RE-THINKING GROUP D THROUGH THE AVANT-GARDE AND MODERNIST ART MOVEMENTS WITHIN THE NATION-BUILDING CONTEXT OF TURKEY (1933-1951)

by
İpek Yeşildağ Sağlık

Submitted to the Graduate School of Social Sciences & Humanities
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts
in Archaeology and History of Art

Koç University,
September 2017

Koç University

Graduate School of Social Sciences and Humanities

This is to certify that I have examined this copy of a master's thesis by

İpek Yeşildağ Sağlık

and have found that it is complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by the final
examining committee have been made.

Committee Members:

_____

Prof. Günsel Renda

_____

Prof. Zeynep İnankur

_____

Prof. Ilgım Veryeri Alaca

Date: September 21, 2017

To my family who has always been supportive

ABSTRACT

This present study examines the unique position of Group D, from its founding in 1933 until its dissolution in 1951, within the revolutionary environment of the early Republican period in connection to the avant-garde and the twentieth century modernist art movements that were influential in Turkish context. The early years of the Turkish Republic, distinguished by the single-party regime of the Republican People's Party (RPP), revealed a particular milieu where the cultural politics of the regime and its support for the arts had far reaching consequences on the modernist premise of Group D within the nation-building project of Turkey.

This thesis firstly investigates the voyage of the avant-garde to understand its anarchist and revolutionary, yet alternating nature in an attempt to set the ground for the avant-garde movements under analysis. Then, the thesis explores the 'revolutionary consciousness' of the Republican period and the artistic milieu in which Group D emerged to raise questions of new art, national art, and state-supported exhibitions and events. Finally, the last chapter examines the artistry of Group D against the influential modernist art movements in the Republican period with a focus on Cubism to reveal the group's unique intellectual stance and artistic production. Hence, the phases which Group D went through from the early 1930s until the late 1940s are investigated to reveal how the once rebellious disposition of the so-called avant-garde Group D was altered over time due to its enhanced connection to the Academy of Fine Arts and the cultural politics of the RPP under the rising nationalist agenda of the period.

Keywords: group d, avant-garde, modernity, cubism, national art, new art, state-supported art, nation-building, single-party era.

ÖZET

Söz konusu çalışma, D Grubu'nun 1933 yılındaki kuruluşundan 1951'deki dağılışına kadar, grubun erken Cumhuriyet döneminin devrimci ortamındaki özgün konumunu avangard kavramı ve Türkiye'de etkili olmuş erken yirminci yüzyıl modernist akımları üzerinden inceler. Cumhuriyetin ilk yılları, Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi'nin (CHP) tek parti rejimi ile öne çıkarken, rejimin kültür politikasının ve sanata olan desteğinin Türkiye'nin ulus inşası projesi bağlamında D Grubu'nun modernist söylemi üzerinde etkili olduğu özel bir dönemi işaret eder.

Bu tez öncelikle avangardın on dokuzuncu yüzyıldaki yolculuğunu anarşist, devrimci ve aynı zamanda değişen doğasını çalışmada analiz edilen avangard akımlarına zemin oluşturmak amacıyla incelemektedir. Ardından, yeni sanat, ulusal sanat ve devlet destekli sergiler ve etkinlikler ile ilgili konuları sorgulamak için Cumhuriyet döneminin 'devrimci bilincini' ve D Grubu'nun içine doğduğu sanatsal çevreyi araştırmaktadır. Son bölümde ise D Grubu'nun özgün düşünsel duruşunu ve sanatsal üretimini ortaya koymak amacıyla grubun sanatını Cumhuriyet döneminde etkili olmuş modernist sanat akımları ve özellikle Kübizm üzerinden analiz etmektedir. Bu sebeple tezde, bir zamanlar karşıt bir duruş sergileyen ve avangard olarak adlandırılan D Grubu'nun 1930'lu yılların başından 1940'ların sonuna doğru geçirdiği aşamaların grubun Güzel Sanatlar Akademisi ile değişen ilişkisi ve etkisi artan milliyetçi gündemde CHP'nin kültür ve sanat politikaları ile artan bağlantısı sonucu nasıl şekillendiği araştırılmaktadır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: d grubu, avangard, modernite, kübizm, ulusal sanat, yeni sanat, devlet destekli sanat, ulus inşası, tek partili dönem.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

INTRODUCTION

The artistic and cultural milieu in the revolutionary climate of the early Turkish Republic is characterized by the endeavors of the Republican intellectuals, artists, and officials dedicated to establish a new consciousness for arts in dialogue with the modernist movements of Europe. In tandem with the reforms realized during the early Republican period to reach the level of *muasır medeniyetler* (contemporary civilizations) from education to civil rights to economic, industrial, and political development, the young regime also supported the revolutionary and progressive discourse flourishing in the realm of art. Significantly in the 1930s, pursuing the 'civilized' European models, the references that Turkish intelligentsia made to demolition of the 'old' for the sake of the 'new' recalled the aesthetics and theoretical premises of the avant-garde. Indeed, in the domain of painting and sculpture, a newly formed artists association named *d Grubu* (Group D) built a dynamic relation with the idea of avant-garde and the early twentieth century avant-garde movements on a selective basis informed by the nation-building context of early Republican period. However, from the 1930s to the beginning of 1950s, which corresponded to the lifetime of Group D, the Republican intelligentsia was highly influenced by the single party rule of the Republican People's Party (RPP), the rise of nationalism and socialism worldwide, and the outbreak of the Second World War in generating the vision for the art of the Republic. Thus, these two decades introduced a rather unique interpretation and adaptation of the avant-garde influencing the way artists addressed to modernist approaches within Turkey's nation-building project.

With a particular focus on the avant-gardeness of Group D, the degree to

which artists formed an 'avant-garde' is a debated issue not only due to the distinct case of Turkish context in the process of nation-building, but also because of the perplexing nature of the avant-garde. The avant-garde, an originally French word and a notion overran with paradox, was invented within the terrain of military. Dating back to the Middle Ages as a term of warfare, the avant-garde did not develop a figurative meaning as early as the Renaissance. In fact, not until the nineteenth century, the metaphorical use of the avant-garde acquired a consistent and self-conscious advanced position in politics, literature, and art.[1] The avant-garde, as emerged in the first decades of the twentieth century in Western Europe, claimed a radical and revolutionary opposition to the established artistic norms and the official ideology, and therefore, asked for the demolition of the 'old' and traditional in every field of life. Indeed, such a historical voyage of the term has determined the qualities of the avant-garde notion with ambiguity due to its articulated meanings, and therefore, the attempts to define 'What is an avant-garde?' by art historians and critics have become a challenging matter.

When Turkey was ready to adopt the avant-garde in the 1930s, though its period had already ended in the West, its antagonist connotation was still viable. Nevertheless, the avant-garde idea found correspondence with the ideals of the newly established Republic through a selective transformation process. Although the avant-garde in the early Republican Turkey did not have a political opposition or critical stance against state power, and was in fact, in support of the Kemalist revolution and progress, the avant-garde in the artistic realm attempted to radically alter the field and establish a novel visual culture and a theoretical base for arts. As

---

[1] Matei Calinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity: Modernism, Avant-garde, Decadence Kitsch Postmodernism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1987), p.97.

[2] Zeynep Yasa Yaman, *d Grubu:1933 - 1951* (İstanbul: YKY, 2006).

a matter of fact, rooted in the conception of avant-garde and in reference to Cubism, this study examines how Group D, the so-called avant-garde artist's group of the early Republican period, revolutionized the Turkish artistic realm by establishing the 'new art' of the new Kemalist regime. Hence, this thesis explores the avant-gardeness of Group D through its lifetime within the unique context of Turkish painting determined by discussions on new art/national art, art and cultural politics of the single-party regime, and debates centred around the Academy of Fine Arts *(Güzel Sanatlar Akademisi)*.

In 1933, Group D was formed in the wake of the strengthened agendas of nationalism and populism aiming to define the aesthetic modernism in Turkey and to disseminate it on every level of the society.[2] Marking the tenth year of the Turkish Republic, Group D was founded by Nurullah Berk (1904-1982), Zeki Faik İzer (1905-1988), Cemal Tollu (1899 - 1968), Elif Naci (1898-1987), Abidin Dino (1913-1993) and the sculptor Zühtü Müridoğlu (1906-1992). The founding members chose the name 'Group D,' the fourth letter of the alphabet, as they came to be the fourth art group after the Association of Fine Arts *(Güzel Sanatlar Birliği)*,[3] Society of New Painters *(Yeni Ressamlar Cemiyeti),* and Independent Painters and Sculptors Association *(Müstakil Ressam ve Heykeltıraşlar Birliği)*.[4]

---

[2] Zeynep Yasa Yaman, *d Grubu:1933 - 1951* (İstanbul: YKY, 2006).

[3] In 1919, Ottoman Painters Society, the first free society of Ottoman artists founded in 1909 aiming to progress artistry as well as art as a discipline within the Ottoman society, enlarged its charter and was renamed Turkish Painting Society *(Türk Ressamlar Cemiyeti).* Later on, the name of the society was first changed to the Association of Turkish Sanayi-i Nefise *(Türk Sanayi-i Nefise Birliği)* and then finally to the Association of Fine Arts *(Güzel Sanatlar Birliği).* The society continued to have a significant influence on the Turkish art scene until 1940. Please refer to Abdullah Sinan Güler, "Osmanlı Ressamlar Cemiyeti ve Naşir-i Efkarı" ed. Yaprak Zihnioğlu in *Osmanlı Ressamlar Cemiyeti Gazetesi 1911 - 1914* (İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2007).

[4] Zeynep Yasa Yaman, *d Grubu:1933 - 1951,* p.7. Also see, Sezer Tansuğ, *Çağdaş Türk Sanatı* (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1986), p.179.

This thesis firstly investigates the emergence and conception of the avant-garde in Western Europe for a sound understanding of how the Turkish intellegentia was inspired by its progressive and revolutionary tenets from the 1930s forward. Beginning with a focus on the origins of the avant-garde idea embedded in the nineteenth century France, the following chapter examines the history and voyage of the avant-garde through time and place revealing the perplexing nature of the concept. Indeed, due its ambiguous and paradoxical character, rather than a thorough research on the loaded discourse of the avant-garde, this study pursues its basic principles to set the framework through which the avant-gardeness of Group D can be evaluated. Additionally, in the succeeding chapter, critical studies contributing to the theorization of avant-garde by Clement Greenberg, Renato Poggioli, Peter Bürger and Matei Calinescu are revealed to understand the divergent approaches toward the avant-garde as these works enhanced discussions on the early twentieth century avant-garde movements. To clarify, these considerations have acted as a backdrop for the analysis of avant-garde movements which the artistic approach and production of Group D can be debated against.

The chapter following the first focuses on the revolutionary consciousness of early Republican period and unveils the rise of Group D within the history of modern Turkish painting. Examining the basic tenets and aesthetics of Group D in reaction to the 1914 Generation and in relation to particular avant-garde movements, the second chapter explores debates regarding old/new art and national art within the nation-building context of Turkey between the 1930s and the 1950s. Indeed, the distinct approaches of Republican intellectuals and artists toward the early twentieth century avant-garde movements, such as Cubism, Futurism,

Supremativism, Constructivism, Expressionism and Dada are highlighted to reveal how the revolutionary consciousness of the early Republican period informed their stance for these particular modernist discourses. In fact, Cubism, the prominent movement to inspire the cultural and artistic milieu from the 1930s on in Turkey, is explored through its stylistic qualities and technical experiments as formalized by Pablo Picasso (1881-1973) and George Braque (1882-1963) at the turn of the twentieth century to discover how Group D interpreted the movement's aesthetics.

Finally, under the light of the conception of avant-garde, and the particular approach of Turkish intellectuals and artists toward twentieth century avant-garde movements shaped by the reformist and nationalist discourse of the Republican period, the third chapter analyzes the changes within the vision and artistic production of Group D from its formative years until its dissolution in 1951. In this aim, the four phases defined by Zeynep Yasa Yaman that Group D went through, rebellion, conciliation, maturity and international, are referred to based on a thematic approach. While the most radical period of Group D is investigated across the group artists experimentation with Cubism through exemplarily paintings; the group's stance toward futurist and constructivist premises within the nation-building project of Turkey is examined with respect to Futurism and Constructivism. Further, its conciliation and maturity periods are highlighted to discuss the alterations in the group triggered by the Second World War. These years are investigated based on rising nationalist sentiments and rising criticisms against modernist currents around the world. Lastly, the aesthetic formations of Group D during its international period are unveiled to observe how the group's view for Turkish painting changed over its lifetime. Besides, the group's changing stance toward state intervention in the realm of art in regard to art institutions, exhibitions,

and events through the years are also revealed to discuss its alternating avant-garde approach.

As a matter of fact, throughout my research, I have mainly focused on the intellectual stance of Group D, the relation it had with the state and academy, and its artistic production with a focus on painting to evaluate the avant-garde stance of the group. Due to the limited scope of the thesis, I pursued an overarching approach in discussing the avant-gardeness of Group D rather than focusing on each group artist individually or investigating the artist's production in other fields such as sculpture, illustration, mural art or writing. Yet, despite the controversial stance of Group D toward the avant-garde, an analysis of the impact of avant-garde idea on Group D artists with a more concentrated approach toward their particular works of art beyond the discipline of painting can reveal further interpretations expressed through diversified media from illustration to writing. In fact, recent studies on avant-garde have attempted to resolve how the idea of avant-garde and the twentieth century avant-garde movements impacted certain fields that have been overlooked through a multidisciplinary approach.[5]

However, my primary aim in this thesis has been to unfold the avant-garde notion and the avant-garde movements under scope to be able to formulate an accurate picture of Group D that was inspired by the founding tenets of the avant-garde and the aesthetics and premises of avant-garde currents which led the group to deal with accusations of imitation as well. Indeed, the thematic approach of the thesis intends to provide an axis of debate beyond 'cultural westernisation' and beyond debates of imitation versus rejection, an approach that has recently

---

[5] For example a recent study edited by Elina Druker, *Children's Literature and the Avant-garde* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing, 2015) reveals how the impact of avant-garde can be extended into areas that have been neglected due to the complexity of "the question what constitutes an avant-garde work." See "Introduction" by Elina Druker and Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer.

dominated art studies in Turkey. Therefore, diverging from the previous studies on Group D, this study conducts an in-depth analysis of the avant-garde and consults the formative periods of Cubism, Futurism, and Constructivism. Yet, this thesis depends on former analyses of Group D to juxtapose and evaluate its beliefs and artistry against the detailed investigation of the avant-garde. From the 1990s forward, theses with a particular interest on the artistic production of Group D are observed to be on the rise based on YÖK database. Among these studies, the Phd Dissertation introduced by Zeynep Yasa Yaman in 1992 entitled, *1930-1950 Yılları Arasında Kültür ve Sanat Ortamına Bir Bakış: d Grubu (A View of the Cultural and Art Environment between the years 1930-1950: Group D)*, is pivotal for examining Group D under three main sections, 'national art,' 'old/new art,' and criticisms against the academy. Besides, in this study, Yasa-Yaman introduces an in-depth documentation of Group D exhibitions along with the state-sponsored exhibitions that Group D artists participated in. This PhD Dissertation along with Yasa-Yaman's varying articles, books, and exhibition catalogs on the artistic milieu of the early Republican period have fundamentally informed my research to make an accurate examination.

While seminal studies on the avant-garde by Renato Poggioli, Donald Egbert, Peter Bürger, Clement Greenberg and Matei Calinescu have led me to uncover the conception of the avant-garde and observe various attempts in its theorization, Sibel Bozdoğan's far-reaching study *Modernism and Nation Building,* exploring modern architecture and art with respect to nation-building in Turkey, has provided me fundamental insights to consider the artistic and cultural realm of the early Republican period across the question of the avant-garde. Additionally, two articles of Duygu Köksal have contributed largely to this thesis to critically tackle the

avant-garde aspect of Group D in relation to the revolutionary politics of the Kemalist regime: "Domesticating the Avant-garde in a Nationalist Era: Aesthetic Modernism in 1930s Turkey" and "Art and Power in Turkey: Culture, Aesthetics and Nationalism During the Single Party Era." Köksal's analyses, mainly addressing to the dominance of the single party rule from 1923 to 1945 with its unique impact on the art and cultural politics of the period along with the nation-building endeavors of the Republican intelligentsia, have put forward critical discussion points for state intervention in the arts.

Besides, I have consulted comprehensive sources on Turkish painting to locate Group D in the history of modern Turkish painting where books by Nurullah Berk, Hüseyin Gezer, Sezer Tansuğ and Kaya Özsezgin became significantly important. Periodicals published in the early Republican period such as *Ar, Kadro, Yeni Adam* and *Güzel Sanatlar* have also provided critical first hand information on the cultural environment of the period to advance discussions related to the modernist aspect of Group D. I have given references to secondary sources for specific debates that took part in these publications as well. In the end, exhibition catalogues *d Grubu 1933 - 1951* and *Serginin Sergisi: İstanbul Resim ve Heykel Müzesi - 1937 Açılışı Koleksiyonu,* along with the comprehensive study on Ankara Painting and Sculpture Museum entitled after the name of the museum, *Ankara Resim ve Heykel Müzesi,* were among the prominent sources that I have consulted also for their rich collections of Turkish paintings.

CHAPTER I

AN OVERVIEW: CONCEPTION OF THE AVANT-GARDE

Origins: Emergence of the Avant-garde in France

Rooted in the meaning vanguard[6] or advance guard in English in a military

sense, the first figurative use of the avant-garde in the domain of literature is

attributed to French humanist lawyer and historian Étienne Pasquier (1529-1615),

who wrote in 1596 in his *Recherches de la France*: "A glorious war was then being

waged against ignorance, a war in which, I would say, (Maurice) Scève, (Théodore)

Bèze, and (Jacques) Peletier constituted the avant-garde; or, if you prefer, they were

the forerunners of the other poets."[7] Even though Pasquier utilized the term avant-

garde to denote the members of a community who constitute the vanguard, leading

the way ahead of their time, literary critic Matei Calinescu has provided that

Pasquier's use of 'avant-garde' is no further than a rhetorical device implying

change and progress in literature. In defense, Calinescu features an important aspect

of the avant-garde, which is the state of self-consciousness: "Significantly, he

(Pasquier) never implied that those whom he ranged in the 'vanguard' had been in

any way conscious of their role. [...] Self-consciousness - or the illusion of self-

consciousness - is absolutely crucial to the definition of the more recent avant-

---

[6] See dictionary.cambridge.org for the definition: the part of an army or navy that leads an attack on an enemy.

[7] Étienne Pasquier, *Recherches de la France* (Paris, 1596), cited in Matei Calinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity: Modernism, Avant-garde, Decadence, Kitsch, Postmodernism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1987), p.98.

garde."[8] Therefore, the modern notion of the avant-garde came to be formulated as

a concept with reference to radical political thought only in the aftermath of the

French Revolution. In these revolutionary years of 1789-1799, the first journal to

bear 'avant-garde' in its title was, *L'Avant-garde de l'armée des Pyrénées*

orientales of 1794, whose motto was "liberty or death," charged with revolutionary

political overtones.[9] Thus, art historian David Cottington has stated that "it is no

coincidence that the word 'avant-garde' is French, because it was the French

Revolution that, more than any other event in European history, brought about that

rupture with the past on which the consciousness of change and of 'modernity'

were founded."[10] As the 'avant-garde' demanded the destruction of the 'old' to

establish the 'new' for progressive causes in political and social domains,

connoting its militaristic origin, the French Revolution was the embodiment of

these advanced ideals. However, with the reestablishment of the monarchy in 1815,

it was again in France that social theorists emerged questioning the legacy of the

revolutionary years across the political spectrum becoming the vanguards. Their

aim was to seek ways to improve the current political and social establishments and

even abolish the monarchy for a more respectful regime against individual rights

and collective identities. In this political spectrum, one of the precursors of

socialism, Henri de Saint-Simon (1760-1825), arose as a prominent figure on the

left axis.[11] Eventually, as interpreted by Calinescu, it was not a coincidence that the

---

[8] Matei Calinescu provides that this passage occurs in chapter XXXVIII of the *Feu-gere* edition of *Recherches* (1849). Mateli Calinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity: Modernism, Avant-garde, Decadence Kitsch Postmodernism,* p.100.

[9] *Ibid.*, p.101.

[10] David Cottington, *The Avant-Garde: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p.5.

[11] *Ibid.*, p.5.

use of avant-garde in literary-artistic context was derived from the vocabulary of

revolutionary politics. Correspondingly, the term 'avant-garde' was used

figuratively with reference to art, denoting radical progress in both artistic and

social realms, for the first time in a collective volume entitled *Opinions littéraires,*

philosophiques et industrielles published in Paris in 1825 by Simon and his

disciples.[12] To be precise, the term was included in Olinde Rodrigues' dialogue

"L'Artiste, le savant et l'industriel," which he wrote between the artist, the

scientist, and the industrialist. Saint-Simonians believed in the social power of the

arts and designated artists, together with scientists and industrialists as the leaders

(the vanguards) of the new social order. Rodrigues had the artist say:

> It is we, artists, who will serve you as avant-garde: the power of the
> arts is in fact most immediate and most rapid: when we wish to
> spread new ideas among men, we inscribe them on marble or on
> canvas; [...] and in that way above all we exert an electric and
> victorious influence. We address ourselves to the imagination and to
> the sentiments of mankind, we should therefore always exercise the
> liveliest and most decisive action [...][13]

> Further Saint-Simonian doctrine asserted that the good society could (will) be

achieved only

> when (individualistic) egoism, this bastard fruit of civilization, has
> been pushed back to its last defenses, when literature and the fine
> arts have put themselves at the head of the movement, and have
> finally filled society with passion for its own well being [...] What a
> magnificent destiny for the arts is that of exercising a positive power
> over society, a true priestly function, and of marching forcefully in

---

[12] While Donald D. Egbert attributes *Opinions littéraires, philosophiques et industrielles* solely to Henri de Saint-Simon in his "The Idea of 'Avant-garde' in Art and Politics" of 1967 (p.347), Matei Calinescu argues that the book is in fact collective in nature. Calinescu puts forward that it was Olinde Rodrigues, a disciple of Saint-Simon, who wrote down the dialogue between the artist, the scientist, and the industrialist even if Saint-Simon had already ascribed the leading role to the artist and had therefore inspired Rodrigues. Matei Calinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity: Modernism, Avant-garde, Decadence Kitsch Postmodernism,* pp. 101-102.

[13] Cited in Donald D. Egbert, "The Idea of 'Avant-garde' in Art and Politics," *The American Historical Review 73,* No. 2 (December 1967), p. 343. Egbert attributes this passage directly to Henri de Saint-Simon, *Opinions littéraires, philosophiques et industrielles* (Paris, 1825).

the van of all the intellectual faculties, in the epoch of their greatest development! This is the duty of artists, this their mission [...][14]

Indeed, as underlined by Donald D. Egbert, the new social order presented by Saint-Simonians indicated some later Marxian theories of society and art where "society would be highly centralized under the direction of an elite group, with the end of art to be social utility achieved by making the works of art didactic and easily understood by the multitude."[15] Nevertheless, at the opposite pole of the spectrum, there were some intellectuals who were so much taken by the role which Saint-Simonians ascribed to the artist that they rejected the idea that art should be at the service of the society for its progress and well-being. They opposed to the functional and didactic character of art in favor of the view *"l'art pour l'art"* or "art for art's sake." Since this notion did not correspond with the ideals of Saint Simonianism, the supporters of art for art's sake moved closer to the social utopianism of Saint-Simon's primary rival, Charles Fourier (1772-1837), hence moving toward social anarchism. Fourier stood for decentralizing society and government into small, interwoven communities, or "phalanxes" what he called, to pave way for the individual development of their members.[16] As a matter of fact, this individualism and anarchy would be highly influential in the modern understanding of the artistic avant-garde.

The notion *"l'art pour l'art"* or " art for art's sake" was conceived by Théophile Gautier (1811-1872) and his disciples who were against the bourgeois capitalism and utilitarianism. The preface of Gautier's 1835 novel, *Mademoiselle*

---

[14] *Ibid.,* p.343.
[15] *Ibid.,* p.343.

[16] *Ibid.,* p.344.

de Maupin, informs that "the useless alone is truly beautiful; everything useful is ugly since it is the expression of a need, and man's needs are, like his pitiful, infirm nature, ignoble and disgusting. The most useful place in the house is latrines."[17] In other words, the followers of the art for art's sake endorsed a controversial concept of beauty: beauty in terms of its total uselessness. David Cottington has indicated that although Gautier made no reference to an avant-garde or to art as avant-garde, diverging from that of the mainstream, his view of the art found some correspondence with the concept of avant-garde in art.[18] While Gautier greatly diverted from Saint-Simon as he argued against the utilitarian and didactic art, he approached Fourier, whom he admired for his anarchistic individualism. Given this fact, Donald D. Egbert provided that some leading proponents of art for art's sake would later be connected with the socialist anarchism based on Fourierism.[19] However, Pierre Joseph Proudhon (1809-1865), the first man to call himself an anarchist, who encountered Fourier as a young man while he was supervising the printing of Fourier's masterpiece *Le nouveau monde industriel et sociétaire* (1829) and was highly influenced by his ideas, strongly believed that art should have a social purpose. Therefore, the relationship between anarchism and the idea of art for art's sake was not straightforward. Nevertheless, since the opposition of anarchists to centralized government and parties allowed much more room for individualistic expression, avant-garde could also be conceptualized under anarchism. Indeed, the view of artists and writers who were inclined to keep revolutionary politics and art apart from each other, and believed in art for art's

---

[17] Théophile Gautier, *Mademoiselle de Maupin* (Paris, 1835), cited in David Cottington, *The Avant-Garde: A Very Short Introduction,* p.100.
[18] David Cottington, *The Avant-Garde: A Very Short Introduction,* p.100.

[19] Donald D. Egbert, "The Idea of 'Avant-garde' in Art and Politics," pp.344 -345.

sake corresponded with anarchism.[20] As a consequence of these web of relations, already in the first decades of the nineteenth century, the avant-garde started to acquire contradictory significances in terms of being socially conscious or ignorant, or being a collective or individual enterprise, while it still prevailed in the political domain rather than the artistic one.

The Political Dominance of the Avant-garde

By the mid-nineteenth century, the conception of the avant-garde in the political domain with reference to radical thought and revolution became a vehicle of the leftists in the political spectrum. Indeed, Calinescu has asserted that all the future-oriented socio-political doctrines considered themselves as being in the avant-garde such as Saint-Simonians, Fourierists, anarchists, Marxists as they adopted the conception to their own rhetoric. In fact, in Marxism, even though the use of the word avant-garde was lacked in *The Communist Manifesto* (1848), its conception was clearly revealed: [21]

> In what relation do the Communists stand to the proletarians as a whole? [...] The Communists are distinguished from other working-class parties [...], they point out and bring to the front the common interests of the entire proletariat [...] (In) the struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie has to pass through, they always and everywhere represent the interest of the movement as a whole. The Communists, therefore, are on the one hand practically, the most advanced and resolute section of the working class parties of every country[...]; on the other hand, theoretically, they have over the great mass of the proletariat the advantage of clearly understanding th line of march [...] of the proletarian movement.[22]

---

[20] *Ibid.,* pp.344 - 355.

[21] Matei Calinescu underlines that Lenin was the first to define the party as the avant-garde of the working class in his *What is to Be Done* (1902). See Calinescu for his further elaboration on Lenin's conception of the avant-garde. *Five Faces of Modernity: Modernism, Avant-garde, Decadence Kitsch Postmodernism*, pp.113-114.

[22] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "Bourgeoisie and Proletarians" in *The Communist Manifesto* (1848), p.79.

Karl Marx (1818-1883), as a young man, was interested in the social ideas of Saint-Simon as well as his conception of artists and art. He was then involved in aesthetics and art history. However, he started to concentrate on political economy as he sought that a given society was determined by the mode of production. In the *Communist Manifesto* (1848), Marx and Friedrich Engels (1820-1895) partly referred to the system of Saint-Simon, along with other utopian socialists such as Fourier, as they disregarded matters on art and solely devoted themselves to the problems of political economy. By the 1880s, Marxists were getting used to avant-garde as a political term. In fact, during the 1890's numerous provincial French newspapers in relation to Marxism were either named *L'Avant-garde* or included the word.[23]

As a matter of fact, the long nineteenth century prioritized the political meaning of the expression avant-garde. In France, the revolutions of the 1830 and 1848, the disaster of the Prussian war from 1870 to 1871, and the revolt and repression of the brief but the influential Paris Commune of 1871 caused the *fin de siècle* literary-artistic movements to take up political or reactionary attitudes by the end of the century. However, as Poggioli unfolds the concept of avant-garde historically in his seminal *The Theory of the Avant-garde* (1968), he gives a sense of chronology on when and how the image of the avant-garde began to take a secondary meaning referring to the cultural-artistic context. He considers that only after 1870s, as the social crises and political upheavals in France started to be overcomed, the image of the avant-garde began to take a secondary meaning, a cultural-artistic one, even though it still indicated the socio-political avant-garde in

---

[23] Donald D. Egbert, "The Idea of 'Avant-garde' in Art and Politics," pp.351-354.

a larger sense. Yet, Poggioli assumes that the avant-garde as an articulation of artistic and political radicalism lasted until 1880s, when "the divorce of the two avant-gardes" occurred.[24] He concludes the voyage of the term as follow:

> Thus, what had up to then been a secondary, figurative meaning became instead the primary, in fact only, meaning: the isolated image and the abbreviated term avant-garde became, without qualification, another synonym for the artistic avant-garde, while the political notion functioned almost solely as rhetoric and was no longer used exclusively by those faithful to the revolutionary and subversive ideal.[25]

The Duality of the Avant-garde: Artistically and/or Politically Radical

Paris, regarded as the cultural capital of the time, had exceptional cultural authority, art schools, and networks that attracted artists and writers from all over the world in the late nineteenth century. Among those institutions, Salon exhibitions organized by the *Académie des Beaux-Arts*, had an enduring effect on the artistic life of Paris. With its origins in the late seventeenth- century and followed by many decades in the making, Salon exhibitions came to be the dominant 'public' entertainment from 1737 onward. As Thomas Crow has stated, "the Salon was the first regularly repeated, open, and free display of contemporary art in Europe to be offered in a completely secular setting and for the purpose of encouraging a primarily aesthetic response in large numbers of people."[26] As Parisians flocked to exhibitions, painters found themselves in an art-critical system where the journalists and critics inspired them to address the needs and desires of the exhibition 'public.' In fact, state officials in charge of arts, also claimed that their decisions had been

---

[24] Renato Poggioli, *The Theory of the Avant-garde,* trans. Gerald Fitzgerald (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1968), pp.10-12.

[25] *Ibid.,* p.12.

[26] Thomas Crow, *Painters and Public Life in Eighteenth Century Paris* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), p.3.

made in the interest of the 'public.'[27] Since art displays were not restricted to the

elite individuals or groups as it had been before Salon exhibitions, the visitors to the

Salon came to be an important indicator designating the value of a painting. Jürgen

Habermas has interpreted the emergence of public as a critical authority:

> Like the concert and the theater, museums institutionalized the lay judgement on art: discussion became the medium through which people appropriated art. The innumerable pamphlets criticizing or defending the leading theory of art built on the discussions of the salons and reacted back on them - art criticism as conversation.[28]

However, as the public exhibitions began to attract wider audience, the

development of professional art criticism developed further. This new occupation

emerged in the institution of art criticism in the late eighteenth century was called

'art critic.'[29] Boris Groys recalls the perception of art critic in the end of the

eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century as follow:

> The art critic was certainly not regarded as a representative of the art world but strictly as an outside observer whose function was to judge and criticize works of art in the name of the public exactly as would any other well-educated observer with the time and literary facility: good taste was seen as the expression of an aesthetic 'common sense.'[30]

Nevertheless, by the mid-nineteenth century the position of art critic,

distanced from the artist with a tendency to write in favor of the common sense

aesthetics, was challenged with the arrival of the avant-garde. Indeed, the

---

[27] *Ibid*, p.1.

[28] Jürgen Habermas, *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society,* trans. Thomas Bürger, Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1993), p.40.
[29] *Ibid*, p.41.

[30] Boris Groys, "Critical Reflections," in *The State of Art Criticism,* eds. James Elkins and Michael Newman (New York: Routledge, 2007), p.62.

emergence of the avant-garde notion in the Parisian cultural life not only altered the artistic production of the time along with the stance of art critics, whom were no longer hesitant to be friends with the artists, but also critically challenged the institutionalization and the autonomous status of arts.

