

**Mystical Inspirations of  
Abstract Expressionist Painting**

by

**Şevket Cem Onat**

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the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

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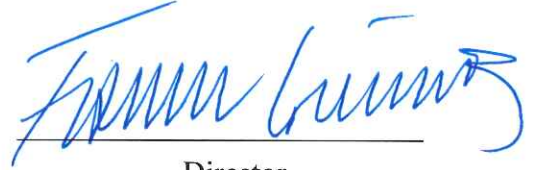
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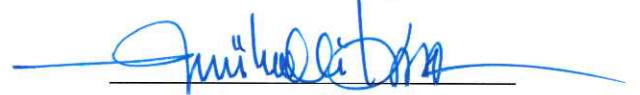
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## ÖZET\*

Bu çalışmada, soyut sanatın, özellikle soyut dışavurumcu akımın içinde yer alan aksiyon ressamalarının yaratım sürecindeki mistik deneyimlerinin izlerinin sürülmesi amaçlanmıştır.

Sanatçıların mistik esin kaynaklarını izleyebilmek amacıyla öncelikle, mistisizmin gerek tek tanrılı gerek çok tanrılı dinlerin tasavvuf felsefesini yansıtan bir kavram olduğu görüşünden hareketle, Doğu ve Batı gizemciliği, coğrafi yaygınlık ölçeğinde, (1) Uzak Doğu: Tao, Brahman, Tantrik ve Zen, (2) Batı: Hıristiyan ve Kabala ve (3) Orta Doğu: Zerdüş ve Sufi sınıflaması yapılarak irdelenmeye çalışılmıştır. Bu sınıflamada yer alanların tümünün içe dönük mistisimde birleştikleri gözlenmektedir.

Bir sanat eserinin sanatçının sadece algılama veya imgeleme gibi doğuştan getirdiği iç güçlerini yansıtan ürün olarak tanımlanamayacağı, sanatçının esas olarak ulaşmak istediğinin ruhsal bir arınma olduğu belirtilmektedir.

Arketipler ve kolektif bilinçaltı kavramlarıyla ilişkilendirilen Carl Gustav Jung'un yaklaşımlarının, mitosların ve rüyaların yanı sıra, sanat eserlerinin de etkili bir biçimde yorumlanmasına katkı sağladığı görülmektedir. Jung'a göre, yaratım sürecinde sanatçı yalnız kendi özüne ulaşmakla kalmayıp, inanç sistemlerinin belirlediği ideal hedeflere de varmaktadır.

Yaratıcılık ile mistisizmin her ikisinde "ben" ve "ben olmayan" karşıtlığı birlikte varolmaktadır. Bu varoluş, vecd halinde gerçekleşmektedir.

Doğayı görüldüğü gibi tasvir etmenin yerine yaratıcılıklarını ve farkındalıklarını herhangi bir rezervasyon koymaksızın eserlerine yansıtmaya başlayan soyut sanatın aksiyon resmi akımının içinde aşkın inanışların yer almasının önemi, bu akımın öncülerinden olan Pollock, Rothko ve Newman tarafından özellikle vurgulanmakta; ulu sanatı yaratma arayışında oldukları belirtilmektedir.

Literatür destekli benzer çalışmalara katkı sağlaması amacıyla, Jackson Pollock, Bernett Newman, Robert Motherwell, Mark Rothko, Wols, Georges Mathieu'nun yanı sıra M. Zahit Büyükişliyen, Zafer Gençaydın gibi Soyut Dışavurumculuğun hem dünyadaki hem

Türkiye'deki öncülerinin mistik esinlenmeleri, yaratım sürecindeki eylemlerinde, söylemlerinde, ürünlerinde ve izleyiciyle buluşmalarında işaretlenmeye çalışılmıştır.



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\* Bu tezin tamamı Türkçe olarak [www.cemonat.com](http://www.cemonat.com) adresinden temin edilebilir.

## ABSTRACT

Action painting refers to a style within abstract art, especially abstract expressionist movement. In this study, it is aimed to trace the mystical experiences of the action painters in their creation process.

