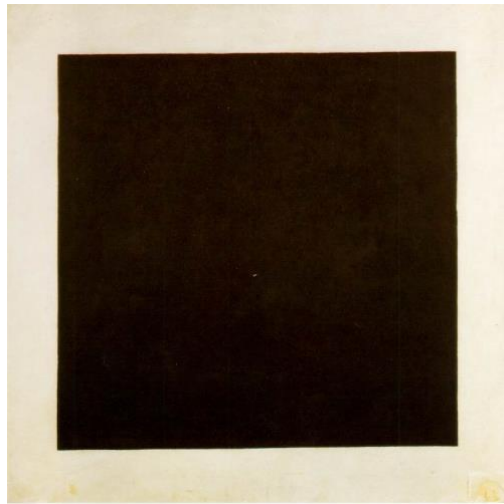
CHAPTER 3

THE CONCEPT OF EMPTINESS IN ART AND ITS AESTHETIC REFLECTIONS

In this chapter, it will be examined how and within which contexts the concept of emptiness was addressed throughout art history with examples. The stories of processing the emptiness in relation to concepts of existence, fullness and mass as opposed to non-existence, absence will be explained through examples from artists. Tendencies of intellectual abstraction and the intellectual roots of reforming the nature reach way back to the philosophy of Kant. According to Kant, humans would recognize the nature in a different manner if their mental structure was shaped differently. Abstract intellectual structure determines the shapes of nature, which is compatible with Kant's idea that space and composition is an intellectual concept (Tunalı, 1983, p. 172). Defining artists as 'geniuses', Kant expresses that they are those who can reduce the mysteries of things to perceptible levels. According to this idea and style, we try to reflect intellectual reality by putting mental structures before nature.

3.1.Emptiness as a Concept

Gaining its form in 1920s, 'Abstract Art' brings together many artists demonstrating the essence of reality of art instead of external reality, therefore focusing on formal elements such as color, line, shape and space, and they create paintings extending from formal elements to philosophy, music, mathematics, and spirit. Kazimir Malevich, a representative of abstract art, also is a painter who painted according to a theory that he elevated almost to the level of religious belief for a long time in his artistic journey. From the moment the Moscow-born Russian painter began to simplify his compositions, traces of his philosophy began to appear in his art. In his monochrome works, he questioned the emptiness and the viewer who is a part of the emptiness. Malevich said that the abstract shapes in his paintings are filled with the absence of any object, therefore they are not empty, but each form is rife with meaning.

Figure 4*Black Square*

Note. Image taken from Malevich, Kazimir Black Square, 1915, Oil painting, RussianStateMuseum,St.Petersburg

St.Petersburg<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artists/kazimir-malevich-1561/five-ways-look-malevichs-black-square>, Date of Access: 09.01.2023

In suprematist paintings, the formal expression of the absolute and infinite was tried to be developed, and deep meanings were attributed to pure forms. One of the most important elements among these meanings is the square, which does not exist in the nature. Malevich portrayed emotion with the black square, and the emptiness beyond emotion with the white in his work 'Zero-Form' in 1918. He aimed to create new forms by changing the meaning of square, and imbued new forms with the function of representing emotions that birthed them into existence (Figure 4).

Starting from 1940s, the art carried from Europe to America with then-prevalent artistic style 'Abstract Expressionism' is fundamentally different in terms of art, form, and style of works created in 1920s and 1930s. During this period, art was heavily influenced by the transformation occurring within art, ideology and politics triangle. "According to the American art critic Harold Rosenberg, American painters who transform painting surface into some sort of stage made a certain struggle, an action visible instead of showing an object; therefore, created images as a result of this struggle they undertook (Antmen, 2008, p:148).

Figure 5*Black on Gray*

Note. Image taken from Mark Rothko, Untitled, Black on Gray, 1969

<https://www.guggenheim.org/artwork/3535>, Date of Access.09.01.2023

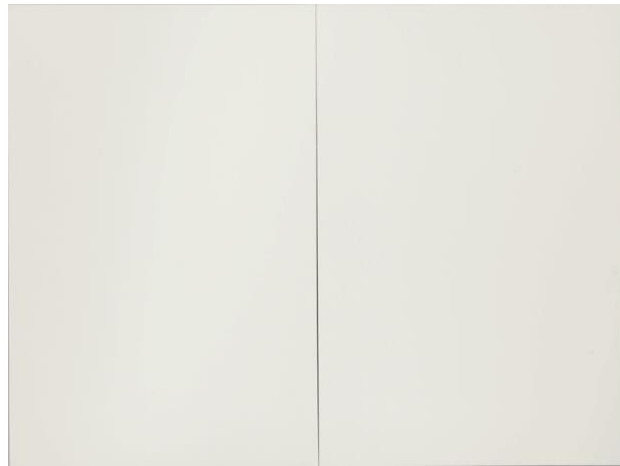
Mark Rothko defining his abstract paintings as 'realistic' or another American abstract expressionist Adolph Gottlieb's words 'Abstraction is the realism of our time' are an important clue concerning the état d'esprit of painters and sculptors of post-World War II period. It is no coincidence that painters born out of this dark period turned to the concept of Emptiness. Abstract expressionist artists, such as Rothko, who gave importance to the spirit and tried to achieve purity with colors in their artworks, assumed that the meaning of life in modern society was empty and that a connection with God was a necessity for human beings. Rothko argues that the main material of a painting is 'emptiness', and uses color fields and vibration to express it. With color, he produces a theatrical space. In his paintings, which are based on atmospheric effect and color rather than form, an active character and a vibration similar to sound waves are felt (Auping, 2007, p.p.139-140). In his paintings, color creates the effect of movement towards the viewer, pushing the limits of surface space towards classical space and contemporary space. Thus, he assigns a new function to the painting surface, which he rescues from being a plane of illusion, and develops it. His paintings merge with the

wall surface on which they are hung, making the room they are in part of their own spatial experience (Auping, 2007, p.141).

In Rothko's paintings 'Black and Gray (1970)', (Figure 5) created during his last days, the concept of emptiness makes itself felt together with the concept of death. It is said that the most important influence on Rothko was Friedrich Nietzsche's *The Birth of the Tragedy*. Nietzsche claims that Greek tragedy serves to rid humans of fears of mortal life, and in line with this motto, Rothko aims to rid modern humans of their spiritual void. He referred to his paintings only by numbers and refused to frame them in order to provide viewers a maximum level of interpretation.

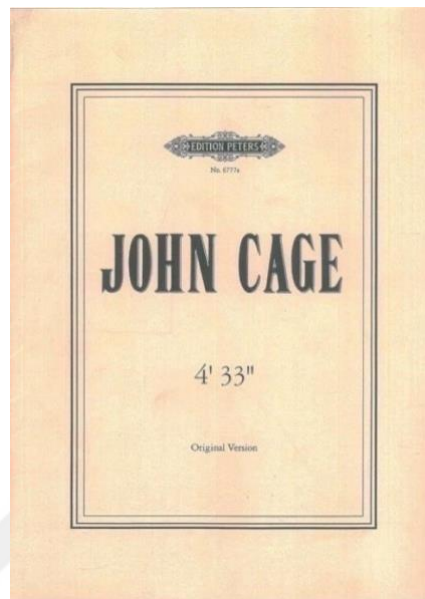
With their works, post-1960 artists enable for concepts to be redefined and re-read. Although initially referred to as 'idea art' and information art, new trends in this genre were gathered under the title 'Conceptual Art' after the Minimalist artist Sol Lewitt published the article 'Paragraphs on Conceptual Art' in *Artforum* magazine in 1967 to emphasize the conceptuality of his own works, and conceptualism became an umbrella term that encompassed almost all alternative forms of expression of the period (Antmen; 2008, p:193).

Understanding of art as idea has leaned towards productions on ideal concept-level with language, philosophy, mathematics and physics. According to Kosuth, "there is no art without language." Kosuth, separating art into two categories as pre- and post- Duchamp in his article 'Art After Philosophy' published in 1969, questioned the meanings of words such as art, definition, painting, nothing in 'Art as Idea as Idea' he created with white writing on a black background; he examined the dynamics behind the mental processes that extend from visual perception to language, from language to concept.

Figure 6*White Painting*

*Note. Image taken from, Robert Rauschenberg White Painting 1951
<https://www.moma.org/audio/playlist/40/639> , Date of Access:15.12.2020*

Another example of the concept of emptiness. Robert Rauschenberg (1925-2008), who began making monochrome 'White Paintings' in 1951 while teaching at Black Mountain College (1933-1956 North Carolina, USA) (Figure 6). In these paintings, he aimed to create a more pristine experience by reducing painting to its essence, to the point zero. He described his experience during this period with the concepts of 'silence', 'being limited', 'absence', 'nothingness', 'pointing to a circle that begins and ends' and stated that the aura had reached to an end.

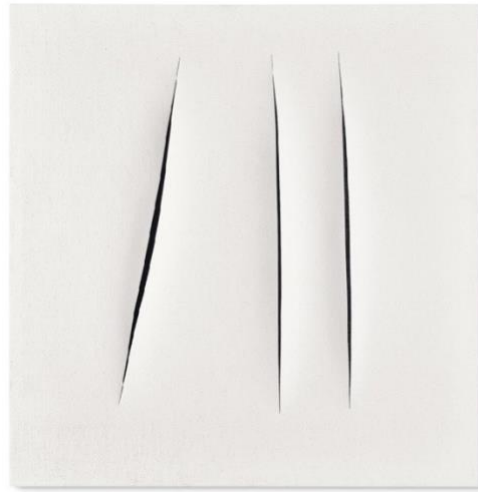
Figure 7*1952, 4'33'' / 4'33''*

*Note. Image taken from, John Cage, 1952, 4'33'' / 4'33''.
<https://goo.gl/4o8A0A> Date of Access: 12.12.2020*

The equivalent of emptiness in music is silence. Symbols indicating the duration of this silence are also an important part of music. As much as the notes, the spaces between them are the elements that make music what it is.

American composer John Cage (1912-1992) was inspired by it while composing the piece entitled 4'33'' (Figure 7). In this piece, a pianist made the audience waiting for him to perform listen to the silence, while the audience becomes a part of this concert that lasts four minutes and thirty-three seconds without music. This work was considered a precursor to Conceptual Art (Mayer, 2000, p.21).

Figure 8 *Spatial Concept: Expectations*



Note. Image taken from Lucio Fontana, 1959, 'Spatial Concept: Expectations', 125x250,8cm, Synthetic Paint on Canvas, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. <https://www.artbasel.com/catalog/artwork/89667/Lucio-Fontana-Concetto-spaziale-Attese> , Date of Access: 09.01.2023

Fontana, blurring the borders of physical space in his installation in his first spatial exhibition opened in 1949, tries to materialize Umberto Boccioni's non-material art dreams. In the same year, Fontana creates his first 'buchi' by making holes on a canvas, in a way reminding of galaxies and starry worlds with spiral and cosmic arrangements. Fontana, wanting to create objects with a similar texture to that of meteorites, achieves this texture with voids and clusters obtained by carving, piercing, ploughing the surface while also using various materials such as clay (Figure 8). His works begin when he slices the canvas in 1958 to expose what is beneath the space and he says "I do not want to make a painting; I want to open up space, create a new dimension, tie in the cosmos, as it endlessly expands beyond the confining plane of the picture." (Theberge, 1999, p.182)

According to the Futurist theory, Fontana depicted and painted nature with the objects of his imagination, which is related to space and the cosmos. Thus, Fontana introduced cosmos to the imaginative realm of mankind by physically limiting space.

Rothko, Newman, Fontana and Klein play an important role in guiding abstract space into philosophical, psychological and formal depths of new horizons.

There have also been periods and works of art in which emptiness was approached as an element of fear. The term fear of emptiness (*horror vacui*), first introduced by the Italian art theorist Mario Praz for the domestic arrangements of the bourgeois class at the end of the 19th century, has come to describe all works of art that are full to the brim with no void on the surface. According to Praz, the abundance of objects that emerged with capitalist commodity production also manifests itself in the artifacts displaying the daily life of the period. The fear of emptiness, especially in Renaissance and Victorian works, corresponds not only to the fear of emptiness but also to the desire to decorate with uncontrollable intricate details, such as houses filled with too many furnitures (Taburoğlu, 2016, pp. 165-167)

Figure 9

The Garden of Earthly Delights

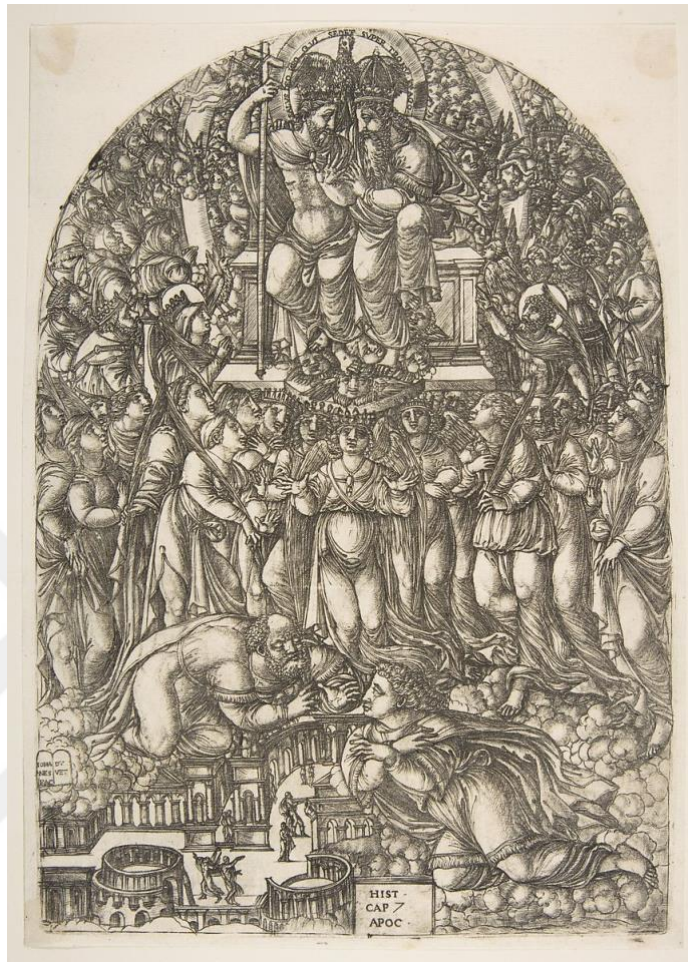


Note. Image taken from, Hieronymus Bosch, The Garden of Earthly Delights
<https://www.wondriumdaily.com/garden-earthly-delights/> , Date of Access
 (06.06.2022)

It is possible to observe this fear of emptiness in the works of painters such as Hieronymus Bosch, Jean Duvet, Pieter Bruegel, Jan van Eyck, and El Greco, which are full of figures and objects, almost every corner of which tells a different story. In Hieronymus Bosch's 'The Garden of Earthly Delights' the viewer almost has difficulty in distinguishing the background (Figure 9).

Figure 10

An innumerable Multitude which Stands before the Throne, from the Apocalypse



Note. Image taken from Jean Duvet (French, ca. 1485–after 1561), An innumerable Multitude which Stands before the Throne, from the Apocalypse <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/386212> , Date of Access: (06.06.2022)

In Jean Duvet's engravings, the blanks are at most filled and there are overlapping patterns of events and people with no negative space (Figure 10). It is also suggested that this is due to the need to fully utilize limited and precious materials such as papyrus, parchment or marble blocks, which were obtained through painstaking and laborious means in the past, and at the same time to fill almost every spot of the surface.

3.2. Emptiness as Space

Increasing the dimensional perception in the space, in other words, rendering the space perceivable means the same thing as rendering the emptiness between objects forming it meaningful. Dimensional relations can be perceived only by experiencing spatial experiences in space. Such dimensional relations have varied in each period.

Perspective, along with the renaissance which laid the foundation for modernism, brought about a measurable and geometric understanding in lieu of spatial understanding of the Middle Age. This understanding, which requires looking at an object at a certain angle, is important in terms of maintaining the point of view and therefore sublimating the view of the individual. The conquest and rational organization of space develops the understanding of the individual and modernization. With modernization, time has been placed on a linear plane as past, present and future. The industrial revolution and technological advances have gradually made time more measurable, controllable and premeditable for individuals. In the 19th century, the concept of time is enriched with the development of historical understanding, the understanding that there is a history and time flow independent of religious history, and the understanding that the subjective, inner emotional world of the artist, which had developed with the romanticism movement in art, also contains a rhythm of time. Thus, in the face of a rapidly changing objective concept of time, the artist's effort to capture objective time within their subjective time constitutes the basic principle of the different styles emerging in contemporary art.

Perspective produces a calculable, measurable future. The use of linear perspective in painting dictates to the viewer what to look at and where to look from, and all modernist teachings use this visually.

With the transformation of perspective, we come to a point where we see down from above, we feel the need to define the place, the ground. With a vertical perspective, we can look from a perspective where we see down from above, and define the place, the ground. While modernism questions and defines time, postmodernism questions and defines space, and in doing so, it loses or redefines borders. Developments in navigation, satellite images, and images recorded with the widespread use of drones constitute these definitions. With vertical perspective, the sense of feeling changes, the balance changes, a whole new visuality emerges. The linear perspective becomes

obsolete and the vertical perspective becomes our point of view. The concepts of subject, object and space begin to reposition and change definition with the vertical perspective. Accessing and experiencing aerial imagery creates a sense of transmission from the human gaze to the God gaze. It creates a transition from static linear perspective to multiple perspectives. In vertical perspective, our sense of vision is not static, it dominates the whole and all angles.

As Hito Steyerl describes it in his essay 'Freefall'; suppose you are falling and there is no ground, if there is no ground, time and history cease to exist. The moment of falling is a moment of loss of boundaries and liberation. This is equivalent to 'emptiness'.