In the mid-nineteenth century, Gustave Courbet (1819-1877), the famous realist painter of the epoch, came to denote the origins of avant-gardism in the artistic realm as his paintings embodied ideological and artistic opposition. He was the *par excellence* of 'militantly radical Realism,' and his realism defined the avant-garde as an articulation of artistic and political radicalism.[31] Linda Nochlin clarifies that Courbet's paintings are 'avant-garde,'

> if we understand the expression, in terms of its etymological derivation, as implying a union of the socially and the artistically progressive. Far from being an abstract treatise on the latest social ideas, it is a concrete emblem of what the making of art and the nature of society are to the Realist artist.[32]

Not surprisingly, Courbet himself was politically active during the Revolutions of 1848. During these revolutionary years he met Proudhon and they formed a strong friendship that would have enduring effects on each other's ideas and works. From 1848 onward, Courbet shared Proudhon's "love for the common people" and agreed with his theories while Proudhon admired Courbet's realist style and socially radical works.[33] George Woodcock has illustrated that Proudhon defined Courbet as a "critical, analytical, synthetic and humanitarian painter" who

---

[31] Refer to Linda Nochlin in "The Invention of the Avant-garde: France 1830-1880," *The Politics of Vision: Essays on Nineteenth-Century Art and Society* (1989), p.3.

[32] *Ibid.,* p.12.

[33] George Woodcock, *Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, A Bibliography* (Montreal, NY: Black Rose Books 1972), p.257.

was part of the movement that would bring an end to "capitalism and sovereignty of the producers."[34] In this respect, Courbet's choice of subject on his canvas was influenced by the artistic and social movements of his time. As Meyer Schapiro has revealed:

> Courbet's preference for romantic subjects before the 1848, is replaced by the representation of the people through an attentive program following the revolution. Courbet does not represent the forms of modern industry but rather the hand work of the villages, the traditional as appeared in the *Stonebreakers* (1849) [fig.1]. This painting was politically suggestive as the lower class and especially the workers had emerged as a factor in politics. His political radicalism in linked to his friendship with Proudhon.[35]

Similarly, Linda Nochlin puts forward that Courbet's post-revolutionary *The Painter's Studio: A Real Allegory Summing up Seven Years of My Artistic and Moral Life* (1854-1855) (fig.2) was in fact a Fourierist allegory. Completed after seven years from the 1848 revolution, Nochlin has interpreted that "the advanced social ideals of the mid-nineteenth century are given expression in appropriately advanced pictorial and iconographic form." In the painting, the right-hand side of Courbet includes philosophers and critics from Baudelaire to Proudhon whose presences, he thought, were essential in the structuring of the new world order. Therefore, *The Painter's Studio* has been perceived as a vivid demonstration of Courbet's vision of society where artists played a critical role.[36] As realism meant "democracy in art" for Courbet, not only he stood against conservatism in society

---

[34] *Ibid,* p.257.

[35] Meyer Schapiro, "Courbet and Popular Imagery: An Essay on Realism and Naiveté," in *Modern Art: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (New York: George Braziller, 1978), p.51.

[36] Refer to Linda Nochlin's detailed analysis on the *The Painter's Studio* in "The Invention of the Avant-garde: France 1830 - 1880," pp.5-10.

through the choice of his subject matters, but also he broke away from the canons of the French Academy as well as those of the Romantics and the Classics with his radical style.[37]

Indeed, during the mid-nineteenth century in Paris, following the first adoption of 'avant-garde' by Saint-Simon with reference to "radical and advanced activity in both the artistic and social realms," the wider use of the term began to proliferate in the cultural sphere. Yet, it still embodied military connotations, as has been illustrated with the avant-gardism of Courbet, and therefore the use of avant-garde in the cultural context received some criticisms from the literature domain. For this reason, some of the true avant-gardes of the intellectual world, who were aiming for revolution in the literature and artistic realms, used the term 'avant-garde' in a negative sense like the great poet Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867).[38] Ironically, although Baudelaire disdained the concept of 'avant-garde,' he also established our modern understanding and use of it within the cultural context. David Cottington reads that for Baudelaire "not all writers (littérateurs), not all literature, was 'avant-garde,' but only some" marking a shift from the Saint-Simonian idea of avant-garde with reference to art in its widest sense to "a new sense of 'an avant-garde within art.'"[39] In other words, the avant-garde was acquiring new and paradoxical significances as it was about to be withdrawn from its socio-political domain and transmitted into the artistic-cultural realm. In fact, Calinescu elaborates on Baudelaire's visionary thinking by stating that the inner

---

[37] *Ibid.,* p.3.

[38] As illustrated by David Cottington, Baudelaire disfavored "the Frenchman's passionate predilection for military metaphors: the poets of combat, the littérateurs of the avant-garde," in his private notebook *My Heart Laid Bare* of the 1860s, which was published after his death. David Cottington, *The Avant-Garde: A Very Short Introduction*, p.5.

[39] David Cottington, *The Avant-Garde: A Very Short Introduction,* p.6.

conflicts that the avant-garde possessed as a cultural concept, which would be studied by the mid-twentieth century art historians and critics, were already inherent in Baudelaire's mind in the late nineteenth century.[40]

The Avant-garde, Modernity, and the City

Baudelaire, the prolific writer and intellect of the Parisian cultural life during the nineteenth century, believed that artists should be of their own time as illustrated by Courbet. Even though Baudelaire distanced himself from the notion of avant-garde, he was avant-garde by the very fact of his revolutionary ideas on how the artists and arts of his time should be. Following the political upheavals, industrial developments, and social transitions France was going through, it was time for change in the realm of art as well. In his essay "The Salon of 1846: On the Heroism of Modern Life" Baudelaire declared:

> It is true that the great tradition has got lost, and that the new one is not yet established. But what was this great tradition, if not a habitual, everyday idealization of ancient life [...] Before trying to distinguish the epic side of modern life, and before bringing examples to prove that our age is no less fertile in sublime themes than past ages, we may assert that since all centuries and all peoples have had their own form of beauty, so inevitably we have ours.[41]

Baudelaire was explicitly confronting the academic art where the heroic content of the ancient world was portrayed. After all it was time to reflect upon the modern society in transition and the class conflict rather than the historical past. However, the principal problem for Baudelaire was to "discover whether we

---

[40] Matei Calinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity: Modernism, Avant-garde, Decadence, Kitsch, Postmodernism,* p.120.

[41] Charles Baudelaire, "On the Heroism of Modern Life," Section XVIII of "The Salon of 1846," trans. and ed. Jonathan Mayne in *Art in Paris 1845-1862: Salons and Other Exhibitions* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1965), p.126-127.

possess a specific beauty intrinsic to our new emotions."[42] At the time, he was not

satisfied with the majority of works that attacked modern life, and therefore he

demanded the subjects to be more heroic. In this respect, Courbet's realism by 1848

can be interpreted as a precursor of this 'specific beauty' not only due to his choice

of content, but also because of his artistic technique.

As a matter of fact, Baudelaire, playing a critical role as a theorist of aesthetic

modernity, claimed opposition to both traditional aesthetics and modernity of the

bourgeois culture. He described 'modernity' in *The Painter of Modern Life* (1863)

as follow:

> By 'modernity,' I mean the ephemeral, the fugitive, the contingent,
> the half of art whose other half is the eternal and the immutable.
> Every old master has had his own modernity; the great majority of
> fine portraits that have come down to us from former generations are
> clothed in the costume of their own period. They are perfectly
> harmonious, because everything - from costume and coiffure down
> to gesture, glance and smile (for each age has a deportment, a glance,
> and a smile of its own) - everything, I say, combines to form a
> completely viable whole.[43]

For Baudelaire, "what has survived aesthetically from the past is nothing but

the expression of a variety of successive modernities," each period portraying its

unique artistic expression.[44] In Baudelaire's idea of modernity what matters is the

present time, 'now' is the true source of 'all our originality.' Thus, Baudelaire wrote

correspondingly: "It is doubtless an excellent thing to study the old masters in order

to learn how to paint, but it can be no more than a waste of labour if your aim is to

---

[42] *Ibid.,* p.129.

[43] Charles Baudelaire, "The Painter of Modern Life (1863)," trans. and ed. Jonathan Mayne in *The Painter of Modern Life and other Essays by Charles Baudelaire* (London: Phaidon Press, 1964), p.12.

[44] Matei Calinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity: Modernism, Avant-garde, Decadence, Kitsch, Postmodernism,* p.49.

understand the special nature of present-day beauty."[45] The revolution of the present against the tradition was already inherent in Baudelaire's writing. For Marshal Berman, Baudelaire "did more than anyone in the nineteenth century to make the men and women of his century aware of themselves as moderns."[46]

At this point, an emphasis on the two distinct and conflicting modernities explained by Calinescu will help to understand the idea of modernity in the realm of arts and culture. Calinescu claims that around the first half of the nineteenth century "an irreversible split occurred between modernity as a stage in the history of Western civilization and modernity as an aesthetic concept."[47] Where the former bourgeois modernity is an output of the scientific and technological progress, industrial revolution, and economic and social changes introduced by capitalism; the latter cultural modernity, critically questions the changes caused by the first paving the way for the emergence of the radical artistic avant-garde.

By 1852, with the emergence of the Second French Empire under the rule of Napoleon III, the Emperor announced the 'public works project' to redesign and rebuild the city of Paris. Paris, which was still a medieval city since then with its narrow and twisting streets, wooden houses, and inadequate water and drain infrastructure, was about to go under massive change under the supervision of Baron Georges Haussmann. Water and drain systems, wider boulevards, street lightning, parks and residential and commercial structures were among the new establishments done by the project that lasted for the entire Second Empire.

---

[45] Charles Baudelaire, "The Painter of Modern Life (1863)," p.12.

[46] Marshall Berman, *All That is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (New York: Penguin Books, 1988), p.132.

[47] Matei Calinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity: Modernism, Avant-garde, Decadence, Kitsch, Postmodernism,* p.41.

However, not only health and transportation systems were improved but also new public works programs were introduced to cope with the massive unemployment of the period as part of the larger Haussmannization, which this massive project was called. These economic and strategic endeavors, which also strengthened the power of the Emperor securing his undemocratic rule, had immense effects on the social and cultural life of Paris. The city under development, whose inhabitants were going through economic, social, and political conflicts, was also giving signs of urban violation and alienation along the urbanization process.[48] It was during this transition period that writers like Baudelaire and painters like Manet displayed their dislike for the values of status-seeking bourgeoisie along with the existing social and artistic institutions. As they estranged themselves from these orders, they felt a sense of psychic alienation. In fact, this feeling of alienation has come to denote the well-spring of the modern understanding of avant-garde within art that is separate from other conventions.[49]

"As regards Baudelaire," Walter Benjamin stated "the masses were anything but external to him; indeed, it is easy to trace in his works his defensive reaction to their attraction and allure."[50] Benjamin further elaborated on alienation theme and wrote about Baudelaire's relation to the metropolitan masses and the urbanized city:

> Baudelaire describes neither the Parisians nor their city. Forgoing such descriptions enables him to invoke the ones in the form of the other. His crowd is always the crowd of a big city, his Paris is

---

[48] "Manet and the Impressionists," in *Nineteenth Century Art: A Critical History*, ed. Stephen f. Eisenman (London: Thames & Hudson, 2011), pp.350-368.

[49] David Cottington, *The Avant-Garde: A Very Short Introduction,* p.7.

[50] Walter Benjamin, "On some Motifs in Baudelaire," in *Illuminations* (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), p.167.

invariably overpopulated [...] It is precisely this image of big-city crowds (pure and simple people) that became decisive for Baudelaire. If he succumbed to the force by which he was drawn to them and, as a *flâneur*, was made one of them, he was nevertheless unable to rid himself of a sense of their essentially inhuman make-up. He becomes their accomplice even as he dissociates himself from them.[51]

Correspondingly, the stance of *flâneur* served Baudelaire along with other writers and artists of the epoch, who shared the same distaste against bourgeois values to endure against the 'shocks of the capital.'[52] Baudelaire presented the portrait of *flâneur* as follow:

The crowd is his element, as the air is that of birds and water of fishes. His passion and his profession are to become one flesh with the crowd. For the perfect *flâneur,* for the passionate spectator, it is an immense joy to set up hose in the heart of the multitude, amid the ebb and flow of movement, in the midst of the fugitive and the infinite. To be away from home and yet to feel oneself everywhere at home; to see the world, to be at the centre of the world, and yet to remain hidden from the world.[53]

For Baudelaire, the *flâneur,* the city stroller who observed the crowds, was the result of the psychic alienation in the urban city. On one hand, immersed in the crowds, the *flâneur* was observing; on the other hand, estranged from the crowds, the *flâneur* was investigating with suspicion. Thus, the notion of *flâneur,* embedded in such rich associations came to the attention of scholarly interest by the studies of Walter Benjamin in the first quarter of the twentieth century. In fact, his conceptualization of *flâneur* not only influenced the way nineteenth-century

---

[51] *Ibid.,* p.168.

[52] See Walter Benjamin, "On some Motifs in Baudelaire," p.164. For Benjamin shock is among experiences that has decisive importance for Baudelaire's personality.

[53] Charles Baudelaire, *The Painter of Modern Life,* p.9.

Paris has been understood but also helped to further studies including modern/urban experience, spectatorship, and alienation.

Courbet can be taken into account as the developer of the 'avant-garde' in the arts, if the notion is thought of in its etymological derivation, as implying a dual progress both in socio-political and artistic domains. However, in order to avoid any confusion, Nochlin has provided that "if we take 'avant-garde' out of its quotation marks," meaning, if we recognize the term only in the realm of artistic avant-garde, apart from its social and political references, "we must come to the conclusion that what is generally implied by the term begins with Édouard Manet (1832-1883) rather than Courbet" since the concept of alienation, which was critical to the understanding of avant-garde was lacked in Courbet's life and art.[54]

Manet, whose lifetime largely coincided with the urbanization of Paris, sought to escape the values of the bourgeoisie and avoided conventions in a similar vein like Baudelaire. His *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* (1863) (fig.3), refused by the Academy jury, was presented in the *Salon des Refusés* in 1863. In an effort to meet the demands of the expanding middle class with varied tastes for artistic styles, Emperor Napoleon had just set the *Salon des Refusés* in Paris, offering an alternative venue for the rejected paintings like Manets' against the official annual Salon ran by the Academy. The exhibitions of rejected artists received wide criticism across thousands of visitors as well as from art critics in general.[55] *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* faced severe criticism from the supporters of the Academy ideals since Manet teased the 'timeless' Raphaelesque composition with his

---

[54] Linda Nochlin, "The Invention of the Avant-garde: France 1830-1880," p.12.

[55] David Cottington, *The Avant-Garde: A Very Short Introduction,* p.7.

figures "staring blandly out of the decor of Giorgione's venerated pastoral idyll (in) their elegant contemporary costume - or lack of it."[56] Against all odds, Émile Zola (1840-1902), interested in the artists rejected by the official critics, endeavored to form an understanding for Manet with his supportive writings.

For Manet, regarding the avant-garde in the arts, the relation of the artist to society was not a social fact as it had been for the revolutionary intellectuals of the 1848 generation, but rather phenomenological, as explained by Nochlin.[57] Given this insight, as the artistic avant-garde was freed from its revolutionary political connotations, it started to imply the self-experience of the artist to the modernized city and its people. Therefore, it was no coincidence that Manet's *A Bar at the Folies-Bergere* (1881-1882) (fig.4) was considered to be an excellent example for the image of isolation considering the artist's own sense of alienation within the crowds. During this period, although the 'avant-garde' came to denote only the artistic avant-garde, without needing the prefix artistic to be distinguished from the politically avant-garde, in the early twentieth century, the avant-garde started to reacquire critical political overtones due to the relation of artist to rising social and political conflicts in the world scene.

---

[56] Linda Nochlin,"The Invention of the Avant-garde: France 1830 - 1880," p.14.

[57] *Ibid.* p.14.

A Review: Varied Approaches in Theorizing the Avant-garde

In the history of modern art, to understand what the avant-garde art and artists stood for in general and to make proper distinctions between the avant-garde movements in particular, a theory of avant-garde was required to be made. Due to the fully loaded discourse on the avant-garde, its conception is still a hot debated topic today. Besides, there is the misuse of avant-garde in place of 'modernism.' Although they posed the same reactionary and revolutionary attitude against tradition and past, and emphasized the vitality of artistic experimentation through a constant self-criticism at the beginning of the twentieth century, avant-garde diverged from modernism with its critique against the bourgeois modernity, indeed the conversion of art into 'kitsch' due to popularity concerns. Hence, pivotal scholarly works conducted by Clement Greenberg, Renato Poggioli, Peter Bürger and Matei Calinescu from the 1930s to the 1980s, are examined to provide the contribution of each scholar on forming the theoretical framework of avant-garde and the discussed core ideas in reference to early twentieth century avant-garde movements.

In the late 1930s and the early 1940s, when a group of New York scholars were highly interested in the avant-garde, Clement Greenberg made an influential contribution to its theorizing with the "Avant-garde and Kitsch" article, which appeared in the literary magazine *Partisan Review* in fall 1939. This essay, which was not on painting or sculpture but on culture, was considered by Fred Orton and Griselda Pollock as Greenberg's critical input in the "debate about the role and nature of revolutionary literature and art," undertaken in *Partisan Review* aiming to publish "creative and critical literature from the viewpoint of the revolutionary

working class," from 1936 to 1940.[58] T.J. Clark further emphasized the

importance of Clement Greenberg's essays "Avant-garde and Kitsch," which was

followed by "Towards a Newer Laocoon" in 1940, for the modern history of art

such that "these two articles, I believe [...] set down the main lines of a theory and

history of culture since 1850, since shall we say, Courbet and Baudelaire."[59]

Critical for the history of modern art, Greenberg was one of the first to

contextualize the avant-garde within a social and historical framework in "Avant-

garde and Kitsch." In his quest to discover what perspective of culture was broad

enough to place different kinds of approaches in an enlightening relation to one

another, Greenberg conducted his investigation beyond aesthetics including the

relationship between the aesthetic experience of the individual and the social and

historical contexts in which that experience occurred.[60] In an effort to provide a

historical perspective on western bourgeois culture since the mid-nineteenth

century, Greenberg explained that back then the avant-garde, initially associated

with revolutionary political attitudes, was established against the bourgeoisie.

However, though the avant-garde courageously stood against the prevailing

standards of the bourgeoisie first, it then turned out be uninterested in politics.[61]

Eventually, the avant-garde acquired a paradoxical nature during this transition, it

---

[58] Fred Orton and Griselda Pollock explain that the founding editors of *Partisan Review*, William Phillips and Phillips Rahv, thought that it was not correct to use literature as a vehicle of the current political ideas since literature should not have advanced the class conflict. Yet, a literary theory, which emanates from Marxism was "an intellectual tool to be used to understand and preserve the best literature of the past while creating the basis for a new culture." Fred Orton and Griselda Pollock, "Avant-gardes and Partisans Reviewed," in *Pollock and After: The Critical Debate* (London: Harper & Row, 1981), p.169.

[59] T.J. Clark wrote in "Clement Greenberg's Theory of Art," *Critical Inquiry,* Vol. 9 (September, 1982) pp.139-156. He noted that Greenberg did not reprint "Towards a Newer Laocoon," but represented some of the arguments in *Art and Literature* (1965) with the title "Modernist Painting."

[60] Clement Greenberg, "Avant-garde and Kitsch" in *Art and Culture: Critical Essays* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1961), p.3.

[61] *Ibid,* p.5.

became part of the bourgeois order which it had previously argued against. For Greenberg this was because no culture could advance "without a social basis," "without a source of stable income," and for the avant-garde, "this was provided by an elite among the ruling class of that society from which it assumed itself to be cut off, but to which it has always remained attached by an umbilical cord of gold."[62] As Greenberg unfolded the historical formation of the avant-garde in 1939, at a time when capitalism was in crisis and therefore the avant-garde culture was under threat, he also posited the risk of kitsch against culture as the antithesis of the avant-garde. For Greenberg, kitsch, a product of the industrial revolution, emerged due to the arrival of 'universal literacy' as the masses of Western Europe and America were urbanized.[63] Orton and Pollock made valuable contributions for an in depth understanding of "Avant-garde and Kitsch" as they stated that Greenberg did not provide the avant-garde "as an idea or as an artistic development," but rather "as a special socio-artistic intellectual agency through which culture could be advanced." The avant-garde, in reference to "a novel form of culture" produced in bourgeois society in the mid-nineteenth century, was in fact "a novel force of culture" which advanced and maintained culture at a high level.[64] Indeed, Greenberg took 'avant-garde' as one of the driving forces behind modernism for sure. Later in the century, the avant-garde departed from politics for the sake of independence, for the art for art's sake, avoiding subject matter or content. However, in the current crisis of capitalism, the avant-garde which had been developed "in and against bourgeois society as a product of it and challenge

---

[62] *Ibid,* p.8.

[63] *Ibid,* pp.9-10. Kitsch was the popular, commercial art, or literature including magazine covers, illustrations, comics and Hollywood movies which the newly literate urbanized 'public' could enjoy.

[64] Fred Orton and Griselda Pollock, "Avant-gardes and Partisans Reviewed," pp. 211-226.

to it" had to look for revolutionary politics again, "to socialism, not for the new culture but for the preservation of living culture, of itself." [65]

Renato Poggioli's 1962 book (English translation 1968), *The Theory of the Avant-garde,* was the first attempt in writing a comprehensive theorizing for the avant-garde. Poggioli, in his endeavor to study avant-garde as a "historical concept," as a "center of tendencies and ideas," unfolded the concept not purely in itself but "through what it revealed, inside and outside of art itself, of a common psychological condition and a unique ideological fact." In other words, he contextualized the avant-garde art not under the history of art, not solely as an aesthetic fact but rather as a sociological one, through what it revealed.[66] As Poggioli distinguished between the 'school' and the 'movement,' where schools presumed a tradition and an authority, and movements were "constituted to obtain a positive result,"[67] he defined founding moments for the early European avant-garde movements.[68] He proposed four phases: activism, antagonism, nihilism, agonism. Correspondingly, by definition, the avant-garde movements are activist and antagonist as they stand against the status quo, the previous generation, and indeed fight with them. Next, nihilism denotes a "kind of transcendental antagonism," in connection with Dada, where it ignores any kind of barrier for the sake of destruction without showing any interest in new set of values. In fact, the concept of alienation develops mainly in nihilism phase. Finally, agonism goes beyond

---

[65] *Ibid,* p.177.

[66] Renato Poggioli, *The Theory of the Avant-Garde,* pp.3-4.

[67] *Ibid,* pp.20-21.

[68] Marjorie Perloff clarifies in "Avant-garde Poetics" that Poggioli's examples are drawn primarily from Italian futurism. Marjorie Perloff, "Avant-garde Poetics," in Roland Greene and Stephen Cushman eds., *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2012), p.112.

nihilism to accept self destruction for the sake of future movements which Poggioli refers as an "unknown sacrifice" to "transform the catastrophe into miracle."[69] However, his definitions and criterias were largely criticized by Jochen Schulte-Sasse, who argued that they were historically and theoretically ambiguous to accomplish a 'theory of avant-garde.' For him, Poggioli could not represent the historical uniqueness of the avant-garde movements of the 1920s - Futurism, Dadaism, Surrealism, the left avant-garde in Russia and Germany - theoretically. In fact, Schulte-Sasse further criticized Poggioli for his tendency to "equate modernism and avant-garde," as he praised Bürger for pointing out their difference.[70]

Sharing the same title with Poggioli's 1962 book, Peter Bürger published his *Theory of Avant-garde* in 1980, where he famously wrote that the avant-garde "radically questions the very principle of art in bourgeois society according to which the individual is considered the creator of the work of art," in reference to Marcel Duchamp's provocation when he signed the readymade, *Fountain* (1917) (fig.5), challenging the idea "signature meant more than the quality of the work."[71] Bürger has named the early-twentieth century European avant-garde movements 'historical avant-garde' to distinguish them from the 'neo-avant-garde' of the 1960s. Bürger, rather than providing a basic history or survey for the historical avant-garde movements, has formulated a theory where their individual elements were integrally related, and where the attack on the institution of art and the aim to

---

[69] *Ibid,* pp.61-66.

[70] See Jochen Schulte-Sasse's "Foreword" to Peter Bürger, *Theory of Avant-garde,* trans. Michael Shaw (Minneapolis: Manchester University Press, 1984), for his further critiques on Renato Poggioli's *Theory of Avant Garde.* p.xiv, xv.

[71] Peter Bürger, *Theory of Avant-garde,* p.52.

revolutionize life intended by the avant-garde rested at. Correspondingly, the avant-garde demanded the abolition of autonomous art and the status of art in bourgeois society (epitomized by Aestheticism) through the integration of art into 'praxis of life' to attack art as a bourgeois institution.[72] In other words, art had to be liberated from the institutional constraints to deliver its social influence. It was in fact a precondition for the avant-garde to revolutionize life as a whole and achieve a utopia.[73] In fact for Bürger, this feature of the avant-garde indicated its difference from modernism. Where the avant-garde was committed to destruct art as a bourgeois institution and aimed to reintegrate art into life, modernism preserved arts distance from life in fact vitalizing museum culture. Bürger further elaborated on the theory of avant-garde in his article "Avant-garde and Neo-avant-garde: An Attempt to Answer Certain Critics of *Theory of the Avant-garde*" (2010), as he felt the urge to respond to many critiques his work received in a similar vein like the other seminal theories of the avant-garde. Indeed, while the debates emerging from the relationship between autonomous art and avant-garde, such as if there was not a rupture but continuity or if the avant-garde had failed or not exceed the scope of this study, they rather provide Bürger's demanding contribution to the field and represent the ongoing conflicts in the context of avant-garde paving the way for a continuous critical thinking on the subject.

For Matei Calinescu, avant-garde is a version of modernity as he has presented in *Five Faces of Modernity: Modernism, Avant-garde, Decadence, Kitsch, Postmodernism* (1987). This influential book was in fact an extended

---

[72] *Ibid,* p.54.

[73] See Peter Bürger, "Avant-garde and Neo-avant-garde: An Attempt to Answer Certain Critics of *Theory of the Avant-garde,*" *New Literary History,* 41 (2010): 695-715 for his responses against a set of critiques on his theorising of the avant-garde.

edition to *Faces of Modernity* (1977) with an additional section on post-modernism, which demanded a timely investigation. As Calinescu has explored each five term with a correspondent history of its meaning and use, he unfolded how each had acquired multiple meanings over time along with their relation to one another. For Calinescu the avant-garde historically emerged "by dramatizing certain constitutive elements of the idea of modernity and making them into cornerstones of revolutionary ethos."[74] Thereupon, the avant-garde, more radical than modernity by all means, is conceptualized by an idealized version of modernity in an oppositional relation to bourgeois. Through a historical perspective, Calinescu examines the division of the artistic and political avant-garde with an increased conflict in between by the mid-nineteenth century. He states, "the representatives of the artistic avant-garde consciously turned against the stylistic expectations of the general public, whom the political revolutionists were trying to win over through the use of the most platitudinous revolutionary propaganda."[75] Although Calinescu accepts a splitting between the two avant-gardes, he is critical of Poggioli's idea of an "abrupt and complete divorce" as he argues that the relation between the artistic and political avant-gardes came to be more complicated with the arrival of the more than once politically inspired historical avant-garde movements.

The theories and frameworks of the avant-garde asserted by these art critics and scholars, reflect how their approaches and interpretations have varied from each other due to the loaded and contradictory discourse of the concept. Nevertheless, among many others, the ongoing scholarly discussions on the avant-garde depend to

---

[74] Matei Calinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity: Modernism, Avant-garde, Decadence Kitsch Postmodernism,* p.95.

[75] *Ibid.,* p.112.

these studies in the form of reflections, negotiations, negations or rejections. However, my intention is neither a critique against the set forth theories of the avant-garde nor an endeavor to re-theorize it, but rather to provide a framework in which I can examine the so-called avant-garde artist's group of the early Republican Turkey, Group D. Only after an attentive emphasis on the conception of the avant-garde and a consideration for the arrival of twentieth century avant-garde movements, which Turkish artists and intellectuals interacted with, the transmission of the avant-garde into the Republican period can be thoroughly investigated.

Internationalization of the Avant-Garde and the Turkish Republic

Studies of 'the avant-garde,' especially since Poggioli and Bürger, have transformed our understanding of the avant-garde concept through a series of revisions and reinterpretations. The early intelligentsia of the Western World felt compelled to formalize an overarching entity, hence a theorization of the avant-garde, although there has not been a single overarching movement that could affirm what avant-garde is. In fact, both theories of the avant-garde by Poggioli and Bürger were criticized for selectively depending on a few avant-garde currents. While the former was commented to be largely dependent on Italian Futurism, the latter was underlined for being oriented specifically toward Dada and Surrealism.[76] Indeed, today, what has come to be indicated by 'the avant-garde' is an array of

---

[76] For the criticism on Poggioli's theory see Marjorie Perloff, "Avant-garde Poetics," in *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, eds. Roland Greene and Stephen Cushman (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2012) and for the criticism on Bürger's theory see Richard Murphy, *Theorizing the Avant-garde: Modernism, Expressionism, and the Problem of Postmodernity* (UK: Cambridge University, 1999).

experimental dispositions and works of art by innovative writers and artists whom constitute the vanguard of the epoch.[77]

The preoccupation of the early avant-garde with the nineteenth century's anarchic stage was on the rise by the early twentieth century with the heated political, military, and nationalist motives in the world scene dragging numerous countries into the World War I from French Third Republic, United Kingdom, Russian Empire and Kingdom of Italy to German Empire and Ottoman Empire. In this troublesome period at the turn of the century, the political affiliation of the avant-garde concept which was subordinated to its artistic formation by the end of the nineteenth century was re-established with the growing intellectual anarchism of the avant-garde writers and artists.[78]

Although the avant-garde was initially conceptualized with left politics in the political spectrum, it presented a politically dual character by the early twentieth century. For example, of the early twentieth century avant-garde movements, Futurism, was introduced to the opposite pole of the left-wing by Marinetti with an active agenda in Fascism. According to the influential cultural historian Raymond Williams, "the Futurist call to destroy 'tradition' overlaps with socialist calls to destroy the whole existing social order."[79] Accompanied with revolutionary politics on the rise and the grow of modernisation in big cities with enduring effects on

---

[77] See John J. White's "Introduction" to *The European Avant-garde: Text and Image,* eds. Selena Daly and Monica Insinga (UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012) where he introduces recent critical approaches toward the avant-garde with multiple contributions made to movements including Italian and Russian Futurism, Expressionism, Dada, Surrealism, Vorticism and Constructivism through diverse themes from the representation of the body to identity and exile.

[78] For the re-establishment of the relationship between the artistic and political avant-garde which Poggioli perceived as a limited one, see Renato Poggioli, *The Theory of Avant-garde,* p.12.

[79] Raymond Williams, "The Politics of the Avant-garde" in *Visions and Blueprints: Avant-Garde Culture and Radical Politics in Early Twentieth-Century Europe,* eds. Edward Timms and Peter Collier (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1988), p.4.

people's lives during the early twentieth century, all avant-garde movements agreed on to be 'anti-bourgeois' even though they diverged from each other politically and aesthetically. Indeed, Williams stated that there were 'decisive links' between the avant-garde movements of the twentieth century and the specific conditions of the century's metropolis. He added firmly, "the true social bases of the early avant-garde were at once cosmopolitan and metropolitan;" in fact, with a further focus on the internationalism of the avant-garde Williams observed, "there was rapid transfer and interaction between different countries and different capitals, and the deep mode of the whole movement, as in modernism, was precisely this mobility across frontiers: frontiers which were among the most obvious elements of the old order which had to be rejected."[80] From this perspective, the advent of the avant-garde concept in Turkey following the proclamation of the Republic in 1923 can also be attributed to Williams' view on the rapid transmission of vanguard ideas. Indeed, especially since the 1930s, the young Republic in the wake of the revolutionary period during which a series of successive reforms and revolutions were performed in the political, economical, social and cultural domains after European models approached open mindedly towards the conception of a belated avant-garde and its international currents.

Of the early twentieth century avant-garde movements, which dominated the European art scene primarily between the two world wars; Cubism, Futurism, Constructivism, Surrealism, Dada, Expressionism, De Stijl and the Bauhaus School; Cubism determined the specific visual idiom in Turkish painting especially through the artistic and intellectual contribution of Group D during a period when Turkish Republic was going under rapid transformation in response to the needs of

---

[80] *Ibid.,* p.11.

a secular and modern nation-state. As a matter of fact, prior to an investigation on the avant-gardeness of Group D (Chapter III), the next chapter unfolds the revolutionary consciousness of the early Republican period and the artistic milieu in which Group D emerged to reveal the group's innovative and radical approach within the specific dynamics of Turkish painting and the nation-building context of Turkey.