In art literature, the abstract expressionist art movement emphasizes a process that creates the works of the artist without making any reservations to their creativity and awareness, and this movement also forms the basis of the action painting. In the action painting, the artwork of an artist has not been described as a product that reflects the inherent forces of nature, such as perception or imagination; but it is additionally emphasized that what the artist essentially wants to achieve is a spiritual purification. In other words, it is emphasized that the works of the action painting style not only reflect the characteristics of the abstract expressionist art movement but also the spiritual calmness; and this emphasis is explained in the search for “sublime art creation” of the artists, namely, Pollock, Rothko and Newman who are among the pioneers of this movement. These proposals accelerated the “mystic” approach in abstract expressionism. Based on this approach, in present study, attempts were made to explain the mystical experiences of some abstract expressionist painters during their creation process.

It is accepted that the mysticism is a concept that reflects the mystic philosophy of both monotheistic and polytheistic religions. Mysticism is examined by taking into account the three classifications determined by the geographical prevalence scale: (1) Far East: Tao, Brahman, Tantric, and Zen, (2) West: Christian and Kabbalah, and (3) Middle East: Zarathustra and Sufi. In this study, Eastern and Western mysticism was tried to be explained by considering this classification.

In the present study, the mystic inspirations of the artists who are the pioneers of Abstract Expressionism both in Turkey and in the world, namely, M. Zahit Büyükişliyen, Zafer Gençaydın, as well as Jackson Pollock, Bernett Newman, Robert Motherwell, Mark Rothko, Wols, Georges Mathieu, tried to be marked in terms of their actions during the creation of painting process, their discourse, their products and their meetings with audiences. It is

believed that the discussions of the present study will contribute to similar works supported by the literature.





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## Section I

### INTRODUCTION

This study aims at analyzing in a comparative manner and with literature search support the mystical inspirations of abstract artists, and in particular artists within the limitation of abstract expressionism, based on the observation that the resources frequently quote the mystical lives in the creation process.

In line with this objective, attention has been paid to compile the philosophical and psychological contexts of mysticism only within the limits of supportive literature. Interpretation in relation to each of the areas mentioned is particularly avoided; however, regardless of whether the artists recognize this or not, the sources of inspiration in the creation process of art is monitored by trying to associate with these areas.

Briefly this study first deals with

- Mysticism within the context of being a concept reflecting the philosophy of esoteric approach of both monotheistic and pantheistic religions, and the reference points of the philosophy which occurs based on the narrative in the literature for the weight of religions at the sources of mysticism, were highlighted,

thereafter,

- psychoanalytical effects of philosophies of mysticism were researched to a limited extent starting from Sigmund Freud and with particular emphasis to Carl Gustav Jung,
- the effect of abstract art in Europe and America was determined,
- An account of brief definitions of painters who are selected as abstract expressionist, as well as their notes related to their works and mystical inspirations was also given.

#### **I. 1. Source of Philosophical Thought**

It is prevalent that the most significant source of philosophical thought is the existence. The existentialist investigations of human beings, their attempts to understand and interpret

continues lifelong as part of satisfaction, and these are transferred to humanity through various means.

As stated by Olguner,

“In general, the source of philosophical thought is taken as a *pure curiosity and espial* for some, and *fear of death* for some, and the *feeling of eternity* for the others. Different outward reflection of tendencies of each person which are different from those of other people, is in fact a recognition of a lack, a loss at the very basis of the creation, which is the common point for the whole humanity. A human being thus tries to overcome this lack personally by himself. However, these ways of satisfaction appear different from one another. Regardless of what the direction is, the philosophy arises from the creature of human beings” (Olguner, p. 116).

whereas Taş supports the idea by saying,

“It is for this creation that the integral inner life of a person as well as his attitudes and situations could be created by being affected from the mode of understanding. A lived condition is in fact a situation of an hermeneutics” (Taş, p. 17).

and Kam and Ayni emphasize this support as they say

“The situation in which a person realizes the real meaning also gives him the real existence” (Kam ve Ayni, p. 78).