Figure 11

Untitled Anthropometry



*Note. Image taken from. Yves Klein, 1960, 'Untitled Anthropometry' ,
www.yvesklein.com, , Date of Access:18.11.2020*

'Leap into the Void' is a work by Klein; on November 27, 1960, he created a fake newspaper called *Dimanche-Le Journal d'un Seul Jour* (Sunday - Newspaper for one day only) for the 2nd Avant-Garde Festival and sold it on Paris newsstands for one day (Figure 11)." His work caught attention with the headline 'A man in the void! The painter of empty spaces leaves himself in the void!'

Figure 12

Void Room



Note. Image taken from, Yves Klein, 1958 at the exhibition 'Void Room' Photo: Charles Wilp, www.yvesklein.com, 18.11.2020

In 1958, for his exhibition 'The Void' at the Iris Clert Gallery, Klein removed everything from the gallery (except for a cabinet with all surfaces painted white). The gallery with blank white walls turned into a space filled with emptiness, putting visitors into a metaphysical void (Figure 12). "Yves Klein revealed the space in all its reality, and instead of proposing a new formula for the space or the art object, he destroyed aesthetic perceptions/expectations with what he inherited from Dada. The viewer is dragged to an emotional void and left at the level of satisfaction (the viewers' feeling who has expectations from the work of art), the emptiness in which they were invited."

"The artist treats space as art itself. In this context, the gallery changes its raison d'être and transforms itself into a work. Klein created a metaphysical art space in the name of art." (Graf, 2019)

Figure 13

Descent into Limbo



Note. Image taken from Anish Kapoor, Descent into Limbo, 1992, Museum de Pont, Tilburg, Date of Access 18.11.2020

In this work by Anish Kapoor, after entering the gallery, you realize that you see nothing but a black circle where you were expecting for a work of art and an object. You take a closer look. And after close investigation, you see that this is not merely a black circle, but a real pit in the ground (Figure 13). As the pit is covered in dark pigment, it appears bottomless. The unexpected emptiness in this room is a work of Anish Kapoor. *Descent into Limbo* evokes a sense of dread at first glance, but at the same time seduces us to investigate the possibility of disappearing underground.

What is it that makes the void so attractive yet so scary?

"The void is not silent. I always thought of it more and more as a transitional space, an in-between space. It's very much to do with time. I have always been

interested as an artist in how one can somehow look again for that very first moment of creativity where everything is possible and nothing has actually happened. It's a space of becoming... 'something' that dwells in the presence of the work... that allows it or forces it not to be what it states it is in the first instance." (Bhabha, 1998, p. 11-41).

Artists such as Jackson Pollock, Barnett Newman, Morris Louis, and Frank Stella began to play with the shape and dimensions of the flat, two-dimensional painting surface (canvas), and to spread the painting out into the space by removing it from the easel on which it was being worked on, thus taking part in it instead of against it. Stella, on the other hand, gave the canvas a new form, aiming to transform it into an art object that should be evaluated not only as a surface on which thought is conveyed, but also with its physical presence.

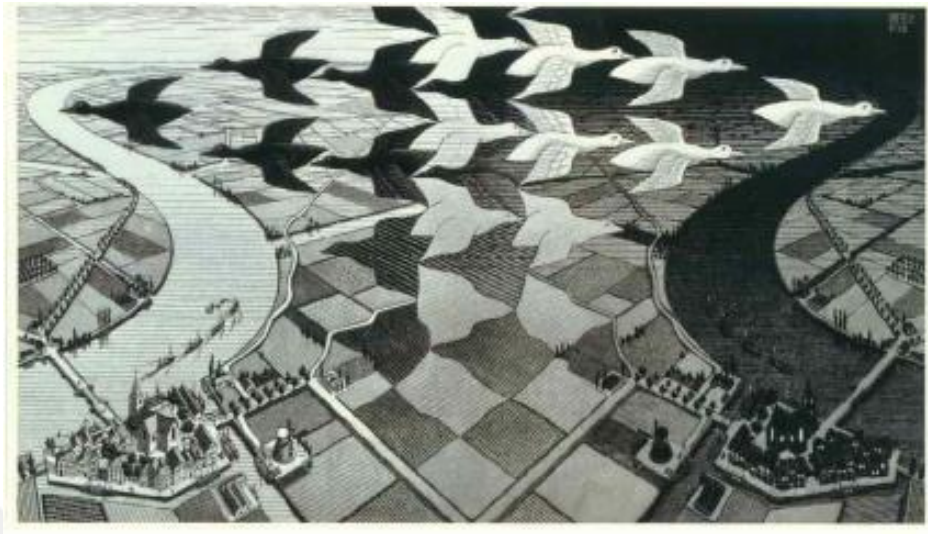
Italian artist Salvatore Garau created a sculpture whose physical presence is invisible. The work titled 'I Am' was auctioned on March 18, 2021 for 15 thousand euros. There is no representation of the work in either print or digital format. The only way to verify its existence is a certificate of authenticity in the hands of the buyer. Garau describes his work as follows; "The vacuum is nothing more than a space full of energy, and even if we empty it and there is nothing left, according to the Heisenberg uncertainty principle, (a principle proposed by Werner Heisenberg in 1927) that nothing has a weight. Therefore, it has energy that is condensed and transformed into particles, that is, into us. When I decide to 'exhibit' an immaterial sculpture in a given space, that space will concentrate a certain amount and density of thoughts at a precise point, creating a sculpture that, from my title, will only take the most varied forms." (Garau, 2022)

In art, as in the field of thought, definitions and concepts differ according to the characteristics of the age. These definitions also affect our perception and mental process. Today, we can make different interpretations of the concept of 'emptiness', which is being reinterpreted beyond its traditional meaning. Now the digital era is a new revolution because of its speed and enormous scale of change. The adaptation of new technology and social media platforms is creating noticeable changes in our global culture. It is a rapid process for artists and philosophers to adapt, express, create and influence culture.

3.3. Emptiness as Form

When we consider emptiness as a form within the discipline of art, we start from the relationship between shape and ground. Negative and positive space. In landscape painting, our perception of emptiness is revealed by the size and how the space left as the sky or land is treated. Based on the relationship between shape-ground, we can classify negative and positive space with Gestalt theorems. The German-American psychiatrist Fritz Perls founded his own method of psychoanalysis, which he named Gestalt. *"The word Gestalt means 'form', 'completion', 'integration' in German"*. In time, Gestalt has been coined as psychology term by the psychologists researching how visual perception is shaped. In Gestalt theory, which originally means to organize in German, the mind, which focuses on the perception of the whole from incomplete parts, organizes the images it sees by associating them with each other (Uçar, 2004, p. 65).

Integrity in painting and visual design is more than merely incorporating additional parts. The balance and harmony that emerges by controlling the relationship and diversity of each incorporated element contributes to the perception of the image. In landscape paintings, this space is sometimes the sky, other times the sea or earth. Since each painted component serves to the perception of the whole, they cannot be evaluated separately from each other. Chaotic results can occur when variations and diversifications are not controlled. The white surface of the paper in its untouched state is perceived as an inactive space, whereas the moment a dot, line or other design element is placed, the empty space is activated. Filling only a small area and recognizing the contrast in this area is similar to understanding the concept of light only in comparison to shadow (Frutiger, 1989, p. 21).

Figure 14*Day and Night*

Note. Image taken from, M.C. Escher, 1938, Day and Night
<https://mcescher.com/2021> , Date of Access: 01.12.2021

M.C. Escher, who transformed emptiness into form and dealt with the relationships between shape and ground with a mathematical definition, is famous for his paradoxical structures. The shape and the background in his works are so professionally rendered that emptiness and fullness are intertwined. It is hard to distinguish the ground from the figures, the eye is constantly moving from one figure to another. In Escher's 1938 engraving *Day and Night*, the forms and space created by contrasts are designed to play with our visual perception (Figure 14). Combining different images together, the space of the painting is quite filled. The spaces between the birds also turn into bird images. Empty and full switch places in line with our view. We see the chromatic contrast of night and day, and the fact that they emerge from each other and cover the surface of the earth. This is one of the best examples of emptiness and fullness. It symbolizes the interconnectedness of all opposites and their emergence from each other. All the images we see in the engraving are interconnected. Birds appear from landscape forms, the sky from birds; the darkness and light of the sky, day and night appear as a part of each other.

In contrast to the image above, Chinese landscapes, which employ large gaps in the painting space, contain many different alternatives to examine on emptiness and

fullness. In this example, we can see that the painter has left more than half of the painting space empty (Figure 15).

Figure 15

Returning Sails Off Distant Shore



Note. Image taken from, Muxi: *Returning Sails Off Distant Shore*
<https://www.comuseum.com/product/muxi-returning-sails-off-distant-shore/> ,
 Date of Access 01.12.2021

Since the main theme here is a storm, the emptiness of this space kindles curiosity and thrill, and shapes one's visual perception as such. Diverging from the engraving mentioned above, in this image, the ability to grasp the unclear nature buried under the misty void, and to complete the image is left to the viewer. This leads to feelings of excitement, panic, or even fright. Here, too, all the elements appear within each other, but unlike others, in a state of unknown. Emptiness leaves the concept of fullness to our perception.

Figure 16*Auspicious Cranes*

Note. Image taken from, Zhao Ji, *Auspicious Cranes*
<https://www.comuseum.com/product/muxi-returning-sails-off-distant-shore/>

Date of Access 01.12.2021

It can be seen that the lower part of the image consists of mysterious temples covered in clouds. The void and the unknown manifest themselves as clouds hanging above the temples. In the sky that covers two-thirds of the area above the temples, we see the wandering storks. The clouds below, and the storks moving in rhythm above, as opposed to fixated, inanimate temples. The motion above and the stillness below completing each other (Figure 16).

Although there are over one hundred and fourteen Gestalt principles, artists and designers have focused on a small portion of these laws of perception to develop their two-dimensional works such as paintings, photographs and posters (Graham, 2008, cited by Aydın, 2015, p. 91).

Knowing these principles in controlling harmony and diversity in design helps to visualize the message to be conveyed. Some of the key principles in art and design are: shape-ground, similarity, continuity, unity, and proximity. The same principles apply while studying a painting to describe, define, analyze and transcribe it.

Parts of an image can be analyzed and evaluated as different components. The whole is more comprehensive than the sum of its parts. According to Gestalt principles, the background of a shape has a significant impact on perception. The simplest example of this impact on perception is the contrast between light and dark.

In the relationship between shape and ground, the eye seeks balance between the figure and the ground, the space and the mass. The relationship between those shapes visual perception. When the designer, who tries to achieve balance and harmony through shaping the space around and between the design elements, discovers that the space can become an active form on its own, the shape-ground relationship takes on another dimension. While describing the fundamental design principle, balance, (Becer, 2015) points out that the space that allows for momentary rest is sometimes more determinant than other visual elements in creating optical weight. The active use of negative space, i.e. emptiness, has the ability to transform into something positive in a composition and can help render the deeply suggestive figure-ground relationship (Poulin, 2011, p. 102-103). In designs with this kind of shape-ground relationship, the ground can turn into a shape, resulting in void-free designs that appear active both in the background and foreground, according to the viewer's perspective.

The principle of unity contains the fact that the designer sometimes deliberately makes reductions in the whole picture instead of representing everything as they are while conveying the message. In paintings that are sometimes created unconsciously and randomly, as in Chinese calligraphy, in paintings made with a childish naivety and a longing for spontaneity, when these reductions in the unbounded incomplete image are made in the right amount, the eye completes the missing parts while perceiving the whole. This helps create designs that move away from boredom by creating a sense of discovery in the viewer (Ambrose & Aono-Billson, 2013, p. 57). It is possible to observe this in the works of mystic artists such as Kandinsky, Klee and Mondrian.

CHAPTER 4

THE CONCEPT OF EMPTINESS IN ART AND IT'S REFLECTIONS ON LANDSCAPE PAINTING

The intersection of the concept of emptiness and landscape will be analyzed in terms of perspective, the absence of people, the sky or landforms used to cover more than half of the picture area, leaving space for the viewer to create their own fiction, presence, absence, nothingness, and transformation.

In English, the word 'landscape' is of German origin, meaning agricultural land. This word is brought into English in the beginning of the 17th century and was used solely in the context of art. The word *Landscape* comes from the old Frisian language, which now corresponds to the language spoken in the coasts of the Netherlands and northern Germany. In Frisian, it means shoveled soil. The word was used for soil that is shoveled and thrown into the sea. Sailors introduced the word *landschop* to Britons along the coast in the 16th century. However, as the British misunderstood the word or could not pronounce it, they used it as *landskep* for a while (Stilgoe, 2015, p. 2). Around 1600, traveling Britons began to use the word *landskip* or *landskep* for pictures showing land from the sea. A few decades later, the word became to be used to describe landscapes that are easy on the eyes. Later, 19th century German geographers took the word and defined it from a more conceptual (especially political) perspective as *landschaft*, and this meaning started to be used in the contemporary academic world as *landscape* (Stilgoe, 2015, pp. 3, 4).

The words 'paysage' and 'scenery' in Turkish language are used interchangeably to define landscape (manzara). The Turkish Language Association describes the word 'landscape' (manzara) as "a painting whose subject is nature, a painting of the nature". The origin of the word landscape in Turkish, manzara, is Arabic and derives its root from the word *nzr*, which means to look at a place with a view, and is referred to as *paysage* in French, translated from the word meaning 'countryside view' ("etymology dictionary, 2020"). However, academically, landscape can be perceived as nature that is organized by man, as it refers more to landscape architecture. For this reason, the word landscape will be used in this research.

When landscape is evaluated within cultural practices, it leads to assumptions and conclusions through its own forms of expression (Cosgrove, 1998, p. 1). When the history of the landscape is analyzed in terms of social economy, it points to the diversity

in the cultural and visual perceptions of different classes. Landscape is an ideological concept. It is the way in which people of certain classes represent themselves and their world through their imagined relationship with nature (Cosgrove, 1998, p. 15). For a peasant, the countryside is a piece of land to be cultivated and harvested, while for a nobleman it is an object of pleasure that alludes to romantic feelings or the sublimity of nature. The cultural filtering of the individual's communication with nature plays an important role in determining whether what is viewed is a landscape or not. In this context, the cultural and social difference of the landscape painter is also seen in the manner about the landscape they tell.

Throughout history, nature and the perception of nature, which has been the source of artistic creations, have been among the main subjects of art research in every period, from primitive depictions in caves and temples to Roman mosaics, Persian miniatures, and Chinese scrolls, from the Renaissance to the Romantic period landscape paintings, and from Realism to Impressionism. The artist perception and the insight on art have undergone as striking change with the transformation in nature. During the periods when religious-themed paintings were the norm, landscape was used as a background element and, or complementary element with its imaginative depiction. Landscapes became parts of paintings during the Renaissance. Although landscapes were only used as a background, this led to art being created in a Naturalist manner once again. The 18th-century romantics generally considered nature in terms of the serenity of feelings. Landscape has become something that directs the viewer to examine their own state of mind and analyze its effect on their own emotions (Sözen, T. 2009, p.190).

Artist's view and perception of nature has more philosophical qualities after the 18 th. Century. Landscape paintings were turn into self-portraits. Thus, studying paintings by focusing on the concept of emptiness becomes easier in the mental process context of the artists. Social perception and the individual perception can easily be distinguished and analyzed.

The perception of nature by the artist who emulates and imitates nature, who treats nature aesthetically, and the view of nature by today's artists begin with the reflection of the change in the social structure of the period after 1960 on art. As part of a process that has come to the present day exponentially with an intense population growth, increase in industrial consumption, waste released into the nature, and a rapidly

changing global climate, the artist interprets nature with different perceptions, and we see more often in their artworks that their art bears the traces of existence and extinction. When the perception of nature in today's landscape paintings is analyzed through the concept of emptiness, this concept appears as landscapes on their way to extinction. Every concept carries its opposite within, and this destruction will bring about a new existence.

4.1.Landscape and Space

When it comes to the concept of emptiness in landscape painting, space is one of the primary concepts. In this chapter, how the concept of 'space' has been used, how space has been defined until today, and its types will be examined in terms of place of painting, depth, and visual space.

The word 'space' came into the Turkish language from the Latin root, through French and English. The Arabic word for 'space' is 'mekan'. Spatium in Latin stands for: space, area, field, duration, interval, and gap. The concepts of place, surface and space tell us about the perceptual differences between two-dimensionality and three-dimensionality and the perceptual dimension of landscape painting. Space is a whole. This whole includes all the elements within it, as well as the relations between them and the 'emptiness'. According to Max Wertheimer, one of the theorists of Gestalt psychology of perception, we do not see everything separately, we perceive space as a whole. In his words, "the whole is different from the sum of its parts" (Arik, 2000, p.304-315). The meaningful space between the elements are the elements that make up the whole. According to David Hockney, who thinks along the same lines, "the emptiness in painting is God" (Berger, 2011, p.21). The elements of a painting, like the elements of space, creates meaning by being in certain positions and relationships. Based on this analogy, we can say that without emptiness, intertwined forms cannot create a meaningful composition, and that without emptiness and energy, piles of atoms cannot form an object.

In painting, an area called space emerges as a result of the arrangement of forms on a surface bounded by a certain line. This area in a painting can be created with different tools and at different levels of depth. Whether the artist paints the space surrounding himself or makes an attempt to depict a completely fictional space, he makes use of space. Space is not a tangible element, a form; it is completely abstract.

In this regard, it is one with emptiness. It investigates whether emptiness can be defined or not. And it is categorized into different types. Types of space according to the elements and techniques that make up the space: Planimetric space, perspective space, volumetric space, pyramidal space, coincidental space, and irrational space. In addition, there is also a distinction between tangible and abstract space, with respect to the use of symbolic and plastic elements.