CHAPTER II

THE REVOLUTIONARY CONSCIOUSNESS AND
THE INNOVATIVE PAINTING OF THE EARLY TURKISH
REPUBLIC

The 'Revolutionary' Conscious in Early Republican Turkey

Nationalisms of the twentieth century, once liberated from the rule of
monarchs or colonial powers, believed that the society could be radically shaped
and directed in new directions aligned with the politics of the newly founded state.
The early twentieth century also witnessed the dissolution of the multi-ethnic
Ottoman Empire and the abolition of sultanate through successive wars and treaties;
the rise of Balkan Wars (1912-1913), the World War I (1914-1918) defeat, the War
of Independence glory in 1923 succeeded by signing of the Lausanne Agreement,
and finally the proclamation of the Republic the same year. With the founding of
the Turkish Republic by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, Turkey's political and intellectual
elites endeavored to form a modern, secular, European nation-state in total rejection
of the traditional tenets of the Ottoman Empire. Actually, the first initiatives for a
modern state were taken in 1839 in the late Ottoman era with the declaration of
Tanzimat (reforms) legal acts in an effort to equally secure the rights of Muslim and
non-Muslim Ottoman subjects in front of the law.[81] Although these efforts were
reached zenith with the constitutional revolution of 1908 realizing a relatively
reformist period for the formation of progressive ideas persistent in the Ottoman
Empire's Second Constitutional Era *(İkinci Meşrutiyet Dönemi)*,[82] only after the

---

[81] See Erik Jan Zürcher for his emphasis of the debates on the sincerity of *Tanzimat* legal acts and
their main intention in *Turkey, A Modern History* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004), p.51.

[82] *Ibid.,* p.93.

proclamation of Turkish Republic and the successive revolutionary period, the young Republic could be manifested as a true modern state breaking away from its Ottoman past. In fact, the 'self-consciously revolutionary' official discourse of the young Republic, evoking the basis of the European avant-garde, included 'revolutionism' in the six pillars of Kemalism along with republicanism, secularism, populism, statism and nationalism as they constituted the founding ideology of the Turkish Republic. Aiming to transform not only the political system but also the cultural and artistic domain, the Republican intellectuals undertook an all-encompassing project of 'modernization' and 'civilization' as their primary objective through a 'top-to-bottom' approach.[83]

In the newly founded Republic of Turkey, particularly the first decade encompassed a range of reforms and changes overthrowing religious symbols in support of secularism and introducing new symbols for the advent of European 'civilization' in the country. Among those, the abolishment of the traditional headgear, such as the fez, followed by the restriction of religious attire with the dress code of 1925, and the replacement of the old Ottoman-Arabic script with the Latin alphabet in 1928 had effective symbolic resonances. In reference to adopting or interpreting European symbols to represent the country's progress, the revolutionary Republic also perceived the artistic domain as a powerful sign of the cultural 'modernization' with its 'westernized aesthetics,' indeed a vehicle to reflect upon the great transformation of the society through revolutionary themes.[84]

---

[83] Sibel Bozdoğan, *Modernism and Nation Building* (Seattle, London: University of Washington Press, 2001), p.6.

[84] See Cemren Altan for the significance of art as a symbolic field to identify the shift of civilization in "Populism and Peasant Iconography: Turkish painting in the 1930s," *Middle Eastern Studies,* Vol.41, No.4 (July, 2005), pp.547-560.

Art historical studies have also revealed that 'westernization' efforts in the realm of art and culture trace back to the Ottoman period. Like Günsel Renda has stated particularly for the painting field in the Empire, "the most influential representatives of the new westernised style of art in the nineteenth century were those artists who were sent to study in Europe, since they personally received an academic art education rather than learning western techniques secondhand."[85] In fact, the turn of the twentieth century in the late Ottoman Empire, though spanned a turbulent period between the Second Constitutional Revolution of 1908 and the founding of Turkish Republic in 1923, provided a relatively liberal and fertile ground for artistic production and dissemination. By then, the preliminary steps taken for the institutionalization of art education and artistic creativity in the late nineteenth century had also begun to proliferate. Certainly, the founding of Academy of Fine Arts *(Sanayi-i Nefise Mektebi)* in İstanbul under the leadership of Osman Hamdi Bey in 1882 marked a turning point in the history of Turkish art and architecture.[86] As the academy institutionalized art education, despite continuous criticism against its academic staff, curriculum, and the inadequacies related to its infrastructure or painting collection, it created an equal opportunity to talented students to study art.[87] Furthermore, in 1914, with the founding of Academy of Fine

---

[85] Günsel Renda, "Ottoman Painting and Sculpture" in *Ottoman Civilization II,* eds. Halil İnalcık and Günsel Renda (Ankara: Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2009), p.949.

[86] For further information on the founding of Academy of Fine Arts refer to Mustafa Cezar, *Sanat'ta Batıya Açılış ve Osman Hamdi II* (İstanbul: Erol Kerim Aksoy Kültür, Eğitim, Spor ve Sağlık Vakfı Yayınları, 1995), pp.455-475. Also see, Mustafa Cezar, *Güzel Sanatlar Eğitiminde 100 Yıl* (İstanbul: Mimar Sinan Üniversitesi Basımevi, 1983).

[87] The first teaching staff of the academy was as follows: The Director of the Museum and Academy of Fine Arts-Osman Hamdi Bey; Internal Director and Sculpture Teacher-Osgan Efendi; Architecture Teacher-Vallauri; Oil Painting Teacher- Salvator Valeri; Charcoal Drawing Teacher-Warnia Zarzecki; History Teacher-Aristoklis Efendi; Mathematics Teacher-Hasan Fuat Bey; Anatomy Teacher-Kolağası Yusuf Rami Efendi. See Mustafa Cezar, *Güzel Sanatlar Eğitiminde 100 Yıl* (Mimar Sinan Üniversitesi Basımevi, 1983), p.11. For the detailed curriculum of the Academy of Fine Arts refer to Seçkin G. Naipoğlu, *Sanayi-i Nefise Mektebi'nde Sanat Tarihi Yaklaşımı ve Vahit Bey* (Unpublished PhD Thesis, Hacettepe University, 2008).

Arts for Women *(İnas Sanayi-i Nefise Mektebi)*, women were also given this possibility.

However, due to the limited scope of the thesis, rather than a through analysis of the 'westernising' initiatives taken during the nineteenth century in the Empire for the institutionalization of arts, the focus is given to the formations in the realm of art at the turn of the twentieth century. This period not only sheds light to the 1914 Generation artists who introduced a new European art style inspired by Impressionism to the Turkish art scene but also to the artistic milieu in which Group D emerged.

A Group In Transition: The Aesthetics of the '1914 Generation'

The young artists educated at the Academy of Fine Arts during the period of Osman Hamdi Bey in line with the academic art and were sent to Paris either by acquiring the Europe scholarship or by their own means introduced the innovative aesthetics and themes of Europe in dispute with the French Academy upon their return to İstanbul due to the outbreak of the First World War in 1914. A group of artists, Mehmet Ruhi (Arel), İbrahim Feyhaman (Duran), Namık İsmail, Nazmi Ziya (Güran), İbrahim (Çallı), Hüseyin Avni (Lifij), Hikmet (Onat), Ali Sami (Boyar), Sami (Yetik), among which the founders and members of the Ottoman Painters Society[88] *(Osmanlı Ressamlar Cemiyeti)* also existed, were trained at École des Beaux-Arts, Fernand-Anne Piestre Cormon Academy, Julian Academy and at

---

[88] The first free society of artists named Ottoman Painters Society was founded in 1909 as a sign and aspiration of cooperation and solidarity among Ottoman artists. The society, independent from government institutions and ideas, was aiming to progress artistry as well as art as a discipline in the Ottoman society. The group also endeavored to reach the public and create consciousness for arts through their periodical, Ottoman Painters Society Journal *(Osmanlı Ressamlar Cemiyeti Gazetesi)*, published from 1911 to 1914. Please refer to Abdullah Sinan Güler, "Osmanlı Ressamlar Cemiyeti ve Naşir-i Efkarı" in *Osmanlı Ressamlar Cemiyeti Gazetesi*, ed. Yaprak Zihnioğlu (İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2007), pp.xı – xıx.

the academies of artists such as Gustave Clarence Rodolphe Boulanger, Jean-Paul Laurens, Paul-Albert Laurens, Jean-Joseph Benjamin Constant, François Schommer, Jean Paul Gervais and Adolphe Déchenaud.[89] During their stay in Paris, the 1914 Generation artists studied methods of academic painting and could finally study nude figures in front of nude models that were not available in the Academy of Fine Arts during their school years. Hikmet Onat's memoir reflects the attitude toward working from a live model during his academy years in İstanbul:

> I need to reveal that it was really hard to study painting at the Academy of Fine Arts during our pupilage. There was neither a nude man nor a nude woman model, even the ugliest men did not want to pose naked. The environment was accusing our school to be immoral and corrupt. It was explained that prior to our arrival to the academy, some fanatics had broken into the school and broke down some sculptures. You can understand the difficulty of painting in such an atmosphere. Our models were some hamals in turban with beard and mustache. We could only study portrait and bust. One day as we were bored of depicting hamals, we decided to find a woman model even if she would pose dressed. As we posed this girl from the gypsy neighbor, Osman Hamdi Bey called us and yelled, "Kids, are you insane? Where do you think you are? It's Turkey! Immediately send her away. Soon you'll be gone to Europe, you can paint plenty women, nude women portraits there.[90]

Paris, then the capital of the art world which many promising artists from other European cities also flocked to study or practice painting, would inspire these young graduates of the academy for bringing the nineteenth century Impressionism to Turkey despite their academic trainings. These artists who are called 'the 1914 Generation' along with their other titles 'Impressionists' or 'Çallı Generation' would determine the visual culture of Turkish painting from the last years of the Empire

---

[89] Zeynep Yasa-Yaman, *Ankara Resim ve Heykel Müzesi* (Ankara: T.C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Kütüphaneler ve Yayımlar Genel Müdürlüğü, 2012), p.140.

[90] Nurullah Berk and Hüseyin Gezer, *50 Yılın Türk Resim ve Heykeli* (İstanbul: İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1973), p.18.

into the early years of the young Republic.[91] In fact, the artistic production of the 1914 Generation who were educated in the late Ottoman period and matured in the early Republican era, spanned a unique time period marked by wars, dissolution of the Empire, and the founding of the Turkish Republic. Besides the revolutionary context of Turkey, Paris at the turn of the twentieth century must have influenced the 1914 Generation artists with fundamental views about the mandatory and free education system, right to found an association, freedom of the press and secularism.[92]

Upon their return, in an effort to disseminate their artistic production and reach people, the 1914 Generation artists organized exhibitions in İstanbul and Ankara and also participated in Galatasaray and Ankara Exhibitions, the workshops of Şişli Studio *(Şişli Atölyesi),* the Exhibitions of the Revolution *(İnkılap Sergileri)* (1933-1937), the First and Second United Exhibitions *(Birinci ve İkinci Birleşik Sergileri)* (1937-1938), the State Exhibitions of Painting and Sculpture *(Devlet Resim ve Heykel Sergileri)* (1939-) and enrolled to the Painting Tours and Exhibitions of Anatolia *(Yurt Gezileri ve Sergileri)*. These artists prolifically depicted themes varying from war and ideals of the Republic to the city and village life, streets, bazaars, beaches and cafes.[93] In other words, they were interested in depicting social change and daily life with their technique influenced by the Impressionist style rather than scenes from the palace or old streets, parks, and gardens that looked frozen in time.[94] They also included the landscapes of Anatolia

---

[91] For further information on İbrahim Çallı, who had given his name to a generation of artists, see Kıymet Giray, *Çallı ve Atölyesi* (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1997).

[92] Zeynep Yasa-Yaman, *Ankara Resim ve Heykel Müzesi,* p.140.

[93] *Ibid.,* pp.140-141.

[94] Nurullah Berk and Kaya Özsezgin, *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türk Resmi* (Ankara: İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1983), p.25.

and Ankara in their repertoire besides İstanbul views as a consequence of their participation in Painting Tours of Anatolia organized by the Republican People's Party (RPP). But, how were the 1914 Generation artists affiliated to this style which would radically alter the development of Turkish painting in the early years of the Republic? How did the artistry of 1914 Generation artists differ from the 'Impressionists' of Europe? Why would Group D oppose to 1914 Generation?

Since the 1860s onward, the Parisian art world started to divide between the academic art and the avant-garde.[95] In these days, Manet's radical artistic production with his innovative style and critical subject matters against the status-seeking bourgeoisie did not just shock the artistic milieu in Paris but also indicated a path for the emerging Impressionists. However, Impressionism, rising its popularity since the late nineteenth century in Paris with Claude Monet, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Alfred Sisley and Camille Pissarro, rapidly lost attention due to its indifference to socio-political conflicts in the heated political environment at turn of the century. Meyer Schapiro explained that Impressionism, "more than any previous style of painting, explored and pictured everyday objects and occasions that we enjoy with our eyes and value for their sensuous qualities."[96] Regarding the style, emphasizing a mode of perception called 'impression' and pursuing to reflect this on canvas, the Impressionists established a new way of painting by the use of pure unblended colors, emphasis on tonality, flickering light effects and short-broken brushstrokes that barely conveyed forms.[97] Painting in the open air was

---

[95] Chapter I.

[96] Meyer Schapiro, *Impressionism: Reflections and Perceptions* (New York: George Braziller, 1997), p.16. Also see, "Manet and the Impressionists," in *Nineteenth Century Art - A Critical History,* ed. Stephen F. Eisenman.

[97] Meyer Schapiro, *Impressionism: Reflections and Percep*tions, pp.43-50.

another constitutive of Impressionism; dominance of light and atmosphere became essential features of the style. Coinciding with the notion *"l'art pour l'art,"* the Impressionists were never as political as the avant-garde artists emerging in the early twentieth century, and rather chose to paint landscapes and suburban and rural leisurely life. By 1884, a new independent artists' group was already under way criticizing the Impressionists for being indifferent to the problems of the world in their subject matters. Furthermore, George Seurat and Paul Signac, admirers of science, reacted against Impressionism precisely because it was not scientific enough. They rather favored a measured painting technique, Pointillism, which was based on the study of optics.[98]

Despite the 'failure' of Impressionism in France due to its lack of interest in socio-political issues and insufficient technique, the 1914 Generation artists were inspired by it since the prevailing discussions must have been irrelevant for Turkish painting then. Indeed, during late Ottoman and early Republican period, the priority of the 1914 Generation artists was to create consciousness and love for painting in people. Impressionism had given the 1914 Generation a style free of any predilection devoted to brushstrokes and rich colors through which people could enjoy views of İstanbul, Ankara, and Anatolia, scenes from daily life, and portraits and still-lifes. In fact, as much as their landscapes exhibited impressionist technique, their academic training in Paris could also be observed in their figural studies and portraits.[99] Another subject matter which 1914 Generation artists worked on, further deviating them from their European counterparts, was the depiction of war scenes and soldiers. The examples of this genre were culminated

---

[98] *Ibid.*, pp.299-303.

[99] Ali Kayaalp, "Türkiye'ye Özgü Bir İzlenimcilik: 1914 Kuşağı," *Sanat Dünyamız,* No.143 (November-December, 2014), p.22-29.

with their prolific creations in the Şişli Studio, founded in 1917, in preparation of an exhibition opening in Vienna.[100] These paintings were unique in displaying the emotional side of the war through the struggle and pain of a society rather than reflecting stories of heroism. Therefore, like Sezer Tansuğ stated, although the 1914 Generation artists were clearly influenced by the visual style of the Impressionists, the wide differences between the two groups must also be acknowledged.[101]

The 1914 Generation artists prolifically produced and exhibited during a period spanning from the last years of the Empire to the early Republican era. In fact, as they were critical of the education system and academic staff of the Academy of Fine Arts under the directorship of Halil Edhem from 1910 to 1917, following the death of Osman Hamdi Bey,[102] they started to fill the teaching staff positions replacing foreign and non-Muslim instructors with the arrival of Halil Paşa in 1917 as the new director of the academy.[103] Hence, the 1914 Generation became influential on art education in Turkey until the University Reform *(Akademi Reformu)* of 1933. The artists of the 1914 Generation, who were also active in the Ottoman Painters Society, initiated Galatasaray Exhibitions *(Galatasaray Sergileri)* in 1916 at the Galatasaray student dormitory *(Società*

---

[100] The paintings were displayed in Galatasaray student dormitory before they were sent to Vienna for exhibition. For further information on the Şişli Studio refer to Ahmet Kamil Gören, *Türk Resim Sanatında Şişli Atölyesi ve Viyana Sergisi* (İstanbul: Şişli Belediyesi Yayınları, 1997).

[101] Sezer Tansuğ, *Çağdaş Türk Sanatı*, p.121.

[102] Please refer to the series of articles in the Ottoman Painters Society Journal entitled as "Sanayi-i Nefise Mektebi için I-II-III-IV-V" by Sami Yetik in *Osmanlı Ressamlar Cemiyeti Gazetesi,* ed. Yaprak Zihinoğlu. These articles include fundamental ideas necessary for the progress of a country's arts as well critics of the curriculum, physical appearance, and the directors and the teachers of the Academy of Fine Arts. As of 1914, nationalist rhetoric becomes visible in the writings of Yetik. Through this discourse he stated that although Osgan Efendi, Valeri, and Warnia were all very valuable artists, they cannot represent Turkish fine arts. And since they were reluctant to develop and improve their teaching methods, Yetik hinted that it was time for the arrival of a new group of staff.

[103] Also see Turan Erol, "Painting in Turkey in Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century" in *A History of Turkish Painting,* ed. Günsel Renda (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1984).

Operaia) as well. This exhibition marked the beginning of an event that would acquire an identity similar to the Paris Salon until 1951, taking place in Galatasaray High School *(Galatasaray Mekteb-i Sultanisi)* and presenting more than 300 artists and nearly 6000 works through the years.[104]

One of the first reactions against the 1914 Generation, and therefore against the Association of Fine Arts *(Güzel Sanatlar Birliği)*[105], was initiated by the New Society of Painters *(Yeni Ressamlar Cemiyeti)* formed in 1923 by Mahmud Fehmi (Cuda), Şeref Kamil (Akdik), Büyük Saim (Özeren), Refik Fazıl (Epikman), Elif Naci, Muhittin Sebati, Ali Avni (Çelebi) and Ahmet Zeki (Kocamemi), many of whom were also the students of İbrahim Çallı and Hikmet Onat. This group signified the willingness of young artists to represent themselves besides Galatasaray Exhibitions where they could only acquire small spaces upon the approval of members of the Association of Fine Arts. Though the New Society of Painters held its first exhibition in 1924, the same year, many members of the group left to further their trainings in Europe, causing the group to become inactive.[106] After then, the artists returning back from France and Germany in 1928, held their first exhibition in Ankara Ethnography Museum in April 1929. Presenting subjects that were not depicted before and displaying novel techniques, the exhibition was met with astonishment. Following this exhibition, in 1929, the artists were united

---

[104] Ömer Faruk Şerifoğlu, "Whenever I Think of Galatasaray I Think of Exhibitions" in *From Mekteb-i Sultani to Galatasaray Lycée* (İstanbul: Pera Müzesi Yayınları, 2009), p.147.

[105] The name of Ottoman Painters Society was changed to the Association of Fine Arts in 1929. See the Introduction of the thesis for the other former names of the Association. In 1973, the name of the Association was finally changed to the Society of Painting of the Association of Fine Arts *(Güzel Sanatlar Birliği Resim Derneği)* in 1973. Also refer to the website of the Association at: http://www.guzelsanatlarbirligi.com/tarihce.htm.

[106] Nurullah Berk and Hüseyin Gezer, *50 Yılın Türk Resim ve Heykeli*, p.41. Also refer to Kıymet Giray, *Müstakil Ressamlar ve Heykeltıraşlar Birliği* (Unpublished Phd Thesis, Ankara University, 1988), pp.25-27.

under the Independent Painters and Sculptors Association *(Müstakil Ressamlar ve Heykeltıraşlar Birliği)*. Refik Fazıl (Epikman), Cevat Hamit (Dereli), Şeref Kamil (Akdik), Mahmud Fehmi (Cuda), Nurullah Cemal (Berk), Hale Asaf, Ali Avni (Çelebi) and Ahmet Zeki (Kocamemi) were among the founders of the association. Independent Painters and Sculptors, as an association, opened its first exhibition in İstanbul at the Turkish Hearth *(Türk Ocağı)* in Cağaloğlu in 1929. The association did not interfere with the aesthetic choices of artists presenting a wide range of styles from cubist tendencies to constructivist qualities.[107] Rather, it sought to preserve the mutual rights of the artists and the interest of the group. In this effort, Nurullah Berk not only criticized the events of Association of Fine Arts but also expected support from the government and critics.[108] Among the members, Ali Avni Çelebi and Zeki Kocamemi, who were trained in the studio of Hans Hofmann in Germany, came forward with their influence on the Republican Turkey's 'new art' which presented modernist techniques. In fact, Independent Painters and Sculptors Association can be viewed as the initiator of 'old-new art' discussions targeting the Impressionism of 1914 Generation.

From the 1930s onward, within the revolutionary context of the Republic, 1914 Generation artists were also started to be questioned for being disinterested in the reformist and progressive discourse of the period. In 1933, six artists, Nurullah Cemal (Berk), Zeki Faik (İzer), Elif Naci, Cemal (Tollu), Abidin Dino and the sculptor Zühtü (Müridoğlu), who were in fact the students of the 1914 Generation, united under the name Group D. Fascinated with the modernization efforts in Turkey and the modernist currents in Europe, they criticized 1914 Generation

---

[107] Nurullah Berk and Hüseyin Gezer, *50 Yılın Türk Resim ve Heykeli*, p.43.

[108] Kıymet Giray, *Müstakil Ressamlar ve Heykeltıraşlar Birliği,* pp.54-63. Also see Zeynep Yasa Yaman, *d Grubu 1933-1951,* p.13.

artists for lacking an intellectual base and a contemporary approach in their artistry.

Indeed, 1914 Generation artists were judged in a similar vein with their European

impressionist counterparts, since they were also found to be indifferent to the

contemporary demands of the period. Consequently, starting from the 1930s, Group

D artists emerging in opposition to the 1914 Generation would not only

revolutionize the course of Turkish painting aesthetically, thematically, and

intellectually but also build a unique relation with the art and cultural politics.

The Founding Premises of Group D

The founding of Group D was ignited when controversy emerged between

Nurullah Berk, who was then the member of Independent Painters and Sculptors

Association, and Mahmud Cuda and his supporters within the association. While

Berk believed that members of the association should only devote themselves to

painting and to organize exhibitions, Cuda argued that they should, in fact, aim to

improve the working conditions of the artists first. In 1932, Berk and his only

supporter Elif Naci were suspended from the association with the decision of the

board.[109]

Stimulated with the aesthetics and theoretical premises of the avant-garde

movements, the artists of Group D, who were trained in the studios of André Lhote

and Fernand Léger in Paris[110] introduced the 'cubist' and 'constructivist' style of

Lhote and the 'synthetic cubist' style of Léger through the discourse of 'living

art.'[111] For them, 'living art' meant the contemporary currents of the period, and

their trainings in Paris had decisive effects on their artistic production. Cubism,

---

[109] Zeynep Yasa Yaman, *d Grubu 1933 - 1951,* p.13.

[110] Among the founders of Group D Elif Naci did not receive training in Paris.

[111] Zeynep Yasa Yaman, *d Grubu 1933 - 1951,* p.7.

designated as the art of civilized nations by certain Republican intellectuals, perfectly complied with Group D artists who were eager to revolutionize the artistic domain with a modernist discourse in the early Republican period. Opposed to the impressionism of the 1914 Generation and the Academy of Fine Arts, where many members of this generation taught, Group D not only aimed to amplify old-new art discussions, but also to establish radical changes in the realm of art and culture.

Group D organized its first exhibition in 1933 at the hat store named *Mimoza* under the *Narmanlı Han* in Beyoğlu. In the brochure of this exhibition, Peyami Safa indirectly stated the manifesto of Group D:

> Group D is not a squad.
> It aims neither for the right nor for the left.
> Nor for a sergeant major,
> Six minds rotating on their own axis.
> Six pairs of eyes look both at substance and within it; as if searching for the alive hidden even in death. This is not new painting, neither European nor local, but just painting. Neither Delacroix, nor Cezanne, nor Manet, nor Monet, nor Pisarro, nor Picasso.
> No, they are Abidin, Cemal, Nurullah, Naci, Zeki, Zühtü.
> Neither school, nor doctrine. The principle is a single word: Painting. The ox and the photograph see the same thing, but no one sees the same thing with another person.
> [...]
> It will be unfortunate if there is a single painting there that fits to our view, because the attribute of seeing the same thing is inherent in mirror, photography, and ox. My affectionate greetings to Group D that does not see as we do.[112]

Yasa-Yaman has interpreted Peyami Safa's approach toward Group D as a celebration considering that art needed to constitute an intellectual base rather than just being a reflection. Yasa-Yaman has further explained, "Although the members of Group D explained their objectives as reviving the artistic milieu, triggering motion in art events, and disclosing 'living art' to people through exhibitions and

---

[112] Peyami Safa quoted in Zeynep Yasa Yaman, *d Grubu 1933 - 1951* (İstanbul: YKY, 2006), p.9.

conferences, their main aim was, in fact, to revolt against the academic art and the arts of the 1914 Generation."[113]

The founding members of the group Nurullah Berk and Elif Naci wrote productively in an effort to communicate the aesthetics and the theoretical base of the group's artistic production dominated by Cubism as they also informed about exhibition openings and art events. Particularly, Berk had a unique influence on the very existence of Group D. In this regard, Turan Erol provided significant insights for Berk's prominence in group's endeavors:

> Almost all the participants of Group D used to write. They had to explain themselves to announce their exhibitions and activities. [...] Nurullah Berk spontaneously undertook the spokesmanship and the authorship of Group D. In time, Nurullah Berk was not only perceived as the thinker and the writer of the group, but also the vanguard art movement in Turkey. He introduced himself to the intellectual and artistic circles through his daring writings. [114]

Elif Naci was also a pivotal figure in the group due to his strong ties with the press and his talent in caricature. Adnan Çoker has likened him to the 'minister of propaganda' since Naci used to instantly report art incidents in the newspaper.[115] In fact, Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu's memoir revealed how Elif Naci once encouraged Group D to organize an exhibition utilizing the power of press:

> When Elif Naci is mentioned, I recall the the most productive years of Group D. I never forget that we used to meet at *Tan* newspaper which started to be published in 1935. Unexpectedly Elif Naci would say:
>
> > - I don't like the way the group is performing. Unless we organize an exhibition within these months, things will loosen up. What do you think?
> > - Let's open.

---

[113] Zeynep Yasa Yaman, *d Grubu 1933 - 1951,* p.10.

[114] Turan Erol quoted in Sezer Tansuğ, *Çağdaş Türk Sanatı,* p.188.

[115] Adnan Çoker, "Interview with Adnan Çoker" in Zeynep Yasa Yaman, *d Grubu 1933 - 1951,* p.60.

The day after, this announcement would be in the newspapers:

> "According to the information we have received, the painters of Group D will open an extensive exhibition on the fifteenth of this month."
> The fifteenth of the month would be just fifteen days away. And the colleagues who found out that they were going to open an exhibition through the notice of Elif Naci would gather.[116]

In a short period of time, Turgut Zaim, Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu, Eren Eyüboğlu, Eşref Üren, Halil Dikmen, Arif Kaptan, Fahrelnissa Zeid, Sabri Berkel, Salih Urallı, Hakkı Anlı, Nusret Suman and Zeki Kocamemi joined Group D. Active until the beginning of the 1950s, Group D artists determined the visual aesthetics and directed art related discussions in the early Republican period for two decades mainly through internal and abroad exhibitions, and the reforms they realized in the Academy of Fine Arts.[117]

Cubism: Emergence in France & Arrival in Turkey/
The Question of Avant-garde Movements

Especially from the late 1920s and the early 1930s on, incited with the nation-building policies of Kemalism, İsmail Hakkı Baltacıoğlu and Nurullah Berk began to write prolifically on the prominence of modernist art currents in the realm of art, notably on Cubism. Although the Turkish art scene was introduced to 'Cubism' and its constructivist language with the Independent Painters and Sculptors Association, particularly through the paintings of Zeki Kocamemi and Ali Avni Çelebi upon their return from Europe to Turkey in 1928, discussions of Cubism in the realm art in

---

[116] Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu quoted in Nurullah Berk and Hüseyin Gezer, *50 Yılın Türk Resim ve Heykeli*, p.65.

[117] Chapter III.

Turkey focus more on Nurullah Berk, Zeki Faik İzer, Elif Naci, Zühtü Müridoğlu, Cemal Tollu and Abidin Dino, who were gathered under Group D in 1933.[118]

Cubism, often considered to be one of the most influential art movements of the twentieth century, initiated a pictorial revolution with its radical approach to image-making, invention of the collage technique, and experimentation toward pure abstraction.[119] Art critic Louis Vauxcelles is generally credited with introducing the cubist movement with his commentary for Braque's 1908 painting of *l'Estaque* (fig.6) where he referred to 'cubes' to describe Braque's pictorial language. In his critique of *l'Estaque* at the Braque Exhibition at Kahnweiler's gallery in Paris he wrote:

> Mr. Braque is a very audacious young man. The disconcerting example of Picasso and Derain has emboldened him. Then too, perhaps the style of Cézanne and the reminiscences of the static art of the Egyptians obsess him unduly. He constructs deformed men of metal, terribly simplified. He has contempt for form, reduces everything - places and figures and houses - to geometrical patterns, to cubes. Let us not make fun of him, since he is sincere. And let us wait.[120]

Vauxcelles was critical, and yet, distanced in his view for the new aesthetics of form and line which he described as cubes. Although he was credited with coining the term, recent scholarship has made a distinction between the descriptive

---

[118] Zeynep Yasa Yaman, "Türkiye'de Kübizm ve Yeni Sanat," *Sanat Dünyamız* (Winter, 1993), p.62.

[119] Mark Antliff and Patricia Leighten, *Cubism and Culture* (London, New York: Thames and Hudson, 2001).

[120] Louis Vauxcelles, "Braque Exhibition. At Kahnweiler's, 28 rue Vignon" in *A Cubism Reader: Documents and Criticism, 1906 - 1914*, eds. Mark Antliff and Patricia Leighten (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008), p.48.

use of Vauxcelles' term and the later negative use of 'Cubist' or 'Cubism' in illustrating an art movement at the turn of the twentieth century.[121]

Guillaume Apollinaire, as a poet, prose writer, critic and an active participant in the avant-garde, felt compelled to change the inferior image of the Cubists back in the 1910s. Apollinaire, who was also a good friend of Picasso and established the collaboration between him and Braque, had written, "At the height of the struggle that is being conducted against those young artists who as proof of the depth of their art proudly bear the name of Cubists - a name that was given to in order to render them ridiculous."[122] In support of emerging cubist artists, Apollinaire issued articles in French newspapers *Le Temps* and *L'Intransigeant*, and also his book *Meditations esthetiques* was published in 1913. Apollinaire argued for the rise of a generation who excluded perspective and other conventions introducing a total revolution in aesthetics. Indeed, he revealed what differentiated Cubism from the old painting. Apollinaire explained, "[Cubism] is not an art of imitation, but an art of concenception that tends to rise toward creation."[123] Besides, regarding the formal elements of this novel style, Apollinaire emphasized that they were not derived from visual reality but from the reality of concepts contributing to "a form

---

[121] See the "Commentary" in *A Cubism Reader: Documents and Criticism, 1906 - 1914* for "Braque Exhibition. At Kahnweiler's, 28 rue Vignon," pp.48-49. Also refer to the "Introduction" in *A Cubism Reader: Documents and Criticism, 1906 - 1914* for the analysis of Antliff and Leighten on Edward Fry's *Cubism* (1966). Published in the 1960s, *Cubism* by Fry presented a formalist approach in unfolding the movement. For Fry, where Picasso was the leader and the inventor of the movement, the others were the followers whose importance varied. However, in recent scholarship where the studies surpass formalist perspectives introducing standpoints of social history and gender studies, the scholars no more consider such a differentiation as leaders or followers, pp.1-14.

[122] Guillaume Apollinaire, "Reality, Pure Painting (December, 1912)" in *A Cubism Reader: Documents and Criticism, 1906 - 1914,* pp.453-459.