### **I. 1. 1. Mysticism**

Mysticism finds its place both in monotheistic religions and polytheistic religions. In its dictionary meaning, mysticism relates to the person who initiates in the Eleusis Mysteries\* ,

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\* Eleusis Mysteries: Ceremonies which were organized in the name of the legendary figure who named the city Eleusis, the cereal goddess Demeter and her daughter (underworld goddess) Persephone, were the most sacred and reputed of all of the ritual celebrations in the ancient Greek. These celebrations have been taking place since the period of Miken in Eleusis city located 20 km to the west of Athens, and have a history of 2 thousand years. Pupils who come together in Greece and Rome walked in between Athens and Eleusis and are blessed and they participated in the secret rituals of Eleusis, which is accepted as the highest step of Greek religion (Azra Erhat, Dictionary of Mythology, p. 100).



namely μυστικός (mystikos) in Greek, and to the term μυστήρια (mysteria) which means participating in the mysteries” (Eliade, p. 361). “There is also an opinion that the root comes from muein, which means closing lips and eyes in Greek” (Schimmel, p. 22).

“Today mysticism is used to mean the identification with the spiritual reality of Neoplatonism\* rather than the mysteries of Eleusis, or with God, through direct experience, intuition, introspection, namely to reach to a new level of cognition” (Tonza, p. 9). “Mysticism is a transcendent-intellectual experience performed for filling out the gap or distance between the creator and the created” (Özer, p. 28).

“According to Plato, art is dangerous, because art principally imitates the ‘immaterial’ and changes its appearance finely to make it insignificant. Artists infinitely play with the religious images. Even for Plato, there is an inauspicious aspect in the frisky of art, art an entertaining acceptance of the evil full of envy. The real logos remains silent in the face of the highest reality; however the object of art likes its own chattering, it loves itself rather than the reality, and desires to be eternal and endless” (Murdoch, p. 36).

However, Plato expresses the opinion that “...art is more creation than imitation. ... the painter could express more than what an ordinary observer expresses ‘from a single point of view’; a painter and an author are not only copiers or people who create illusions; on the contrary they see a rather deeper aspect of the issue they are handling, and they could be the privileged people expressing the reality” (Murdoch, *ibid*, p. 1, 4).

“Mysticism, which is a whole of systems expounded by philosophical questions, could be interpreted as a philosophy, or more as a philosophy of religion. Mysticism starts after the boundaries of philosophy and science and from time to time demonstrates characteristics overlapping them. The basic problem is the understanding of ‘existence’, which is the main

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\* Neo-platonism: A theosophical (*philosophical system using the external knowledge*), hermetic [*hermetism is a gnostic (knowledge that could be obtained through intuition and contemplation) and even a mystical teaching which includes all types of mysteries and discovery of beliefs and secrets*] (“Orhan Hancerlioglu, Dünya İnançları Sözlüğü [World Belief Dictionary], p. 743).

question of philosophy. Mysticism could be defined as a ‘way of belief relying on emotions and intuitions’. The word ‘mystery’ which means the ‘secret and believing in the secret’, corresponds to both Western and Eastern mysticism” (Bal, p. 9).

The Western and Eastern mysticisms which are mentioned in this study will be studied within the framework of the following classifications. The prevalence in the geography of residence has been taken as a measure for this classification:

- Far East: Tao, Brahman, Tantric and Zen (Esoteric Buddhism)
- West: Christian and Jewish (Kabbalah)
- Middle East: Zoroastrianism, Sufi (Mevlânâ Celaleddin-i Rûmî [Jalal al-Din al-Rumi] and İbn-i Arabî)

Ninian Smart defines mysticism as “emotional experiences or mental images which are unexplainable, in other worlds are unidentifiable” (Forman, p. 5-6).

Mystical and religious experiences are classified in various ways. W. T. Stace made a separation between introvertive mysticism and extrovertive mysticism. In extrovertive mysticism the person perceives a new relationship that occurs between the external world and himself within the context of reality, one of unity and blessedness. Stace defines the introvertive mysticism differentiation as the awareness of void or pure consciousness of the nonspatial experience. In some mystical traditions, the introvertive experience is handled as nothingness or a void (Forman, *ibid*, p. 5-8).

Mystical experiences could occur as a result of an immediate illumination or as a result of diligent and detailed preparation in the long run. All mystic approaches have two faces being contradictory and complementary. These are conservative and innovative aspects. The conservative function is within the definition of mysticism. The fact that the mystics are in a productive relationship directly with the object of the experiences contributes to the change and also protection of the content of the tradition where the person lives (Scholem, p. 5-9).