The understanding of space historically progresses in a line from classical space to surface space, and then to contemporary space. Throughout this process, the use of planimetric space is often seen in the classical space period, especially in the Gothic period. In the Renaissance, perspective space, moulded by Euclid's theorem and various perspective theories, began to be replaced by pyramidal space and atmospheric space in the High Renaissance. The use of volumetric space that began to be seen in this period is parallel to the transition from linework to shading and is used in Baroque paintings (Ülker, 2014, p.32).

4.1.1.Planimetric Space

Plans emerge when a shape gains dimension within itself or when more than one shape interacts with each other, e.g. one in the front and one in the back, one covers the other. The space obtained through plans is called Planimetric Space. In planimetric space, the illusion of depth is created by the positioning of closed forms on different plans. When they come into contact, they create the illusion of pushing and pulling each other. The use of planimetric space is mostly seen in medieval European art, Gothic movement, and icons, but it is not limited to these periods and geographies. According to Reigl, tactile perception, as seen in Egyptian and Roman art, renders the object and the field of vision independent of each other, rigidly constrains them and tangibly separates the two.

Figure 17*Marriage Feast at Cana*

Note. Image: Duccio, Marriage Feast at Cana, Italian, c. 1308-1311, Siena, Museo dell'Opera del Duomo. Date of Access:09.10.2022

In Duccio's Marriage Feast at Cana, the placing of elements is arranged in order of importance, with large figures at the top, and small and irrelevant figures at the bottom (Figure 17). In addition to the depth of meaning indicated by the placement of the symbols in the uppermost plan, planimetric space is observed throughout the work.

4.1.2.Perspective Space

Perspective space applies when by using perspective, the illusion of depth is achieved, based on the logical proportional relations of objects and scale, is whole set of rules pertaining to the illusion of depth on the surface of the canvas.

Atmospheric perspective, a special type of perspective, can be achieved through the use of lines, shadows and color. Atmospheric perspective can also be referred to as atmospheric space. However, as atmospheric perspective serves the perspective-appropriate alignment of plans within the painting, also shall be addressed under this heading.

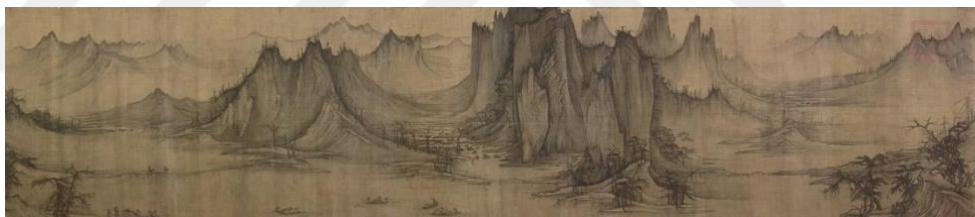
With atmospheric perspective, layers of air are taken into account as a pictorial value binding the elements of the composition together, in order to display the depth of the space. It can be observed that the saturation of colors decreases due to the

superimposition of light, or layering of refractions within the chromatic spectrum. This mixture of colors gives way to the grey coloration of layers of air. Plans are arrayed sequentially and fading ever further in accordance with the thickness of the layer of air in between them; thus, a feeling of the thickness of the atmospheric layer is generated.

In the 16th century, instead of the linear perspective of the 15th century, tonal perspective and relief effects began to be used, and these soft aerial effects were initially achieved with the sfumato technique. The sfumato technique creates a sense of atmosphere through the fusion of forms and space with a dry brush. "Massaccio was one of the first artists to use atmospheric perspective. Leonardo Da Vinci is one of the artists who used this technique who used this technic, combining with his spacial technique called sfumato. However, much earlier, the Chinese used the atmospheric perspective very skillfully, especially in landscape paintings." (Keser, 2009, p.53) (Figure 18).

Figure 18

Fishermen on a Mountain Stream



Note. Image: Xu Daoning: Fishermen on a Mountain Stream (1049), 111,4x56 cm, ink and slight color on silk, Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Xu_Daoning_-_Fishermen_on_a_Mountain_Stream_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg#/media/File:Xu_Daoning_-_Fishermen_on_a_Mountain_Stream_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg, Date of Access: 15.12.2022)

Eroğlu states that atmospheric painting emerged with the light and shadow used by Venetian artists. He says that atmospheric space, which they used to determine volume values and relief effect in forms progressed with Giorgione, the Bellini brothers and especially Tiziano, and turned into color and light painting (Eroğlu, 2006, p.55).

Just as Massacio and Leonardo Da Vinci, Constable (Figure 19) and Claude Lorraine used this new trend in painting, the effect of atmospheric space and colors. The nature and atmosphere depicted in the painting would influence the Barbizon School, which was the source of Impressionism, as was the case with the Venetian school. As the eye replaced the mind, observation replaced imagination, and artists began to paint on white canvas in the open air; optical understanding developed and advances in color theories were transferred to painting.

Figure 19

Hampstead Heath with Bathers



Note. *Hampstead Heath with Bathers* 1821-22 John Constable, <https://www.metmuseum.org/> , Date of Access: 12.12.2022

In the atmospheric perspective created with color, the illusion of depth is established with the help of unsaturated colors and diminishing contrast, as well as colors that become colder as they move away. Especially in Turner's works, the atmosphere is the subject of the painting on its own, and has a colorist and impressionist quality. Turner's formal conception is ahead of his time. It is remarkable for its dimension of meaning, atmospheric perspective, and the use of movement.

4.1.3. Volumetric Space

'Volume' can be called mass or dimension and it constitutes the third dimension of an entity. Volumetricity in a painting is achieved through the use of shading,

modulation or values. The space achieved through the volumetricity of forms is volumetric space. The transition from planimetric to volumetric space is parallel to the transition from tactile to visual perception and from linework to shading. The developments in mathematics and geometry have revealed that planar alignment or linear perspective is incapable of expressing depth.

The depth created by transitivity is a special case of volumetric space. The 'gradient' takes place on vertical or horizontal axes and increases the tension. Depth is represented by a gradual increase or decrease. The psychology of holistic perception analyzes physiological structure and visual habits and reveals that the eye, seeking stability and comfort, perceives close or similar objects as being connected to one another. Accordingly, transitivity in form, size, movement and the space in between is achieved through the comparison of similarities.

4.1.4. Pyramidal Space

A triangular composition in which figures or forms are depicted by placing them inside an imaginary pyramid is called a pyramidal composition (Figure 20).

Figure 20

The Madonna of the Meadow



Note. Painting: Raphael, The Madonna of the Meadow, c. 1506, , Date of Access: 12.12.2022

The base of the pyramid, obtained by placing the elements of a painting in an equilateral triangle or isosceles triangle, is usually square shaped and its sides meet at

a vertex. This use of space is mostly encountered in religious paintings and in the Renaissance. The pyramid here is not a horizontal pyramid, but a vertical one with an imaginary base.

4.1.5. Abstract and Tangible Space

The tangible and the abstract are fundamentally a distinction between the representational and the non-representational. Hançerlioğlu says that in terms of philosophy, the concept of the tangible is the holistic reality grasped by the senses and its equivalent of truth in human consciousness. The difference between truth and reality is that truth is an unchanging, absolute fact. While in idealist philosophy, the abstract exists only in thought, in dialectical philosophy, as a form of knowledge, it reflects the objective reality of the missing, of the part (Hançerlioğlu, 201, p.377).

Tangible space is a representational illusion in line with the concept of tangible. The interior or exterior space, represented through tangible space, reminds us of a reality. In abstract space, however, the reality created through plastic fiction is important in visual perception, regardless of the represented reality.

In the transition from tangible to abstract space, one can observe a transition similar to the transition from linework to shading, from planarity to depth, from closed to open form, from multiplicity to unity, from absolute and proportional determination of objects, which Wölfflin observed in the transition from the 16th to the 17th century. In this process, it is possible to observe that open forms, forms constructed depending on light, shadow, and modulation gradually become elements of a composition in independent geometry.

Figure 21 *Abstract Composition*



Note. Image: Fahrelnisa Zeid, *Abstract Composition*
<https://www.bozluartproject.com/en/exhibition/fahrelnissa-zeid-towards-a-storm/> , Date of Access: 12.12.2022

In this example, the amorphous shapes created with lines, larger in the center and smaller towards the edges, create an abstract space (Figure 21).

In daily life, the concept of the abstract is defined with the negative criterion of not being perceivable by the senses. However, this definition became insufficient when it was discovered that the senses were insufficient in perceiving many tangible realities, such as radio waves or infrared rays. Abstract refers to concepts which are perceived mostly through thought, while tangible refers to concepts which are perceived through an understanding of existence and reality. In parallel, tangible or symbolic form emulates a figure or an object; it reproduces and reflects its form, color, texture, properties, and meaning.

4.1.6. Classical Space

In classical space, the generalizations of the tangible space depicting a symbolic area apply. The area symbolized is constructed as a scene from the surface of the painting inwards. For this very reason, atmospheric, linear, and chromatic perspectives, the depth acquired through foreshortening and overlapping relations, and the potentials of color in relation to distance are used to serve this illusion. Paintings require that we look through them, as if they were windows.

Contemporary space and surface space suggest a space on and beyond the surface. This anti-Euclidean, non-figurative space suggests curved surfaces, a relative depth outside of classical perspective, transitions (passages), and third and fourth dimensions. The concern for space in art moves from classical space to modern space and contemporary space. However, this course is not linear; there are flashbacks and repetitions throughout the history of art.

4.1.7. Coincidental Space

Two elements are necessary for coincidence to occur: Impulse and action. Metaphysical thought appeals to concepts such as necessity, freedom and causality in order to make sense of impulse and action. Although coincidence and necessity are usually considered opposites, coincidence can be necessity and necessity can be coincidence. According to some metaphysicians, coincidence is necessity whose causes cannot be known. Here, necessity is treated as a different category from causality. Hançerlioğlu states that some metaphysicians equate coincidence with freedom: "According to Spinoza, for example, everything happens by absolute logical necessity, there is no such thing as coincidence in the physical realm as there is no free will in the mental realm" (Hançerlioğlu. 2011, p.34)

Figure 22*Abstract Composition**Note. Painting: Mübin Orhon (1924-1981) Abstract Composition*

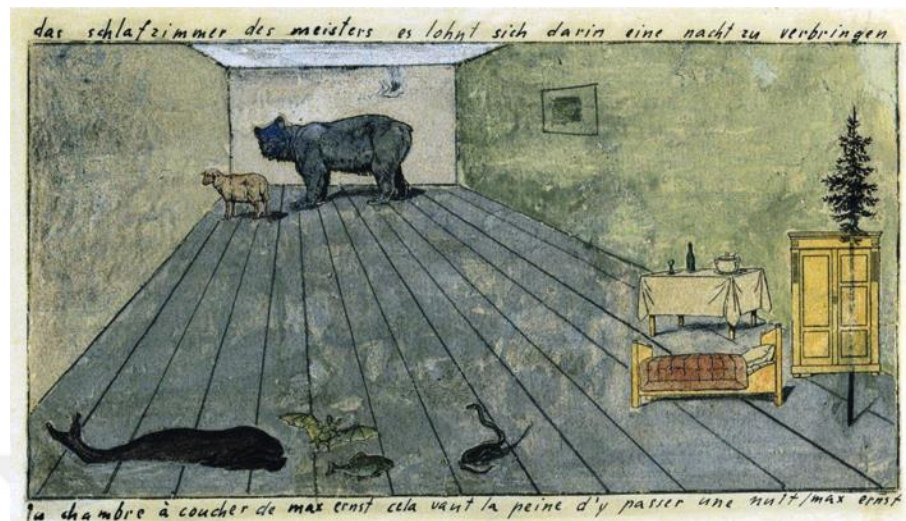
Coincidentalism is seen especially in automatism and action painting (Figure 22). Overlapping shadows, lines, and colors are formed by gravity or speed, freed from the painter's will, and spill onto the canvas.

4.1.8.Irrational Space

Irrational space is seen in metaphysical and surreal paintings. That way, it is possible to encounter a new fictional understanding of space, apart from a depiction of a space that can be defined in reality. The use of foreshortening, in which the parts in the front appear larger, and the parts in the distance appear shorter and narrower, is quite common. An example of irrational space is the surrealist depictions of space in the works of surrealist painters such as Max Ernst (Figure 23), Salvador Dali, and Rene Magritte.

Figure 23

Das Schlafzimmer des meisters es lohnt sich darin eine nacht zu verbringen



Note. Max Ernst, *Das Schlafzimmer des meisters es lohnt sich darin eine nacht zu verbringen* (*The master's bedroom, it's worth spending a night there*), 1920. Date of Access: 12.12.2022

4.1.9.Space in Chinese Landscape Paintings

Wang Wei, who researched the subject of space in terms of landscape, in his book *Shan-shui-fu*, defines perspective in three different phases:

1-Shen-Yuan Distance to Depth: It is the most used method in Chinese landscapes in which when the method applied, the viewer feels as if he is on a high hill and where he stands he looks upon, and sees the landscape in a panoramic way (Figure 24). We find in Dong_yuan Works (Chang, 2006).

Figure 24

Awaiting the Ferry at the Foot of the Mountains in Summer



Note. Dong Yuan, *Awaiting the Ferry at the Foot of the Mountains in Summer*, <https://www.comuseum.com/?s=dong+yuan> reached, 30.12.2022

2-Kao-Yuan Raised Distance: It is the method generally applied in vertical pictures. The viewer is located relatively low and directs his gaze upwards (Figure 25). The dominant horizon of the painting is designed a little higher accordingly, and the viewer's gaze shifts towards the elevations indicated by the placement of the mountains on top of each other at different levels; so each placement creates its own horizon.

Figure 25*Returning Late From A Spring Outing*

Note. Dai, Jin, *Returning Late From A Spring Outing*
<https://www.comuseum.com/painting/masters/dai-jin/returning-late-from-a-spring-outing/> reached, 30.12.2022

3-Ping-Yuan Flat Distance: The viewer's gaze stretching freely from a close position towards infinity (Figure 26).

Figure 26 *Awaiting Ferry*

Note. Dong Yuan, *Awaiting Ferry*, <https://www.comuseum.com/?s=dong+yuan>
 , Date of Access 30.12.2022

4.2. Far East Landscape Painting and the Concept of Emptiness

Eastern philosophy followed a path that drove people away from concrete values. Nishida Kitaro, one of the founders of the Kyoto school that best interprets Far

Eastern art, aims to grasp the "space of the heart/mind" (kokoro no kūkan). He says that in 'grasping the space of the heart/mind' it is not the object that is grasped, but the 'space' in which the self (ni oite aru kūkan) or the process of perception/creation is located. Comp. (Özdemir, 2011)

This is about the heart and mind experiencing the same thing at the same time. This is perhaps the reason why Far Eastern landscape paintings have a meditative aspect that captivates the viewer. The most harmonious combination of the concept of emptiness and landscape painting is seen in Chinese landscape paintings. "Chinese painting was mainly influenced by Taoist philosophy and continues to enrich by the philosophy of Ch'an (zen). During the Tang Dynasty (7th- 9th centuries), in the paintings of Chinese artists Wang Wei and Wu Tao-tzu, the concept of void began to take an active position by then. The artistic style and the philosophy reached its highest level in the Sung and Yung period (10th and 15th centuries)" (Cheng, 2006, p.99).

It is a philosophy that develops through concepts such as mountains, valleys, rivers and roads, principally selected from nature. (Cheng, 2006, p.57) This philosophy is also reflected in the painting, and 'emptiness' carries a certain representation, as does each figure such as mountain, water, tree, etc. The space used is a reflection of this representation.

The emptiness in Chinese painting is, as Cheng puts it, "a connection that allows one to reach from a visible world to an invisible world through inspiration" (Cheng, 2006, p.51).

On a piece of paper of three-square feet, the part painted only occupies one third. On the rest of the paper, it seems there are no images at all; nevertheless, the images are eminently existent there. Thus, emptiness is not nothing. Emptiness is the painting itself (Cheng, 2006, p.131).

Chinese painting is more inclined to philosophical concepts rather than pictorial elements and the meanings we perceive from objects. Emptiness is the place in which human beings exist, or in which they reach a kind of nothingness.

Figure 27*Stroll About in Spring*

Note. Zhan Zigian, *Stroll About in Spring*. (Mid 6th century) Date of Access: 01.06.2020 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zhan_Ziqian

In Zhan Zigian's landscape painting 'Stroll About in Spring', the empty space left in the middle of the landscape creates a sense of depth (Figure 27). This composition is an element in Chinese painting in general and the viewer is expected to fill the gaps with their imagination.

Figure 28*Five Dynasties Period*

Note. Dong Yuan, *Five Dynasties Period* (907–960), *Xiao and Xiang Rivers*, Date of Access: 02.06.2020 <https://www.comuseum.com/painting/masters/dong-yuan/>

Dong Yuan is famous for his landscape paintings and especially for his use of monochrome ink. In the landscape painting *Xiao and Xiang Rivers*, the empty space left by the rivers creates a sense of depth. He uses a special technique in which he achieves a texture with his 'hemp fiber' brush (Figure 28). The strokes achieved with this brush are suitable for depicting the soft rolling mountains of the south. The subject is depicted by creating dots and lines that seem random but are in fact very finely put into place.

Wang Wei on Chinese painting: "By means of a slim brush, re-create the immense body of emptiness." (Chang, 2006, p.102,)

Figure 29

Autumn Colors among Streams and Mountains



Note. Zhao Ji , *Autumn Colors among Streams and Mountains*, (960–1279), *Hanging scroll, ink and light color on paper, 97 x 53 cm, National Palace Museum, Taipei, Date of Access: (02.06.2020*

<https://www.comuseum.com/painting/masters/zhao-ji/autumn-colors-among-streams-and-mountains/>

In his landscape painting, *Autumn Colors among Streams and Mountains*, Zhao Ji depicts a more vertical composition with trees at the bottom and hills sloping upwards (Figure 29). To give his landscape painting a lyrical quality, he created shadows with light ink washes to replicate the effect of misty waters. This work represents a transition from the monumental Northeast landscapes in periodical style to the more lyrical atmosphere of the Southeast. In the paintings of the masters in the Far East, cloud and fog were among the important elements in the creation of a painting. Artists began to depict the nature they internalized during their walks in nature by thinking about how they should portray it with meditation methods (Gombrich, 2011, p. 153).