[123] Guillaume Apollinaire, "The Cubist Painters: Aesthetics Meditation (Paris, March 17, 1913)" in *A Cubism Reader: Documents and Criticism, 1906 - 1914,* pp.477-523.

of poetic painting" which surpassed "visual perception."[124] Depending on Apollinaire's observation, where the display of three dimensions was in some way *cubicized,* Edward Fry emphasized that abandonment of the two main principles of European painting since the Renaissance, "the classical norm for the human figure and the spatial illusionism of one-point perspective," marked the beginning of radical aesthetic innovations in cubist painting.[125]

Cubism, "arguably the seminal art movement of the twentieth century," like Mark Antliff and Patricia Leighten have stated, became the indicator of modernity during a century when industry and science took over Europe and America as it introduced a pictorial revolution employing "visual abstraction and obfuscation, spatial and temporal disorientation, avant-gardist rejection of past values, and breakdown of class hierarchies in the embrace of popular culture."[126] In fact, it was so influential in freeing painting from the restraints of Renaissance perspective that artists of the Futurist, Suprematist, Constructivist, Dutch De *Stijl* and Surrealist movements all shared the Cubists' perceptual and pictorial revolution along with the theoretical interests in their own explorations.[127] Indeed, besides France, Cubism had far-reaching effects in Italy, Russia, and the Netherlands along with other countries.

Regarding the newly established Republic of Turkey, the Republican intelligentsia asserted the necessity of a radical change in the realm of art in tandem with the revolutionary spirit of the Republic. In his seminal *Democracy and Art*

---

[124] Guillaume Apollinaire, "Modern Painting (Berlin, February 1913)" in *A Cubism Reader: Documents and Criticism, 1906-1914,* pp.471-476.

[125] Edward Fry, *Cubism* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1966), p.13.

[126] Mark Antliff and Patricia Leighten, *Cubism and Culture,* p.7.

[127] *Ibid.,* p.80.

(Demokrasi ve San'at), İsmail Hakkı Baltacıoğlu defined that Cubism was the art of civilized democratic nations, and therefore, he specified it as the ideal visual idiom for the arts of the Turkish Republic.[128] Debating against the Academicism and Impressionism of the nineteenth century, Baltacıoğlu criticized the former for "lacking character and not being original" and the latter for "settling with color and light."[129] For him, Cubism was born out of the contradiction between the two movements and among the Impressionists. Due to its wisdom, Cubism was the proper art movement for the modern epoch. Nurullah Berk's influential book *Modern Art (Modern San'at)* of 1933 is also critical for featuring innovative Turkish artists' belief in modernist art currents. In *Modern Art,* Berk disclosed the phases of modern art through the analyses of 'isms' of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, among which Impressionism, Neo-Impressionism, Cubism, Futurism and Surrealism existed. For him, modernist art currents were the result of a half century intellectual thinking, and therefore, they not only addressed to senses but also to intellect.[130] By explaining what modernist art currents were, Berk actually implied that their intellectual base should inspire the arts of the young Republic.[131] In fact, Berk and other Group D artists, who are known for introducing Cubism to Turkey, embraced this radical approach to image-making based on the teachings of Paul Cézanne as they believed that his pictorial language was the key

---

[128] İsmail Hakkı Baltacıoğlu, *Demokrasi ve San'at* (İstanbul: Kanaat Kütüphanesi, 1931), p.102. Also see, Zeynep Yasa Yaman, "Demokrasi ve Sanat," *Anadolu Sanat,* Vol.1 (1993), pp.183-196.

[129] İsmail Hakkı Baltacıoğlu, *Demokrasi ve San'at,* pp.103-105.

[130] Nurullah Berk, *Modern San'at* ([İstanbul]: Semih Lütfi Bitik ve Basım Evi, 1933), p.12.

[131] Also refer to Zeynep Yasa Yaman in *Ankara Resim ve Heykel Müzesi* and in *Suretin Sireti* (İstanbul: Pera Museum Publication, 2011) for her interpretation of *Modern San'at.*

to establish a modern and national Turkish art.[132] Indeed, Cézanne's influence on the development of Cubism was pivotal.

<u>The Formative Period of Cubism in France</u>

"Cézanne's art, now so familiar, was a strange novelty in his time" said art historian Meyer Schapiro highlighting Cézanne's vanguard position in the history of art. For him, Cézanne's art lied in between "the old kind of picture, faithful to a striking or beautiful object, and the modern 'abstract' kind of painting, a moving harmony of colored touches representing nothing."[133] According to Schapiro, Cézanne recreated the visible world through 'strokes of color' in his mature paintings where a subjective decision became essential. For him, Cézanne created a new method of painting due to this distinct personal impulse:

> The strokes of high-keyed color which in the Impressionist paintings dissolved objects into atmosphere and sunlight, forming a crust of twinkling points, Cézanne applied to the building of forms. He loosened the perspective system of traditional art and gave to the space of the image the aspect of a world created free-hand and put together piecemeal from successive perceptions, rather than offered complete to the eye in one coordinating glance as in the ready-made geometrical perspective of Renaissance art. The tilting of vertical objects, the discontinuities in the shifting levels of the segments of an interrupted horizontal edge contribute to the effect of a perpetual searching and balancing of forms.[134]

For instance, in Cézanne's late work *The Big Trees* of 1902-1904 (fig.7) 'little facet-planes' painted with repeated brush strokes are easily observed. In the composition, the big trees displayed in close-up present a tendency toward geometrical forms and emphasize painting's flat surface through the spatial relation

---

[132] Zeynep Yasa Yaman, *Suretin Sireti,* p.22-23.

[133] Meyer Schapiro, *Paul Cezanne* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, c.1960s), p.10.

[134] *Ibid.,* p.10.

of the two trunks and the intense strokes of color. Facet-planes, so central to the distortion of object and space, regardless of what Cézanne aimed to achieve through his own aesthetics, inspired Picasso and Braque to determine the vocabulary of Cubism by incorporating this novel method into their technique.[135]

Besides Cézanne's influence on the formation of Cubism, refusing theories of art on the imitation of nature, the early cubists' deliberate simplification and distortion of forms for the sake of a direct expressiveness - roughly between 1907 and 1909 - has been linked to the 'primitive art' of non-European cultures from sub-Saharan Africa to Oceania.[136] But what did 'primitive art' mean in the modernist discourse? Late nineteenth-century avant-gardists and future Cubists perceived the culture and art of people who were thought as 'primitives' as a source of 'authenticity' and 'assumed directness' that they could appropriate in an attempt to transform Western art. Constructing a binary opposition to the 'civilized,' the avant-gardists incorporated stylistic features of the 'primitive cultures' into their modernism to oppose the recognized "sterility of their own society and its arts: over civilized, moribund, and decadent."[137] In this regard, James Clifford's observations in the "Histories of the Tribal and the Modern" written in response to the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) exhibition "'Primitivism' in Twentieth Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern," which was on display between September 1984-January 1985, during a time when exhibitions of tribal objects around New York were popular, provide critical insights to the debated history of the primitivist discourse. Focusing on the influence of non-Western artifacts on vanguard artists,

---

[135] Thomas Vargish and Delo E. Mook, *Inside Modernism: Relativity Theory, Cubism, Narrative* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), p.112.

[136] Mark Antliff and Patricia Leighten, *Cubism and Culture*, p.25.

[137] *Ibid.*, p.9.

the MoMA exhibition drew comparison across cultures and endeavored to discover

affinities between 'primitive art' and the art of avant-garde artists. One of the most

salient criticism leveled against the show came from Clifford, who criticized it on

many grounds from the comparative method of the museum to the detachment of

tribal objects from their cultural and historical contexts. For him, the display of

tribal objects and works of Western artists side by side was not enough to reveal

their 'affinities.' Thus, Clifford argued that the juxtaposition of Picasso's *Girl

Before a Mirror* (1932) with a Kwakiutl half-mask (fig.8) was the result of a careful

selection and setting up of a specific angle of vision.[138] As a matter of fact, he

criticized the pioneer modernists either for their limited or lack of knowledge for

the ethnographic meanings of these object and argued that what the exhibition

actually did was a demonstration of the modern West's ambition to collect the

world rather than a display of the affinities between the tribal and the modern.

While Clifford's observations and criticisms suggest the wide range of discussions

and the heated debates against the conceptualization of 'primitive art' in the mid-

1980's, the main takeaway for this study is that artists' interest in the arts of the

Africa and Oceania did not go beyond stylistic references since they were not

concerned with the objects' meaning peculiar to their immediate contexts. Yet, the

primitivist discourse provided qualities inherent to tribal art such as purity,

spontaneity, and directness to the art of early Cubists who were eager to vitalize

their artistic production through the incorporation of 'primitive' stylistic expression.

Aside from the influence of Cézanne and the arts of the Africa and Oceania

on the early phase of Cubism, possible other sources of inspiration were also certain

for the Cubists in France. For example, for Picasso, the impact of painters including

---

[138] James Clifford, "Histories of the Tribal and the Modern" *Art in America,* April, 1985.

El Greco, Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres, and Paul Gauguin have long been discussed by art historians based on Picasso's sketchbooks and numerous drawings. Thus, *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* (fig.9), which has been perceived as one of the most famous paintings of Picasso and the precursor of twentieth century art due to the artist's innovative approach toward perspective and expressive human emotions, has received considerable contributions from scholars on this regard.[139] For the *Demoiselles,* completed by the mid-1907, Leo Steinberg stated that critics of the period proclaimed it to be proto-Cubist, "indeed the very birthplace of Cubism," underlining the pivotal role of the painting in the course of Cubist epoch.[140] In the *Demoiselles*, Picasso experimented for the first time with a type of approach that he later developed with Braque in his cubist works. Where a brothel scene was depicted, Picasso departed from "the spatial illusionism of one-point perspective and the classical norm for the human figure."[141] Inspired by Cézanne's *passage* in his radical treatment of space, Picasso also integrated multiple viewpoints in the *Demoiselles* by creating a stunning female nude "whose mask-like face, back, breasts are all visible at once."[142] Picasso, in his new approach to the human figure, was presumably inspired by the African sculpture, which he must have seen the

---

[139] For discussions on artists and non-European arts influencing Picasso and his painting *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* please refer to Alfred H. Barr, Jr., *Picasso: Forty Years of His Art* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1939); Christopher Green, "An Introduction to *Les Demoiselles D'Avignon*" in *Picasso's Les Demoiselles D'Avignon,* ed. Christopher Green (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Douglas Cooper, *The Cubist Epoch* (New York: Phaidon Press, 1971); Edward Fry, *Cubism* (London: Thames and Hudson,1966); John Golding, *Visions of the Modern* (Los Angeles: University of California Press Berkeley, 1994); John Richardson, *A Life of Picasso, The Prodigy, 1881-1906* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2015 [1991]); Leo Steinberg, "The Philosophical Brothel" *October,* Vol.44 (Spring, 1988), pp.7-74; William Rubin, "From Narrative to 'Iconic' in Picasso: The Buried Allegory" in *Bread and Fruitdish on a Table* and the Role of *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*" *The Art Bulletin,* Vol. 65, No.4 (December, 1983), 615-649.

[140] Leo Steinberg, "The Philosophical Brothel" *October,* Vol.44 (Spring, 1988), pp.7-74.

[141] Edward Fry, *Cubism* (London: Thames and Hudson,1966), p.12.

[142] *Ibid.,* p.15

examples at the Trocadéro Museum, in his friends' private collections or at the shops in Paris. His approach paved the way for a more conceptual treatment of the body form through which expressive feelings are also manifested.[143]

The formative period of Cubism bracketed between 1907 and 1914 suggests the creation of the *Demoiselles* and the outbreak of the First World War respectively as turning points in its history. In Cubism's early development phase, while the impact of 'primitive art' considers the period from 1907 to 1909, with respect to Cézanne's influence, William Rubin asserted that it "took root in a limited way in 1906, became central in Picasso's work by late 1908, and persisted throughout the history of 'analytic' cubism."[144] Collectively, rejecting the traditional techniques of nineteenth century academic painting, cubist artists not only distorted and disfigured forms but also introduced multiple viewpoints and ambiguous spatial relations into their radical style. Approximately between 1909-1912, which early scholarship categorized as 'analytic' cubism, cubist painters prolifically experimented with fragmented objects that could be seen from multiple viewpoints simultaneously.[145] They opposed to the conventional perspective of "being seen from a fixed position in space" and the belief that a painting should represent a "single moment in time," those canons pertinent to the academic

---

[143] *Ibid.,* p.12.

[144] William Rubin, "From Narrative to 'Iconic' in Picasso: The Buried Allegory in *Bread and Fruitdish on a Table* and the Role of *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*" *The Art Bulletin,* Vol.65, No.4 (December, 1983), p.619.

[145] Alfred Barr, Jr., Edward F. Fry, and William Rubin were among the leading scholars who had included the division of 'analytic' and 'synthetic' cubism in their studies. However, recent scholarship is not subject to this kind of categorization. Douglas Cooper was one of the first to oppose this categorization claiming that "the currently accepted division of Cubism into phases labeled 'analytic,' 'hermetic,' 'synthetic,' is largely meaningless, since these words apply exclusively to stylistic methods - often found together in a single work - used by only certain artists and having no general application and also because they cannot be properly defined," in *Cubist Epoch* (New York: Phaidon Press, 1971), p.13.

technique.[146] This phase was succeeded by 'synthetic' cubism, generally indicated to date from 1912 to 1914, where Picasso, Braque, and Juan Gris developed collage technique abandoning three-dimensional space. They introduced prefabricated pattern into the painting as they experimented with collage using newspaper print and patterned paper. This period is often called 'synthetic' cubism after Alfred H. Barr, Jr.'s *Cubism and Abstract Art* published in 1936.[147] Barr stated that Picasso's *Head of a Young Woman* (1913) (fig.10)

> marks the end of 'analytical' cubism and the beginning of 'synthetic' cubism. Only vestiges of an eye, chin, shoulder remain in an arrangement of rectangles and circles, nearly but not exactly geometrical. The progression moves from the three-dimensional, modelled, recognizable images to two-dimensional, flat, linear form, so abstract as to seem nearer geometry than representation.[148]

In other words in 'synthetic' cubism, the painting is converted into a two dimensional flat object characterized by ambiguity. Picasso prolifically produced in this technique, and in fact, his collages reveal important insights for his debated anarchism and socio-political tendency in the atmosphere of the impending First World War.

A Focus on Collage Technique through the Debated Anarchism of Picasso

The collage technique offered a style that was more abstract comparing to the earlier cubist paintings; first by the incorporation of numbers and letters into the painting and then by pasting paper onto the canvas. The practitioners of collage

---

[146] Mark Antliff and Patricia Leighten, *Cubism and Culture,* p.9-10.

[147] Daniel Robbins, "Abbreviated History of Cubism" *Art Journal,* Vol.47, No. 4 (Winter, 1988), pp. 272 - 238.

[148] Alfred H. Barr, Jr., *Cubism and Abstract Art* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1936), p.31. Alfred Barr was the director of the MoMA from its founding 1929 until 1943. He was appointed as the museum's advisor director from 1943 to 1947 and became the director of the museum collections from 1947 until his retirement in 1967.

technique further broke away from academic conventions with the inclusion of mass consumer products into their works of art. *Still life with Chair-Caning* (fig.11) painted in May 1912, is an early yet significant example for Picasso's collages on which he added a piece of oilcloth (contact paper) that looked like a chair caning.[149]

While the collage technique proposed an extraordinary break with the past in terms of aesthetics, with Picasso's inclusion of newsprint, it has been argued that it also became a medium through which the artist's political tendencies can be observed despite objections and criticisms. Building on Patricia Leighten's stimulating view on the more politicized account of modernist painting through the analysis of key avant-garde artists and their connection to anarchist movement, Picasso's cubist period has provided an understanding of his art in relation to the politics of his oeuvre beyond purely formalist terms.[150] Leighten informs, "Picasso's collages have traditionally been seen as his most highly abstract works. This has been due partly to our formalist bias, partly to Picasso's own desire to obfuscate his creative processes and his impatience with earnest inquiries concerning his 'meaning.'"[151] Notwithstanding, the analysis of more than half of the newspaper clippings that Picasso used in his collages from 1912 to 1914, in the *avant-guerre* of World War I, reveal that they were not arbitrary, in fact they were

---

[149] See Mark Antliff and Patricia Leighten, *Cubism and Culture,* p.163-164 for the alternative readings of *Still life with Chair-Caning*.

[150] Patricia Leighten is currently the Professor Emerita of Art at the Duke Trinity College of Arts and Sciences. Her books on the modernist painting and politics in the early twentieth century include *The Liberation of Painting: Modernism and Anarchism in the Avant-Guerre Paris* (Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 2013) and *Re-Ordering the Universe: Picasso and Anarchism 1897-1914* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989) along with substantial sections in *Cubism and Culture,* co-authored with Mark Antliff. Leighten has made significant contributions to the study of newspaper cuttings in cubist collages during the Balkan War. Also see the highly critical review of Robert S. Lubar in *The Art Bulletin,* Vol.72, No.3 (September, 1990), pp.505-510 written in response to *Re-Ordering the Universe* where he criticized Leighten's one-sided and at times misguided reading of the historical data.

[151] Patricia Leighten, "Picasso's Collages and the Threat of War, 1912-13," p.653.

his 'anarchist and socialist responses.' Leighten has argued that following his first encounter with the anarchist intellectuals in Barcelona, and then with his move to Paris in 1904, Picasso got deeply involved with the highly politicized atmosphere of the city. As he further immersed into the intellectual anarchism and vanguard action through literary and artistic circles in Paris, the effects of the political atmosphere on his art seemed to be visible.[152] However, while Leighten's political approach in Picasso studies has added new perspectives to scholarship for interpreting Picasso's political tendencies, Leighten's methodology was not without criticism. Mainly critiqued against her arguments for Picasso's politics in Barcelona, Leighten was reviewed for not differentiating the "intellectual or philosophical anarchism articulated within the aesthetic domain" from "the militant, revolutionary anarchism in Spain at the time."[153] For Robert S. Lubar this was a fallacy since "the relation between intellectuals and anarchism was never straightforward" at the time in Spain due to the intricate ideological roots of the movement and the varied interpretation of anarchist ideas within the artistic circles.[154] Nevertheless, despite criticisms against her methodology, Leighten prolifically published her investigations consolidating her views and opening new doors in deciphering Picasso's collages as she also responded to critics.

---

[152] *Ibid.*, 654. For the literary and artistic avant-garde in Paris, please refer to Donald Egbert's "The Idea of 'Avant-garde' in Art and Politics" (1967) and Renato Poggioli's *Theory of the Avant-garde* (1968).

[153] Robert S. Lubar, "Review of *Re-Ordering the Universe: Picasso and Anarchism* by Patricia Leighten," *The Art Bulletin,* Vol.72, No.3 (September, 1990), pp.505-510. Also see the critique of Marilyn McCully and Michael Raeburn in "Letters: Picasso's Politics in Barcelona" *The Art Bulletin,* Vol.69, No.1 (March, 1987), pp.133-136, where they commented that Leighten had established a 'superficial connection' between Cubism and anarchism. For them, there was an absolutely appealing analogy between Cubism and anarchism, but it needed a more 'rigorous argument.' In defense, Patricia Leighten's reply to the critique is also available in the same issue.

[154] *Ibid.,* p.106.

Created during the Balkan Wars, in the pre-World War I period, Picasso's collages incorporated newspaper clippings concerning the war, in fact its tension and destruction. For example, his use of newsprint in *Bottle of Suze* (fig.12), dated 1912, illustrate that his choices were not random. In the collage, where pasted papers suggest a liquor bottle accompanied by a glass and an ashtray with cigarette, Leighten examines the embedded newsprint beyond composition's formal qualities. She acknowledges that the newspaper clipping contains information on the Serbian advance toward Monastir in Macedonia describing the battle movement, reporting the wounded, and estimating on how long Adrianople *(Edirne)* could stand against famine.[155] The work also includes an excerpt on the cholera epidemic among the Ottoman soldiers revealing the disaster the war caused during the First Balkan War. Though Ottoman Empire was the opponent of the Balkan League - Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece and Macedonia - the passage that Picasso chose approached sensitively to the situation of soldiers emphasizing Picasso's antiwar posture. A shortened version of the account is as follow (fig.13):

> Before long I saw the first corpse still grimacing with suffering and whose face was nearly black. Then I saw two, four, ten, twenty; then I saw a hundred corpses. They were stretched out there there they had fallen during the road [...] How many cholerics did I come upon like that? Three thousand? I don't dare give a precise figure. Over a distance of about twenty kilometres, I saw cadavres strewing the cursed route where a wind of death blows and I saw the dying march, ominous in the middle of troops indifferent and preparing themselves for combat.[156]

In this respect, the statement made by Pierre Daix in 1990, whom Picasso met through the French Communist Party, is critical to understand Picasso's willingness to demonstrate his antiwar stance. Accordingly, when Daix asked Picasso whether

---

[155] *Ibid.,* p.665.

[156] Cited in Patricia Leighten, "Picasso's Collages and the Threat of War, 1912-13," p.665. Author's trans.

he used newsprints in *Bottle of Suze* to make pacifist statements, Picasso said, "Of course I did it on purpose, because it was an important event involving a hundred thousand people [...] Oh yes, I found that in the newspaper, and it was my way of showing I was against the war."[157]

Under the light of aforementioned analyses, it can be strongly argued that Picasso was persistent in producing socially and politically conscious works of art prior to the World War I, though he was subtle particularly during his Cubist period. During the First World War, Picasso refused to serve in the military presenting his anti-war attitude once again. With the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in 1936, Picasso not only became more politically active but also more frank about the horror of the wars with his *Guernica* (fig.14) of 1937. Leighten informs that Picasso's politics "did not follow any strict ideological line; he was manifestly uninterested in and insensitive to doctrinal differences between anarchist and Marxist philosophies."[158] Nevertheless, he quickly reacted to the Civil War and even made serious donations to the Republican Government of Spain arguing that he was in fact against "the fight of reaction against the people, against freedom," like his constant struggle against the reaction towards his art and the death of art. When Picasso was commissioned by the newly elected left wing Republican government of Spain to create a work of art for the *Exposition Internationale* in 1937, neither a subject was chosen nor he was imposed one. Soon after, the devastating attack on Guernica, a Basque village in the Northern Spain, by the bombing aircraft sent by Nazis upon the request of the Spanish Nationalists gave Picasso his subject. Adding to Picasso's previous statement, he made his disposition

---

[157] Patricia Leighten, "Response: Artists in Time of War" *The Art Bulletin,* Vol.91, No.1 (March, 2009), pp.35-44.

[158] *Ibid.,* p.40-41.

against the war more direct by explaining, "In the panel on which I am working which I shall call *Guernica*, and in all my recent works of art, I clearly express my abhorrence of the military caste which has sunk Spain in an ocean of pain and death."[159]

For Leighten, during the foreshadow of the impending World War I, many important avant-garde artists including Picasso considered "anarchist politics as inherent in the idea of their avant-garde art and created new formal languages expressive of a desire to effect revolutionary changes in both art and society."[160] Even though Leighten's approach has been criticized by certain art historians, her research is critical for bringing forth Picasso's political affiliation with an emphasis on his pasted press cuttings. Eventually, Picasso's artistic production has presented that Cubism, beyond formal avant-gardism, encompassed politically critical subjects in opposition to the dominant ideology even in the more abstract works of Picasso in association with the idea of the avant-garde.

<u>Approach Toward other Avant-garde Movements</u>

Along with assigning Cubism the 'new' pictorial idiom of the 'new' Republic, Baltacıoğlu and Berk formed particular relations with other avant-garde movements, such as Futurism, Suprematisism, Constructivism, Expressionism and Dada, as they either transferred some of their tenets or fully rejected them. But, why did they pursue a selective approach toward the avant-garde? In this regard, Zeynep

---

[159] Cited in Patricia Leighten, "Response: Artists in Time of War," p.41. Picasso's statement dated May or June 1937. It was issued to coexist with a Spanish war posters exhibition held in New York, p.41. See Alfred Barr, Jr., *Picasso: Fifty Years of his Art* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1946) for the preparatory drawings of *Guernica.*

[160] Patricia Leighten, *The Liberation of Painting: Modernism and Anarchism in Avant-Guerre* (Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 2013), p.2.

Yasa Yaman's remarks on the subject matter provide critical insights for understanding the modernist vision of Baltacıoğlu and Berk, hence Turkish painting, within the nation building context of the early Republican period during the early 1930s. Yasa-Yaman revealed:

> While Baltacıoğlu and Berk stood close to Futurism, nonetheless, they avoided certain movements that existed in the period they were addressed at, such as the trauma and social collapse caused by the World War I, the unconditional faith in technological progress, the nihilist and sarcastic protests of Dada - which reacted as much to war, society, tradition and religion as to art itself - as well as Suprematism, which was close to Christian mysticism and the abstraction of Kandinsky, moving away from the politicization of art. They did not mention these movements and attitudes in their writings or books, and without giving names, made it clear that they did not approve certain extreme tendencies.[161]

Indeed, from the 1930s onward, besides Cubism, the influence of Futurism on the Turkish intelligentsia among other artistic avant-garde movements came to the fore though its tenets were selectively adopted. Fundamentally, the destructive aspect of Futurism, which wanted war at all fronts, was excluded from the Turkish context. When Filippo Tommaso Marinetti published "The Foundation and Manifesto of Futurism" (fig.15) in the front page of *Le Figaro* in 1909, which he had previously issued in several Italian newspapers, Marinetti shook the foundations of the prevailing cultural scene in Italy, and also set the tone of the early twentieth century avant-garde movements like Dadaism and Surrealism. For him, only through a straightforward and aggressive approach art could be transformed into life.[162] As Marinetti put forward in the manifesto:

---

[161] Zeynep Yasa Yaman, *Suretin Sireti,* p.22.

[162] Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, "Introduction" in *Critical Writings,* ed. Gunter Berghaus, trans. Doug Thompson (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006).

There is no longer any beauty except the struggle. Any work of art that lacks a sense of aggression can never be a masterpiece […] We wish to glorify war - the sole cleanser of the world [...] We wish to destroy museums, libraries, academies of any sort, and fight against moralism, feminism, and every kind of materialistic, self-serving cowardice.[163]

In the early twentieth century, many intellectuals believed that the outbreak of war was necessary for the total destruction of old traditions in political, social, and cultural realms favoring a brand new future, a new order in every domain of life. Arguably they were unable to predict the mass slaughter the First World War was about to bring.

Marinetti propagated the conception of revolutionary war as "the sole cleanser of the world," since he believed that humankind could progress only afterwards.[164] Regarding the artistic realm he stated, "this present war is the finest futurist poem that has materialized up to now [...]. War, which is futurism intensified, will never kill of war, as the traditionalists would like, but it will kill traditionalism."[165] Instantly, manifesto became the principal medium in disseminating the avant-garde idea. The mass media channels of the day which Futurists utilized in their effort to reach people included "publishing of manifestos in daily newspapers, plastering them on walls, and dropping them in leaflet form from airplanes onto Italian piazzas" along with printing journals, organizing theatrical performances and exhibitions.[166] Eventually, innovative, in fact

---

[163] Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, "The Foundation and Manifesto of Futurism" in *Critical Writings,* p.14.

[164] Filippo Tommaso Marinetti published his essay "War, the Sole Cleanser of the World" in *La demolizione*, an anarcho-syndicalist journal on March 16, 1910. See *Critical Writings* for the full text.

[165] Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, "In This Futurist Year" in *Critical Writings,* p.235.

[166] Christine Poggi, *Inventing Futurism: The Art and Politics of Artificial Optimism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), p.1.

revolutionary approach would soon span every field in the realm of art from poetry, painting, sculpture to music, theater, and film aiming to 'bring art into life' and to realize social transformation and political action. Though diversified by medium, each branch was founded on the same idea that art should triumph modern life and science.

As a matter of fact, in the revolutionary discourse of the Republican Turkey during the 1930s, rather than Futurists' fascination with the destruction of war to demolish all traditions, their belief in art to realize social and cultural transformation was echoed. Therefore, Republican intellectuals and artists selectively adopted principles of Futurism as they saw them the instruments of progress for modern life and culture. Nevertheless, the very conditions of the revolutionary period in Turkey altered the interpretation of Futurism unique to Turkish experience in its quest to reach the level of contemporary civilizations.

Yasa-Yaman further clarifies the relation of modernist Turkish painting to Constructivism and Expressionism in the 1930s based on the writings of Baltacıoğlu and Berk:

> Although a Cubist/Constructivist attitude is mentioned in Turkish art, this rather relates to the constructivist approach in the painting's composition. Writers who did not establish any bonds with Constructivism, must have stood against the formalist attitude of this movement, which was identified with the Bolshevik revolution after the Stalinist reaction it received in the 1930s. The same attitude is true for Expressionism as well. Although it has been argued that Zeki Kocamemi and Ali Avni Çelebi introduced Expressionism to Turkish art, during those years, Europe had condemned artists who had experienced the traumas caused by wars in industrializing nations, pushed the boundaries of form (and deformed them), and expressed subjective feelings, criticisms, and adversities with rigorous brush strokes and a thick paste of paint. The intellectual fantasies and desires of such art concepts were incompatible with the conditions of Turkish society and Turkish artists.[167]

---

[167] Zeynep Yasa Yaman, *Suretin Sireti,* p.22.

In other words, Expressionism, which sought distortion and exaggeration to express criticisms and painful emotions, did not suit Turkish context due to the positive attitude of Republican artists toward the progressive discourse of the nation-building project of Turkey and the future of Kemalist regime. Likewise, Constructivism, which established a unique stance aiming to 'construct' utilitarian design rather than being interested in 'composition' or 'aesthetic creativity' in the revolutionary period of the Bolsheviks, did not echo in the Turkish artistic realm. Russian Constructivism, in consensus with the Bolshevik vision for a communist order, was opposed by the Socialist Realism founded in the Soviet Union under Joseph Stalin's rule. Despite Constructivists' enthusiasm for the Bolsheviks' idealized communist utopia, their avant-gardist production was eventually and officially taken over by the Socialist Realists. In fact, Constructivism is further investigated in this study due to this conflict between the two movements. On the rise from the 1930s, Socialist Realism's ambition to reflect official ideology through representational art, in opposition to the avant-gardism of Constructivism, had direct effects on Turkish painting.[168] The critique of Socialist Realism for Constructivists' lack of presenting reality provide important insights in evaluating the critical approach arising toward the avant-garde Group D artists regarding their modernist approach in Turkish painting.[169]

As a matter of fact, for those intellectuals and artists following the lead of Baltacıoğlu and Berk within the revolutionary climate of the early Republic, their approach against the modernist currents of the interwar period was determined by the hope and optimism of the era. Therefore, revolutionary artists not only avoided

---

[168] Cemren Altan, "Populism and Peasant Iconography: Turkish Painting in the 1930" *Middle Eastern Studies,* Vol.41, No.4 (July, 2005), pp. 547-560.

[169] See Chapter III for further examination.

some of the extreme avant-garde movements but also selectively transferred and adopted from particular currents that seemed proper for Turkish context and the advance of Turkish art. In fact, although Cubism was designated as the art of civilized nations by particular Republican intellectuals and artists, and was therefore, seemed to be the correct visual idiom for the Republic, in time, Cubism discussions targeting Group D would reshape the vision of the group's artists. Indeed, during its lifetime for two decades in the artistic realm, Group D would go through different stages and acquire different views mainly due to the heated debates regarding new art/national art, the art and cultural politics of the Republican People's Party, and the changes in the Academy of Fine Arts.

Art and Culture within the Nation-Building Context of Turkey

In the early Republican Turkey, the 'modernization' efforts in the domain of art and culture shall be rethought within the context of 'nation-building,' which was the privileged aim and the ideal of the young Republic.[170] An understanding of culture through modern lenses in Turkey can be traced back to the writings of Ziya Gökalp at the turn of the twentieth century. Gökalp described 'culture' *(hars)* in relation to 'civilization' *(medeniyet)* through areas of 'convergence and divergence.' For him, convergence occurred because "both culture and civilization covered religious, moral, legal, intellectual, aesthetic, economic, linguistic and technological spheres of social life" and that they were constituted by the sum of

---

[170] Please refer to Duygu Köksal for her analysis on aesthetic modernism in the early Republican Turkey against the backdrop of 'nation-building' politics in "Domesticating the Avant-garde in a Nationalist Era: Aesthetic Modernism in 1930s Turkey."

these domains.[171] Nevertheless, according to Gökalp, the two concepts also diverged from each other since culture was considered national and civilization was considered universal. Based on his argument, elements of national culture were not the products of the conscious individual actions but rather natural and spontaneous outcomes, while the elements of universal civilization were, in fact, the result of conscious individual actions as they were based on science and technology. Therefore, whereas civilization could be borrowed from the European context, culture had to be produced by its own people, by the 'nation.'[172]

However, with the founding of the Kemalist Republic, the distinction between the two concepts was abolished and culture was included under the broader conception of civilization aiming for a "single contemporary civilization to be shared by all nations" like Sibel Bozdoğan has stated.[173] In this effort, Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, in his 1933 essay entitled "Culture and Civilization," provided a model where "contemporary civilization" became a precondition for the "artistic and cultural regeneration of the nation."[174] Thus, transformation in the domain of art and culture was regarded a must in the early Republican Turkey. As a matter of fact, in the single party-era of the early Republic, from 1923 to 1945, during which the RPP was identified with 'uncontested rule,' the party determined art and cultural politics of the state in an endeavor to comply with the level of contemporary civilizations.