Figure 30

One Thousand Li of Rivers and Mountains



Note. Wang Ximeng (11th to early 12th c.), *One Thousand Li of Rivers and Mountains*, Handscroll, ink and color on silk, 51.5 x 1191.5 cm, Palace Museum, Beijing <https://www.comuseum.com/?s=Wang+Ximeng+>, Date of Access: 02.06.2020

Figure 31

One Thousand Li of Rivers and Mountains. Detail



Note. Detail- Image 11. Wang Ximeng (late 11th to early 12th c.), One Thousand Li of Rivers and Mountains, Handscroll, ink and color on silk, 51.5 x 1191.5 cm, Palace Museum, Beijing

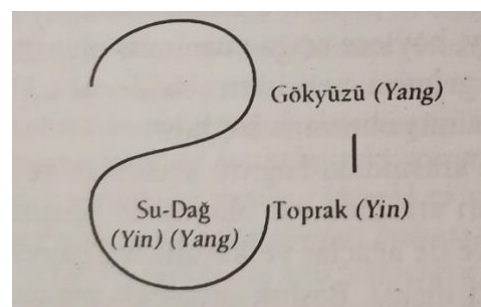
One of the most famous paintings in Chinese history is One Thousand Li of Rivers and Mountains, the only surviving masterpiece by the young prodigy painter Wang Ximeng of the late Northern Song dynasty (960-1127). Wang Ximeng's One Thousand Li of Rivers and Mountains is a landscape painting that is around 11 meters (Figure 30). When we look at the details of this landscape painting, we see the mountains and the earth with the emptiness formed by the sky and the river (Figure 31). In these early Chinese landscape paintings, we can see the effect of meditative paintings that immerse the viewer and relax the mind.

A distinctive feature of Chinese landscapes is that the paper or fabric used for the painting is considered a form and must be rolled up afterward. In the book Void Fullness, Cheng emphasizes that “wrapping the painting by rolling means dominating the image, reliving the harmony in the essence of life, solving the miracle of the concept of time in every moment of folding, that is, reaching the level of creativity (for the audience participating in this action).

Above all, the Chinese artist seeks to transform the concept of experiential time into vital space” (Cheng, 2006 p.141) Wrapping the finished work is another reference to the ongoing flow of the experience. This approach reflects the spiral distribution of the Yin Yang philosophy in landscape paintings (Figure 32).

Figure 32

Sky, Water-Mountain, Soil



Note. Chang; 2006, p.130, Sky, Mountain, Soil

In early Japanese landscapes, as in Chinese landscapes, we see empty spaces, sacred mountains, and rivers. "The spirituality of Japanese art, which is 'intertwined with nature', 'envelops the heavens and earth in a terracotta black tea bowl', in which 'the ordinary, everyday mind/heart becomes one and the same through art (heijōshin soku dō)." According to Nishida, this spirituality manifests itself in the line of the ink painting of the East, which is 'one with nature, spontaneously as it is (jinen hōniteki)'. In this sense, in such an art, it is 'not the subject but nature' that produces the work. In Nishida's words: "Poiesis is the making of the object by the self. It is subjective in its entirety. But the object is not simply made by the self. There has to be a historical basis. The subject itself already emerges from the self-contradiction of the historical world" (Özdemir, 2011).

Mountains, which have a special spiritual value in Japanese mythology, are depicted quite often. Mount Fuji, one of the three sacred mountains of Japan, appears in early landscape paintings. It was Katsushika Hokusai who made Mount Fuji recognizable. *Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji* is an Ukiyo-e series consisting of 46 pieces with later additions (Figure 33). What makes this series important for the history of art is Hokusai's style of blending Japanese philosophy and teachings and his mastery of poetic expression. It is very common in Japanese paintings to depict human emotions while creating these successive series. Space and time, landscape and human emotions are identified with one another in this process, which is defined as walking the road. This process can be explained as going from one place to another. These paintings that merge human and nature work with an associative structure that combines the direct and the indirect, the learned and the culturally derived. Japanese artists draw their strength from the intertwining of nature, culture, and discourse.

Figure 33*Thirty-six Views of Mt.Fuji - Red Fuji*

Note. Hokusai Katsushika 1760-1849 Thirty-six Views of Mt.Fuji - Red Fuji
<https://www.artelino.com/articles/hokusai-36-views-fuji.asp> Date of Access:
 07.06.2021

Ukiyo-e paintings are a style of painting favored during the Edo (Tokyo) period, mostly produced through woodblock printing. It can be translated into Turkish as flowing, fluctuating, floating world paintings, or ephemeral world paintings. The impermanence of life and worldly things is very important in Buddhism. This is intensely felt in Hokusai's paintings. In this series, Mount Fuji is depicted from different angles, at different distances and in different atmospheres. The Great Wave off Kanagawa (1829-1833), one of the first works that comes to mind when it comes to Japanese painting, is another of the most famous examples that introduced this type of painting to the world (Figure 34).

Figure 34*Thirty-six Views of Mt.Fuji*

Note. Hokusai Katsushika 1760-1849, Thirty-six Views of Mt.Fuji - The Great Wave , <https://www.artelino.com/articles/hokusai-36-views-fuji.asp> , Date of Access: 07.06.2021

This painting is characterized by Hokusai's use of multiple perspectives, usually referred to by art historians. He uses the depth that differs by our gaze in different parts of the painting, the different points of view he places up, in the center and down in the painting create the depth that art historians call floating perspective, and this depth draws us into the painting.

Unlike Western art, which tends to grasp the 'space of the object' (mono no kūkan), Asian art tries to grasp the 'space of the mind/heart' (kokoro no kūkan). This space is not out or against the self, but 'the space in which self resides.' But this does not mean that in Nishida's definition the 'space of the mind/heart' is 'subjective' as opposed to 'objective'. For Nishida, the 'space of the mind/heart' is 'historical space', in other words, our self is located in historical space. Although Nishida elaborates in detail on the 'metaphysical background' and 'logic' of the mutually influencing and determining relationship between man and nature, subject and environment in 'historical space', he mentions only a few examples of concrete expressions of the 'grasping of the space of the mind/heart' in Japanese arts. "Our technique has to be the technique of nature. Where you consume the technique of your own self and forget it, artistic creation emerges" (Özdemir, 2011).

4.3.Landscape Painting and the Concept of Emptiness in Western Art

Landscape, as a subject on its own, has been included in Western Painting since the 16th century. It is seen that the theme of landscape in Western Painting emerged as a necessity of lifestyle and as a result of a reckoning with nature. While painting outdoors, Western painters created a new form and style in painting by observing the light and its effects on objects and developed a new understanding of painting in the application of paint on canvas. The pattern-based painting of the Renaissance and Classicism, the new form that emerged as a result of the reflections of the layers of paint obtained by the Baroque Artists by applying the paints on top of each other, revealed a new understanding of painting. In the 19th and 20th centuries, the patterned precision of the Renaissance was gradually replaced by the painterly form (Turani, 1985, p.28).

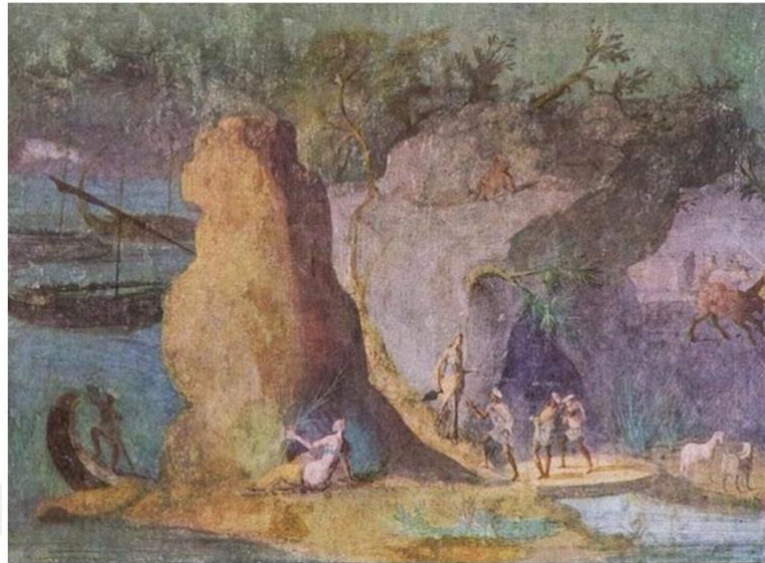
Prior to this, Hellenistic landscape paintings appear as backgrounds in frescoes depicting the mythological stories of the Iliad and Odyssey (Figure 35). Figures also draw attention in these landscapes. In contrast to the Chinese landscape, nature and people inspired by stories are depicted in place of fairy-tale images inspired by nature. Although the images may seem similar, their emergence is different.

Figure 35

Landscape 1st century AD Mural



Note. Figure 14. Landscape 1st century AD Mural; Villa Albani, Rome
<https://nl.pinterest.com/pin/68187381840092888/?mt=login>, Date of Access 02.06.2020

Figure 36*A Chapter from the Odyssey*

Note. A Chapter from the Odyssey 60-40 BC, 180 cm, Rome
<http://www.theartwolf.com/landscapes/roman-odyssey-landscape.htm> Date of Access:
 02.06.2020

In this fresco, which is an episode from the story of Odessa, Roman painters were very interested in the problems of perspective and space (Figure 36). Although it cannot be claimed that they solved all their problems in terms of linear and aerial perspective in this period, it is undoubtedly true that they skillfully created the illusion of space. Especially in Greek, Hellenistic and Roman art, landscape paintings and wall frescoes are in naturalist style. With this naturalistic style, the characters of the subject of the painting also take their place in the foreground.

Figure 37

Annunciation to the Blessed Virgin Mary



Note. Annunciation to the Blessed Virgin Mary (National Ohrid Museum) Date of Access: 03.06.2020

With Christianity, a more static (perspective and proportion) understanding of composition prevailed instead of the naturalistic understanding. A formal approach was adopted and paintings of holy people were depicted on the grounds of sacred texts. In this context, especially in the medieval European painting art, the background is especially empty but complete with gilded colors; and it was aimed to direct the focus of the viewer to the subject or the person. The sense of depth is lost in these paintings (Figure 37).

Figure 38*Lamentation*

Note. Giotto di Bondone, Lamentation, fresco, c. 1305–06; in the Arena Chapel, Padua, Italy. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Giotto-di-Bondone>, Date of Access: 10.01.2023

Before the Renaissance, it was Giotto di Bondone (1267 - 1337) who revived the Hellenistic formulas of space, movement and emotion (Figure 38). In his paintings, Giotto creates an idealized perception of space. Instead of static compositions which are empty but complete with gilded colors and which try to focus the viewer on the subject or the person, views of sky and nature begins to differentiate the painting from the rest. It adds a fairytale-like softness to the spiritual.” (Graf, 2019).

Figure 39*Landscape*

Note. Leonardo da Vinci, Landscape, 1473. Florence, Uffizi Gallery
https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Leonardo-da-Vinci-landscape-1473-Florence-Uffizi-Gallery_fig6_226963956 15.09.2021 Date of access: 04.05.2021

This painting of Arno Valley, which Leonardo Da Vinci drew with a fountain pen on a sheet of paper in 1453, is considered one of the first landscape paintings without any human figures (Figure 39). It has an emptiness and sublimity similar to Chinese landscape paintings. However, it is possible that Da Vinci has produced this analytical artwork to explore botany, nature and perspective with a positivist approach. Another important reason why the works of artists such as Leonardo Da Vinci, Michelangelo, Raphael, Tiziano and Dürer have a value far beyond their contemporaries is the unconventional way of incorporating the void in these works (Kara, 2006).

In his book 'The Story of Art', Gombrich mentions that the rigidness issue of images, observed even in paintings where every detail is depicted with craftsmanship akin to an imitation of nature, is solved with Leonardo's sfumato (gradual melting) technique. "If the margins are not drawn rigidly, if the form is left a little indistinct, as if disappearing in the shadow, any impression of rigidity and dryness will disappear (Gombrich, 2014, p. 302)". Thus, the boundaries that melt into the void add depth to

the work, and the forms that do not have sharp lines arouse curiosity in the viewer and give them the opportunity to explore.

Figure 40

Battle of Alexander at Issus



Note. 'Battle of Alexander at Issus,' detail of an oil painting on panel by Albrecht Altdorfer, 1529; in the Alte Pinakothek, Munich <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Albrecht-Altdorfer>, Date of access: 04.05.2021

Altdorfer's masterpiece 'The Battle of Alexander at Issus' (1529; Alte Pinakothek, Munich) is both an incredibly detailed battle scene and a highly dramatic and impressive landscape. There in this landscape we can observe the mysticism native to the eastern approach. The sublimity of nature is handled in spirituality (Figure 40).

In other works, Altdorfer painted the first pure landscapes since antiquity, i.e., landscape scenes without any human figures. His favorite subject is the thick and impenetrable forests of Germany and Austria. He is also among the first to point out sunsets and picturesque ruins at dusk.

If we look at 19th century western painting, we see that with Romanticism, landscape painting overtook figure painting for the first time, and here we can see that the concept of existence and emptiness is embodied in painting.

Japanese philosopher D. T. Suzuki writes that one of the defining characteristics of Japanese arts is 'silent solitude', in other words, 'the feeling of solitude aroused by the sense of infinity', which includes elements such as 'simplicity, being oneself, breaking out of the mold'. In his words, 'a simple corner with no frills' makes it possible to evoke this feeling, to 'glimpse the infinite out of the corner of one's eye' (Suzuki, 1979, pp. 133-135)

Figure 41

Coastal Scene with Cliffs



Note. John Constable (1776–1837), Coastal Scene with Cliffs (c 1814), oil on paper laid on canvas, 12.1 x 23.5 cm, Yale Center for British Art, New Haven, CT. Wikimedia Commons. <https://eclecticlight.co/2020/07/30/skying-3-john-constable/>, Date of access: 04.05.2021

The naturalistic understanding of landscape, brought to existence by the English landscape painter Constable, is very similar to this essence in this respect. According to Constable, spirituality is inherent to the nature, therefore, landscape paintings present spirituality. Constable recognized that nature has become a mechanic universe through 18th century philosophy, nonetheless, he believed in the existence of things that are full with the sacred, both in trees and in flowers. According to him, only if one devotes oneself to nature, then the moral and spiritual quality in nature can be revealed. For this reason, pastoral romanticism in landscapes should be conserved. Influenced by Constable, the Barbizon School's view of nature is also romantic. According to romanticism, life on earth reveals itself to us in its many forms and characteristics. Life

on earth is so profound that its grandness cannot be compared to the inferiority of human beings. Behind everything that is perceived, and behind everything that exists, there is an infinite, eternal unity, which is God. This eternal and everlasting unity manifests itself to us internally as reason and externally as nature, and man is a part of this unfolding. According to romanticism, since the presence of each work of art is a product of the creative power of the human soul, they carry a piece from eternal and everlasting unity, and landscape paintings represent the image that corresponds to life in nature. Other artists from Barbizon School, having similar understandings of nature, such as Theodore Rousseau, Corot, Courbet, Daubigny reflect their unarguable beliefs in pastoral views through a romantic style. Painting pastoral landscapes mean the essence of art for them, and art exists solely to express emotion. Therefore, sensuality, sincere modesty and meekness are the main characteristics of the aforementioned artists' landscape paintings. However, Western understanding (especially in Paris) of academic art takes a completely different turn in 19th century. Constable's landscape paintings are the embodiment of feelings such as solitude, emptiness, silence, and sublimity (Figure 41).

Figure 42

Norham Castle



Note. Joseph Mallord William Turner, R.A. (London 1775-1851), Norham Castle: Sunrise <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/turner-norham-castle-colour-study-d02344>, Date of access: 04.05.2021

Figure 43*Norham Castle, Sunrise*

Note. Joseph Mallord William Turner, [Norham Castle, Sunrise](#), c.1845, oil on canvas, Tate Britain , Date of Access: 04.05.2021

Turner's two distinct paintings of the same view in different years were made during the Romanticism movement (Figure 43, 44). It is possible to observe that these two landscape paintings have similar characteristics with Monet's 'Impression, Sunrise', the painting that gave the art movement impressionism its name. The landscape can only be interpreted experimentally as a test of colors according to the changing intensity of light during the day. However, the gradual fading of clarity in the first painting, giving way to the more unknown and ambiguous, may also be Turner's search for the mystical and more oriental void. This feeling of emptiness enables us to feel ourselves as belonging within the painting through the empty spaces on the canvas. It arouses a sense of curiosity in the viewer and our mind completes this gap. It is possible to attribute a different meaning to the foggy and ambiguous landscape in each glance.

Turner's works are notable for their pursuit of innovation, advanced brush strokes, a chromatic spectrum, and widely applied depths of atmosphere.

English art critique John Ruskin defines Turner as "the most accurate artist in blending the moods of the nature". In his following artwork, the artist commenced to use the colours more transparently, hence, his works thoroughly evoke pure light.

In the atmospheric perspective created with color, the illusion of depth is established with the help of unsaturated colors and diminishing contrast, as well as

colors that become colder as they move away. Especially in Turner's works, the atmosphere is the subject of the painting on its own, and has a colorist and impressionist quality. Turner's formal conception is ahead of his time. It is remarkable for its dimension of meaning, atmospheric perspective, and use of movement.

The gradual fading or loss of clarity of the landscape may also be a criticism of a life that has lost its clarity. Does the second (on the right side) painting break our accustomed perception and enable us to look at this painting from a different perspective? Is it possible that the painter wanted to stimulate our sense of discovery while working on these two paintings at two different times?

Figure 44

Riesengebirge



Note. Caspar David Friedrich, *Riesengebirge* 1835

<https://www.caspardavidfriedrich.org/biography.html> Date of access:

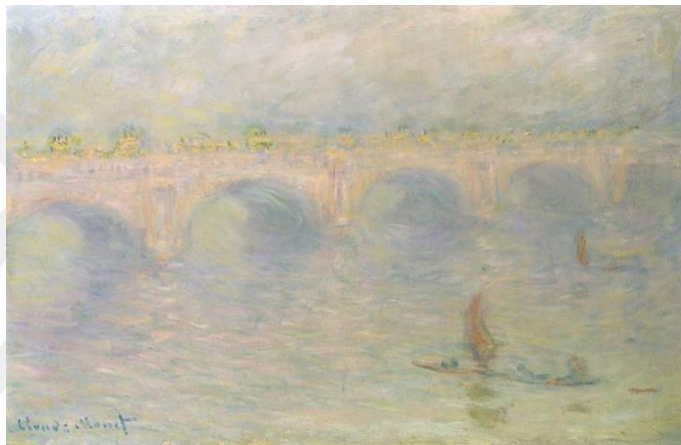
04.05.2021

Casper David Friedrich is one of the painters who best reflected existential anxiety among the romantics. Unoccupied pastoral landscapes in his paintings make the viewer feel one within nature (Figure 44) It creates spaces that we can refer to as meditative paintings. Caspar David Friedrich, who is considered to be the most significant landscape painter in German Romanticism, was an artist who followed the path of Schelling's romantic philosophy of nature, which imbues that "man can comprehend the divinity in nature only to the extent that he is in it" (Krausse, 2005,

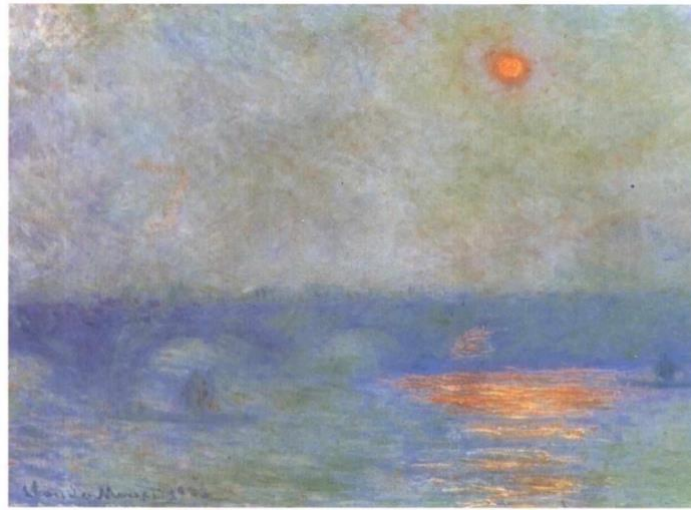
p.57). The artist, who we can closely associate with German idealism, summarizes the philosophy that forms the foundations of romanticism by saying, "Close your eyes, see yourself first with your spiritual eye" (Turani, 1992, p. 496). This also refers to Nishida Kitaro's idea suggesting that Self-awareness is a first-hand realization of the spontaneity of everyday experience. Nishida chose the colloquial Japanese word 'jikaku' to describe this awareness. Jikaku is the awareness of one's own creation during the realization of one's own essence (Özdemir, 2011).

Figure 45

Waterloo Bridge, Sunlight Effect



Note. Claude Monet, Waterloo Bridge, Sunlight Effect, 1900, Oil on Canvas, 65 x 100 cm, Foundation E.G. Bührle Collection, Zurich, Switzerland. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Waterloo_Bridge_\(Monet_series\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Waterloo_Bridge_(Monet_series)) Date of Access:03.06.2021

Figure 46*Waterloo Bridge*

<i>Note.</i>	<i>Claude</i>	<i>Monet,</i>	<i>Waterloo</i>	<i>Bridge</i>	<i>(1903)</i>
	<i>https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Waterloo_Bridge_(Monet_series)</i>				<i>Date of Access</i>
					<i>03.06.2021</i>

Claude Monet's 'Impression, Sunrise' is often seen as the painting that gave impressionism its name (Figure 46). However, this painting, which depicts the sky and the sea in all their colors and reflections of light, is a reference to the sublimity of space and nature. This painting seems to depict a reflection of Monet's mind as one with nature. These paintings could also stand for Monet's search for the mystical and more oriental void, like Turner. This sense of emptiness arouses curiosity in the viewer with the traces reflected on the canvas and obscuring the clarity. The exact same mysticism attributed to Van Gogh's paintings in art history is also felt here. In the paintings of the artists of this movement, the light colors and atmospheric games of impressionism were not attached importance. These painters, who wanted to show objects in a solid structure and were not satisfied with the colors of the sun, reshaped nature by taking all colors into their palettes (Turani, 1992, p.113).

Figure 47*Wheatfield with Crows*

Note. Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam *Wheatfield with Crows*, July 1890
https://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buğday_Tarlası_ve_Kargalar Date of Access:
 08.05.2021

Van Gogh shifted modern painting from a phenomenological to a mystical direction. Unlike the impressionists, he painted with a mystical sensibility, independent of factualism, and wanted to make the reality of nature visible with his transphysical sensibility. When his paintings are viewed, the reflections of his enthusiasm and pessimism can be seen as clear as day (Figure 47). Van Gogh wanted to unlock the secrets of nature with his superior sensitivity and intuitive power. He aspired to reflect reality in his paintings through his mystical feelings and ecstasies. The understanding of emulation from nature that dominates classical art did not fit his intuitive world. The world he wanted to reflect is actually more profound. The concept of reality that modern painting wanted to reflect and the reality that Van Gogh wanted to reflect overlap in the context of reflecting the truth of existence. What Van Gogh contributed to modern art is mystical sensibility (Alparslan, 2018, p. 207). The effort of modern painting to reflect reality gained a transphysical dimension with Van Gogh. Therefore, modern painting served to an understanding that sought after the unseen rather than the concrete. Van Gogh's contribution to modern painting can be summarized within this context as an attempt to visualise the reality that cannot be sensed rather than reflecting what is seen and perceived.

Figure 48*Segelboot auf dem Meer*

Note. Wassily Kandinsky: 1902 "Segelboot auf dem Meer".
<https://www.sueddeutsche.de/kultur/unterwegs-mit-wassily-kandinsky-und-gabriele-muenter-das-sehen-und-die-sehnsucht-1.5063103>, Date of Access 03.06.2021

In his early paintings, Kandinsky also chose to express himself based on landscapes (Figure 48).

He argued that the best way to express emotions is through instinct and primitive elements, and stated that one of the conditions for artistic creation is the direct transmission of emotion.

For Kandinsky, "the understanding that art is the perception and expression of an infinite spirit, a universal soul beyond daily life weighed heavy" (Antmen, 2008, p.81).

In his book 'Concerning the Spiritual in Art', Kandinsky suggest that artists are the spiritual teachers of the world (Kandinsky, 2015, p.13). He emphasized inner emotion. He also stated that primitive artists had this inner feeling (Kandinsky, 2015, p.27). In Kandinsky's book, relationships in art are not based solely on external form, but on a commonality of meaning. External similarities of form are sometimes, even often, possible. However, only the inner meaning should be considered when evaluating

spiritual relationships (Kandinsky, 2015, p.15). The book emphasizes the need for artists to lean towards the soul and spirituality.

Figure 49

Nature study on the Yellow Stagecoach

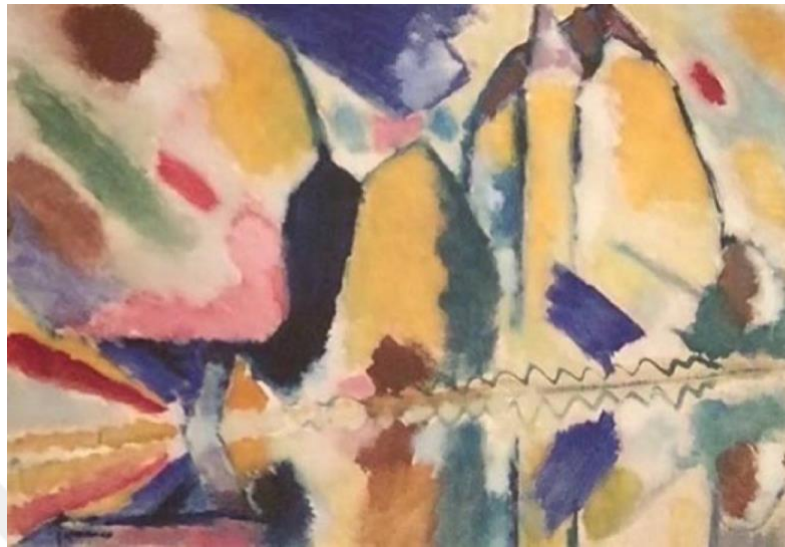


*Note. Kandinsky, Kallmünz - Nature study on the Yellow Stagecoach
 Lenbachhaus, Munich 1903, <https://www.bergverein-kallmuenz.de/Maler-in-kallmuenz/14-Wassily-Kandinsky.html> Date of Access: 03.06.2021*

Kandinsky alleged that his visual choice stemmed from an 'internal compulsion' to express and sought a synthesis of the arts in which meaning is created through the interaction and space of text and image, sound and meaning, sign, and empty space. It possible to notice the traces of this pursuit in his initial landscape paintings (Figure 49). With Kandinsky, it is possible to witness how a landscape is transformed into a whole painting through the mental impressions of an artist. The initial signs of such abstractions can be felt in the landscape paintings of artists who have just begun their journey leading to the total abstract.

Figure 50

Autumn



Note. Kandinsky, *Autumn*, 1912, Kandinsky - Autumn II, 1912.jpg <https://www.kandinskywasily.de/werk-670.php> Date of Access: 03.06.2021

Kandinsky shares his mind map with us in this landscape abstraction in its entirety (Figure 50). It becomes harder to recognize the forms we perceive, we can feel the music in our minds just as he intended.

Figure 51

Landscape with Five Houses



Note. Malevich Kazimir, Landscape with Five Houses, 1932, oil on canvas, 83x62cm <https://www.wikiart.org/en/kazimir-malevich/landscape-with-five-houses> Date of Access: 09.10.2021

This work, which can be defined as transitional landscape in 1900s, is Malevich's journey from landscape painting to black square. Malevich's landscape with five houses (Figure 51). We can observe the initial traces of both the effect of suprematism and progressing towards abstract in this painting. The fact that each of the houses looks like spaces can be associated with emptiness through the countryside being forgotten or its loneliness.

Figure 52*RheinII*

Note. Gursky, Andreas, RheinII, 1999
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rhein_II#/media/File:Rhein_II.jpg Date of
 Access: 09.10.2021

In Ben Lewis's interview with Gursky World September 27, 202, 30', Andreas Gursky attributes this landscape painting, which he created by manipulating photographs taken at different times and by erasing the surrounding structures, to the power of the narrative built on the concepts of 'fullness and emptiness' using minimal elements (Figure 52). Once Gursky films for a year-and-a-half on the banks of the Rhine River, waiting for the exact moment to create the picture in his mind's eye, he then starts to work to re-create the very aura of the picture that now resembles a painting with the help of technological capabilities. The 'now' that was exterminated with digital brush strokes unearthed the landscape of another time (Demirci, 2021, p.39).

Figure 53*Bahrain*

Note. Gursky, Andreas, Bahrain I 2005
<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artists/andreas-gursky-2349> *Date of*
Access.12.12.2021

These photographs, demonstrating man-made structures and nature in different unisons, unravel the transformation of land and landscape by creating meaningless spaces with multiple repetitions (Figure 53). Another important aspect is being able to clearly see how the earth is deformed in geometric and human-like forms. In short, Gursky's photographs are works emphasizing the spatial productions created by the existence of post-modern society of globalization era. These repetitions and overlapping photographs constitute a digital landscape image.

Figure 54*Des Herbstes Runengespinst*

Note. Anselm Kiefer, 2006, *Des Herbstes Runengespinst*
<https://www.sothebys.com/en/articles/language-as-landscape-anselm-kiefer-and-the-poetry-of-paul-celan> Date of Access.12.12.2021

Kiefer employs the legacy and power of poetry in addition to a German tradition regarding land as a metaphor for the foundation of human existence.

Through the symbolic weight of a plowed land, *Des Herbstes Runengespinst* engages with a great German tradition advocated by his fellow countryman, the nineteenth-century Romantic painter Caspar David Friedrich, which emphasizes an emotional response to the natural world. Kiefer's explicit battle scenes offer the viewer a spiritual contemplation of the landscape as a powerful reflection of the human condition (Figure 54). Kiefer's ability to transform the material reality of a painting into an object of fundamental metaphorical significance lies at the core of the artist's invention.

The attractiveness of Anselm Kiefer's landscapes lies in the ingenuity with which Anselm Kiefer draws from such diverse fields as confrontation with existential

emptiness, personal biography, materiality, collective cultural spirit and, perhaps most importantly, poetry. (Auping, M., 2007).

Figure 55

Horror Vacui



Note. Alejandro Almanza Pereda, *Horror Vacui*
<https://www.peramuzesi.org.tr/blog/horror-vacui-ya-da-bosluk-korkusu-alejandro-almanza-pereda/1217> , Date of Access.12.12.2021

In his series *Horror Vacui* (Fear of Emptiness, 2010-17), Alejandro Almanza Pereda uses Romantic landscapes and genre paintings that he sought and found in Istanbul (Figure 55). Over each picture hanging on the wall, he glues a piece of concrete that partially obscures the image, so that it looks as if the picture is not hanging on the wall, but the wall is hanging on the picture. The painting and the wall on which it hangs are then splashed with liquid concrete. The resulting image looks like the interior of a small bourgeois house of twentieth century which was ruined during construction. Pereda's work can also be regarded as an allegory of entropic forces that can destroy while building. By bringing a construction material such as concrete against outdoor landscapes, Almanza Pereda draws attention to the processes of gap filling in man-made construction. 'Horror vacui'-'fear or disdain of empty space'-which gives the series its name, is a traditional visual technique based on filling the negative space of a painting plane with details (Pereda, A.,A. 2010).

CHAPTER 5

THE CONCEPT OF EMPTINESS AND LANDSCAPE PAINTING IN TURKEY

5.1.The History Of Landscape Painting In Turkey Through The Concept Of Emptiness

When trying to read landscape painting in the context of Turkey and the concept of emptiness, we see an interest that develops especially under the influence of Islam. The passion for nature was reflected in miniatures from the 16th century onwards, and gradually formed the first examples of canvas paintings in the ongoing process. The use of landscape as a theme in the historical development process until the 1940s can be analyzed in terms of technical, stylistic and painterly development. In this section, historical development of landscape painting in Turkey will be addressed through selected artworks within the contexts of emptiness and nature.

The figurative approach in the miniatures has more to do with Eastern societies' conception of the object in general than with Islam itself. (Ergüven, M. 1995, p.24)

In the 16th century, the first landscape paintings, which was deemed to be significant only in the Ottomans among the Islamic world, are found in manuscripts documenting the routes and ranges of Suleiman the Magnificent's campaigns. Baghdad and Belgrade campaigns of the Ottoman Sultan were written and illustrated in 1558 by Matrakçı Nasuh, who was a military man. Starting from the 16th century when European painters commenced to work in the painting atelier (nakkaşhane) of the Ottoman Palace, western elements started to be sprinkled in the miniatures. During this period westernization process in painting has commenced. The another factor is that, in Süleymanname, the most prominent features of the environment are tried to be reflected, as in other miniatures. The Ottomans prepared atlases by making use of Spanish and Portuguese maps to gradually establish the tradition of topographical painting in which every important detail can be seen together (R. M. Meriç,1970, p.p..167-196).

Painter Matrakçı Nasuh, who joined the significant campaigns of the Suleiman the Magnificent era, has documented the places where army stopped over just like a map. Matrakçı added an impression, a taste of nature to these topographical drawings,

which can be considered as landscape painting experiment, by painting the hills in blue and green colors with brightly colored plants (Günsel, 1981, p.25).

The tradition of topographic painting ceased by the end of the 17th century, followed by miniaturists -especially one miniaturist, Nakshi, although somewhat primitively, tried to use perspective to reinforce the depth-effect in architectural depictions. Thus, the concept of three-dimensionality that was at once alien to the Islamic Art of Miniature but kin to Western Painting made its way into Ottoman miniatures.

The very first formation of the 'Westernization Movement' in The Ottoman Empire were the establishment of the military and engineering academies and schools. One should remember the two military academies, naming the Naval Engineering Academy and the Engineering and Artillery Academy that were facilitated the adaptation of western knowledge and technologies through education. Landscape was the first and foremost subject-matter of the painting classes that were given in these schools. It is known that the Engineering and Artillery Academy was the first to accommodate painting in its course curriculum in 1775. However, the education of painting of the period in question focused heavily on the understanding of topography and objects for knowledge of perspective was indispensable for one of the pillars of the military profession -artillery. Accordingly, it would not be wrong to consider such educational establishments in Türkiye as the gateways to let Western painting in. That is, the advent of painting in Türkiye going back to military schools does not necessarily bear any reference to any artistic purpose, nor any aesthetic concern. Turkish cadets trained by foreign professors but had to grow an interest in painting to better grasp the educational content. As the Ottoman elite and engineering students have realized that the perspective and technique in Western painting were so different that those of miniaturists, this, in conjunction also with the politics of the era, have led to the 'fall from grace' of the art of miniatures.