---

[171] Ziya Gökalp, *Turkish Nationalism and Western Civilization: Selected Essays of Ziya Gökalp,* Niyazi Berkes ed. and trans., (London: Ruskin House George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1959), p.104. Also refer to Ziya Gökalp, *Türkleşmek, İslamlaşmak, Muasırlaşmak* (1918).

[172] Also see, Sibel Bozdoğan, *Modernism and Nation Building,* pp.35-36.
[173] *Ibid., p.107.*

[174] Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu's views are cited in Sibel Bozdoğan, *Modernism and Nation Building,* p.107.

RPP Initiatives: The People's Houses and Painting Tours of Anatolia

To construct a national identity breaking away from the Ottoman Empire's *ümmet* identity based on religious doctrines, the new Republic founded the Turkish Historical Society *(Türk Tarih Kurumu)* in 1931 and the Turkish Language Society *(Türk Dil Kurumu)* in 1932. Also in 1932, a nation-wide project, the People's Houses *(Halkevleri)*, was also established as part of the RPP's agenda in propagating nationalist consciousness on every level of society. In fact, one of the most prominent initiatives taken by the RPP in shaping the art and cultural politics of the Republic was the undertaking of People's Houses.

Asım Karaömerlioğlu has stated that People's Houses were "founded for the purpose of disseminating the propaganda of the governing RPP and they mobilized in their activities the prominent intellectuals and officials of the time."[175] The Houses were established as adult education centers and conducted cultural, sporting, and educative activities. These facilities emphasized the role of Peasantist Divisions *(Köycülük Kolları)* aiming for "the development of social, medical, and aesthetic aspects of villages while establishing mutual respect and solidarity with city dwellers."[176] As the Republican intellectuals believed that raising the cultural level of people would solve the country's problems on the way of progress, the People's Houses primarily aimed to define 'the intellectual basis of the peasantist ideology.' Karaömerlioğlu underlines how rapidly the Peasantist Divisions of the People's Houses grew with numbers: "In their inaugural year, the divisions had

---

[175] Asım Karaömerlioğlu, "The People's Houses and the Cult of the Peasant in Turkey," *Middle Eastern Studies* 34, No.4 (1998) pp.67-68. Also, see Kemal Karpat, "The People's Houses in Turkey: Establishment and Growth," *Middle East Journal,* Vol.17, No.1-2 (Winter-Spring, 1963), pp.55-67.

[176] Asım Karaömerlioğlu, "The People's Houses and the Cult of the Peasant in Turkey," p.70.

2,908 members nationwide, and by 1940, there were 154,000. In the same year, their members visited over two thousand villages all over the country. Visiting villages was the most important activity of the Peasantist Division [aiming to] bridge the gap between the city intellectuals and the people." Essentially, People's Houses were informed by the model of Turkish Hearths *(Türk Ocakları)*, a nationalist organization officially established in 1912 with the objective of advocating Turkism *(Türkçülük)*. Aiming to progress national education and science along with the nation's social and economical level, and to perfect Turkish race and language, the Turkish Hearths were also supportive of literature, music, architecture and visual arts.[177]

In line with the comprehensive efforts of the RPP to bring together the Republican intellectuals and the villagers, the officials also initiated the Painting Tours of Anatolia between the years 1938 and 1943 to introduce artists to village people and life. The artists, who had been preoccupied with the modernist currents and the modernization efforts in the city, were then expected to realize their 'national duty' by depicting 'their truth' unique to Turkish context by not just considering 'art for art's sake' but also 'art for society.'[178] Throughout the project, each year, selected painters visited various provinces in Anatolia aiming to illustrate Anatolian themes and reflections from geography and climate to history and heritage. Consistent with the peasant theme, which was already part of the early

---

[177] Füsun Üstel, *İmparatorluktan Ulus-Devlete Türk Milliyetçiliği: Türk Ocakları 1912-1931* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2004). For the foundation rules of the Turkish Hearths, see pp.100-102. Exhibitions, concerts, and conferences were also organized in the buildings of the Turkish Hearths. For the objectives of the Turkish Hearths in the realm of art and culture from supporting musical activities to exhibitions see Füsun Üstel, *İmparatorluktan Ulus-Devlete Türk Milliyetçiliği: Türk Ocakları 1912-1931*, p.216-226. Also refer to Zeynep Yasa Yaman, *Ankara Müzesi,* p.138. The Turkish Hearths were closed down in 1931 with the accusation of advocating pan-Turkism as a rival ideology to Kemalist territorial nationalism.

[178] Zeynep Yasa Yaman, "Yurt Gezileri ve Sergileri ya da 'Mektepten Memlekete Dönüş,'" *Toplumbilim* Vol.4 (June 1996), p.40.

Republican artistic discourse, Painting Tours of Anatolia caused more and varied series of peasant images to be introduced into the realm of art.[179] The paintings depicted during these visits were then displayed in the Exhibitions of the Painting Tours of Anatolia, where the first three painters were awarded by a jury composed of the RPP politicians and art critics. Group D artists also actively took part in these tours and exhibitions revealing their peculiar relation with the state-support and therefore with the avant-garde.[180]

<center>State-Supported Art Exhibitions</center>

In the early Republican period, art exhibitions constituted a critical vehicle in the proliferation and dissemination of Turkish painting, and perhaps, they were the most far-reaching events to create public opinion for the 'evolution' of Turkish painting. The annual Galatasaray Exhibitions, started to be organized by the Ottoman Painters Society in 1916 and continued until 1951, remained an important art event during the single-party era of the Turkish Republic. Nurullah Berk's account regarding the Galatasaray Exhibitions evidences the emergence of an interested clientele in the Turkish art scene: "Even only once a year, the large-scale paintings of İbrahim Çallı, Hikmet Onat, and Namık İsmail presented in the bright halls of *Galatasaray Lycée* was an important cultural event expected with great impatience by the public, especially by the intellectuals."[181] In the early Republican period, the Ottoman Painters Society, whose name was then changed to the

---

[179] Cemren Altan, "Populism and Peasant Iconography: Turkish painting in the 1930s," *Middle Eastern Studies,* Vol.41, No.4 (July, 2005), p.552.

[180] The avant-gardeness of Group D from the early 1930s to the beginning of 1950s is examined in Chapter III.

[181] Queted in Ömer Faruk Şerifoğlu, "Whenever I Think of Galatasaray I Think of Exhibitions" in *From Mekteb-i Sultani to Galatasaray Lycee.*

Association of Fine Arts not only carried on with annual Galatasaray Exhibitions, but also started to organize exhibitions in Ankara every year. Following the lead of Galatasaray Exhibitions, and apart from independent efforts, the state initiated and sponsored a series of art exhibitions from the 1930s on. As a consequence of this attempt, the first Exhibition of the Revolution *(İnkilap Sergisi)* was organized in 1933 in Ankara celebrating the tenth year of the Republic. Until 1937, the Exhibitions of the Revolution requested artists to depict themes on the War of Independence and the progressive Republican reforms. However, from the beginning, the exhibitions were criticized for being filled with war and soldier paintings and lacking those that reflect the spirit of the revolutionary Republic. In addition, the artists were disapproved for being devoted to symbols such as Ankara castle, factory chimneys, and the six arrows of the RPP in their paintings as they sought state acquisition. On the whole, the exhibitions were evaluated to be unqualified due to exhibiting every piece of art that was sent without the judgement of a selection committee.[182] The Exhibitions of the Revolution also triggered debates on state-directed art and state sponsorship as they limited the artist's freedom in content choice. After 1939, the annual State Exhibitions of Painting and Sculpture *(Devlet Resim ve Heykel Sergileri)* took the place of Exhibitions of the Revolution following the First and Second United Exhibitions *(Birinci ve İkinci Birleşik Sergileri)* of 1937-1938. Along with this drive, two other exhibition series were initiated in 1936 and 1938; one being the Painting Exhibitions pioneered by Ankara People's House and the other one Exhibitions of the Painting Tours of Anatolia introduced by the RPP respectively. Like their presence in the Painting Tours of Anatolia, Group D artists regularly participated in state-sponsored

---

[182] Zeynep Yasa Yaman, "Yurt Gezileri ve Sergileri ya da 'Mektepten Memlekete Dönüş,'" *Toplumbilim* Vol.4 (June 1996), pp.35-52.

exhibitions as they strengthened their particular relation with the cultural politics of the state, diverging from their avant-garde stance over time.[183]

Although it has been argued by some scholars that the reforms and initiatives realized in the artistic and cultural realm during the single party-era resonated the authoritative tone of the fascist regimes in Europe, the counter-view has challenged this consideration.[184] In this respect, Duygu Köksal has pursued an in-depth analysis of the controversy and has argued that although "during the single-party era the state was the major actor in shaping the cultural and art policies in Turkey," it fairly diverged from the fascist Italy or Nazi Germany first by not implementing a "categorical rejection of the modernist avant-garde" and by not establishing a "monolithic plan or scheme that would have been able to sustain total control over the cultural sphere."[185] Indeed, in the realm of art, the state's stance toward the arrival of European avant-garde movements was quite fair first. In fact, Group D emerged during a time when its cubist visual idiom and constructivist approach gained recognition from the state due to its modernist tendency. The visual language of the newly founded Turkish Republic had to be new in tandem with the all-encompassing revolutionary spirit in the country. However, especially from the 1940s on, the intelligentsia in close contact with the RPP regime would begin to question the validity of the artistic avant-garde proliferated in the country, particularly in connection with the concept of national art. This inquiry would soon

---

[183] For an in-depth documentation on the participation of Group D artists in state-sponsored exhibitions, please refer to Zeynep Yasa Yaman, *1930 - 1950 Yılları Arasında Kültür ve Sanat Ortamına Bir Bakış: d Grubu.*

[184] See Duygu Köksal for her thorough analysis on the cultural politics of the young Turkish Republic opposing the common assumption on early Republican modernization that the single party imposed almost total control over the realm of culture. "Art and Power in Turkey: Culture, Aesthetics and Nationalism During the Single-party Era," *New Perspectives on Turkey*, Vol.31 (2004), pp.91-119.

[185] *Ibid.,* p.92.

surface in Group D as well, despite its once revolutionary avant-garde stance. In this regard, the journals and periodicals of the period have revealed important insights on the identity of national art along with the discussions on state-directed art.

<u>Diverse Approaches in Republican Periodicals toward
'State-directed Art' and 'National Art'</u>

Ar, after the Ottoman Painters Society Journal, was the second art journal solely dedicated to art in the history of Turkish painting and was in fact the first art journal of the Republican period. The issue celebrating the first year of *Ar* had stated that this publication was for enthusiastic people and artists who wanted to learn and comprehend matters on art rather than for those who preferred to skim pages to spend time. While Nurullah Berk, Elif Naci, Cemal Tollu, Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu, Malik Aksel, Zühtü Müridoğlu and Nusret Suman were announced to be among the permanent staff writing on painting and sculpture, Suut Kemal Yetkin was welcomed as the editor in chief who had already been writing in the journal on theory of art.[186] Apart from these topics, the journal also included articles on music, theatre, cinema and archaeology. In the early Republican period, journals and periodicals were important vehicles to further debates on art related topics. Besides *Ar* journal, which was closely associated with Group D due to its staff, some other important periodicals of the period such as *Kadro, Yeni Adam,* and *Ülkü,* though were not solely dedicated to art, also disclosed pivotal arguments for the progress of art and culture. *Güzel Sanatlar Dergisi* was another journal of the era in support of the state policy in the realm of art. Since the ideological tendencies of the

---

[186] "Ar Okuyucularına" *Ar,* Vol.12 (Birinci Kanun, 1937), p.16.

publications were usually echoed in art related discussions, the debates indicated the intricate relationship between the state and the artistic realm as the authors discussed topics regarding new art, national art, and politically engaged art. Actually, these considerations determined the larger framework of art discussions in the early Republican period within the context of nation-building policies, hence the cultural politics of the RPP, where Group D was a critical constituent.

A series of articles published in *Ar* investigating the effects of statist political economy on the artistic milieu in the 1930s, which Sezer Tansuğ analyzed, is critical for questioning state direction in the realm of art. Indeed, a question explicitly asked "Considering the social tendencies of Turkey, do you support state intervention in the realm of art? Implemented by diverse regimes, do you think this principle can lead to beneficial consequences?"[187] What meant by diverse regimes in the question were probably the totalitarian regimes of Germany and Italy. However, no further explanation was made. Answered between the years 1937-1938 by Reşat Nuri Darago, Hasan Ali Yücel, Türkân Örs and former *Kadro* journal writers Vedat Nedim Tör and Burhan Asaf Belge, in other words by the intellegentsia who were in support of 'state-directed art,' the inquiry actually aimed to stress the complicated tension in the artistic domain against state dominance peculiar to the early Republican period. Therefore, the significance of this survey was in fact the questions themselves rather than the answers in support of state intervention in the realm of art. Although *Ar* seemed to present a stance closer to Group D, it nevertheless tried to 'find a mid-way' between the extreme nationalists and the modernist view. In *Ar*, Suut Kemal Yetkin, Sabahattin Rahmi Eyüboğlu, and Hasan Ali Yücel also emphasized the importance of national art in their

---

[187] Sezer Tansuğ, *Çağdaş Türk Sanatı,* p.193.

writings.[188] Suut Kemal Yetkin's clarification of the vision of *Ar* in 1938 exemplifies their stance for national art:

> The kind of art which *Ar* has adopted is distanced from the doctrine disputes or style fantasies. It is rather nourished with the energy of deep springs. *Ar* desires a music that takes its scent from Turkish spirit and meaning from Turkish folklore, a painting that compiles its colors from the colors of homeland, an architecture and sculpture that take their shape and rhythm from the climate and needs of the country, and names this art as national classism. *Ar* will pursue its endeavors within these principles.[189]

As a matter of fact, while Yetkin was not in opposition to Group D, in fact, in favor of its progressive view and technique, he sought the roots of national art in local folk culture rather than fully adopting the aesthetics of the modernist avant-garde. Essentially, Yetkin's view signaled the changing approach toward the 'aesthetic modernism' of Group D during a time when the tension between national art and modernist avant-garde art was on the rise by the end of the 1930s. Significantly from the 1940s on, this inclination for Anatolian folk arts in the intelligentsia would have far-reaching consequences on the aesthetics of Group D.

In *Kadro*, issued from 1932 to 1935 in support of the official Republican ideology, Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, Vedat Nedim Tör, and Burhan Asaf Belge frequently referred to culture and art related topics. For Belge, "patronage of the state over art and artists" was essential for the 'national revolution,' in fact, art should have acquired a national tendency "for being understandable and revolutionary."[190]

---

[188] Şeyda Barlas, *Visions of Aesthetics and Culture in Yeni Adam: Republic of Fine Arts (1934-1950)* (Unpublished MA Thesis, Boğaziçi University, 2007), p.92.

[189] Suut Kemal Yetkin, "Ar İkinci Yılına Girerken," *Ar,* Vol.1 (İkinci Kanun, 1938), p.4.

[190] Şeyda Barlas, *Visions of Aesthetics and Culture in Yeni Adam: Republic of Fine Arts (1934-1950)*, p.88.

Another prominent periodical of the period was *Yeni Adam* established in 1934. The owner and editor-in-chief of the journal İsmail Hakkı Baltacıoğlu started to issue *Yeni Adam* when he was discharged from his duty in İstanbul University due to the Academic Reform of 1933. Depending on Baltacıoğlu's academic background, *Yeni Adam* aimed to educate and guide people in line with the revolutionary agenda of the Republic. In fact, *Yeni Adam* was founded on the aspiration that each reader had to be a 'new man' since modernization could only start within the individual and then spread into the society.[191] Arguing that art should have a social purpose, the periodical included cultural nationalist commentary and asserted that Turkish art was in need of 'tradition'.

Güzel Sanatlar Dergisi published by the National Ministry of Education in 1940s for six issues reflected and supported the state policy in the realm of art, to which intellectuals and artists such as Suut Kemal Yetkin, Hasan Ali Yücel, Ahmet Muhip Dıranas, Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu and Zühtü Müridoğlu contributed. In an article of his in *Güzel Sanatlar* and in line with his previous arguments, Suut Kemal Yetkin emphasized the role of artist on national grounds and declared that national art was embedded in the arts of the Central Asia.[192] He attributed the artist's role as introducing the arts of the period to the Republic for progress while he indicated the path for the arts of Group D as well: 'Synthesis of east and west.'

Last but not least, *Ülkü*, the publication of Ankara People's House, was a critical and far-reaching journal which sought "to propagate the principles of the Kemalist revolution and to instill a strong idealism, especially among the young, for

---

[191] For an in-depth analysis of writings and views in *Yeni Adam*, see Yasemin Türkkan, *Türk Modernleşmesinde Yeni Adam Dergisi (1934 - 1938)* (Unpublished MA Thesis, Hacettepe University, 2008).

[192] Suut Kemal Yetkin, "Sanatkar," *Güzel Sanatlar Dergisi,* Vol.1, (1940), p.3.

serving the nation and bringing 'civilization' to every corner of the country."[193] In addition to topics ranging from people's education to history, the journal included critical art writings by Ali Sami Boyar revealing a political stand. As Boyar underlined the Republic's need for national art, he refused the modernist style of Group D. He declared in the June 1934 issue of *Ülkü*,

> We are in need of national painting more than ever. In fact, we can accomplish this without any hindrance. [...] But, somehow our painter friends have not started their national duty. This stagnation shall be investigated. Before paintings of magnolia and chrysanthemum, we need works of art that echo national epics, retain national pride, and historicize the revolution. We can not flourish our museums or galleries with these. [...] The language of painting is international. Therefore, the post-war world gives importance to art propaganda as much as to aircraft bombs and sea torpedos.[194]

While the Republican intellectuals and artists aimed to define how the national art of the Republic should be during a time when Group D was at its peak due to its progressive discourse and technique, they greatly diverged from each other as they either supported, rejected, or expected some alterations for the group's artistic production. Although they were all united in the idea that they were in need of national art, their definitions for it varied from each other. Especially Nurullah Berk's view on behalf of Group D introduced a rather different conception of national art. According to Berk, for a work of art to be national, it did not have to present epic war themes or progressive reforms but rather a modernist approach with a sound theoretical base. In other words, as he explicitly stated in 1934: "Full freedom in painting and sculpture: Here is the true 'national art.'"[195] However, even

---

[193] Sibel Bozdoğan, *Modernism and Nation Building,* p.93.

[194] Ali Sami Boyar quoted in Sezer Tansuğ, *Çağdaş Türk Sanatı,* p.184.

[195] Quoted in Zeynep Yasa Yaman, *1930 - 1950 Yılları Arasında Kültür ve Sanat Ortamına Bir Bakış: d Grubu* (Unpublished PhD Thesis, Hacettepe University, 1992), p.166.

though Berk initially sought full freedom in the realm of art, which he associated with the definition of national art, his ideas started to diverge from modernist discourse in time.

Within this context of diverse views against the idea of national art and where state intervention in art becomes a precondition through its institutions, exhibitions, or events within the nation-building context of Turkey, the artistic thought and production of Group D from the early 1930s to the end of the 1940s reveal how their vision for the arts of the Republic was restructured over the years. In fact, the changes that Group D went through its lifetime have led me to question how the group's once revolutionary and avant-garde stance was challenged over time. Accordingly, the next chapter endeavors to answer critical questions in understanding the avant-gardeness of Group D through the unique dynamics of the Turkish artistic realm, and in reference to particular avant-garde movements and the artistry of Picasso. Some of the asked questions are: Were the artists of Group D more radical in their views and aesthetics when they first gathered? How did they adopt the tenets of Cubism into Turkish painting? What does the enrollment of Group D artists to the Academy of Fine Arts indicate regarding the avant-garde stance of Group D? How did the style and choice of content within Group D change over time due to rising national sentiments during the Second World War? What are the particular discussions and events that altered the avant-garde attitude of Group D? How did the Socialist Realism emerging in the Soviet Union echo in Turkey? What was the stance of Group D against futurist and constructivist premises in understanding its avant-garde aspect? Why and how did the counter arguments against Cubism, and therefore Group D also target Picasso?

CHAPTER III

QUESTIONING THE AVANT-GARDENESS OF GROUP D

Zeynep Yasa Yaman has defined the lifetime of Group D in four periods: rebellion (1933-1936), conciliation (1937-1940), maturity (1941-1944) and international (1945-1951). An in-depth analysis of the phases that Group D passed through is critical for understanding not only group's origins, its changing stance toward the idea of new art/national art, and the art and cultural policies of the state, but also to see how, as a consequence, its approach toward modernist art movements shifted over time. Therefore, rather than a detailed survey on Group D, this chapter examines the two decades of the group's existence on a thematic basis against which its avant-gardeness can be discussed. Nevertheless, in reference to critical events and dates in Group D's history, the time intervals defined by Yasa-Yaman are also emphasized. Accordingly, the analysis consists first, the origins of Group D and its experiments with the cubist technique introducing a radical style into the artistic realm in early Republican period; second, the group's relation to the state by means of art institutions such as the Academy of Fine Arts and the Painting and Sculpture Museum, and art exhibitions in dialogue with the avant-garde idea; third, its stance toward futurist and constructivist premises; fourth, the rising critiques against Group D, modernist currents, and the artistry of Pablo Picasso; and fifth, the changing position of Group D artists toward 'national art' and their affinity for the inclusion of local motifs exclusive to the Republican period.

Group D Experiments with Cubism

The rebellion period which includes the early years of Group D is distinguished with the preoccupation of group artists for form, technique, and intellect as they defied any limitation introduced by content. Corresponding with the revolutionary discourse of the early Republic, Group D argued for the technical regeneration of arts ignoring the previous past. Therefore, the avant-garde idea, thus, the avant-garde movements of the early-twentieth century, which were in opposition to 'tradition' and 'old' by nature, found resonance within the premise of Group D. During this formation period, Group D artists actively investigated the problems of the artistic realm and searched a foundation for the 'new art.' Like the early Cubists in Paris, they observed Cézanne for his experiments in reducing every element in painting to geometrical patterns, in fact, to cubes.[196] Employing cubist visual idiom in essence, Group D acknowledged revolution and dynamism in the realm of art emphasized by futurist approaches.[197] Similarly, Bozdoğan has stated, "in the favorable 'revolutionary' climate of the Kemalist *inkilap,* the references that Turkish artists, architects, and intellectuals made to technology, industry, and the 'machine age' often did evoke the aesthetic and theoretical premises of the modernist avant-garde."[198] However, as scholars have also put it, it would be deceptive to carry the comparison to Cubism and other avant-garde currents too far. Yet, on a selective basis, this thesis investigates how Cubism, with a focus on its visual idiom, and the futurist and constructivist premises were 'domesticated' in the realm of art, as has been phrased by Duygu Köksal.

---

[196] Zeynep Yasa Yaman, "Türkiye'de Kübizm ve Yeni Sanat," pp.59-66.

[197] Zeynep Yasa Yaman, *d Grubu 1933 - 1951,* p.24-25.

[198] Sibel Bozdoğan, *Modernism and Nation Building,* p.148.

From 1933 to 1936, Group D artists organized six exhibitions. In their first exhibition, held between 8-18 October 1933 at the hat store *Mimoza,* they displayed their preparatory drawings which were never out from studios before.[199] Displaying preparatory drawings was a novelty in Turkish painting. In fact, Group D was critical of the 1914 Generation for lacking such preparatory drawings as well. Thus, this first exhibition of Group D provoked and incited the conflict between the 'new' and the 'old.' While the new artists (Group D artists) declared that the old ones (referring to 1914 Generation artists) were worthless, the old artists questioned if what the new artists did was even art since their paintings and sculptures were impossible to understand (fig.16).[200]

Group D artists displayed their oil paintings in the second exhibition which was open to visit from 19 January to 9 February 1934 at Beyoğlu People's House. The economic burden of this exhibition for Group D was extensive since the artists financed it by themselves. Besides, it seemed impossible to sell any painting since the exhibition was found to be too modernist.[201] In the exhibition, artists clearly manifested the technical innovations they pursued in reference to cubist aesthetics. From this standpoint, Nurullah Berk's *İskambil Kağıtlı Natürmort (Still Life with Playing-Cards)* (fig.17) dated 1933 presents a well document. While this painting reminds Braque's *Fruit Dish, Ace of Clubs* (fig.18) dated 1913, it nevertheless significantly differs from it due to Berk's particular technical interpretation of Cubism. To begin with, *Fruit Dish, Ace of Clubs* is an example of 'synthetic' cubism, where Braque totally diminished perspective employing a collage

---

[199] Zeynep Yasa Yaman, *1930 - 1950 Yılları Arasında Kültür ve Sanat Ortamına Bir Bakış: d Grubu*, p.97.

[200] Zeynep Yasa Yaman, *d Grubu 1933 - 1951,* p.8.

[201] Zeynep Yasa Yaman, *1930 - 1950 Yılları Arasında Kültür ve Sanat Ortamına Bir Bakış: d Grubu*, p.100.

technique and integrating playing cards and fruits on a table among other elements which are highly abstracted and hard to decipher. The progression from three-dimensional, recognizable images, to two-dimensional flat objects that seem like geometrical figures underlines the technical aspect of Braque's work. However, though geometricized, the elements in Berk's *İskambil Kağıtlı Natürmort* are relevantly observable with the clear representation of a fruit dish, a bottle, and scattered playing cards. In fact, Berk did not totally abandon perspective in his painting since the table seemed like stretching back into the composition. Early charcoal drawings of Cemal Tollu vividly display his technical studies in reference to Cubism as well. For example, *Portre (Portrait)* (fig.19) dated 1931 is illustrative of Tollu's approach for figures where he integrated geometric shapes. However, this work also reflects how his experimentation with the picture plane was limited as he neither reduced it to two dimensions nor introduced multiple facets which Picasso realized in his *Portrait of Wilhelm Uhde* (fig.20) dated 1910, an acclaimed painting of 'analytic' cubism. In *Portrait of Wilhelm Uhde*, the emphasis on the two-dimensionality of the picture plane and the view of the fragmented images through multiple facets mark the qualities of 'analytic' cubism. Wilhelm Uhde, who was depicted in half-length portrait, was a German art collector, dealer, and curator. In the picture, the details such as his hair parted in the middle, mouth, eyes and nose along with his shirt and suit are noticeable. Mark Antliff and Patricia Leighten describe further, "Behind Uhde, canvases lean against a wall, while a table with a drawer and knob appear just to the right. But all the observable forms - body, head, table, canvases, wall - are so broken up into tilted geometric planes, connected through passage, as to nearly dissolve into a play of line and very limited color:

black, white, ochre and their mixture."[202] Therefore, despite observable elements, the depiction becomes harder to decipher mainly due to the inclusion of multiple viewpoints in the picture plane.

Cemal Tollu's *Alfabe Okuyan Köylüler (Villagers Reading the Alphabet)* (fig.21) and *Bir Öğretmen Portresi (Portrait of a Teacher)* (fig.22), both dated 1933, were also among the paintings exhibited in the second exhibition of Group D that presented cubist tendencies. In both paintings where figures were distorted with a leaning for geometrical shapes through the artist's treatment of line and form where contours are strongly visible, one-point perspective prevail. These examples illustrate that diverging from the technical initiatives established by Picasso and Braque in defining Cubism, Group D artists did not experiment with the technique as much as their European colleagues. In fact, they were reluctant to abolish perspective aiming for discernible contents. For example, *Alfabe Okuyan Köylüler* clearly reflects the revolutionary phase of the Republic by displaying the modernization efforts in a village through education, in fact, the education of women. Indeed, education and educated women were important themes which the artists including painters from Group D frequently referred to in the reformist climate of the Republic. Essentially, these examples point out that even in their most rebellious years, Group D artists represented a far different Cubism than the pioneers of Cubism did. Especially in terms of technique, Group D artists did not further experiment with the picture plane through cutting it into facet-planes, which was central to distortion of object and space, or dissected and reassembled elements in their paintings introducing multiple-viewpoints to their paintings.

---

[202] Mark Antliff and Patricia Leighten, *Cubism and Culture*, p.106.

This second exhibition of Group D where they collectively displayed their oil paintings for the first time is illustrative of the group's revolutionary pictorial idiom against the 'impressionism' of the 1914 Generation. Nevertheless, when Cubism that Group D artists portrayed is examined across the technical innovations, their revolutionary idiom presented a different interpretation of the movement's aesthetics. In other words, rather than being preoccupied with overthrowing the traditional techniques of academic painting like the early Cubists, Group D artists were concerned with establishing a revolution in the realm of Turkish art that would correspond with the revolutionary discourse of the Turkish Republic. Hence, this style was defined as Cubism since it was perceived to be the art of civilized democratic nations by particular Republican intellectuals and artists.[203] In fact, Nurullah Berk had envisioned a sense of thought in plastic arts beyond a concern for technical quality or depiction of a specific content implying the importance of thought in the work of art. In 1934 Berk disclosed,

> Plastic arts will play an important role in our future life. It will be one of the brightest faces of our new soul. Turkey of iron, steel, and concrete, which lives in the moment of life, will use these forms of art that it may even further rejuvenate and change.

> Our main aim is to apply the technique and use these new tools in the best way to reveal the sense of thinking; this is the core work. If today, in works of art, direct and extreme influences are seen, it is because not being able to fully absorb the tools.[204]

---

[203] Chapter II.

[204] Quoted in Zeynep Yasa Yaman, *1930 - 1950 Yılları Arasında Kültür ve Sanat Ortamına Bir Bakış: D Grubu*, p.166.

Group D: State-Supported Exhibitions,
the Academy, and the Painting and Sculpture Museum in Question

Despite the avant-garde approach of Group D artists during their formative

years, and their preliminary belief in the freedom of painting and sculpture, they

nevertheless enrolled in exhibitions and events organized by the state. Indeed,

diverging from the European avant-garde, Group D never manifested anarchist

ideas or critiques against the regime but rather created paintings within the nation-

building context of the Republic. In this regard, among the exhibitions initiated by

the state which Group D enrolled in, the Exhibitions of the Revolution provide

productive examples. Despite their criticisms against the restrictions imposed by the

Exhibitions of the Revolution for content choice, Group D artists displayed

paintings in line with the modernization efforts and the revolutionary spirit in the

Republic. To illustrate, Nurullah Berk's painting *Tayyareciler (Aviators)* (fig.23)

which was displayed in the Exhibition of the Revolution in 1933 exhibits a strong

rhetoric for state's reforms and modernization efforts. Although this painting

neither confirms group's belief in 'freedom of content' nor the anarchism of the

avant-garde idea; it presents references to technology and machine age which made

aviation possible.[205] *Tayyareciler,* reflecting cubist elements, indicates the peculiar

relation of the artists to state-support who "lived with the dilemma of surviving

under the protective wings of the state while realizing the problems associated with

state-directed, politically engaged art" as Duygu Köksal has disclosed.[206] Actually,

Tayyareciler, along with another significant painting of the period, Zeki Faik İzer's

İnkilap Yolunda (On the Path of the Revolution) (fig.24) dated 1933, which was

---

[205] Refer to Sibel Bozdoğan, *Modernism and Nation Building.*

[206] Duygu Köksal, "Art and Power in Turkey: Culture, Aesthetics and Nationalism During the Single-party Era," p.116.

also exhibited in the first Exhibition of the Revolution, has been disapproved over the years for imitating European models.[207] Berk and İzer, the two founding members of Group D, were criticized for depicting *Tayyareciler* and *İnkilap Yolunda* after the paintings of Gustave Moreau and Eugène Delacroix respectively. Indeed, 'imitating western works of art' was a topic of contention which the artists of the period were constantly criticized against, and in fact, these two paintings were the two most important works of art that triggered imitation debates during the Republican era. In 1942, the discussions were increased with the publication of *Resim ve Cemiyet* by Hilmi Ziya Ülken where he debated on 'imitation,' 'influence,' and 'authentic creation' within the discourse of national art. As his criticisims were centred on Nurullah Berk and Zeki Faik İzer, he implicitly referred to other painters.[208] Nevertheless, like *Tayyareciler, İnkilap Yolunda,* which was clearly inspired by Delacroix's *Liberty Leading the People* (fig.25), dated 1830, commemorating the July Revolution of 1830 and celebrating the Republican revolutionary spirit in France, is a reflection of the revolutionary context of the Kemalist regime. Considering that "the revolutionary self-consciousness of the Kemalist *inkilap* is most evident in the way it represented itself in the image of the French Revolution,"[209] as has been argued by Bozdoğan, the conscious choice of İzer becomes more understandable. While this painting reiterates how Group D artists produced paintings promoting the ideals of the early Republican period, it reveals the contradictory stance of the group toward the avant-garde. In this adaptation, the examples and symbols chosen by İzer were exclusive to Turkish

---

[207] Sezer Tansuğ, *Çağdaş Türk Sanatı,* p.189.