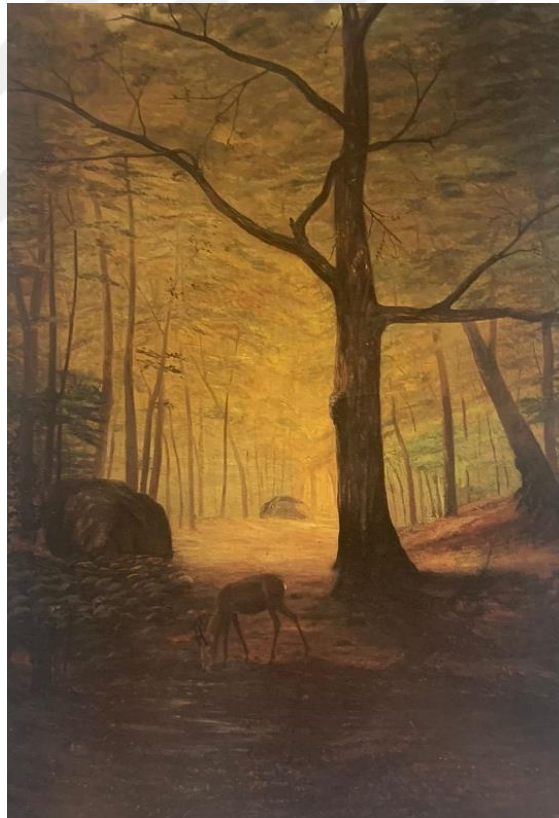
Military Painters

Military Painters are considered those who have been trained in the military academies that blossomed in the 19th century. Among these painters that mostly painted non-figurative landscapes, Osman Nuri Pasha (1832-1900), Şeker Ahmet Pasha (1841-1907), Süleyman Seyyid (1842- 1913), Hoca Ali Rıza (1857-1930), Halil Pasha (1857-

1939), Hüseyin Zekai Pasha (1860- 1919) come to the fore. Almost all these painters have handled landscapes from either a realistic or an impressionistic perspective, mostly so without any figures. Especially Şeker Ahmet Pasha is considered as one of the icons of Contemporary Turkish Painting. In pursuit of his military career on the one hand, Şeker Ahmet Pasha also continued his career in painting and opened the very first Turkish painting exhibition in 1873. He was also the very first to liberate Turkish painting from 'indoors' as he mostly produced landscapes and still lives. Şeker Ahmet Pasha was most influenced by such artists of the Barbizon School as Diaz, Corot, Courbet and Daubigny.

Figure 56

Orman ve Geyik



Note. Şeker Ahmet Paszha, Orman ve Geyik (the Forest and the Deer) , İRHM İncalcık, Halil, Renda, Gürsel, 2004 p. 951 Date of Access 09.01.2020

In his painting 'the Forest and the Deer', one can trace a perspective of nature that is typical of Romanticism (Figure 56). In its loneliness and frailty on the face of

the grandeur and obscurity of nature, the deer entices us inside the painting. Here, one can feel the perception of emptiness native to the Far Eastern tradition. Then, in this painting, Şeker Ahmet Pasha also conveys to us the grandeur of nature as well as the condition of being one with humans as well as other living beings.

Darüşşafaka Painters

Alongside engineering schools and military academies of the Ottoman Empire, established in 1863, Darüşşafaka is also another significant establishment for the Ottoman Art of Painting as because the group of Turkish painters, the so called 'Turkish Primitives' are believed to be composed of Darüşşafaka graduates. These were oil on canvas with considerably-detailed depictions of nature, colored by the painter him/herself, with almost no figures. These painters have especially focused on Yıldız Palace, the palace gardens with fountains, Yıldız Mosque, Kağıthane, İhlamur Mansion as well as depictions of similar buildings and places. Yet, they painted not based on observation but using photographs of their subjects. That was a time when painting was an aggrandized version of photographic images, i.e., the latter was used as an element of transition to painting. Painters such as Salih Molla Aşki, Ahmet Ragıp, Fahri Kaptan, Necib, Kasımpaşalı Hilmi, Şefik, Lofçalı Ahmet, Ahmet Ragıp, Giritli Hüseyin, Ahmet Şekür can be considered as some of the followers of this school.

This group called the 'Turkish Primitives' first worked with photographs and postcards as well as other printed materials. As a result, the paintings were as calm as photographs. With these paintings, artists have endeavored to reflect the nature the most realistically, including all parts and details. In almost all of these paintings, is a lit up atmosphere, a meticulous craftsmanship down to each detail and a concern to lay down a realistic representation of nature with all its content (Başaran, 2013)

Generation of 1914, The Generation of Çallı

Following their return from Europe, the painters who belonged to the Generation of 1914 have very ambitiously entered the world of colors in a way that ended 19th century aesthetics. Yet this was not limited only to landscape, as these painters extended the subject-matter of their art to also include still-life, single figures, portraits and scenes from various events, and tried to teach their audiences that painting

was not just about a repetition of nature but also to create a personal interpretation -a meaning. Following at least the basic principle of the impressionist system, most of these painters commenced to perceive nature and the exterior world from a brand-new perspective (Rzayev, 2017).

One can find significant differences between the paintings by the painters who belonged to the Generation of 1914 or the Generation of Çallı. Considering the atmospheric sceneries of the masterpieces by great impressionist masters such as Pissarro, Sisley, Seurat, Signac and Monet with their almost-mathematical accuracy and grand artistry, or other masterpieces of Neo-impressionism, one can see that the Turkish Impressionists have gone a different way (Ayan, 2014).

Union of Independent Painters and Sculptors

The Union of Independent Painters and Sculptors is the first union of artists of the Republican Era, founded as a result of the solidarity and laborious efforts of the artists returning home from France and Germany in 1928, among the founders of the Union founded in 1929 were Refik Fazıl Epikman, Cevat Hamit Dereli, Şeref Kâmil Akdik, Mahmut Fehmi Cuda, Nurullah Berk, Hale Asaf, Ali Avni Çelebi, Ahmet Zeki Kocamemi, Muhittin Sebati, Ratip Aşır Acudoğlu and Fahrettin Arkunlar.

The most significant characteristic of the Union of Independent Painters and Sculptors was that their common traits were almost none as they all were influenced by entirely different schools and movements. The reason why Independents placed more importance on pattern than color was because the movements of the time that influenced these painters were based more on lines and patterns than color (Ministry of National Education, 2012, p. 34).

The very first expressionist perspective that was initially influenced by the German Expressionism reveals itself in the works of one of the members of Independent Painters and Sculptors Union, i.e., Ali Avni Çelebi. Having worked at the studios of Hikmet Onat and İbrahim Çallı, Ali Avni Çelebi continued to produce at Klein's studio. As he found himself in a position to decide among these studios, where he studied and gained a lot of experience in a very short period of time, Ali Avni Çelebi chose Hans Hoffman's studio, which resonated the most with his personal sensitivities, artistic perspective and curiosity but mostly with his meticulous free spirit. In 1923, Ahmet Zeki Kocamemme arrives in Munich to study in Hoffman's studio on a scholarship from

the Turkish Hearths, which satisfies the painters' need for solidarity and friendship (Giray, 1997, p.92).

Figure 57

Arapkir-Hezende Yolu



Note. Çelebi, Ali Avni, 'Arapkir-Hezende Yolu', (1937), Oil on canvas, 33x41 cm (IMPS) <http://www.antikalar.com/ali-avni-celebi> Date of Access: 10.01.2023

The voluminous sky and mountains in the painting by Ali Avni Çelebi, the 'Arapkir-Hazende Road' (1937) as well as the choice of colors, is reminiscent of the paintings of the romantic period (Figure 57).

Group D

In September 1933, Zeki Faik İzer, Zühtü Müridoğlu, Elif Naci and Nurullah Berk formed Group D. The most distinctive characteristic of this group was their declaration stating that they were not an association. This is an indication that they do not want to be bound by limitations within certain rules (Şerbetçi, F. 2008, p.25).

Yeniler Grubu (Harbour Painters)

Paintings by Kemal Sönmezler, Nuri İyem, Selim Turan, Fethi Karakaş, Mümtaz Yener, Ferruh Başağa and Agop Arad were presented to the public at the 'Harbour Paintings Exhibition'. These painters who carried out the harbor paintings exhibition were called 'Yeniler' in Turkish painting.

Figure 58

Şile



Note. Nuri İyem, Şile <https://artam.com/muzayede/332-online-muzayede/nuri-iyem-1915-2005-sile> Date of Access:10.01.2023

This landscape painting by Nuri İyem, with its wide perspective view and the blue tones he uses, appears to us in a Fauvist influence with the paintings of the romantic period (Figure 58). Nuri İyem leaned more towards social realism and produced works in this context.

Two different ideas have come to the fore: universal realism, which brings art down to the social layer, and social realism, which reflects the life of society through a window. Artists leaned towards social realism put in their canvases, people working in difficult conditions. They aimed to depict workers, the poor and the festered aspects of the society through a realistic manner.

It has been a noteworthy development for Turkish painting (at least within a period of thirty years) that the young generations of artists who have grown up since

the first years of the Republic have presented their productions with a renewed freshness within the framework of historical events (Tanaltay, 1997, p.42).

The Group of Tens

The Group of Tens was founded in May 1947 by Ivy Stangeli, Leyla Gamsız, Hulusi Sarptürk, Mustafa Esirkuş, Nedim Günsür, Fahrünnisa Sönmez, Turan Erol, Orhan Peker, Mehmet Pesen and Fikret Otyam, who were all students of Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu. Their purpose was to combine the traditional embroidery patterns of Anatolia with the narrative forms of contemporary western painting, and to render the subjects they chose from nature and the real environment they lived in with the local language and abstraction of contemporary art. One of the two posters of the exhibition they opened in 1947 featured a detail of a human figure by El Greco and the other an Anatolian rug pattern. In a sense, these posters were like an artistic fusion of East and West. After the first exhibition, the number of members rapidly increased and the group reached a unique line in terms of the subjects it dealt with as well as in narration and technique; deeming the group as a breath of fresh air in the art scene. Although the ensemble developed a common artistic vision, and each member maintained their own unique style (Arslan, 1997, p. 1376).

Figure 59*Manzara*

Note. Leyla Gamsız, *Manzara*
https://turkishpaintings.com/index.php?p=37&l=1&modPainters_artistDetailID=779 Date of Access. 07.01.2021

One of the members of the 'Group of Tens', Leyla Gamsız, does not bear traces of her studio teacher Bedri Rahmi, or Andre Lhote, in whose studio she worked in Paris, in her paintings. By distorting and changing the form in certain proportions, she develops an internally determined style by focusing on color. Visual maturity and the ability to grasp nature at the level of consciousness are the main criteria that determine her art (Yüksel, N., 2019). In this landscape of Leyla Gamsız, the feeling of infinity that the yellow field gives us is remarkable, it is a vivid, lively yellow (Figure 59).

Turan Erol, a member of the Group of Tens, holds a passionate view on nature. That is why he reflected his passion in his paintings with a unique style. His narration is mostly simplistic. And his brush strokes are calm and still. His landscapes are also dominated by the same calm atmosphere. He also took quite a lot of advantage of abstraction. Erol thus claimed that he is a nature enthusiast, and a good impressionist, but he is not too faithful to these characteristics and puts forward his own abstractions of nature.

Figure 60*Oran Yolunda Kar*

Note. Turan Erol, Oran Yolunda Kar, 50x70 <http://www.antikalar.com/turan-erol> Date of Access 07.01.2021

In his interview with Ümmühan Kazanç on the website antikalar.com, Turan Erol says the following about his paintings;

When we look at your paintings, we see that you have certain themes such as high mountains, boats, bridges, slums, artichoke flowers, snowy roads. Although they are based on tangible, objective elements, their impressions are abstract, metaphysical, even. Are you looking for such an impact? If so, what's the source of it?

I would like to interpret the word metaphysics more like 'abstractness'. An extraordinary, touching meaning in the appearance of the objective, phenomenal world... Whatever one may say, it can be argued that some of my series of paintings have already become mythicized. Paintings I have done, such as 'Kar Çitleri', 'Lüksemburg Parkı', 'Oran Yolu', 'Mavi Tekne Kaburgası', 'Ararat Dağı', 'Altındağ', and 'Enginar Çiçeği' are my icons (Figure 60).

Another member of the Group of Tens, Fikret Otyam, whose paintings are also characterized by the elements of nature and emptiness (Figure 61), has Turgut Zaim and Namık İsmail's understanding of subject matter and depiction, and Bedri Rahmi Eyüpoğlu's traces. The frequent use of Anatolian motifs in his paintings must be due to the education and understanding of art he received from his teacher, Bedri Rahmi Eyüpoğlu. He often uses goats and Anatolian women in veils as figures in his paintings.

He draws attention as a painter who loves Anatolia, its people, animals, plants and local elements.

Figure 61

Peysaj



Note. Fikret Otyam, *Peysaj* <https://fikretotyam.com/resimleri/54> Date of Access. 07.01.2021

Period Between 55-70

The intensification of abstract art in the late 1950s and the years of tendency towards abstraction gave Turkish painters, who had later adopted the figurative painting tradition, developed and shaped by the West for hundreds of years, the opportunity to take part in the abstract understanding from its early stages and to put forth original approaches. (Kalkan, 2006, p. 69)

The influences of daily coincidental and spiritual realities on the artist reveal the creative aspect of the individual and the imaginary realities.

Parallel to the development of Abstract Expressionism in the USA, its reflection in Turkey was realized in the 1950-1960s with the continuation of non-figurative, informal, tachism (stainist) painting tendencies. (Tansuğ, 1999)

The introduction of abstract expressionism into Turkish painting in the 1950s and 60s and the way Turkish artists reflected this in their paintings were non-figurative and tended towards the abstract, and in connection with our subject, it was seen that a

preference emerged in which the limits of abstraction were pushed. Among the artists, painters such as Mübin Orhon, Orhan Peker, Lütü Günay, Nuri İyem, Devrim Erbil and Ferruh Başağa took part in this tendency.

Figure 62

Le Havre



Note. Mübin Orhon, Le Havre, 1965, oil on canvas, 130x195cm
<http://www.artnet.com/artists/mubin-orhon/le-havre-NERuTYICsbhSR98DbG5Ztg2> Date of Access 12.01.2021

Mübin Orhon is driven by the desire to capture the pure emotion that we can arrive at with these images, to find and reveal the spiritual meaning behind the visible, without the need for any tangible image mediation, with a purified color organization based on informal modelling (Figure 62). The observation of external reality in Orhon's painting is replaced by the image of an abstract universe that can be grasped through a spiritualist approach.

It is possible to say that Mübin Orhon's search for new space-tonality and his vigilant stance against the new approaches of his contemporaries are the two important factors that determined his works between 1961 and 1970, which can be defined as his Lyrical-Expressionist period. In this period, Mübin Orhon works with gouache and acrylic paints in a conscious and controlled application from the top to the bottom of the painting surface with the method of thinning and flowing. After World War II, this method was also accepted in Europe simultaneously among the Abstract Expressionists

in the U.S.A., especially after Jackson Pollock introduced a form of expression that starts from the momentary moods of the painter and extends to the formation process of the painting by dripping and pouring the paint on the canvas, and art was freed from the task of representing the outside world (Lynton, 1981, p. 233-234). Sam Francis examined Mübin Orhon's works when he lived in Paris and became friends with the artist. Francis's rhythmic understanding of form based on hand gestures, also inspired by Far Eastern calligraphy and his flowing technique transforms the act of creating images instead of randomness.

After the 1980s, painters who were influenced by the new expressionism movement combined their own mental influences with nature. Unable to anticipate its own stirrings, Turkey focused its attention on the expressionist phenomenon only when it was an art movement approved by the western art scene (Akkuş, 2011, p. 96).

Figure 63

Manzara



Note. Zahit Büyükişleyen, oil on canvas, *Manzara*
<https://www.fulartsanat.com/galeri-kolleksiyonu?lightbox=dataItem-ijraujdo>
 Date of Access. 07.06.2021

Zahit Büyükişleyen puts out a diverse portfolio with his different landscapes (Figure 63). Sometimes depicting large empty steppes like Far Eastern landscapes, sometimes the sea and sky, and sometimes the architectural structure of a city. "Zahit

Büyükışleyen thinks that every artist should create for himself the tools and techniques that suit his nature. According to him, this is the first condition necessary to activate the creative power. In the image above, we see two islands and a beach that we can single out. The sky and the sea greet us as large patches of blue, as accompanying voids.

Ivriz Teacher Training School, a continuation of the Village Institute tradition, was a turning point for the artist. He gets acquainted with the steppes of Central Anatolia for the first time. 'Landscape abstractions', which he frequently dealt with throughout his artistic career, begin in this period" (Ateş, 2009, p.16).

In his landscape abstractions, Büyükışliyen adopted an Abstract Expressionist attitude that does not break away from nature. The relations between color, texture, and shadow in his paintings give off a calming vibe. Sometimes he creates dynamic images with his original and energetic use of the brush. By transforming the images in his subconscious mind, he imposes meaning with shadows and lines without abiding by a specific rule. He attached great importance to light and shadow in his paintings.

Figure 64

Denizaltı Ve Savaş Gemisi



Note. *Denizaltı ve Savaş Gemisi*, 1997, Öner Kocabeyoğlu Koleksiyonu, Ömer Uluç <http://www.sanatatak.com/view/omer-uluc-liman-bogaz-istanbul> Date of Access 20.06.2021

Ömer Uluç is a painter who tells us about the concept of emptiness entirely through movement (Figure 64). Ömer Uluç, the first painter who comes to mind when we think of movement, is one of the painters who thought and produced both abstract, figurative and landscape. He is an artist who sometimes thinks about the landscapes he

encounters, such as Istanbul and the Bosphorus, and sometimes thinks from within and is influenced by his thoughts to produce works full of interesting quests. From Ömer Uluç's 2007 exhibition *Voyage of the Ships*, which he made on a real city line ferry.

Figure 65

Untitled



Note. Etel Adnan , Untitled, 2000 <https://www.jadaliyya.com/Details/27443>

Date of Access: 20.06.2021

Etel Adnan is a painter, writer, and a poet who creates abstractions of nature using layers and spaces in her paintings. It is possible to clearly observe both the eastern and western effects, which also constitutes her own culture, of nature abstractions (Figure 65). The serene spaces in Far Eastern paintings appear with lyrical abstraction in western painting.

Figure 66*Tamais Dağı Üzerinde Güneş*

Note. Etel Adnan, Tamalpays Dağı Üzerinde Güneş, Etel Adnan at the Base of the Mountain By: Maymanah Farhat <https://www.jadaliyya.com/Details/27443> Date of Access: 20.06.2021

She uses her words in a similar way, and one sometimes wonders whether she achieved this kind of lyricism in writing through "Perception" (Figure 66). Marie Rose, the protagonist of her famous novel, often shows such clarity. The power of the newly released *Sea and Fog* (Nightboat Books: 2012) lies in the images of intertwined love: elements merge with history, color is infinite, and man must face his inevitable end. The cover of this last book of prose and poetry, like many of Adnan's literary works, features one of her paintings: a seascape comprising of different shades of blue. A thick layer of fog settles over the cool, blackened water within its boundaries, masking the artist's signature above, while a sloping ocean takes the shape of Mount Tamalpais.

Echoing Klee's theory of order, "Do colors have the power to break the barrier of time and transport us to outer spaces that are not only composed of kilometers and distances, but of experiences accumulated since the beginning of time or the beginning of life? Etel Adnan's paintings force the viewer to do so. She does so by abstracting nature and making us feel emptiness and simple sublimity with simpler and simpler lines.

5.2. Contemporary Landscape Paintings and The Concept of Emptiness

With the transformation of perspective, we come to a point where we see down from above, we feel the need to define the place, the ground. With a vertical perspective, we can look from a perspective where we see down from above, and define the place, the ground. While modernism questions and defines time, postmodernism questions and defines space, and in doing so, it loses or redefines borders. Developments in navigation, satellite images, and images recorded with the widespread use of drones constitute these definitions. With vertical perspective, the sense of feeling changes, the balance changes, a whole new visuality emerges. The linear perspective becomes obsolete and the vertical perspective becomes our point of view. The concepts of subject, object and space begin to reposition and change definition with the vertical perspective. Accessing and experiencing aerial imagery creates a sense of transmission from the human gaze to the God gaze. We are moving from an era of static linear perspective to an era of multiple perspectives. In vertical perspective, our sense of vision is not static, it dominates the whole and all angles.

Considering nature as the source of imagination and the driving force of psychological processes, being moved by the sublimity of nature, seeing the wild side of nature as a shelter at the same time, the state of nature in the last quarter century, global climate changes, environmental pollution, unplanned urbanization have created many areas of work and production on redefining, exploring and reshaping it. Today's landscape paintings show that the nature-human-culture relationship is interwoven with similarities. Amidst all the effects arose from this confusion, some painters kept producing through the backing from all the ancient and timeless teachings. Continuing to explore, they both mirrored what was happening and questioned whether it was possible to look differently, with the aim of reaching a collective state of healing. In this section, painters who produce works related to the concept of emptiness and their productions, as well as works that refer to the concept of emptiness and whose productions are on the theme of landscape are included.

Figure 67*Alışıldık Manzaranın Hiçliği*

Note. Devabil Kara, *Alışıldık Manzaranın Hiçliği*, Mixed media on canvas, 200 cm x 170 cm, 2011 <https://www.sanatgezgini.com/devabil-kara-tuval-uzerine-karisik-teknik-alisildik-manzaranin-hiclig> Date of Access: 20.06.2021

Devabil Kara is a painter working on emptiness and its perception. This is how he explains his painting *The Nothingness of the Landscape*: A color stain creates a different experience of space (Figure 67). This experience depends on whether it is placed in the center of the painting plane, or to the left and right, or up or down. Each individual relationship generates its own spatial sense. Existence of more than one stain increases the feeling of emptiness. When the objects to be displayed on the surface are carefully placed in different sizes and different colors, a more vivid spatial event occurs. When texture, tone and position changes are added to these, even more intense and varied spatial experiences are obtained. (Kara, 2006).

As a painter who thinks, writes and produces on emptiness, the perception of space and painting as a whole comes to fore in Devabil Kara's art. What we see in the painting *Nothingness of the Ordinary Landscape* is a plane placed on a highly colored

surface, and this plane provides us with associations with faint tones. The geometric forms that we feel etched on the surface create a contrast with the surface and texture.

Figure 68

Manzara



Note. Gökçebağ, Yalçın, Manzara, 2017<http://ankarakultursanat.com/yalcin-gokcebag-koleksiyon-resim-sergisi>, Date of Access: 20.06.2021

Yalçın Gökçebağ, known as the painter of Anatolian dreams, develops a pure and poetic concept of nature and his paintings are based on images of pastoral country life. <http://ankarakultursanat.com/yalcin-gokcebag-koleksiyon-resim-sergisi> catalogue article. In Yalçın Gökçebağ's landscapes, the perspective often appears as a top-down view. Our perspective gains a deific attribution harboring all angles (Figure 68).

We can see in Yalçın Gökçebağ's paintings large, fairytale-like expanses of space with his more illustrative and dreamlike paintings, far from expressionism. These paintings are the ones where we see this large plane, the feeling of emptiness and deific view. Paintings wide angled, gazing at life with hope and luster. The use of emptiness convinces us of sublimity of nature.

Figure 69*Rise to the Surface*

Note. Ahmet Duru Rise to the Surface, 2020, pencil on paper, <https://www.artsy.net/artwork/ahmet-duru-rise-to-the-surface> Date of Access: 20.06.2021

Ahmet Duru combines contemporary landscape painting with post-industrial ideas about nature to create a contemporary approach to making sense of the strange state of our world, and offers us a beautiful and powerful landscape of our minds. (Graf, 2015)

Ahmet Duru's landscapes push us to question emptiness and absence. His work, which opens up space for the viewer with his increasingly abstract approach, directs us to fill this emptiness (Figure 69). It charms the viewer sometimes into the transformation of the nature to destruction and arid lands and sometimes into a more hopeful color cycle.

Figure 70*Sagalassos İzleri*

Note. *Sagalassos İzleri*, 2019, mixed media on wood, 22.5x27
<https://www.kolekta.com.tr/yapit/sagalassos-izleri/> Date of Access. 09.09.2021

Semih Zeki realizes his artistic productions through a practice that focuses on the social and environmental aspects of physical transformation in urban and rural areas (Figure 70). He extracts the motifs of construction projects located in the periphery of Istanbul. Zeki portrays the industrial structures of Istanbul's ongoing transformation process together with nature and presents them to us in contrasts. (Taycan, 2015)

Semih Zeki produces his works under the influence of the contrast of buildings, buildings under construction or demolition and nature within the same space. What captivates attention in these buildings are the spaces forms create over surface and geometrical patterns which these patterns generate and artificial structures seen in fog, graying the nature en route to absolute tenuity in some of his works. Metal, heavy and big structures, completely alien and in contrast with the nature of man. Form and space offer us a sculptural image in all of these works.

"Semih Zeki mainly uses architectural details and data in his paintings and creates a new architectural system by transforming and changing all the elements. In his early works, there are only hints of the whole of the structure or the evolution from part to whole, while in his recent works, he brings the part-whole relationship to the viewers with an increasingly abstract expression. In this process, which Semih Zeki defines as 'the journey of painting to painting', the paintings take place in a system that preserves their own special forms; bears, produces and constantly renews itself through the bonds they conduct between each other." (Taycan, 2015)

Figure 71

Fortyminutes



Note. Hakan Özer, *Fortyminutes*, oil on canvas, 30x30cm, 2018
https://buyukdere35.com/wp-content/uploads/Hakan_%C3%96zer_Katalogk.pdf Date of Access.11.10.2021

In Hakan Özer's paintings, emptiness has an aspect that takes us inside and leads us to stories. Considering the alienation brought about by the rapidly changing environment and city structure as an 'old friend', Özer takes us to roads, construction

sites, overflowing parking lots, and timeless places that we pass every day but do not see (Figure 71). These seemingly independent works are based on Özer's choices made through a personal context. He depicts the concrete projections of emotions and situations such as loneliness, losses, social complexes, and the desire to escape in his works in a minimalist style, with 'little workmanship but intense labor'. In his paintings, Hakan Özer invites viewers to recognize environmental changes and emotional states through their own investigations.

Figure 72

Migration



Note. Filiz Piyale Onat, *Migration*, IL.XIV.353 2016, 150x150 cm, mixed media on canvas <https://www.filizpiyale.com/series-iii-seri-iii?pgid=jt5sijaq-3c5e99b5-f585-446c-9528-09ab11227f3b> Date of Access. 11.10.2021

Filiz Piyale Onat, who produces mindscapes with wide perspective frames in her recent works, creates her works with stories that refer to the concept of emptiness in her paintings. In Onat's landscapes, images of nature untouched by human hands are seen together with man-made objects. It reflects the human state of belonging to nature and becoming one with it (Figure 72).

The formal similarity of Onat's landscape paintings with Chinese landscape paintings led him to question the relationship between nature and human beings, and provided a conceptual basis for the element of space, which he used extensively in his paintings. The artist's compositions building on opposites are related to the concepts of Yin and Yang in Chinese philosophy. Emptiness as a tertiary force which is necessary for Yin and Yang, described as harmony of opposites, to maintain its effect, is the most important complementary element in Onat's paintings.

Figure 73

Nadas (Fallow)



Note. Berkay Buğdan | Nadas (Fallow), 2020, charcoal on canvas, 160x240 cm
<http://berkaybugdan.com/> Date of Access.11.10.2021

With this exhibition titled 'Ash', Berkay Buğdan provides us not only a conceptual framework insinuating that every end can be a new beginning with raw coal, which can be considered a symbol of ending and metamorphosis, but also opens the doors of brand-new horizons of what can be achieved with this material in the name of art by conducting an experimental work (Figure 73). With their monochromatic depth of field, his paintings draw us in and leave us in the middle of a dark storm.

Figure 74*Zihin Köşesi*

Note. Ayşenur Şentürk, Zihin Köşesi, 2020, oil on canvas, 105,5x184cm (Katalog Photo Shoot) Date of Access: 10.08.2022

Ayşegül Şentürk, a painter I came across in Olympos exhibitions 2, Landscape, is described as a painter who creates landscapes that blend the vast mountain landscapes behind the Mona Lisa with Hieronymus Bosch's perspective and viewpoint (Figure 74). This landscape is an example chosen especially for its deep space and the merging of nature and mind. Both a wild nature and the creatures of the wild nature coexist in this vast space. Creating a surreal atmosphere, it leaves us with a feeling of awe.

Figure 75*Öteki Kıyı*

Note. Gurur Birsin, Öteki Kıyı, 2020, oil on canvas, 90x140cm (Katalog Photo Shoot) Date of Access: 10.08.2022

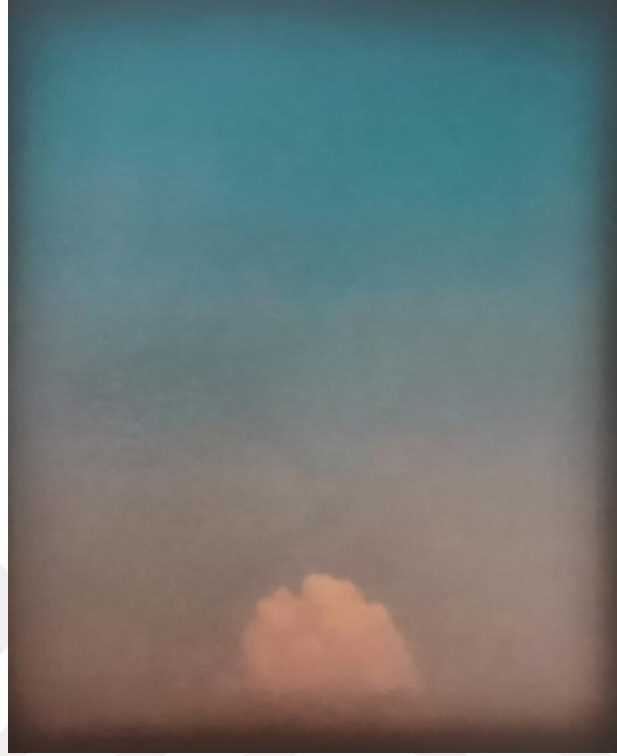
The emptiness of endings, the hesitation of beginnings and the pains of birth. Or the eternal linger in limbo. We are unfinished stories, looking for the meaning of today in yesterday, saving our hopes for the next life (Figure 75). This description is from the exhibition 'Landscape' curated by Taner Ceylan. The colors in this landscape are blue, gray, a little pink, and yellow...an island with ruins and a nude figure with her back turned. There is an eerie loneliness in this painting that can also be seen in Casper David's paintings, a loneliness that makes us feel the emptiness deeply. It offers both an intrinsic and a spatial space.

Figure 76*Geçit*

Note. Ahu Akgün, Geçit, 2020, oil on canvas, 100x75cm (Katalog Photo Shoot)

Date of Access: 10.08.2022

In the painting titled *Geçit*, a cypress tree welcomes us with all its splendor, while in the background we see settlements that do not interfere with each other, each having their own stories (Figure 76). Their presence poses no threat to any element in the landscape. It is said that the chair in this painting is the chair in the painter's studio. The chair sits empty, waiting for the painter. It brings the painter together with us both inside and outside the painting.

Figure 77*Unnamed*

Note. Özlem Yılmaz, unnamed, 2019, archival pigment print on hahnemühle photorag paper, 30x40cm (Katalog Photo Shoot) Date of Access: 10.08.2022

Özlem Yılmaz defines her works as works that started out with photography but later became paintings, they create the whole from tiny parts, and they are all like momentary flashes of light (Figure 77). A lonely cloud drifting by itself seems just like a baroque painting. This snapshot connects us to the cosmos, the great void.

Figure 78*Huzur Tek Ağaç*

Note. Pelin Hazal Aktaş, Huzur Tek Ağaç, 2020, oil on canvas 23x33cm (Katalog Photo Shoot) Date of Access: 10.08.2022

This example is a work that holds all opposites together. In the work, emptiness and fullness, uniqueness and multiplicity are all intertwined together to form a whole, and each of the squares forms different pieces of nature, and the pieces form a landscape (Figure 78). The parts that serve the whole can also exist as independent stories. The artist produces works that harmonize with today's multi-layered structure. These layers represent many stimuli that we see, observe, and perceive all the time, but when we move away from the painting, we see that there is a whole landscape, which again is a calm atmosphere with the sky and the sea.

CHAPTER 6

LANDSCAPE PAINTINGS AND THE USE OF SPACE IN FATMA SELİN ÇÖPLÜ WORKS

6.1.Introduction

Selin Sade Çöplü is an art instructor who studied in the field of graphic design and then continued her artistic productions and survey on landscape painting. Her primary focus is on social, political, natural, and environmental issues. Nowadays the ecosystem is being deconstructed, changed, and transformed for political and economic reasons. From time to time the inspiration that nature reflects on us gives way to anxiety, destruction, or emptiness. The artist believes that the positive transformation and healing are possible and needed. The connection in between the concepts, such as perception, harmony, silence, absence, and nothingness were the sub-headings in her recent works. As the artist believes the healing power of nature, although some of her paintings that are darker in color should not be described as dark and or reflecting hopelessness because she considers that when we determine the boundaries by making choices with the awareness that we, humans, are a part of nature and with our will, we can grasp change, not extinction.

6.2.Subject Concept

Exploring the concept of emptiness during her studies on eastern philosophy and the meditations required, Selin Sade Çöplü began to create her artwork by connecting the landscapes in her mind to nature. According to Eastern philosophy, meditation is the most important method of relaxing the mind. There are many different methods available. Her works are sometimes based on a thought while some are just on emptying the mind. The definition of meditation is fixing a thought on an image of nature, a sound, or a word, weighing it in the mind for a long time, and finally fixing on an idea and examining it with all its aspects without ever letting it go. While doing these exercises, images of nature accompany people so that they can focus their eyes on immense landscapes and keep their minds calmer and steadier. Far Eastern philosophies were the first to spotlight on these kinds of teaching. In this context, Chinese landscape paintings have meditative elements and a state of being one with nature. The emptiness in Chinese painting is, as Cheng puts it, "a connection that allows

one to reach from a visible world to an invisible world through inspiration" (Cheng, 2006, p. 51).

The sublimity and the powerful inspiration of nature in these meditative paintings constitute the central axis of her recent works. She established the subject and the concept in her artworks on the kind of teaching Cheng emphasized.

6.3.Form References

In the history of art, those who think and produce on romanticism and eastern mysticism are the ones she finds closest to herself. What keeps her inspired is; opposing modernism, the romantics deep concern and longing for nature and or the

comfort of the delicate natural gradations of tone that a Chinese calligrapher's skillful brush creates on silk.

Nature, emptiness, mind, and perception are among the concepts she is caught in. Nature is the first and largest source of inspiration for all. Nature is the source of the cycle of curiosity that includes life and death, which carries the macrocosm with its light and dark sides to the microcosm, which is in change and transformation, that our process of discovery begins from the moment we are born into it and continues throughout our lives. Every stage that transforms our perception and mind process is a cycle of nature. As Jackson Pollock said in a different context: "We are nature, and we only separate ourselves from nature when we are in danger." (Heartney, 2008, p.169)

In graphic design, Gürbüz Doğan Ekşioğlu is one of her most influential teachers with his illustrations and witty subtlety and humorous approach to art and design.