[208] Zeynep Yasa Yaman, "Türk Resminde Etkilenme ve Taklit Olgusu I," *Türkiye'de Sanat,* Vol.14 (May–August, 1994), pp.26-34.

[209] Sibel Bozdoğan, *Modernism and Nation Building,* p.57.

context. While Group D artists accepted their 'indebtedness to French models,' they argued for the peculiarity of their works of art in reflecting society's own concerns specific to Turkey which have lead the paintings to be rethought beyond the lasting discourse of imitation.[210]

Besides the participation of Group D artists in state exhibitions with paintings in support of the regime and its ideals, the group's relation to the Academy of Fine Arts especially after 1937 and the Painting and Sculpture Museum which was founded the same year presents critical reference points to evaluate the avant-gardeness of Group D against these prominent art institutions of the period.

From 1937 to 1940, which Yasa-Yaman has described as the period of conciliation for Group D, major changes were realized at the Academy of Fine Arts initiated by the appointments of Léopold Lévy and Rudolf Belling in 1936 with the support of Burhan Toprak and the invitation of Ministry of Education. Upon the death of Namık İsmail in 1935, who was the director of the Academy of Fine Arts and also a member of the 1914 Generation, Burhan Toprak was appointed to the directorship position. Toprak, who was supportive of the modernist European art movements and therefore the modernist approach of Group D, ventured for the enrollment of foreign professors to the academy. Hence, by the end of 1936, Léopold Lévy and Rudolf Belling were assigned as the head of painting studio and the head of sculpture studio respectively. Besides, Bruno Taut was appointed to the architecture department.[211] As a matter of fact, the years between 1937 and 1948 marked the dominance of foreign academic staff in the Academy of Fine Arts. The

---

[210] Duygu Köksal, "Domesticating the Avant-garde in a Nationalist Era: Aesthetic Modernism in 1930s Turkey," p.42. Also, refer to Zeynep Yasa Yaman, "Türk Resminde Etkilenme ve Taklit Olgusu I."

[211] Zeynep Yasa Yaman, *1930 - 1950 Yılları Arasında Kültür ve Sanat Ortamına Bir Bakış: d Grubu,* pp.71-80. Also see, Zeynep Yasa Yaman, *Suretin Sireti,* pp.23-24.

acceptance of Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu and Cemal Tollu to the Academy of Fine Arts in 1937 as tranlators to Belling increased the relation of Group D with the institutuion. Indeed, Group D artists were supportive of the 'new' foreign teachers as they were fundamentally against the 'old' academic staff which included the 1914 Generation artists.[212] In fact, Lévy and Belling endeavored to prepare a curriculum corresponding with the concept of 'living art' advocated by Group D. Also, under the guidance of Lévy, an art education based on the teachings of Paul Cézanne was accepted in the Academy of Fine Arts which Group D was also in accord with. The appointment of Suut Kemal Yetkin, who was also known to be close to Group D, as the director of Fine Arts in 1939 not only confirmed the consensus between the academy and state on fine arts policies but also caused more members of Group D to enter the academy in the following years. Ironically, as Yasa-Yaman has emphasized, the modernist art currents which were not included in the European academic curriculums were formalized within the Academy of Fine Arts with the support of the state.[213]

While the European avant-garde was originally against state power due its anarchic edge, despite adjustments and agreements in time, the avant-garde introduced by Group D to the Kemalist regime was in accordance with the revolutionary spirit in Turkey. Actually, taken into account the difficulty of defining what avant-garde has been and is, its ambiguity, and ever-changing aspect, the analysis of the avant-garde within Turkish context becomes unstable as well. For example, when Italian Futurism is considered, Filippo Marinetti was wishing

---

[212] Sezer Tansuğ, *Çağdaş Türk Sanatı*, p.190-191.

[213] Zeynep Yasa Yaman, *d Grubu 1933 - 1951,* p.25.

Mussolini to adopt Futurism as the official Fascist style.[214] After the First World War, with the peak of Fascism as a political movement in Italy, contradictory views for the interrelation between Fascism and Futurism emerged in the country. At the time, where one view argued for their incompatibility due to anarchic dimension of Futurism against the disciplined, authoritative, and hierarchical qualities of Fascism, the other view defended that they had more in common stating that it was in fact Marinetti, the founder of Futurism, who had opened up the path for Mussolini in his desire to break away with every tradition. Nevertheless, Futurism, which once celebrated the destruction of institutions in order to construct a new world, demanded to be institutionalized within that 'new world' of Fascism. In this desire, Marinetti sought opportunities for state-sponsored exhibitions hoping to convert futuristic art into an official art style.[215] As a matter of fact, the desire of once revolutionary avant-garde movements to become part of the official artistic discourse comes with no surprise. In fact, in the early Turkish Republic, although the state was positive about the modernist art movements, and therefore, supportive of their integration into the curriculum of the academy, soon alterations emerged in the realm of art.

After 1938, with the outbreak of the Second World War and the start of the influential Painting Tours of Anatolia which Group D artists also participated in, Lévy and the group members not only started to question the 'living art' concept but also began to pursue a new discourse in the artistic realm. Basically, between

---

[214] Donald Egbert, "The Idea of 'Avant-garde' in Art and Politics," p.82.

[215] However, the viability of Futurism was challenged by the subsequent art movements emerged during the war or the postwar period like the *Novecento Italiano* rediscovering values of tradition. Indeed, on the international level, the rising Dada movement founded by Tristan Tzara and Francis Picabia had already announced the death of Futurism with its arrival. Lawrence Rainey, "Introduction: F.T. Marinetti and the Development of Futurism" in *Futurism an Anthology,* p.29.

the years 1937 and 1940, Group D began to reflect the attitude of a 'mainstream artistic current,' when the group members started to be recruited regularly by the academy. Indeed, the academy, which Group D artists formerly opposed and criticized due to the teachings of the 1914 Generation, would become a place where they would institutionalize their artistic ideas and styles contradicting their once revolutionary avant-garde disposition. Thus, the seventh exhibition of Group D which was organized in 1939 has been evaluated as the richest exhibition of the group that vividly displayed the improved relation between Group D artists and academy due to the academic reforms initiated.[216]

Formerly, technical training was important for Group D artists with an emphasis on line, drawing, and thought. However, in their period of conciliation, the group artists became more interested in classicism and concurrently began to attach equal importance to spirit as that of thought.[217] With this arisen spirit and the increased debates on nationalization of art, which demanded the integration of local arts for a complete definition, Painting Tours of Anatolia were correspondingly initiated by the RPP. Therefore, during this period, not only the recruitment of Group D artists by the academy but also their enrollment in Painting Tours of Anatolia had tremendous effects on their artistic production. In fact, especially from the 1940s forward, the predilection of Group D for complying with the current definition of national art, which demanded the inclusion of local aesthetics, would not only enhance the bond between the state and Group D artists, but also eventually lead Group D to loose its avant-garde edge with its full integration into the cultural politics of the regime.

---

[216] Zeynep Yasa Yaman, *1930 - 1950 Yılları Arasında Kültür ve Sanat Ortamına Bir Bakış: d Grubu,* p.110-112.

[217] Zeynep Yasa Yaman, *d Grubu 1933 - 1951,* p.26.

Essentially, the complicated relation between the state and Group D was due to the artists' devotion to Republican goals and that the art of Group D was embedded in the spirit of the nation. In their effort to formalize national art, the Republican intellectuals commonly perceived the cultural politics of the regime as a complementary constitutive. An interview of Yasa-Yaman sheds light on the dynamics of the relationship between the state and Group D. She explains that Group D artists did not develop an idiom to run with the politics of the state, but their futurist premise timely corresponded to the art and cultural politics of the Republic. The interviewer asks "Did the artists of Group D try to construct the art ideology of the Republic? Can we see them as the art ideologists of the epoch?" Consequently, Yaman clarifies the position of Group D to the Republican ideology:

> The artists of Group D did not see themselves as the art ideologists of the Republic directly. But I think, the regime realized that they, in fact, could be. As the governing bodies observed that these artists argued for similar ideals, they started to protect and support the artists of Group D. Otherwise, without the backing of such ideology and power, six people would not be able to influence and alter Turkish art. Even though the dynamics of the society and the dynamics of art seem independent, a different kind of energy can be formed with their overlap as in the case of Group D. In order to define themselves, Group D artists went through similar phases which any artist could have gone through. They even had an intellectual and snob aspect. They were not anxious about painting Atatürk portraits or Ankara views even if they did some. They avoided an organic relation between the state and art. They opened an exhibition in Ankara for once and rather aimed to exist in İstanbul refraining from flattering the state officials.[218]

Institution-wise, the presence of Group D in the Painting and Sculpture Museum *(İstanbul Resim Heykel Müzesi)* presents an unusual case regarding the

---

[218] Zeynep Yasa Yaman, "'Cumhuriyetin Kübist Çocukları' d Grubu Yeniden Aramızda" in *Arkitera* (January, 2014) at http://v3.arkitera.com/v1/sanat/2004/01/haberler/kubist.htm.

avant-garde stance of the group. However, as the group is more integrated in the academy, becomes more accepted by people through exhibitions, and moves closer to the art and cultural policies of the state, not only it starts to diverge from its original avant-garde disposition, but also its participation in the art museum becomes consistent and complementary to the new prospects of the group. In the early twentieth century, the Cubists had opposed to the academicism of the Louvre and the futurists had even foreseen the destruction of the museums. Nevertheless, during the Republican period, the institutionalization of modernist approaches in the Painting and Sculpture Museum presented a rather specific case with both the museum's positive approach in devoting a *salon* to Group D and the willingness of the group to be a part. Yet, the positive approach of the both parties shall be rethought within the long-awaited establishment of a painting and sculpture museum in Turkey as well.

The early efforts on founding an art museum in İstanbul goes back until 1917. Halil Ethem, then the director of the Imperial Museum *(Müze-i Hümayun),* had set up a regulation for establishing a museum of paintings. However, this project was not realized due to the outbreak of the First World War. Just before Ethem's initiatives, Sami Yetik had written extensively in the Ottoman Painters Society Journal on the importance of museum collections and his disappointment in the Imperial Museum for not only lacking an extensive painting collection but also a single painting of Osman Hamdi, its founder.[219] Sami Yetik was aware of the importance of a culture's need to collect, maintain, and present its accumulated heritage going forward and was therefore presenting his concerns with the example of Osman Hamdi's paintings. Yetik, as a key figure, reflected the concerns of his

---

[219] Sami Yetik, "Müze-i Osmani Müdür-i Sabıkı Merhum Osman Hamdi," *Osmanlı Ressamlar Cemiyeti Gazetesi 1911-1914*, p.97.

generation for the urgency of a painting collection and its introduction to people. The more art would be appreciated and visited by public, the stronger it would grow.[220] From this perspective, why the destructive feature or the oppositional stance of the avant-garde against museums was absent from the agenda of the Republican intellectuals and artists, in fact, why they aimed for its founding and development can be comprehended more readily.

The Painting and Sculpture Museum was opened upon the order of Atatürk in Dolmabahçe Palace on September 29, 1937, with the rearrangement of *Veliaht Dairesi* (Chamber of the Prince Crown). The same year, it was affiliated to the Academy of Fine Arts. Indeed, Half a Century of Turkish Painting Exhibition *(Yarım Asırlık Türk Resmi Sergisi)* organized by the Academy of Fine Arts occupying all its studios in 1936 had triggered the opening of an art museum. In this exhibition, when people saw the masterpieces of Turkish artists together with the paintings of the young generation Republican artists, the idea of collecting them in a museum became more vivid.[221] The first collection of the Painting and Sculpture Museum was formed by a committee with the participation of Ahmet Muhip Dranas, Cemal Tollu, and Zeki Faik İzer, who were led by Léopold Lévy and the first director of the museum Halil Dikmen. This curated collection was exhibited in the newly opened museum through a chronological order.[222] Based on Nurullah Berk's writing in *Ar* journal in 1938, the exhibition was divided into 3 categories:

---

[220] Sami Yetik, "Louvre'da Chauchard Koleksiyonu – Bizim Müzeye İhtiyacımız," in *Osmanlı Ressamlar Cemiyeti Gazetesi,* p.38.

[221] Semra Germaner, "Elvah-ı Nakşiye Koleksiyonu'ndan Resim ve Heykel Müzesi'ne," *Serginin Sergisi- İstanbul Resim ve Heykel Müzesi, 1937 Açılış Koleksiyonu* (İstanbul: Mimar Sinan Güzel Sanatlar Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2009), p.23.

[222] *Ibid.,* p.27.

1 - The Primitives: The first group of painters from the early nineteenth century to the late nineteenth century.
2 - The Middle Period: The artists who were born and worked since 1870 until the end of the nineteenth century.
3 - The Modern Period: The young artists of the new generation; the oldest whom was born in 1900. This period included artists from Independent Painters and Sculptors Association, Group D, and those artists who did not belong to any association.[223]

Actually, *Veliaht Dairesi* was designed as a temporary space until the construction of a modern museum building with the necessary technical infrastructure. However, the project could not be realized. In fact, Sezer Tansuğ revealed how the museum came to be dysfunctional due to its infrastructural lacks and that even the academy students were reluctant to visit it.[224] The views of Sabit Ayasbeyoğlu, who was the deputy manager of Painting and Sculpture Museum during the fiftieth year of the museum's establishment (1987), provided a glance on its past. He wrote:

The past fifty years of the museum have been happy-unhappy, productive-still, open to visit-close to visit and full of activities-devoid of activities. In short, the path has been occasionally harsh and occasionally hopeful and enlightened. Some days it was said, 'there is danger of collapse and fire at the museum.' Some days it was said, 'the museum takes every chance to inspire love for arts.' Finally, fifty years of the museum with its ups and downs and dark and bright days are left behind.[225]

Renamed as Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University Painting and Sculpture Museum *(Mimar Sinan Güzel Sanatlar Üniversitesi İstanbul Resim ve Heykel*

---

[223] Quoted in Semra Germaner, "Elvah-ı Nakşiye Koleksiyonu'ndan Resim ve Heykel Müzesi'ne," p.27.

[224] Sezer Tansuğ, *Çağdaş Türk Sanatı*, p.194-195.

[225] Sabit Ayasbeyoğlu, "50. Yılında Müze," *M.S.G.S.Ü. Resim ve Heykel Müzesi,* Vol.3 (İstanbul: M.S.G.S.Ü., 1989)

Müzesi), the museum remained in *Veliaht Dairesi*[226] until 2007, though it was regularly closed to visit. And in 2007, due to lack of sources for the renovation of the building, the university had to close the museum completely. Currently, the new building of the Painting and Sculpture Museum with its new location in Fındıklı Antrepo No.5 and advanced technological infrastructure is under construction. Though it took eighty years, it's more than pleasing to be able to finally see the artistic production of modernist Republican artists in an exclusive space in near future, most likely under a new museum name.[227]

The Stance of Group D toward Futurist and Constructivist Premises

In the 1930s, when the admiration of the Turkish intelligentsia for modern technology and machine age was heightened accompanied with the idea of building a modernist 'utopia,' the construction of Ankara, which was declared the capital of the Republic in 1923 to distance the new regime from the Ottoman past, indicated symbolic meanings. Indeed, not only the construction of Ankara, but also the building of dams, railroads, bridges, and industrial and power plants in the country were seen as aesthetic objects following the similar developments in European architectural culture.[228] In fact, they were the building blocks of the modernist city, hence, the Republic. These efforts were widely published in journals and printed on

---

[226] The administration of *Veliaht Dairesi* was given to the National Palaces *(Milli Saraylar)* and was opened to visit after renovation in 2014 as the National Palaces Painting Museum *(Milli Saraylar Resim Müzesi)*. The museum's collection includes paintings of Osman Hamdi Bey, Şeker Ahmed Paşa, Ivan Ayvazovski and Fausto Zonaro.

[227] For a detailed explanation of the project, see "Mimar Sinan Güzel Sanatlar Üniversitesi, 2015 Yılı Yatırım Programı, İzleme ve Değerlendirme Raporu" at:
http://www.msgsu.edu.tr/Assets/UserFiles/AAAAAAAA_BIM/DUYURU/DOKUMAN/2016/Nisan/04/2015_yili_yatirim_izleme_ve_degerlendirme_raporu.pdf

[228] Sibel Bozdoğan, see the chapter on "Aesthetics of Progress," in *Modernism and Nation Building,* pp.106-152.

postcards. Indeed, a similar celebration for the modernist city and machine age was demanded to be seen in the realm of art as well. Yaşar Nabi Nayır's comment in *Ulus* clearly represented the desire for such paintings as early as 1935. He even criticized the second Exhibition of the Revolution for lacking them:

> As a general lack, let us note that the industrialization and construction initiatives taken in the revolutionary period are not represented with any work of art. Besides themes of war and heroism, which are also highly valuable, we expect our young artists to study the radical changes brought about by the revolution in the country, and provide works of art in these subject matters that we desire.[229]

However, corresponding with the rebellious years of Group D, during when the artists' avant-garde approach was at its peak and when they opposed to any content restrictions in their artistic production, Yaşar Nabi Nayır's view demanding the reflection of modernist city in the realm of art did not comply with the vision of Group D.[230] In fact, when the avant-garde movements Futurism and Constructivism are considered due to their relation to modern science, technology, and industry, it becomes clear that the mere reflection of modernization efforts in the city on canvas is not enough to comply with the premises of these currents due to their intellect and stylistic demands. Nevertheless, beyond the artistic production and aesthetics of Group D, 'decisive links' between the rebellious years of the group and the avant-garde idea can further be claimed based on the argument of Raymond Williams that the social bases of the avant-garde were determined by the specific conditions of the city. Sibel Bozdoğan has argued:

---

[229] Yaşar Nabi Nayır, *Ulus,* 31 İlkteşrin 1935, p.3.

[230] Although *Tayyareciler* by Nurullah Berk gave references to science and technology, it was criticized for imitating a painting of Gustave Moreau.

Futurism and Constructivism had originated outside the advanced industrial societies of Western Europe and the United States, in the more 'backward' and agricultural contexts of Italy and Russia, respectively. In these countries, advanced technology and industry were exalted as symbols of a *potential* future, aspired to but not yet accomplished [...] Most importantly, radical artists and intellectuals endowed technology and machine civilization with an apocalyptic power to transform society and to destroy traditional concepts of war.[231]

From this perspective, the admiration with which Turkish intellectuals and artists viewed modern technology in the 1920s and 1930s can be compared to the experience of Italians and Russians earlier. Nevertheless, to reveal how the artistic production of Italian futurist painters and Russian constructivists greatly diverged from that of Group D artists, an emphasis on their vision and technical approach shall be given.

For example, within the realm of Futurism, a focus on the works of Umberto Boccioni (1882-1916) and Carlo Carrà (1881-1966) reveal how vanguard futurists interpreted the movement onto their canvasas. Boccioni and Carrà were among the key artists developing the manifesto for futurist painters in 1910 entitled as "Manifesto of the Futurist Painters" which Marinetti had assisted in revising. A few months later it was followed by "Futurist Painting: Technical Manifesto" mainly worked by Boccioni.[232] Whereas the former manifesto declared war on tradition and academicism as Futurists welcomed violence and triumphed modern life

---

[231] Sibel Bozdoğan, *Modernism and Nation Building*, p.148.

[232] Lawrence Rainey, "Introduction: F.T. Marinetti and the Development of Futurism" in *Futurism an Anthology,* eds. Lawrence Rainey, Christine Poggi and Laura Wittman (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2009), p.9.

transformed by science[233], the latter one focused on the pictorial expression of the futurist artists. The technical manifesto of the futurist painting explicitly stated:

> The gesture that we want to reproduce will no longer be a 'moment' in the universal dynamism 'which has been stopped,' but the 'dynamic sensation' itself, perpetuated as such. [...] Space no longer exists: a street pavement that has been soaked by rain beneath the glare of electric lamps can be an abyss gaping into the very center of the earth. [...] Painting cannot exist today without 'divisionism.' This is not a technical 'device' that can be methodically learned and applied at will. Divisionism[234], for the modern painter, must be an innate 'complementariness,' which we deem essential and necessary.[235]

Correspondingly, by 1910, Boccioni endeavored to create a particular futurist iconography emphasizing 'violent conflict' and 'dynamic movement.' To illustrate, in his *The City Rises* dated 1910 (fig.26), aggression and movement are visible as well as the image of the new metropolis with the modern industrial construction, telegraph poles, and electric tram at the background.[236] Further, Boccioni's statement on his *States of Mind II: The Farewells* dated 1911 (fig.27) is significant in unclosing how his interpretation of 'physical dynamism' and 'psychic state' was characterized by "confused and trepidating lines, either straight or curved" with an aim to "express a sensation of chaotic excitement" through a series of embracing couples seen in multiple perspectives through the windows of a train.[237] A more

---

[233] Umberto Boccioni, Carlo Carrà, Luigi Russolo, Giacomo Balla, and Gino Severini, "Manifesto of the Futurist Painters" written on February 11, 1990, in *Futurism an Anthology,* pp.62-64.

[234] Italian Divisionism refused the direct observation of nature like its French counterpart Neo-Impressionism. More varied in its use of complementary colors and brushstrokes than Neo-Impressionism, Divisionism was the expression of 'innate complementaries,' which emphasized the innate ability of the artist-genius in sensing the color relations. For further analysis on Divisionism, see Lawrence Rainey in *Futurism an Anthology.*

[235] Umberto Boccioni, Carlo Carrà, Luigi Russolo, Giacomo Balla, and Gino Severini, "Futurist Painting: Technical Manifesto" written on April 11, 1910, in *Futurism an Anthology,* pp.64-67.

[236] Christine Poggi, "Introduction to Part Two" in *Futurism an Anthology,* pp.309-310.

[237] Cited in Christine Poggi, "Introduction to Part Two" in *Futurism an Anthology,* p.313.

political theme was tackled by Carlo Carrà with *The Funeral of the Anarchist Galli* dated 1910-1911 (fig.28) where he portrayed the conflict between the anarchists and the bourgeoisie through violent dynamism of the revolutionary proletariat.[238] Along with other thirty-three futurist paintings, these works were exhibited at the Bernheim-Jeune Gallery in Paris in 1912, marking a turning point on the fame, hence the internationalization of this avant-garde movement. Especially until 1914, marked by Marinetti's final appearance in London, futurist activities incited debates in France, England, Germany and Russia on every level of the modern city culture.[239]

As a matter of fact, regarding the futurist influence in Turkey, the idea of modernist city and machine age for Group D was very different from the way Italian futurist painters interpreted it on their canvases. While Italian Futurism was executed with the violent conflict and dynamic movement of Boccioni or the physical dynamism of Carrà with a strong anarchist discourse, the artistic production of Group D was not in line with these technical innovations of Futurism and was in fact in accordance with the state's nation building policies. Therefore, it can be argued that while the futurist tendency within the artistic milieu of the early Republic was a reflection of the state's futurist vision in terms of goals, the Italian futurist paintings were in fact revolutionary in themselves with their clear depiction of conflict and anarchism through the radical discourse and innovative technique of Futurism. In this vein, Sibel Bozdoğan has underlined that "modern science, technology, and industry were idealized in Kemalist Turkey less as aesthetic,

---

[238] Christine Poggi, "Introduction to Part Two" in *Futurism an Anthology,* p.312.

[239] Lawrence Rainey, "Introduction: F.T. Marinetti and the Development of Futurism" in *Futurism an Anthology,* p.13.

poetic, and fantastic experiences in themselves than as the goals, means, and instruments of a larger national program."[240]

In parallel with the futurist vision of the Republican intellectuals and artists, a particular emphasis shall also be given to their fascination with 'constructing' this modernist future in dialogue with the advanced technology and industry under the larger framework of Constructivism to see how in fact they diverged from this movement. In the early twentieth century, forms and planes of Cubism along with the movement and dynamism of Futurism had penetrated Russian artistic realm forming the early phase of the Russian avant-garde prior to the advance of Russian Constructivism in 1917. Art historian Briony Fer has stated, "The Russian avant-garde was using the term 'constructive' to refer to the surface of Cubo-Futurist works" in the early 1910s, however after 1917, "the term accrued connotations of the social role of the artists as that of a constructor and an engineer."[241] Christina Lodder, a prolific researcher and an art historian on the topic, has unfolded that when the idea of Constructivism within the Russian avant-garde came into existence it initially had "specific implications and a real polemical edge."[242] Meaning, what contributed largely to the development of Constructivism was in fact the theoretical discussions held at Inkhuk (The Institute of Artistic Culture) in Moscow in the early 1920s, during which the First Working Group of

---

[240] Sibel Bozdoğan, *Modernism and Nation Building,* p.150.

[241] Briony Fer, "Metaphor and Modernity: Russian Constructivism," *Oxford Art Journal,* Vol.12, No.1 (1989), pp.14-30. Cubo-Futurism, vital by 1912, is considered to be a phase in the Russian avant-garde painting embodying the forms of Cubism and the dynamism of Futurism.

[242] Christina Lodder, "The Transition to Constructivism" in the exhibition catalogue *The Great Utopia: The Russian and Soviet Avant-garde, 1915-1932* (New York: Guggenheim Museum, 1992), pp.266-281.

Constructivists[243] was also formed in March 1921 by the key players of the artistic

avant-garde as a consequence of the productive sessions, where they critically

debated on the "distinction that artists started to make between construction and

composition as principles of artistic organization." Lodder further discloses the

nature of the emerging movement:

> The self-proclaimed Constructivists were united in their commitment
> to a viewpoint articulated by Rodchenko in January 1921: "All new
> approaches to art arise from technology and engineering and move
> toward organization and constructions," and "real construction is
> utilitarian necessity." Such a stance seemed indeed to crystallize
> their response to the pressing question of how artists could
> contribute to the new Communist order and celebrate the values
> inherent in the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917.[244]

Due to the complex and interrelated relationship between the art and politics

in Russia following the Bolshevik Revolution, the avant-garde 'leftists' were

pursuing to 'construct' the best means to respond to the dramatic changes occurring.

In the revolutionary Russia, since industry and machine were considered to be

fundamental to the progress of the new communist order in a general sense, the core

programme of the Working Group of Constructivists enclosed 'a new synthesis of

art and industry' in accordance. This unity, with a base on scientific principles,

sought to establish a system where 'intellectual production' was considered a

priority rather than purely artistic discoveries. With an emphasis on 'the

communistic expression of material structure,' where the industrial material

attained a critical role in the creation process, the Constructivists envisioned three

tenets for their production: *tektonika* (tectonics)*, konstruksiya* (construction), and

---

[243] This group, also known as the Working Group of Constructivists, included the writer, critic and theatrical specialist Aleksei Gan and artists Aleksandr Rodchenko, Varvara Stepanova, Karl Ioganson, Konstantin Medunetskii and the brothers Georgii and Vladimir Stenberg.

[244] Christina Lodder, "The Transition to Constructivism" in *The Great Utopia: The Russian and Soviet Avant-garde,* p.267.

faktura.[245] Lodder has clarified that whereas "tectonics represented the way that the requirements of communism, the demands of industrial process, and material considerations would be taken into account during the design process,"[246] thus becoming the 'governing principle,' construction and *faktura* (texture) regulated the practical processes. While construction principle dealt with the organization of the given material for a specific purpose, *faktura* was about the implementation and the manipulation of the chosen material.[247] Due to these principles, the Constructivists believed that the idea of Constructivism could be best applied to three-dimensional structures as they embodied the materials at the best possible use whereas paintings or drawings were perceived to be inadequate in this regard.[248] As a matter of fact, artists extended their experiments in the realm of three-dimensional abstract forms with an endeavor to manipulate and adopt them into the real environment. Even though constructivist artists aimed to become active in the creation of everyday useful objects with a focus on industrial manufacturing (in accordance with the Bolshevik vision of a communist utopia),[249] their exhibition opened in Moscow in May 1921 in association with OBMOKhu (Society of Young Artists), indicated that

---

[245] Alexei Gan's *Constructivism* is the most comprehensive source for the principles of Constructivism. See "Alexei Gan (1889-1942) from *Constructivism*" in *Art in Theory, 1900–2000: An Anthology of Changing Ideas,* eds. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood (Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), pp.318-320.

[246] Christina Lodder, "Soviet Constructivism" in *Art of the Twentieth-century: Art of the Avant-gardes,* eds. Steve Edwards, Paul Wood (New Haven, London: Yale University Press in association with the Open University, 2004), p.364.

[247] *Ibid.,* p.379. Lodder exemplifies: while tectonics determined that a table should not be produced just for reading but also for other activities like creating posters; construction specified the needs of the table for this particular aim like the adjustable sides on hinges. Then, *faktura* determined the 'choice of material and its manipulation.' Even though the 'machine aesthetic' would probably suggest the use of metal, wood would become mandatory for the production of the furniture, due to the poverty of material and lack of industrial manufacturing. Nevertheless, the wooden furniture would be painted to lessen its naturalistic look and enhance its industrialized aspect.

[248] *Ibid.,* p.361.

[249] *Ibid.,* p.359.

they had a long path ahead of them in order to reach that goal. Came to be known as the Second Spring Exhibition of OBMOKhu (fig.29), far from presenting practical constructions, the exhibit presented three-dimensional structures that resembled abstract sculptures "inspired by mathematics and technology as aesthetic explorations" that could perhaps contribute to the development of functional designs in time.[250]

As a matter of fact, regarding the artistic production of Constructivism, where a new synthesis of art and industry was sought, it would be far stretched to seek its influence in the Turkish artistic realm during the early Republican period. Nevertheless, Constructivism reveals productive insights for the Turkish context; first, due to its desire to contribute to the Bolshevik's idealized utopia during a period when dramatic changes were taking place, and second due its conflict with the Socialist Realism which was declared to be more proper for the revolutionary Russia. Indeed, similar to the influence of Futurism, Constructivism could have echoed in the Republican period in correspondence with the nation-building endeavors of the Republican intelligentsia aiming to respond to the demands of the modernist Kemalist discourse. Thus, a comparison between the Constructivists' aim to serve the goals of the Bolshevik regime and the endeavors of Group D to comply with the revolutionary discourse of the Republic is highly possible. Yet, what actually impacted Group D was the conflict that the Constructivists had with the Socialist Realists. This can even be related to the opposition that Group D faced from *Yeniler* (New Artists) emerging in 1940s. New Artists had criticized Group D

---

[250] *Ibid.,* p.366.

for being indifferent to social problems in the country and therefore not reflecting upon them in their works.[251]

Soviet Realism was introduced to the Turkish artistic realm with the Soviet Painting and Sculpture Exhibition *(Sovyet Resim ve Heykel Sergisi)* organized in Ankara in 1934. In fact, this exhibition marked the first large scale international cultural event of the Republican period. For the exhibition, Turan Erol noted that the works of Soviet socialist realists could not have influenced Turkish painters who were mainly trained after French models. Nevertheless, as this exhibition indirectly influenced artists, it had direct effects on the writers and reformists designating the cultural policies of the RPP. Burhan Asaf, who was prolifically contributing to *Kadro* and whose writings were against the notion of 'art for art's sake' in essence, expressed his appreciation for the Soviet exhibition:

> Now, as we observe the exhibition of Soviet artists, we understand what 'art for people' or 'art appealing to people' mean, which we anticipated vaguely before. What Soviet artists are dedicated to is 'art for people.' Therefore, traces of Cubism and Impressionism that can only be admired by five or ten elites, should not be sought in Soviet currents."[252]

As for Turan Erol, the Soviet exhibition also stimulated the Painting Tours of Anatolia initiated in 1938 by the RPP. [253]

---

[251] Nurullah Berk and Hüseyin Gezer, *50 Yılın Türk Resim ve Heykeli*, p.70.

[252] Burhan Asaf's views are cited by Duygu Köksal in "Art and Power in Turkey: Culture, Aesthetics and Nationalism During the Single-party Era," p.109.

[253] Turan Erol, *Günümüz Türk Resminin Oluşum Sürecinde Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu,* (İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi, 1984), p.41.