Caspar David Friedrich, who lived and produced his works in the 19th century, was the first painter whose paintings influenced Selin Çöplü. She felt a connection with his paintings regarding the symbolism of nature. His paintings are dominated by an intense inner thought, a dramatic interiority, a melancholic atmosphere, and a gloomy appearance, and are characterized by a deep sense of solitude, contemplation, and an encounter with silence. Friedrich, one of the important names of the Romanticism movement, presents a wonderful reflection between what belongs to nature and what belongs to the inner world of man, and we go on separate journeys in his paintings. Secondly, in the paintings of the English painter Joseph Mallord William Turner, we feel the weakness of man in the face of nature. The way he sees and paints the sky

contains a multi-layered and dimensional rhythm. In his paintings, the depth of field can be felt as far as the sky. The feeling of emptiness is in the majesty of how small and weak we are in the face of nature.

The concept of emptiness is the source of many different movements, from romanticism to abstract, from abstract to minimalism. Today, she finds the works of Byron Kim, a Korean-American artist based in New York, influential and inspiring. His Sunday Paintings (2015) (a series in which he looks up at the sky every Sunday and paints it), touch on many concepts such as nature, emptiness, and perception with their naivety, calmness, and composition. The productions for these concepts, which appear in many different forms today, constitute reference points in her artworks. Utilizing the landscape as a part of the decoration or as a mind-relaxing tool out of a mural is in line with the pragmatic nature of the artist.

6.4.Color, Image, and Technique

In her early artworks, she produced works that followed social, political, and archaeological traces and attached specific importance to historical details. She is of the opinion that landscape painting also contains frames according to the environmental, cultural, and social issues that the artist lives with or is concerned about. We can say that her productions also bear the plain, cold, deep, introverted, and distant traces of the steppes where she spent her childhood. A nature or city depicted in any literary text can also be a part of her works. The sky, which creates a space to live, and to breathe, occupies a large area in most of her paintings. She simultaneously depicts the sky or the spaces in her mind by utilizing pictures, photographs, or images she created. In these paintings, emptiness appears both as space and as a spiritual, conceptual, and personal change. She chooses frames with an atmospheric perspective, where the sense of depth is at its most intense, with three-quarters of the picture consisting of sky, sea, or land. Some of these works are mixed media, digitally prepared by overlapping the photographs she took at various times and worked in acrylic on prints. These areas can be multi-layered or completely graphic and composed of two-dimensional, super flat areas. The horizon line, where the earth and the sky meet, is a gap she uses in her paintings. Clouds connect the sky and the earth. The harmony of oil paint and brush is significant in her paintings. When she seeks to create multi-layered areas, the brush glides on the canvas, creating soft, transitional, multi-layered areas. If she is coloring

an area where the two-dimensional graphic effect is prominent, she opts for roller brushes. Roller brushes can create perfectly flat areas. She makes use of every technique that will help her express her inner thoughts and the concepts she is interested in, but painting, photography, and video are her primary techniques.

6.5. Development of Landscape Painting

Her first landscape paintings were made with an illustrative style. Again, wide frames with volumetric space are prominent. One can often come across images of trees. Due to her education in Graphic Design, she produced landscapes with a painting technique that bears resemblance to illustrations.

Figure 79

Trees



Note. Trees, 2016 oil on canvas, 100x100 cm

Colors are vibrant, bright, and unique to nature. These are oil paintings. In these studies, she tried out oil paints for the first time and became acquainted with how to use

them (Figure 79). In her early works, she uses oil paints without a medium, taking advantage of the soft consistency of oil paints to create transitions.

Figure 80

Tree Human



Note. Tree Human, 2016 oil on canvas, 100x100 cm

In this work, three trees symbolize three people, inspired by a poem by Nazim Hikmet: "To live like a tree single and at liberty, and brotherly like the trees of a forest, this yearning is ours." (Hikmet, 2007)

The images of nature paintings, which include vivid colors and trees in her early paintings, are later replaced by steppes and treeless wide areas. (Figure 80)

Figure 81*Mindscape 01**Note. Mindscape_01, Acrylic Painting, 90x140cm*

The monochromatic color palette used consists of shades of gray. The use of gray creates a foggy atmosphere (Figure 81). These are the tones she uses especially when she wants to create emptiness, obscurity, and a cold effect. In a presentation about herself, she says the following: "With technology, our mind has met different dimensions and its preoccupation has moved away from the body, with this distance, the dominance of our mind over us has increased, our mind is busy, and we have to look for ways to rest it. Our busy and chaotic life transforms our environment according to its own rules. All of this is happening at a speed beyond our control and our minds are often busy. It takes effort to return our mind to its own routine. For this, we turn to ancient knowledge, one of which is meditation. To reduce the crowd, to reach tranquility, to simplify again... We see that if we cannot manage our minds and perceptions as individuals, we cannot manage them as a group, community, society, or humanity. Personally, I can say that painting is the action-oriented side of meditation. A void area, a kind of breathing space plays an important role in most of my recent paintings"

Figure 82*Meditate 01**Note. Meditate 01, Acrylic Painting, 90x120cm*

The work above is an acrylic painting created by superimposing stock images. Black and gray are the dominant colors in this painting. An effigy of fog adds depth to the painting (Figure 82). It has an atmospheric perspective, a frame that looks down from above. The painting has a meditative effect that immerses the viewer where it is possible to see the exact traces of Chinese landscape paintings. With the sfumato technique, we see in Chinese Landscapes and Renaissance-era background landscapes, the transitions melt into each other.

Figure 83*Emptiness 01*

Note. Emptiness 01, Acrylic Painting, 100x140cm

Figure 84*Emptiness 02*

Note. Emptiness_02, Acrylic Painting, 140cm (diameter)

The two works above are inspired by a chapter of Italo Calvino's book called *Invisible Cities* (Figure 83,84). The book is about the conversation between Marco Polo

and Kublai Khan during a chess game. The conversations are about Marco Polo's travels. The places described are fictional cities, each of which is named after a woman. Calvino builds the narrative on signs, and the book is among the fundamental literary works on semiotics. The place descriptions of the book, written in a surrealist style, are quite impressive and inspiring. In one section, there is a city built in the sky and stairs leading to that city. This oil painting was made inspired by that section. The yellow, brown, and green hues used also represent the shadows of the city above. However, with this empty land, the artist leaves an empty space for the viewers to create their own fiction. The text from the book "Invisible Cities" is placed next to the painting.

"The slender stilts that rise from the ground at a great distance from one another and are lost above the clouds support the city. You climb them with ladders on the ground the inhabitants rarely show themselves: having already every-thing they need up there, they prefer not to come down." (Calvino, 1974, p.77).

Figure 85

Emptiness 03



Note. Emptiness 03, Oil on Canvas, 70x90cm

There is a sense of existential anxiety in this painting about emptiness. The painting has an effect peculiar to the Romantic period. Caspar David Friedrich, one of the painters who greatly influenced the understanding of art, is one of the painters who best reflected the anxiety of existence among the romantics. Unoccupied pastoral landscapes in his paintings make the viewer feel one within nature. He creates spaces that we can refer to as meditative pictures. Caspar David Friedrich, who is the most significant landscape painter in German Romanticism, was an artist who followed the path of Schelling's romantic philosophy of nature, which imbues that "man can comprehend the divinity in nature only to the extent that he is in it" (Krausse, 2005, p. 57). In this painting, loneliness and existential anxiety give meaning to emptiness. The colors used represent the sky and the earth in harmony with nature.

Figure 86

Ofelia



Note. Ofelia 09, Acrylic Painting, 70x140cm

In 2017, we were asked to watch William Shakespeare's Hamlet in the proficiency in art application workshop and then depict the part by which we were impressed. This is how this painting came into life. In this painting, we see a depiction of Kronborg Castle in Helsingør, Denmark, referred to as "Elsinore" in Hamlet. The reason the title of the work is Ofelia is that Ofelia is the character that the artist was most influenced by in this play. The character's despairing falling into madness and its

end constitute the dark and foggy area of this picture. The painting is painted by acrylics, using mostly black and gray colors (Figure 86).

Figure 87

Emptiness 04, Oil on Canvas, 90x110cm



Note. Emptiness 04, Oil on Canvas, 90x110cm

The gentle hills and fertile wheat fields that are seen as she drives towards the Black Sea on the Ankara highway constitute the main subject of these two paintings. This combination of the steppes and the sky has inspired many painters. The vast steppes with not a single tree in sight create a sense of sublimity (Figure 87, 88).

Figure 88*Emptiness 05*

Note. Emptiness 05, Oil on Canvas, 100x100cm

Figure 89*Clouds*

Note. Clouds, Oil on Canvas, 90x100cm

Working as an optimistic and hopeful void, this painting is the first in a series of meditations. In this painting, the calm water is relaxing, and the clear, sunny sky radiates a warm ray of hope. With the eye focused on the vast horizon line where the sea and the sky meet, it becomes a meditative painting that relaxes the mind (Figure 89).

Figure 90

Cosmos



Note. Cosmos 11, Oil on Canvas, 90x100cm

The cosmos is the greatest and most sublime void that surrounds us, the cosmos is a space that both intrigues and frightens. The cosmos, which is the source of many artists' works, appears in this frame as a depiction of the Milky Way star cluster (Figure 90).

Figure 91*Meditate 02*

Note. Meditate 02 , Acrylic Painting, 70x140cm, 2021

This work of the meditation series was created with inspiration from the following quote: “a slim brush stroke creates the structure of emptiness, a way to infinite.” (Chang, 2006, p.102) The colors used in this nature abstraction are the shades of blue and green. The perspective used is a mindscape, planned based on the flat distance of the ping yuan technique in Chinese mind landscape painting (Figure 91).

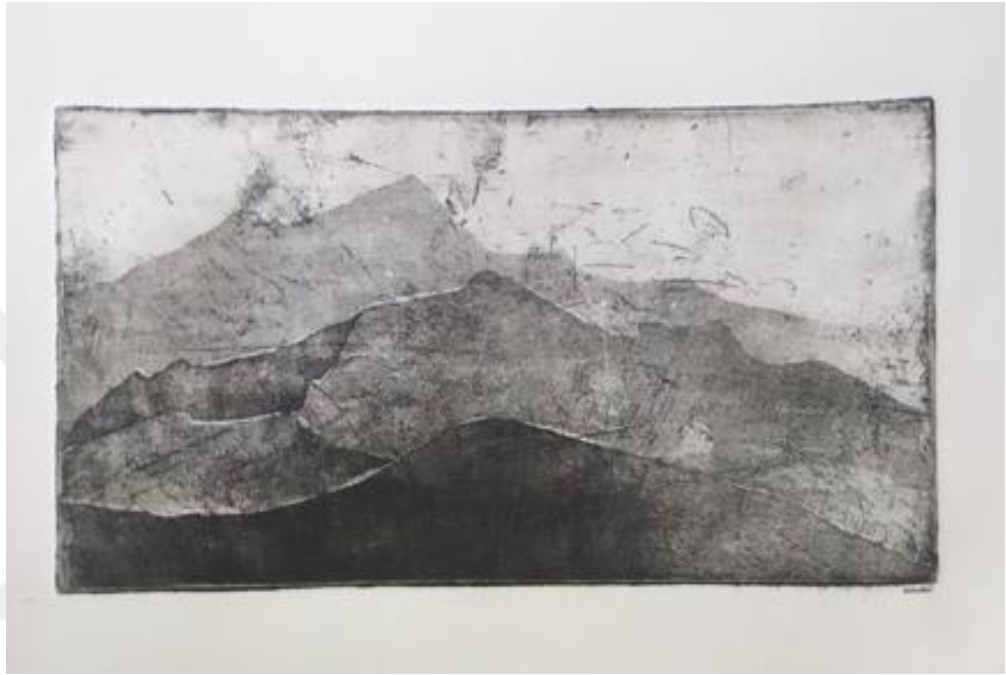
Figure 92*Mindscape 02*

Note. Mindscape 02, lithography, 35x42cm

Printed with the lithography technique, this work aims to depict a void created by climate change, drought, and extinction. On a flat reddish brown arid land, there is a green water with reeds and a sky above it (Figure 92).

Figure 93

Mountains 01



Note. Mountains 01, 13x25cm, Engraving, 2018

Engraving is the technique of drawing and reproduction on zinc plates, usually with pointed engraving pens. A different and less preferred aqua tint method was used in these engravings. Again, to achieve the atmospheric perspective that she also uses in her paintings, she tried to portray a transitional color perspective (Figure 93).

Figure 94*Mountains 02**Note. Mountains 02, 19x25cm, Engraving, 2018*

Mountains hold a special place in landscape painting (Figure 94). Especially when the images of mountain and water[shan-sui] in Chinese landscape painting are considered as a whole, they can be analyzed in the context of the concepts of Yin and Yang in Tao philosophy. In Chinese culture, mountains and water represent two poles. Both need each other to maintain their integrity. The element that provides the balance between this integrity is the void. This work shows three mountains created with the aquatint method. In the front of these the sea placed.

Figure 95*Mindscape 03*

Note. Mindscape 03, etching, 18x30cm, Engraving, 2018

In these artworks, she deals with mountains and plains. A slightly more graphical and simple narrative is clear (Figure 95). Her works of simplification and abstraction often repeat themselves. In some of her works, images of mountains, sky, and roads in nature are depicted in a completely abstract manner. Through abstraction, she tries to bring together design elements such as color, stain, and texture in a rhythm. She believes that there is a unique rhythm in every entity in nature. When this rhythm is captured, the serenity peculiar to nature and the chosen landscape occurs spontaneously.

Figure 96*Pure Nature 01**Note. Pure Nature 2022 Acrylic Painting***Figure 97***Pure Nature 02**Note. Pure Nature 2022 Acrylic Painting*

Figure 98*Pure Nature 03**Note. Pure Nature, 2022 Acrylic Painting*

Her latest production series, named “Pure Nature”, consist of paintings made during the pandemic. They were made with acrylic pens on acrylic paintings. While these paintings refer to the concept of nature and emptiness as a subject, they are quite different from her other works in terms of color and technique. The colors are much more vivid and bright, the nature looks more spring-oriented and fresh (Figure 96,97,98). The reason behind visible is that the pandemic has brought healing and cleansing in nature. Nature is in a state of re-awakening as we emit fewer chemicals and harmful substances, consume less, and pollute less. Although humans suffered greatly during the pandemic, Selin Çöplü thinks that the situation is the opposite for non-human habitats and nature. The other side of this dark process is a process where nature regenerates, rebirths and renews itself. It proves that all opposites are together as a whole.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

When we examine the concept of emptiness in landscape paintings and selected works in Turkey, we encounter artistic works shaped by different views at different times. These studies reveal that human beings, who are one with nature and a part of nature, are all parts of the same nature, albeit from different lands, different cultures, and different languages. From Chinese landscape paintings to contemporary paintings, the world is evolving day by day to fill the void, to empty the full. The relationship between chaos and cosmos, light and dark, macro-cosmos and micro-cosmos, full and empty (solid-plane or solid-void), form and void, negative and positive space, and how the parts of a painting or design that we call full and empty to form the whole are the main contents of my research. All plastic art practices begin with emptiness. This space defines each of us to other with small differences, both materially, psychologically, socially, and technically. Like every concept, emptiness exists with its opposite, fullness. Although the works on nature are made in front of the landscape, the chosen frame reflects the mind map of the painter. There are many sources about the concept of emptiness. The works produced so far in the field of landscape painting are the position and feelings of man in the face of emptiness and space.

Emptiness, also called nothingness or non-existence in mysticism and religion, is a state of 'pure consciousness' in which the mind is emptied of all specific objects and images. Emptiness also describes the quality of undifferentiated reality (a world or reality without distinctions and diversity) projected by the emptied mind. We see that the concept of emptiness has historically been used in the Far East in conjunction with landscape painting as a means of meditation and relaxation of the mind. In the West, they tried to discover emptiness in connection with philosophy, physics, chemistry and mathematics respectively, and after trying to explain it with a positivist understanding starting from antiquity, the concept of emptiness led to the concept of existence during the transition to monotheistic religions, and the fear of the emptiness was closer to the style of the 'Horror Vacui' period. In the 15th century, with the Renaissance and especially with Romanticism, man's return to nature and scientific and artistic discoveries manifested themselves with different quests in art. In the 18th century, man evolved to discover his own inner journey and psychology, and the perception process of the human mind intensified, that man came to terms with the emptiness in the society

and within himself. In the 20th century, with holistic approach, both the entire cosmos and human neuroscience studies gave us clearer explanations about the existence of the concept of emptiness.

Landscape painting creates a different mental space within the viewer after it has been created by the painter as a real view or mindscape.

Figure 99

Meditate 01



Note. F. Selin Çöplü, Meditate 01, Acrylic Painting, 120X100 cm, 2019

In the works selected as the subject of this thesis, as given in the example above, the principle of using a grid consisting of nine sections, with two-thirds of the area depicted as earth, sea or sky spaces, was adhered to (Figure 99).

It allows us to understand and experience in our minds the transformation between the sky and the earth, and from there, we are able to realize the relationship between the concepts of space and time. The research has proven that landscape painting has a positive impact on the mind. As an interdisciplinary approach, in a study conducted on people working under stress, one group of participants were shown landscape pictures and the others shown the images created with mixed images, and it was observed that looking at landscape pictures reduced their stress rates. The fact that the proportion of the negative space in this landscape painting (the area of the sky and the sea) occupies two-thirds of the space suggests that the mind is optically looking for

the negative space of the sky, the sea or the earth in a landscape painting. This optical space involves the viewer in the painting and creates space for the viewer.

(Viewing Landscapes Is More Stimulating Than Scrambled Images After a Stressor: A Cross-disciplinary Approach) (<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.03092/full>) (Date of Access 22.09.2022)

Today, with the social, intellectual and technological advancements, artists are facing onto different pursuits, which we also encounter in landscape paintings. Subjects such as satellite images, drone shots, artificial intelligence applications, new discoveries in space have led to diversifications in landscape paintings. With this diversification, the viewer's integration of self with the landscape and the emptiness in the landscape puts them in a situation where the boundaries between them and the art gradually melt. It gives way to a new representation, to the anthropocene period of entropy, in which emptiness is signified instead of fullness, the non-existent instead of the existent.

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