Group D in the 1940s:
The Second World War and the Critique of Modernist Currents

The maturity period of Group D is bracketed between 1941 and 1944. This phase is identified with the artist's search for a 'modern-classical' understanding. In other words, acknowledging the importance of deriving from tradition without imitation, Group D artists ventured to capture the beauties peculiar to Turkish culture.[254] In this period, the meaning of 'living art' which Group D artists previously defined as the contemporary currents of the time shifted. As Yasa-Yaman has clarified, by the mid-1940s, 'living art' came to denote those that 'exist today' and 'will live' in the future emphasising the concept of 'classic.'[255]

The debates on modernist art movements in Turkey were triggered with the outbreak of the Second World War in a similar vein like the rest of the world. During the war years, though Turkey did not enter the war, the Turkish intelligentsia closely observed changes in the art policies of National Socialist Germany, Fascist Italy, and Soviet Russia and their move toward social realism.[256] Especially in Germany, criticisms and pressures against modernist art movements had already resulted in the closing down of Bauhaus in Dessau in 1932 and in Berlin in 1933. Besides, between 1933-1935, shame exhibitions were organized aiming to introduce degenerate art to people. Opened on July 19, 1937 with the participation of 111 German artists and 730 works of art, 'Degenerate Art' exhibition was visited by 2.000.000 people and therefore became the most successful exhibition held in Europe in terms of number of visitors. The exhibition

---

[254] Zeynep Yasa Yaman, *d Grubu 1933 - 1951,* p.27.

[255] *Ibid.,* p.28.

[256] Zeynep Yasa Yaman, *Suretin Sireti,* p.31.

also toured Berlin, Leipzig, Düsseldorf in 1938 and Frankfurt in 1939 widening its area of influence. In 1937, German museums were 'cleaned' from many modernist artists including Paul Cézanne, Vincent van Gogh, Paul Gauguin, Pablo Picasso and George Braque. Hence, in 1941, art production against the national socialist principles, art policies, and the orders of Adolf Hitler was banned in Germany. Affected by these incidents and practices, Turkish artistic realm aimed for the institutionalization of art policies to create a national art devoid of foreign influences during the period of war.[257] Nurullah Berk, who used to be the spokesman of the modernist movements, started to question all new art tendencies, in fact, first and foremost Cubism with a new vision. Thus, like Yasa-Yaman has underlined, "In agreement with the spirit of a new country, the futurist and constructivist tendencies of the reforms were adopted to a more pragmatic conception of art."[258]

This decade also marked the rising conflict between Group D and the emerging New Artists. The young artists who were trained in the atelier of Lévy in the academy, among whom included Nuri İyem, Ferruh Basağa, Avni Arbaş, Selim Turan and Fethi Karakaş, declared that art should deal with the problems of the society and reflect the daily lives of people. They opened their first exhibition entitled *Liman* (Harbour) in 1940, where they displayed harbour views, harbour life, and varied scenes at İstanbul harbour with a realist tendency rather than a modernist idiom. For them, the Group D artists were reluctant to depict neither the daily lives of people nor the problems prevailing in society due to distancing themselves from the society. For the New Artists, Group D had only transferred

---

[257] *Ibid.,* p.32.

[258] See Zeynep Yasa Yaman, *1930 - 1950 Yılları Arasında Kültür ve Sanat Ortamına Bir Bakış: d Grubu,* p.43 and *Suretin Sireti,* p.32.

European modernist aesthetics to the country.[259] Indeed, during this period, together with the influence of Socialist Realism, New Artists endeavored to reflect upon 'national sentiment.' The 1940s, also marked by the outbreak of the Second World War, accelerated the propagation of 'art for society' advocated by News Artists rather than Group D's 'art for art's sake.'[260] Due to the rising opposition against modernist movements during this period, many intellectuals,writers, and artists in Turkey started to review and reevaluate the art of Picasso as he was seen the leading figure of Cubist movements. Actually, since the 1930s, the cubist visual idiom of Group D was occasionally criticized through the artistry of Picasso. However, criticisms against Picasso by the Turkish intelligentsia reached its zenith in the mid-1940s corresponding with the growing struggle against Cubism and modernist movements.

Pablo Picasso Critique by the Turkish Intelligentsia

A questionnaire published in *Aile* (Family) journal in the summer 1947 about "The Art of Picasso," which Yasa-Yaman has examined, reveals important insights for the reference points that the artists and writers considered for criticizing Picasso's cubism. The questionnaire asked two questions on the two published paintings of Picasso in the journal. The first question asked, "Do you feel enthusiasm and pleasure while looking at these pictures?," and the second questioned asked, "What kind of a social and psychological condition can produce these paintings?" Yasa-Yaman has analyzed that while Halide Edip Adıvar, Necmeddin Sadak, Halit Karay, Vedat Nedim Tör, I. Galip Arcan, Edip Hakkı

---

[259] Nurullah Berk and Hüseyin Gezer, *50 Yılın Türk Resim ve Heykeli*, p.70.

[260] Zeynep Yasa Yaman, *d Grubu 1933 - 1951,* p.28.

Köseoğlu and Selma Emiroğlu responded the first question negatively, Vâlâ

Nureddin, Prof. Bossert, and Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu answered it positively.[261]

Besides, a closer examination of the answers given to the second question by

Sadak, Karay, Tör, Bossart, and Eyüboğlu reveals clues about the diverse

approaches of the intelligentsia against Picasso.

Necmeddin Sadak;

> Since these works of art are observed with admiration by a wide range of audience including artists and especially art critics, there must be a reality in the history of art that we have not reached. Perhaps, they are the expressions of the terrible psychological consequences and social traumas of the two world wars.

Refik Halit Karay;

> I can not attribute such quality to these paintings. [...] These paintings are insane and unfortunately not fully mad. Because I have seen more effective works of art by insane people. I think Picasso is this:
> *Deli deli tepeli*
> *Kulakları küpeli*
> (A Turkish idiom referring to mad people)
> I have also seen pictures of children in a similar vein. They pleased and excited me. I even thought of them for some time.

Vedat Nedim Tör;

> An excitement for beauty? Far from it. On the contrary, I feel a kind of disgust. Actually, I do not feel any grief for not likening the sick-headed people who can not find a topic for his arts rather than unnatural creatures as such with three heads and a sagging breast like a bag and the other shrinked as much as a thimble [...] Let the American millionaires praise Picasso. Once upon a time, Hitler and Mussolini were also praised [...] Great artists have always brought mercy to the soul of man; and these men gloom. We desire a kind of art that understands, loves, and respects people rather than the rigid, deformed art that denies, ridicules, and deprives people from all kinds of love.

---

[261] Zeynep Yasa Yaman, *1930 - 1950 Yılları Arasında Kültür ve Sanat Ortamına Bir Bakış: d Grubu,* p.49.

Prof. Bossert;

> I interpret the main concern of these paintings from this perspective:
> Creating a new model from the demolished old ones. What kind of a
> Europe can be created from today's Europe which has been
> destroyed? I think Picasso is the personal example. This art gives us
> good news. The old art was inspired by the presence of the object;
> while the new art is willing to save oneself from the old thought.
> Neither the actual material nor its identity is manifested in these
> paintings but rather its expression. These are the creation of a color,
> especially the novelty of a revolution.

Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu;

> I find the first part of the question ambiguous. As for the lasting
> value of these, whatever makes the decorative work of art live, that
> will also make these paintings live. Today a tile, a beautiful rug can
> be put into a frame and displayed like a painting. These paintings
> have the same worth.[262]

As a consequence, the nature of the questionnaire signals how Picasso and his

artistic production were questioned through a narrow point of view as the

respondents were expected to do their evaluations just across the two paintings of

Picasso. In fact, the first question was ambiguous like Eyüboğlu stated as it

demanded for an interpretation based on liking. Nevertheless, the answers to the

second question give clues about the values which the artists and intellectuals took as

reference points in the period. In this respect, while Karay and Tör seem to restrict

their evaluations with the formal qualities of the painting, viewing them as unnatural

or childish, Sadak interprets the painting beyond its formal features. Perhaps Prof.

Bossert's analysis comes into prominence with his interpretation of the

'revolutionary' aspect of Picasso's art and the conflict between the 'old' and the

'new.' Further, although Picasso's expressive human emotions were also read on the

basis of the social trauma of the early twentieth century, the critiques against his

---

[262] *Ibid.,* p.50-51.

artistic production generally consisted a formal one. Picasso was a critical figure, which some of the Republican intellectuals ridiculed Cubism through his artistic production. However, their critiques reveal how their view of Picasso, his artistry, and even Cubism was in fact a limited one. Nevertheless, Picasso's art and Cubism was extensively started to be disdained by the mid-1940s.

Dissolution of the Avant-garde, Dissolution of Group D

The years from 1945 to 1951 which Yasa-Yaman has defined as the international phase, indicated the period when Group D artists wanted to be part of the 'western' artistic milieu. The years following the end of the Second World War, when collaboration between states and peace came to the fore, new hopes also influenced the realm of art. In this period, as Group D artists believed that they accomplished international standards, they started to visit and observe the artistic scene in Europe as they also organized abroad exhibitions.[263]

During this international phase of Group D, when the group artists abandoned Cubism for an original 'synthesis of east and west,' they and especially Berk integrated stylized forms inspired by miniature.[264] Berk's *Ütü Yapan Kadın (Woman Ironing)* (fig.30), dated 1950, is a clear manifestation of this influence where he reflected two women in daily life doing household work. In the painting, traditional decorative motifs that Berk included are also visible. Besides, İpek Duben specifies the significance of this painting in relation to the social and political context of the period:

---

[263] *Ibid.,* p.171.

[264] Zeynep Yasa Yaman, *d Grubu:1933 - 1951,* p.29.

In these years, the economic and social structure of society was changing rapidly and industrialization, migration from village to city, multiparty system, liberation and change were occurring. The authoritarian mentality that had nourished the ideology of revolution was weakening. Even though moral values and the static, passive, and absolutist social psychology did not change at the same pace, movement and conversion could be felt in society. *Ütü Yapan Kadın* is an example that successfully reflects this dilemma.[265]

Berk's *Oturan Adam (Seated Man)* (fig.31) of the same year is another famous example illustrating the change in his style and choice of content in a similar desire.

As a matter of fact, during a time when the belief in modernism faded due to the war's mass slaughter, the opposition of Group D artists toward modernist currents was culminated as well. Two decades after the founding of Group D, its original avant-garde disposition, which already started to be challenged through the years, was finally lost as the artists abandoned modernist aesthetics and started to exercise full power in the academy by the end of the 1940s. Soon, a new artist's group named *Tavanarası Ressamları* (Attic Painters), formed by young painters gathered under the teaching of Nuri İyem in 1950, began to criticize the academy and the Group D in charge as they opened their first exhibition at the French Consulate in 1951. Attic painters viewed themselves as the first group of artists to be founded apart from the academy and criticized Group D artists for being 'old, traditional, and copyist.'[266] Indeed, defending the works of free-independent art studios for the development of contemporary currents in the realm of art, Attic Painters declared war to the academy and therefore to Group D as they claimed to be 'new,' 'abstract,' and 'unique.' The once revolutionary avant-garde Group D had

---

[265] İpek Duben, *Türk Resmi ve Eleştirisi 1880 – 1950* (İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2007), p.113.

[266] Zeynep Yasa Yaman, "Türk Resminde 'non-Figüratif' Tartışmaları ve 'Tavanarası Ressamları'" at http://www.sanalmuze.org/paneller/Mtskm/10trnf.htm.

finally become part of the institution through which it was criticized by the emerging new generation of artists. Group D opened its sixteenth exhibition in 1951 at the French Consulate aiming to exhibit the level and maturity of the group. However, considered to be old, Group D would not open any exhibition as a group until 1960 revealing that its influential period in the realm of art actually came to an end by the beginning of the 1950s. After then, the group artists continued their artistic productions independently.

The 1950s, indicated by the dissolution of Group D and the rise of abstract art/ nonfigurative art in the realm of art, marked the ending of the RPP regime, and therefore, the ending of its cultural development program as well. In 1946, the single-party era was over with the founding of the Democrat Party (DP), and with the election of the DP in 1950, the new government focused on an economic development program rather than cultural and artistic initiatives ending state-support in the realm of art.

CONCLUSION

During the early Republican period in Turkey, revolutionary consciousness in the cultural and artistic milieu flourished in line with the reformist and progressive discourse of the state aiming for modernization in every field of life. As the political and intellectual elites endeavored to form a modern and secular European nation-state, they also aimed for a new approach in the realm of art and culture supporting the revolutionary discourse of the European avant-garde movements of the twentieth century. Hence, during this transformational phase, the modernist premise of Group D corresponded with the reformist discourse of the Republic, and the art and cultural politics of the RPP. Indeed, the two decades from the early 1930s to the beginning of 1950s, which encompassed the presence of Group D and the single-party rule of the RPP regime, revealed a unique period in the realm of art due to the 'avant-garde' stance of Group D with its unique premises, modernist aesthetics, and changing attitudes over time. Group D, which was never politically anarchist and was, in fact, in support of the Kemalist regime, indicating group's complex and contradictory position toward state intervention in the arts, provided a controversial relation with the idea of avant-garde. Nevertheless, the group created a distinct relation with the twentieth century avant-garde movements as the artists were driven by the nation-building project of Turkey, and therefore, pursued a selective approach to particular currents based on their vision for the 'new art' of the new Republic. Thus, Group D artists were never informed by the critical and antagonistic aspect of the avant-garde. Their avant-gardeness turned out to be more in line with progressive discourse of the modernist movements, where the main aim in the broadest sense was to built a modern and secular European nation-state.

As a matter of fact, I mainly attempted to analyze the phases that Group D went through to evaluate the group's modernist and revolutionary approach in comparison to the premises of the avant-garde and the particular twentieth century avant-garde movements that were influential in Turkish context during the early Republican period. Indeed, I endeavored to interpret the so-called avant-garde stance of Group D through its relation with the state, art institutions, and new art/national art discussions to reveal how the term shall be used with caution not only due to the loading discourse of the avant-garde but also because of the changing tenets of the group over the years. In this aim, the artistic production of Group D artists is examined through exemplary paintings beyond imitation debates to observe how they interpreted the principles and aesthetics of modernist currents within the unique dynamics and discussions of the Turkish artistic realm.

For a focused understanding of how the avant-garde was echoed in the early Republican period with Group D, the fully-loaded discourse of the concept had to be unfolded first. Due to its changing set of attributes over centuries, only through a multi-layered reading of the avant-garde its political meaning and significance specific to cultural domain could be revealed clearly. With its roots in militaristic jargon indicating vanguard or advance guard in English in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the avant-garde underwent critical transitions during its voyage. In fact, not until the late nineteenth century, the avant-garde seized a self-conscious and progressive stance in politics, literature, and art. To recall, during this transition the avant-garde went through three remarkable periods that would specify its future connotations; the decade spanning French Revolution, the contribution of Saint-Simonian thought, and finally Baudelaire's effect which led the endorsement of the avant-garde into the cultural context. Following the French Revolution, the

avant-garde acquired a radical political stance demanding a radical break with the past, in fact anarchism, to pave way for change. The concept of anarchism, which I have regularly referred to not only in terms of politics but also as an intellectual and artistic approach has become a critical reference point for discussions of the avant-garde in this thesis. With the rise of social theorists questioning the legacy of the revolutionary years at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the avant-garde thought started to indicate radical progress both in the artistic and social realms inspired by Saint-Simon. Nevertheless, it was Baudelaire, who developed the avant-garde within the exclusive context of arts and culture affected by the radical political upheavals, social transitions, and industrial developments occurring in France. Baudelaire's idea of artists, whom he thought should be of their time was also true for Group D artists. Nevertheless, as debated, Group D's position against the city going under rapid transformation and the developments in industry was very different from the experience of the European avant-garde artists at the end of the nineteenth century. Fundamentally, while the avant-garde sought to escape bourgeois values in agreement with Baudelaire's ideas, Group D embraced them in the revolutionary climate of the Kemalist regime. In fact, the main discrepancy between the avant-garde idea established in Europe and the avant-garde endorsed by Turkish context is due to their different stance for the bourgeoisie. Whereas the European avant-garde challenged this order, the avant-garde idea transferred to Turkey with the support of the intellectual elites did not contradict or aimed to displace the bourgeois order or its values going under development. As a matter of fact, alienation theme which emergemd in the writings of Baudelaire and the paintings of Manet due to their dislike for status-seeking bourgeois values was absent from the discourse of Group D.

The turn of the twentieth century marked by the heated political climate in the world scene witnessed the rise of anarchist ideas within the avant-garde once again. The scholarly studies held by Clement Greenberg, Renato Poggioli, Peter Bürger and Matei Calinescu on theorizing the avant-garde, approximately from the 1930s to the 1980s, were critical to tackle the twentieth century avant-garde movements. In this regard, my aim has not been a critique of these varying theorizations or a direction to locate Group D within a pre-established theory of the avant-garde but rather to present a background to examine the selective stance of Group D to the early twentieth century avant-garde movements. In this context, while Group D artists distanced themselves from the nihilism of Dada, which showed no interest for a new set of values, and the expressive and exaggerated qualities of Expressionism, triggered by traumas of the wars, they moved closer to cubist and constructivist aesthetics in reference to Cubism and developed a peculiar relation with the futurist and constructive impulses of modernity though diverging from the loaded discourses of Futurism and Constructivism. Indeed, only through an in-depth investigation of the three avant-garde movements, Cubism, Futurism, and Constructivism, which echoed the most in the early Republican Turkey, the unique relation that Group D built with each of them could be critically studied through the progressive stance and nationalist sentiments of Turkey going under nation-building. In fact, this approach has determined the distinct method of this study.

In analyzing the principles of Cubism, Futurism, and Constructivism that Group D aimed toward, I endeavored to unfold each movement within their respective historical contexts they emerged in and evolved. Therefore, focusing on the early phase of Cubism through Picasso and Braque, I highlighted how they challenged the artistic milieu in Paris at the turn of the twentieth century as they

radically altered the treatment of space, departed from the spatial-illusionism of one-point perspective, and distorted form by experimenting with the facet-planes. In fact, Picasso's debated anarchist stance in his collages provided how certain socio-political tendencies in relation to anarchism could also be revealed through Cubism despite its abstract language. However, reviewing the influence of cubist style in Group D's artistic production against the backdrop of the formative period of Cubism, it can be directly stated that Group D artists interpreted cubist technical developments far differently than what their European counterparts had established. Nevertheless, despite Group D artists limited experiments with Cubism, the group radically altered the course of Turkish painting by distorting space and object and introducing geometrical forms and cubes. As Group D criticized the 1914 Generation for being 'old,' and lacking behind the demands and the stylistic developments of the period, it established the 'new art' of the new Republican Turkey after Cubism. In other words, Group D was never politically avant-garde or anarchist, but in line with the modernist discourse of the Republic. Even so, the group's approach toward 'new art' and Cubism changed in successive years due to rising nationalist sentiments and the rising criticisms against modernist currents in the world on the eve of Second World War.

In discussing the changing vision and the avant-gardeness of Group D from the early 1930s to the beginning of 1950s, I tackled the artistic production and intellectual approach of the group based on new art/national art discussions, the growing relation of Group D with the academy over time, and the intervention of the RPP in the arts through state-sponsored exhibitions and events such as the Painting Tours of Anatolia and Exhibitions. Supporting Kemalist ideals, Group D artists sought independence in their artistry as they were against state-directed art

especially during their rebellious years. And yet, they depicted themes in support of the reforms and participated in state exhibitions and events. In other words, the relation of Group D to the avant-garde was not straightforward. Group D artists, who were against the precepts of the 1914 Generation and the doctrines of the academy, had established a peculiar relation with the cultural politics of the Republic during the 1930s, where they neither fully adopted nor opposed them but rather proposed a particular relation. However, toward the end of the 1930s, Group D started to reflect the attitude of a 'mainstream artistic current,' when the group members started to work in the academy. Also, during this period, Painting Tours of Anatolia initiated by the RPP which Group D artists participated in not only had tremendous effects on their artistic production but also became a strong factor in their estrangement from the avant-garde notion. In fact, triggered by the increased debates on national art, the Anatolian motifs were soon seen in the artistry of Group D artists from Nurullah Berk to Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu.

Indeed, the second decade of the group's lifetime witnessed the demise and finally the end of its avant-garde aspect with the rise of local aesthetics contributing to the establishment of 'national art' during a time when national sentiments were on the rise and the modernist movements more disdained with the influence of the Second World War. Once rebellious Group D artists, who nevertheless remained within the ideological limits of the Republic, finally departed from their relatively radical stance in this period. By the mid-1940s, Group D was fully established in the Republican Turkey with its active members in the Academy of Fine Arts, presence in the Painting and Sculpture Museum, and regular participation in state-sponsored exhibitions losing its avant-garde stance.

Yet, as I conclude this thesis, questions regarding the avant-garde stance of Group D artists on a more individual base expressed beyond the discipline of painting, through other forms of art, such as sculpture, illustration, writing, ceramic or mural, remain a topic of wonder. Following this foundational examination on the avant-gardism of Group D, a question of how the idea of avant-garde could be sought in the sculptures of Zühtü Müridoğlu, the illustrations and writings of Abidin Dino or the ceramic and mural works of Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu paves the way for future studies on the relationship between the avant-garde and Group D artists. Thus, the personal experience of each artist with the notion of avant-garde can be researched throughout the artist's career even after the artist's withdrawal from Group D, after the 1950s. Depending on the artist in question, this method would enable to conduct investigations in more diversified fields, highlighting works from visual arts to even literature.

FIGURES

Fig.1 Gustave Courbet, *Stonebreakers* (1849)
Oil on canvas, 165 × 257 cm.
Gemäldegalerie, Dresden (destroyed).

Fig.2 Gustave Courbet, *The Painter's Studio: A Real Allegory Summing up Seven Years of My Artistic and Moral Life* (1854-55)
Oil on canvas, 361 x 598 cm.
Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

Fig.3 Édouard Manet, *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* (1863)
Oil on canvas, 208 x 264.5 cm.
Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

Fig.4 Édouard Manet, *A Bar at the Folies-Bergere* (1881-1882)
Oil on canvas, 96 x 130 cm.
The Courtauld Gallery, London.

Fig.5 Marcel Duchamp, *Fountain* (1917).
The original has been lost.
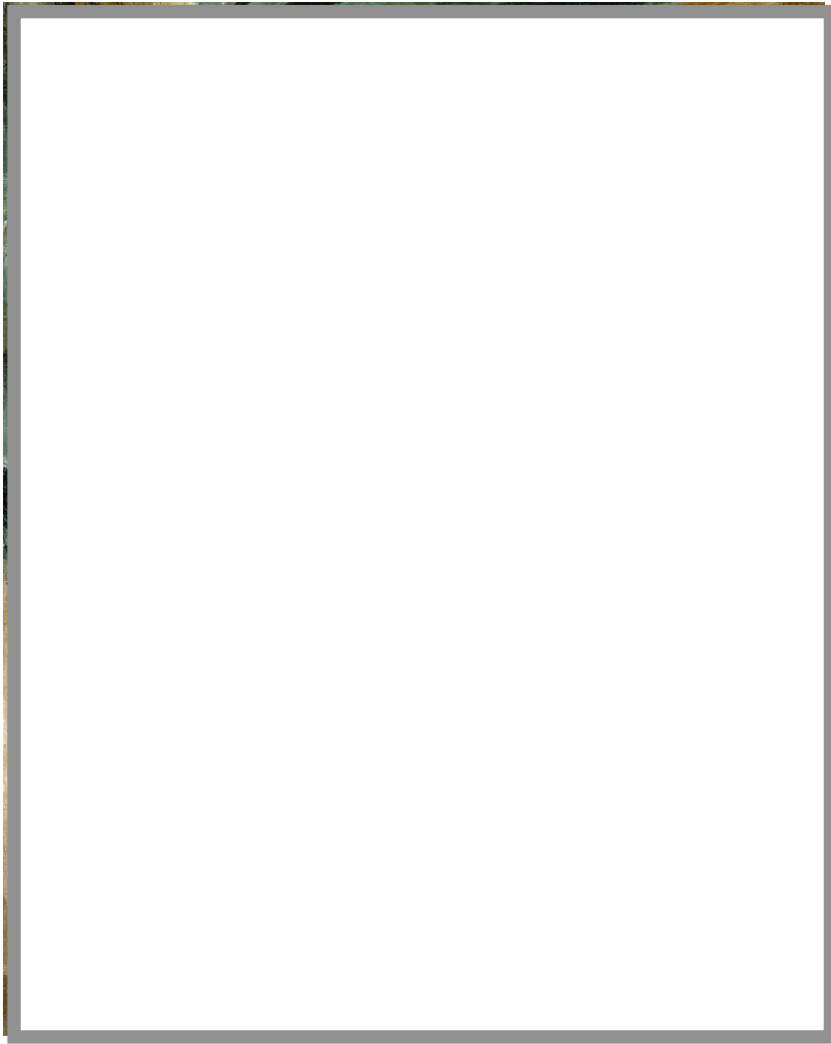
Fig.6 Georges Braque, *Houses at l'Estaque,* 1908.
Oil on canvas, 40.5 cm × 32.5 cm.
Lille Métropole Museum of Modern, Contemporary, and Outsider Art, Villeneuve-
d'Ascq.

Fig.7 Paul Cézanne, *The Big Trees*, about 1902-1904.
Oil on canvas, 81 x 65 cm.
Scottish National Gallery, Edinburgh.
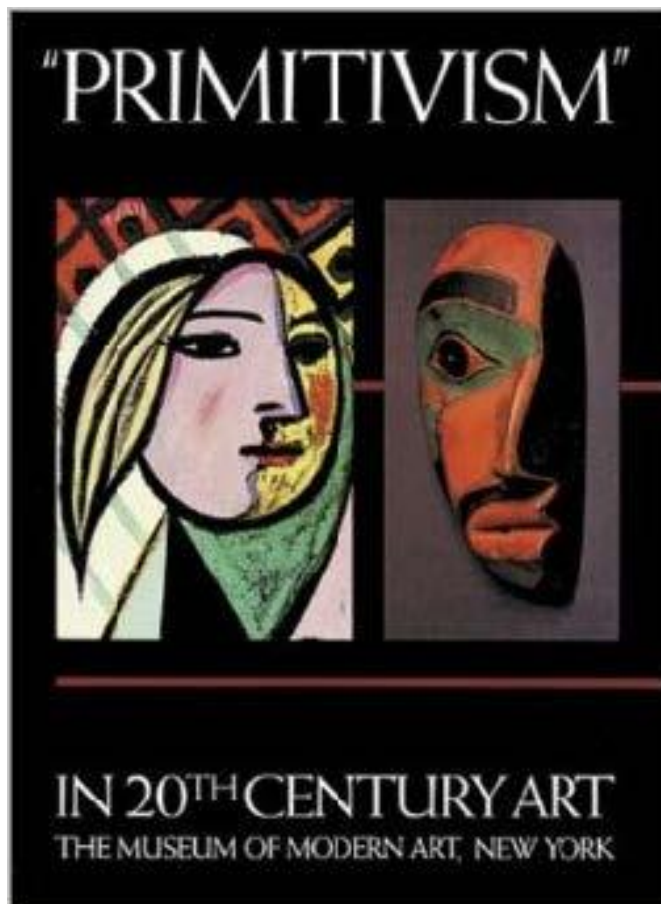
Fig.8 Pablo Picasso, *Girl Before a Mirror* (detail), 1932, juxtaposed to a Kwakiutl half-mask on the exhibition catalogue of 'Primitivism' in Twentieth Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern." The exhibition was on display between September 1984 - January 1985 at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York.
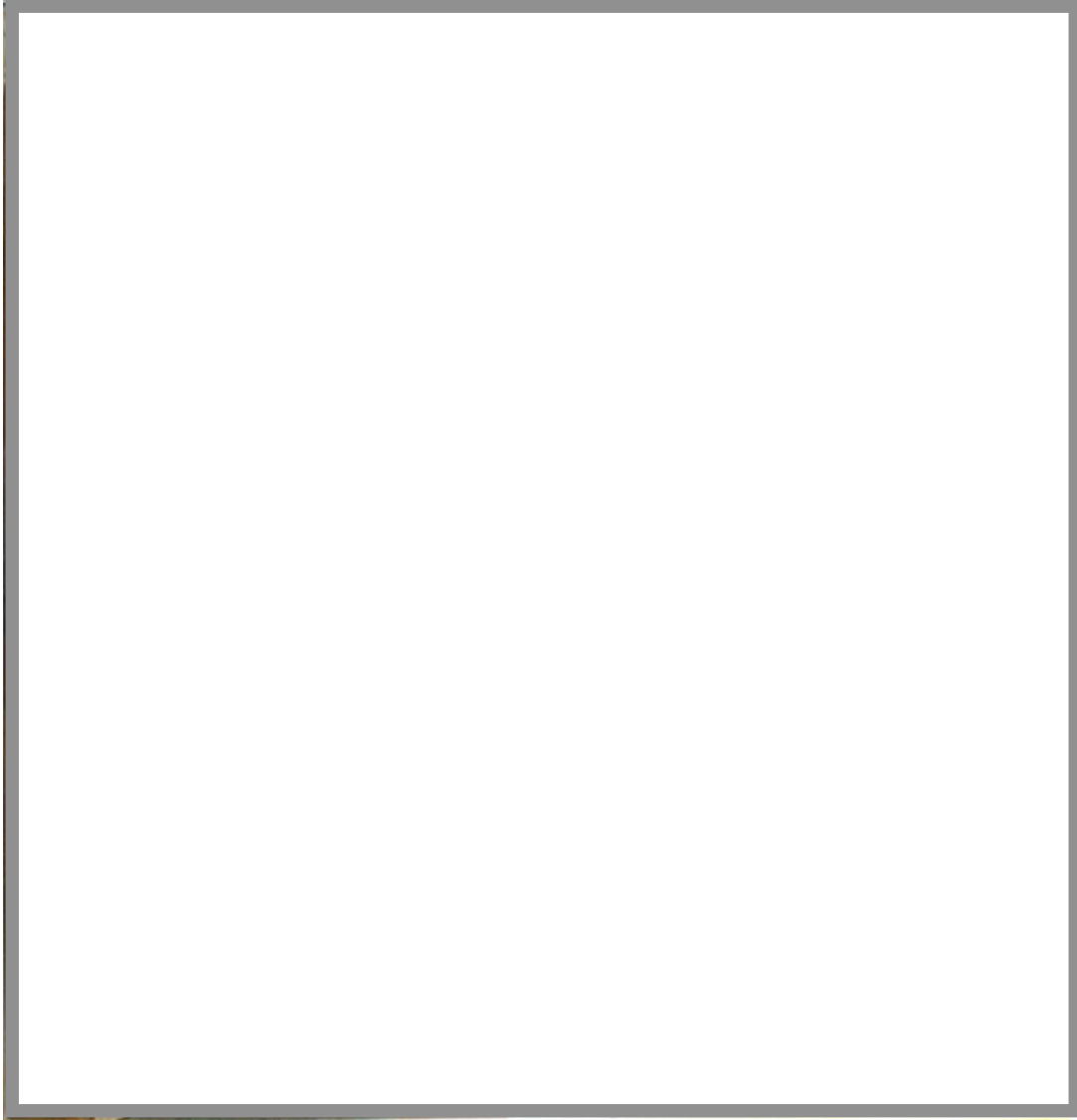
Fig.9 Pablo Picasso, *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon,* 1907.
Oil on canvas, 243.9 x 233.7 cm.
Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York.

Fig.10 Pablo Picasso, *Head of a Young Woman,* 1913.
Oil on canvas, 54.9 x 38.1 cm.
Private collection, New York.

Fig.11 Pablo Picasso, *Still-life with Chair-Caning,* 1912.
Oil on oilcloth over canvas edged with rope, 29 x 37 cm.
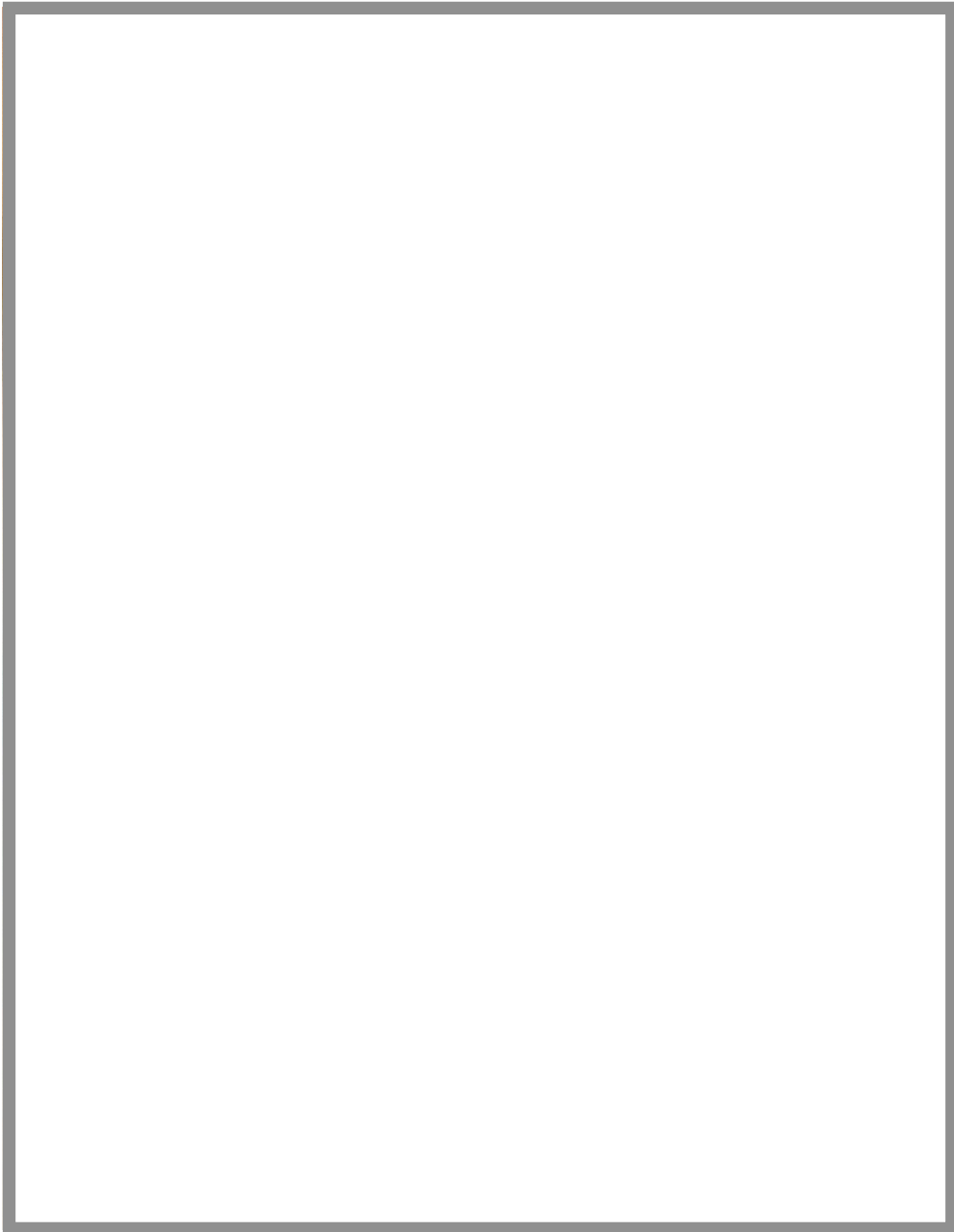Musée National Picasso, Paris.

Fig.12 Pablo Picasso, *Bottle of Suze*, 1912.
Pasted papers, gouache, and charcoal, 65.4 x 50.2 cm.
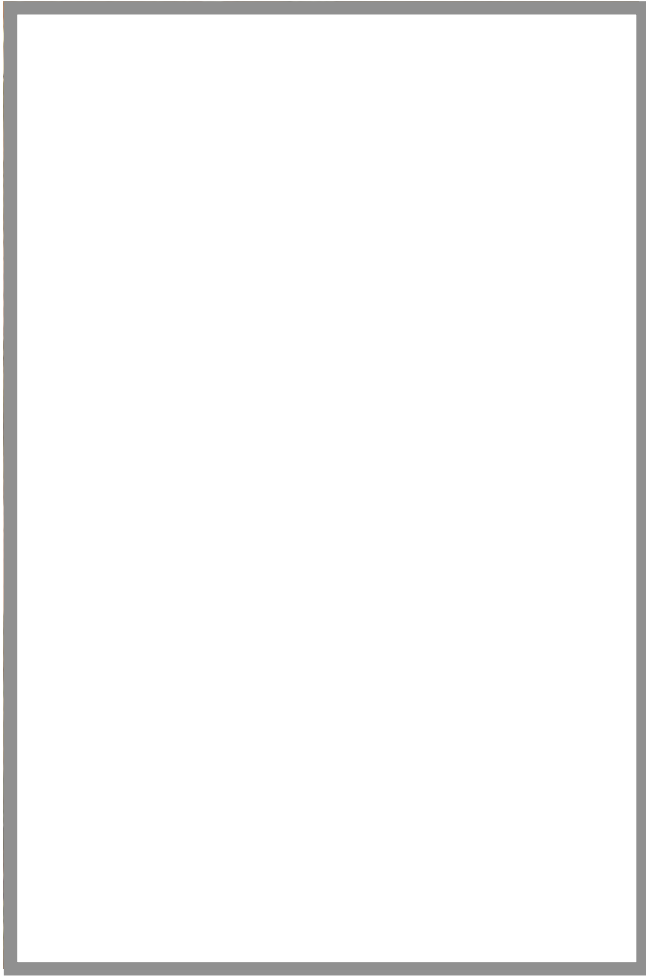Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum, Saint Louis.

Fig.13 Detail from *Bottle of Suze*.

Fig.14 Pablo Picasso, *Guernica,* 1937.
Oil on canvas, 349 × 776 cm.
Museo Reina Sofia, Madrid

Fig.15 Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, "The Foundation and Manifesto of Futurism," front page, *Le Figaro,* February 20, 1909.

Her gün bir anket

Genç sanatkârlar eskilere meydan okuyorlar

"Bütün eskileri imtihana davet ediyoruz. Her sahada..„

Genç ressamlar, genç heykeltraşlarla, eski kodaman ressamlar ve heykeltraşlar arasında göze çarpan bir mücadele var, yeniler:

— Eskiler beş para etmez!.. diyorlar. Eskiler:

— Onların yaptıkları sanat değildir. Allahaşkına şunların tablolarına, heykellerine bakın bir şey anlamak mümkün müdür?.. iddiasında... İki tarafta biribirlerine söylemediklerini bırakmadılar.

Avrupadan yeni dönen, yeni sanat müntesibi ressamlar, heykeltraşlar aralarında toplandılar ve bir «D» grupu teşkil ettiler. Bu «D» grupu dün Beyoğlunda bir sergi açtı. Bu sergide eskileri yine küplere bindirecek bir çok iddialı eserler var. «D» sergisinin etrafında fırtınalar kopacağı gün pek yakındır.

Bundan evvel yeni sanate iman eden genç ressamların fikirlerini yazmıştım. Bu sefer de bu işin biraz heykel tarafını kurcalamağı münasip gördüm. Bizde heykeltraşlık ne sularda?.. Yeni heykel hakkında heykeltraşlarımız ne düşünüyorlar... Bunun için dün «D»

Heykeltraş Zühtü bey

taklit etmiş bir adamdır.

Bugünkü sanat bunu yapmadığı ve tabiati bütün teferrüatına karar almadığı için eskiler, yenilerin eserine bakıp:

— Efendim tabiati taklit etmemişler... Benzetmek istedikleri şeye benzememiş!.. İnsan insana benzemiyor ki... diyorlar. Fakat

Fig.16 Newspaper clipping, 1933

Fig.17 Nurullah Berk, *İskambil Kağıtlı Natürmort (Still Life with Playing-Cards)*, 1933.
Oil on canvas, 64.5 x 80 cm.
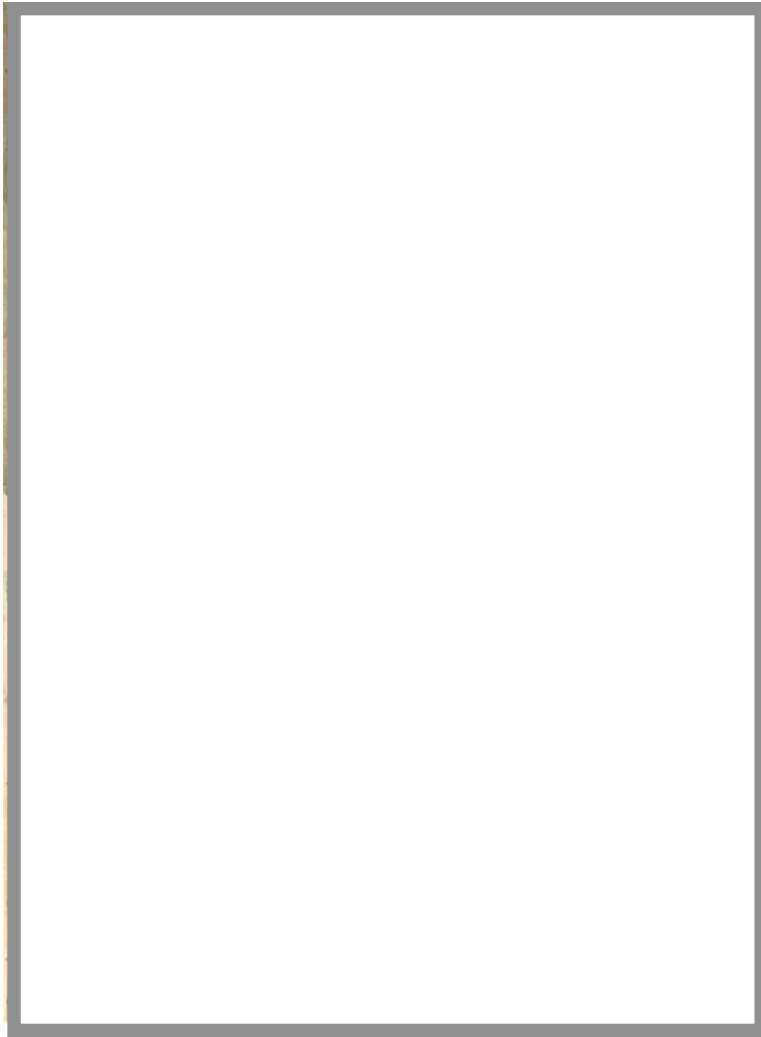MSGSÜ Painting and Sculpture Museum Collection, İstanbul.

Fig.18 George Braque, *Fruit Dish, Ace of Clubs,* 1913
Oil, Charcoal, Gouache on Canvas, 81x 60 cm.
National Museum of Modern Art, Georges Pompidou Center, Paris.

Fig.19 Cemal Tollu, *Portre (Portrait),* 1931
Charcoal on paper, 62.5 x 46.5 cm.
MSGSÜ Painting and Sculpture Museum Collection, İstanbul.

Fig.20 Pablo Picasso, *Portrait of Wilhelm Uhde,* 1910.
Oil on canvas, 81 x 60 cm.
Joseph Pulitzer Collection.

Fig.21 Cemal Tollu, *Alfabe Okuyan Köylüler (Villagers Reading the Alphabet),* 1933.
Oil on canvas, 92 x 73.5 cm.
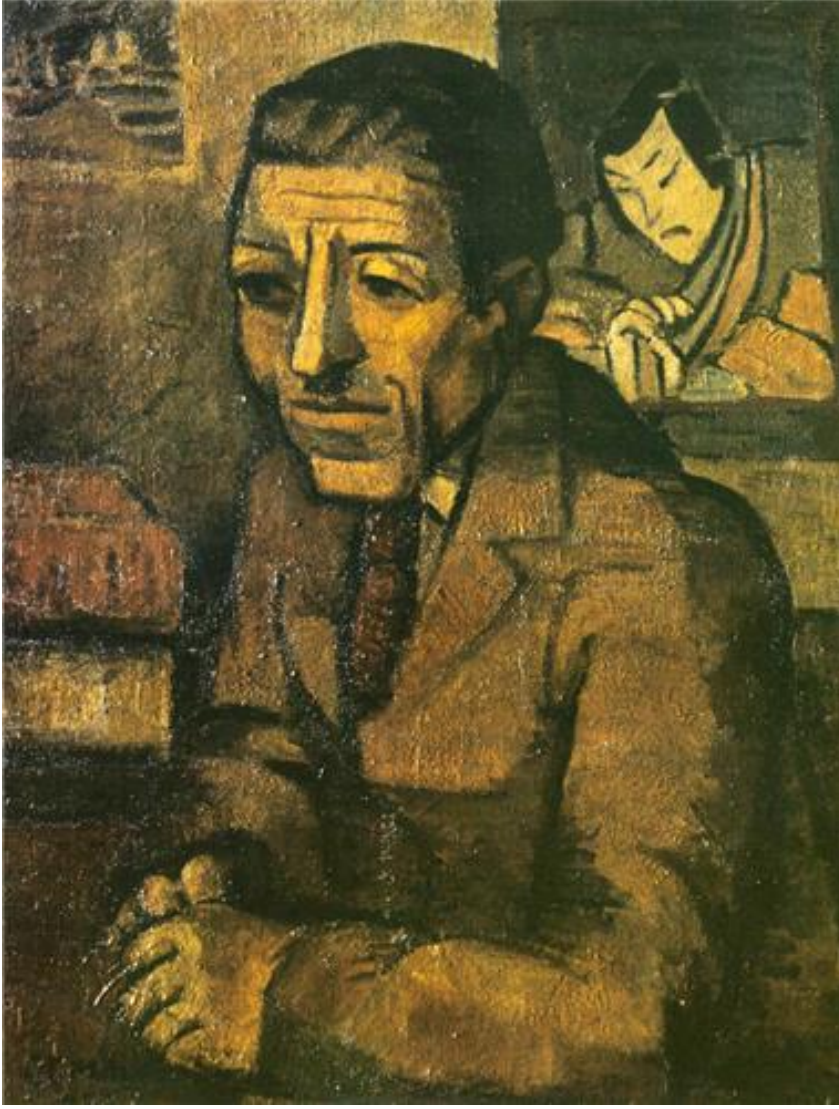MSGSÜ Painting and Sculpture Museum Collection, İstanbul.

Fig.22 Cemal Tollu, *Bir Öğretmen Portresi (Portrait of a Teacher),* 1933.
Oil on canvas, 65 x 50.5.
MSGSÜ Painting and Sculpture Museum Collection, İstanbul.

Fig.23 Nurullah Berk, *Tayyareciler (Aviators),* 1933.
Oil on canvas, 96 x 96 cm.
MSGSÜ Painting and Sculpture Museum Collection, İstanbul.

Fig.24 Zeki Faik İzer, *İnkılap Yolunda (On the Path to Revolution),* 1933.
Oil on canvas, 176 x 237 cm.
MSGSÜ Painting and Sculpture Museum Collection, İstanbul.

Fig.25 Eugène Delacroix, *La Liberté guidant le peuple (Liberty Leading the People),* 1830.
Oil on canvas, 260 cm × 325 cm.
Louvre Museum, Paris.

Fig.26 Umberto Boccioni, *The City Rises,* 1910.
Oil on canvas, 199 × 301 cm.
Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York.

Fig.27 Umberto Boccioni, *States of Mind II:The Farewells,* 1911.
Oil on canvas, 96.2 x 70.5 cm.
Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York.

Fig.28 Carlo Carrà, *The Funeral of the Anarchist Galli,* 1910-1911.
Oil on canvas, 198.7 cm. × 259.1 cm.
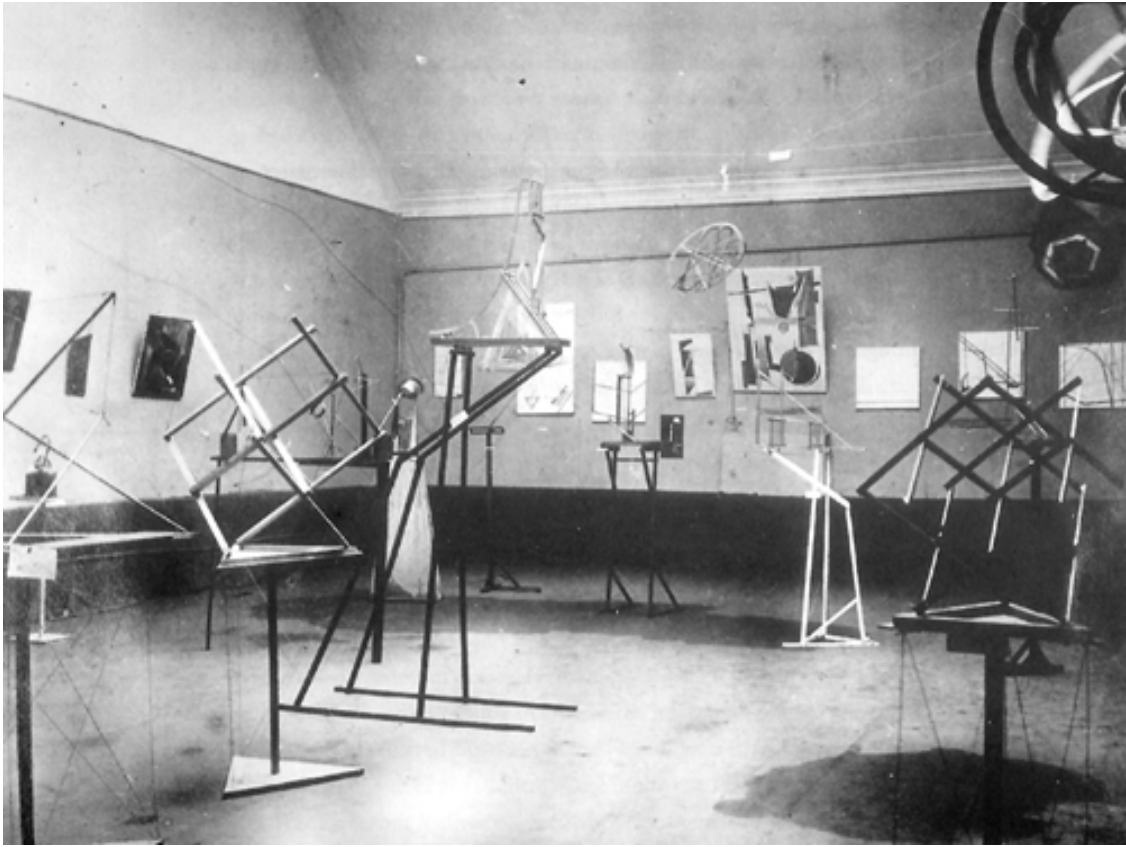Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York.

Fig.29 Second Spring Exhibition of OBMOKhu, Moscow, May-June 1921.

Fig.30 Nurullah Berk, *Ütü Yapan Kadın (Woman Ironing),* 1950.
Oil on canvas, 60 x 91.5 cm.
MSGSÜ Painting and Sculpture Museum Collection, İstanbul.

Fig.31 Nurullah Berk, *Oturan Adam (Seated Man),* 1950.
Oil on canvas, 60 x 73 cm.
MSGSÜ Painting and Sculpture Museum Collection, İstanbul.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

"Ar Okuyucularına." *Ar,* Vol.12, Birinci Kanun, 1937.

Altan, Cemren. "Populism and Peasant Iconography: Turkish painting in the 1930s." *Middle Eastern Studies,* Vol.41, No.4, July, 2005.

Antliff, Mark and Patricia Leighten. *Cubism and Culture.* London, New York: Thames and Hudson, 2001.

------------, eds. *A Cubism Reader: Documents and Criticism, 1906-1914.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008.

Ayasbeyoğlu, Sabit. "50. Yılında Müze." *M.S.G.S.U. Resim ve Heykel Müzesi,* Vol.3, 1989.

Baltacıoğlu, İsmail Hakkı. *Demokrasi ve San'at.* İstanbul: Kanaat Kütüphanesi, 1931.

Barlas, Şeyda. *Visions of Aesthetics and Culture in Yeni Adam: Republic of Fine Arts 1934-1950.* Unpublished MA Thesis, Boğaziçi University, 2007.

Barr, Alfred H. Jr. *Picasso: Fifty Years of His Art.* New York: Museum of Modern Art,1946.

------------. *Picasso: Forty Years of His Art.* New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1939.

------------. *Cubism and Abstract Art.* New York: The Museum of Modern Art,1936.

Baudelaire, Charles. "On the Heroism of Modern Life" Section XVIII of "The Salon of 1846" in Jonathan Mayne trans. and ed., *Art in Paris 1845-1862: Salons and Other Exhibitions.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1965.

------------. "The Painter of Modern Life (1863)" in Jonathan Mayne trans. and ed., *The Painter of Modern Life and other Essays by Charles Baudelaire.* London: Phaidon Press, 1964.

Benjamin, Walter. "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire" in *Illuminations.* New York: Schocken Books, 1969.

Berk, Nurullah. *Modern San'at.* [İstanbul]: Semih Lütfi Bitik ve Basım Evi, 1933.

Berk, Nurullah and Hüseyin Gezer. *50 Yılın Türk Resim ve Heykeli.* İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1973.

Berk, Nurullah and Kaya Özsezgin. *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türk Resmi.* Ankara: İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1983.

Berman, Marshall. *All That is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity*. New York: Penguin Books, 1988.

Bozdoğan, Sibel. *Modernism and Nation Building: Turkish Architectural Culture in the Early Republic.* Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001.

Bürger, Peter. *Theory of the Avant-Garde.* Translated by Michael Shaw. Forward by Jochen Schulte-Sasse. Minneapolis: Manchester University Press, 1984 [1974].

Calinescu, Matei. *Five Faces of Modernity: Modernism, Avant-garde, Decadence, Kitsch, Postmodernism.* Durham: Duke University Press, 1987.

Cezar, Mustafa. *Güzel Sanatlar Eğitiminde 100 Yıl.* İstanbul: Mimar Sinan Üniversitesi Basımevi, 1983.

------------. *Sanat'ta Batıya Açılış ve Osman Hamdi II* (İstanbul: Erol Kerim Aksoy Kültür, Eğitim, Spor ve Sağlık Vakfı Yayınları, 1995.

Clark, T.J. "Clement Greenberg's Theory of Art." *Critical Inquiry.* Vol. 9, September, 1982.

Clifford, James. "Histories of the Tribal and the Modern." *Art in America,* April, 1985.

Cooper, Douglas. *The Cubist Epoch*. New York: Phaidon Press, 1971.

Cottington, David. *The Avant-Garde: A Very Short Introduction.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

de Saint-Simon, Henri. *Opinions Littéraires, Philosophiques et Industrielles.* Paris: Galèrie de Bossange Père, 1825.

Druker, Elina , ed. *Children's Literature and the Avant-garde*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing, 2015.

Duben, İpek. *Türk Resmi ve Eleştirisi 1880-1950.* İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2007.

Egbert, Donald. "The Idea of 'Avant-garde' in Art and Politics." *The American Historical Review 73,* No. 2, December 1967.

Eisenman, Stephen F., ed. "Manet and the Impressionists" in *Nineteenth Century Art: A Critical History.* London: Thames & Hudson, 2011.

Erol, Turan. *Günümüz Türk Resminin Oluşum Sürecinde Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu: Yetişme Koşulları, Sanatçı Kişiliği.* İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi, 1984.

------------. "Painting in Turkey in Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century" in Günsel Renda ed., *A History of Turkish Painting*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1984.

Fer, Briony. "Metaphor and Modernity: Russian Constructivism." *Oxford Art Journal,* Vol.12, No.1, 1989.

Fry, Edward. *Cubism.* London: Thames and Hudson, 1966.

Germaner, Semra. "Elvah-ı Nakşiye Koleksiyonu'ndan Resim ve Heykel Müzesi'ne" in *Serginin Sergisi - İstanbul Resim ve Heykel Müzesi, 1937 Açılış Koleksiyonu.* İstanbul: Mimar Sinan Güzel Sanatlar Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2009.

Giray, Kıymet. *Çallı ve Atölyesi.* İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1997.

------------. *Müstakil Ressamlar ve Heykeltıraşlar Birliği.* Unpublished Phd Thesis, Ankara University, 1988.

Golding, John. *Visions of the Modern*. Los Angeles: University of California Press Berkeley, 1994.

Gökalp, Ziya. *Turkish Nationalism and Western Civilization*. ed. and trans. Niyazi Berkes. London: Ruskin House George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1959.

Gören, Ahmet Kamil, ed. *Türk Resim Sanatında Şişli Atölyesi ve Viyana Sergisi.* İstanbul: Şişli Belediyesi Yayınları, 1997.

Green, Christopher. "An Introduction to *Les Demoiselles D'Avignon*" in Christopher Green ed., *Picasso's Les Demoiselles D'Avignon*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Greenberg, Clement. "Avant-garde and Kitsch" in *Art and Culture: Critical Essays.* Boston: Beacon Press, 1961.

Groys, Boris. "Critical Reflections" in James Elkins and Michael Newman eds., *The State of Art Criticism.* New York: Routledge, 2007.

Habermas, Jürgen. *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society.* Translated by Thomas Bürger, Frederick Lawrence. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1993 [1962].

Hakkı, İsmail. *Demokrasi ve San'at.* İstanbul: Kanaat Kütüphanesi, 1931.

Harrison, Charles and Paul Wood, eds."Alexi Gan (1889-1942) from *Constructivism.*" *Art in Theory, 1900–2000: An Anthology of Changing Ideas.* Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers, 1999.

Karaömerlioğlu, Asım. "The People's Houses and the Cult of the Peasant in Turkey." *Middle Eastern Studies,* 34, No.4, 1998.

Karpat, Kemal. "The People's Houses in Turkey, Establishment and Growth." *Middle East Journal,* Vol.17, No.1-2, Winter-Spring, 1963.

Kayaalp, Ali. "Türkiye'ye Özgü Bir İzlenimcilik: 1914 Kuşağı." *Sanat Dünyamız,* No.143, November-December, 2014.

Köksal, Duygu. "Art and Power in Turkey: Culture, Aesthetics and Nationalism During the Single-party Era." *New Perspectives on Turkey*, Vol.31, 2004.

------------. "Domesticating the Avant-garde in a Nationalist Era: Aesthetic Modernism in 1930s Turkey." *New Perspectives on Turkey,* 52, 2015.

Leighten, Patricia. "Picasso's Collages and Threat of War, 1912-1913." *The Art Bulletin,* Vol.67, No.4, December, 1985.

------------. *Re-Ordering the Universe: Picasso and Anarchism 1897-1914.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989.

------------. "Response: Artists in Time of War," *The Art Bulletin,* Vol.91, No.1, March, 2009.

------------. *The Liberation of Painting: Modernism and Anarchism in Avant-Guerre*. Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 2013.

Lodder, Christina. "Soviet Constructivism" in Steve Edwards, Paul Wood eds. *Art of the Twentieth-century: Art of the Avant-gardes*. New Haven, London: Yale University Press in association with the Open University, 2004.

------------. "The Transition to Constructivism." Exhibition Catalogue. *The Great Utopia: The Russian and Soviet Avant-garde, 1915-1932*. New York: Guggenheim Museum, 1992.

Lubar, Robert S. "Review: *Re-Ordering the Universe: Picasso and Anarchism* by Patricia Leighten." *The Art Bulletin,* Vol.72, No.3, September, 1990.

Marinetti, Filippo Tommaso. *Critical Writings* in Gunter Berghaus ed., Doug Thompson trans. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006.

McCully, Marilyn, Michael Raeburn and Patricia Leighten. "Letters: Picasso's Politics in Barcelona." *The Art Bulletin,* Vol.69, No.1, March, 1987.

Murphy, Richard. *Theorizing the Avant-garde: Modernism, Expressionism, and the Problem of Postmodernity*. UK: Cambridge University, 1999.

Nochlin, Linda. "The Invention of the Avant-garde: France 1830-1880" in *The Politics of Vision: Essays on Nineteenth-Century Art and Society*. New York: Harper & Row, 1989.

Naipoğlu, Seçkin G. *Sanayi-i Nefise Mektebi'nde Sanat Tarihi Yaklaşımı ve Vahit Bey*. Unpublished PhD Thesis, Hacattepe University, 2008

Nayır, Yaşar Nabi. *Ulus,* 31 İlkteşrin 1935.

Orton, Fred and Griselda Pollock. "Avant-gardes and Partisans Reviewed" in *Pollock and After: The Critical Debate.* London: Harper & Row, 1981.

Perloff, Marjorie. "Avant-garde Poetics" in Roland Greene and Stephen Cushman eds. *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2012.

Poggi, Christine. *Inventing Futurism: The Art and Politics of Artificial Optimism.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009.

Poggioli, Renato. *The Theory of the Avant-Garde*. Translated by Gerald Fitzgerald. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1968 [1962].

Rainey, Lawrence, Christine Poggi and Laura Wittman, eds. *Futurism an Anthology.* New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2009.

Renda, Günsel. "Ottoman Painting and Sculpture" in Halil İnalcık and Günsel Renda eds. *Ottoman Civilization II.* Ankara: Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2009.

Richardson, John. *A Life of Picasso, The Prodigy, 1881-1906*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2015 [1991].

Robbins, Daniel. "Abbreviated History of Cubism." *Art Journal,* Vol. 47, No. 4, Winter, 1988.

Rubin, William. "From Narrative to 'Iconic' in Picasso: The Buried Allegory in *Bread and Fruitdish on a Table* and the Role of *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon.*" *The Art Bulletin,* Vol. 65, No.4, December, 1983.

Schapiro, Meyer. *Impressionism: Reflections and Perceptions*. New York: George Braziller, 1997.

Schapiro, Meyer. *Paul Cezanne*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, c.1960s.

Steinberg, Leo. "The Philosophical Brothel." *October,* Vol.44, Spring, 1988.

Şerifoğlu, Ömer Faruk. "Whenever I Think of Galatasaray I Think of Exhibitions." *From Mekteb-i Sultani to Galatasaray Lycee*. İstanbul: Pera Müzesi Yayınları, 2009.

Tansuğ, Sezer. *Çağdaş Türk Sanatı*. İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1986.

Thalasso, Adolphe. *Ottoman Art - The Painters of Turkey*. İstanbul: İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi Kültür Yayınları, 2008.

Türkkan, Yasemin. *Türk Modernleşmesinde Yeni Adam Dergisi 1934 - 1938*. Unpublished MA Thesis, Hacettepe University, 2008.

Üstel, Füsun. *İmparatorluktan Ulus-Devlete Türk Milliyetçiliği: Türk Ocakları 1912-1931*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2004.

Vargish, Thomas and Delo E. Mook. *Inside Modernism: Relativity Theory, Cubism, Narrative*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999.

White, John J. "Introduction." in Selena Daly and Monica Insinga eds. *The European Avant-garde: Text and Image*. UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012.

Williams, Raymond. "The Politics of the Avant-Garde" in Edward Timms and Peter Collier eds., *Visions and Blueprints: Avant-Garde Culture and Radical Politics in Early Twentieth-Century Europe*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1988.

Woodcock, George. *Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, A Bibliography*. Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1972.

Yasa Yaman, Zeynep. *1930-1950 Yılları Arasında Kültür ve Sanat Ortamına Bir Bakış: D Grubu*. Unpublished PhD Thesis, Hacettepe University, 1992.

------------. "'Cumhuriyetin Kübist Çocukları' d Grubu Yeniden Aramızda." *Arkitera,* January, 2014.

------------. *d Grubu 1933-1951*. İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2006.

------------. "Demokrasi ve Sanat." *Anadolu Sanat,* Vol.1, December 1993.

------------. *Suretin Sireti (Türkiye Cumhuriyet Merkez Bankası Sanat Koleksiyonu'ndan Bir Seçki)* İstanbul: Pera Pera Müzesi Yayınları, 1998.

------------. "Türk Resminde Etkilenme ve Taklit Olgusu I." *Türkiye'de Sanat,* Vol.14, May–August, 1994.

------------. "Türk Resminde 'non-Figüratif' Tartışmaları ve 'Tavanarası Ressamları.'" *Eczacıbaşı Sanal Müzesi.*

------------. "Türkiye'de Kübizm ve Yeni Sanat." *Sanat Dünyamız,* Vol.54, Winter, 1993.

------------. "Yurt Gezileri ve Sergileri ya da 'Mektepten Memlekete Dönüş.'" *Toplumbilim,* Vol.4, June 1996.

------------., ed. *Ankara Resim ve Heykel Müzesi*. Ankara: T.C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Kütüphaneler ve Yayımlar Genel Müdürlüğü, 2012.

Yetkin, Suut Kemal. "Ar İkinci Yılına Girerken." *Ar,* Vol.1, İkinci Kanun, 1938.

------------. "Sanatkar." *Güzel Sanatlar Dergisi*, Vol.1, 1940.

Zihnioğlu, Yaprak, ed. *Osmanlı Ressamlar Cemiyeti Gazetesi*. İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2007.

Zürcher, Erik Jan. *Turkey: A Modern History*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2004 [1993].

Websites:

http://dictionary.cambridge.org/

http://v3.arkitera.com/v1/sanat/2004/01/haberler/kubist.htm

http://www.guzelsanatlarbirligi.com/tarihce.htm.

http://www.msgsu.edu.tr/Assets/UserFiles/AAAAAAAA_BIM/DUYURU/DOKUMAN/2016/Nisan/04/2015_yili_yatirim_izleme_ve_degerlendirme_raporu.pdf.

http://www.sanalmuze.org/paneller/Mtskm/10trnf.htm.