In this study, it is observed that that all of those which are included above under Far East, West and Middle East classification merge at the introvertive mysticism. “For example,

Yunus Emre is a Sufi who based such topics as love, the *ideal man, life and death, existence and nothingness* in his poems on the basis of divine love and ethics. Yunus Emre, who tries to find the ideal human type only through “love” in his own ideal self, finds in himself love as a revelation of an experience that is lived. In such experience, he does not refer to symbolic and metaphoric narratives as in the case of Rumi. ... He is only a sufi who finds this “ideal self” through love in himself and realizes this. On the basis of this realization is a Socratic thought, which is the principle that “a man should know himself” (Yakit, p. 213).

## **I. 2. Art and Mysticism**

Within the framework of the foregoing explanations, the place of art could not be denied among the efforts to overcome the shortage perceived in the inquiry of existence, which is a subject of philosophy of mysticism, which is ultimately sourced from the creation of mankind.

“Artwork, which is the concrete phenomenon of the spiritual capabilities of the artist, is not composed of a sum of all types of materials that fit to his own mood. While realizing his own pure art, the artist does not aim at demonstrating an aesthetical language that is knitted with plastic values, rather what the artist desires is the very inner purification itself” (Bal, *ibid*, p. 24) Stephan Zweig says in his work titled “Le mystère de la création artistique” that the act of creation is a mystical fact:

“Since the beginning of the world, the secret of creativity has remained as the ‘secret of secrets’. For that reason all nations and religions connected the fact of creativity to the idea of God; because we can only express and conceive as a fact something that exist. However, every time when something instantaneously happens somewhere without anything – when a child is borne, when a flower blossoms on a dry land at a night – we experience a subtle, divine feeling. We feel the greatest, most sublime and divine bewilderment when we sense that this new thing which suddenly came to being is not something temporal, ... that a thing that continues through all times is being created, ... what remains as eternal is not the human being, but some thing that is accomplished by God” (Zweig, p. 25).

According to Zweig, “experiencing this miracle which occurs from inside and continues over times has become possible for us only in a special field, the art” (Zweig, *ibid*, p. 24).

“In fact, an artist could only create through a ‘loss of consciousness’, namely through an ecstasy. This ecstasy mode of the artist is in the meaning of ‘being outside of oneself’; an artist is personally inside his work when creating, he is in his composition, heroes, colors and images. Since he only looks at his inner thought, the artist can not realize what happens in the exterior world. For that reason, he can not know to look at himself and how he creates when creating; this is the reason why he can not explain this situation afterwards. While the creativity of an artist is not only an inspiration itself, it is not a fact that develops only beyond the consciousness and above the visual area of the eyes, it is a fact of transmitting from the spiritual world to the material world, from the imaginary world to the real world” (Bal, *ibid*, p. 25).

What will be studied in this dissertation is the discussion on the basis of reaching deep awareness in the condition of ecstasy in mystical experiences which covers the ancient cults.

Principally the fact that the area of interest is the deep awareness leads to the necessity that the psychological approaches should be emphasized in the process of creation. This context is tried to be kept limited based on the influence of Carl Gustav Jung in particular.

For example, Ismail Hakkı Baltacıoğlu approaches the subject of creativity in art from a psychological perspective:

“Art is not a creator, it is a stimulant, an excitement. The aesthetical feeling occurs as the bio-psychological or socio-psychological feelings, which exist in human beings but remains at unconsciousness like the feeling of lust, move to over consciousness. This being the case, each art work means a technique which lives at unconsciousness and revives all emotions and reveals them to over-consciousness, not something that injects any feeling” (Baltacıoğlu, p. 9).

Zimmer suggests the following:

“Feeling pleasure liberates the creative senses inside us, it leads to shaking and waking up those senses by the help of symbolic stories and figures of the ancient times and the captivating texts. Then we may allow any type of creative reaction that arises in our unique cognition to get rid of the chains, without being destroyed in the face of criticisms of the methodists” (Zimmer, p. 14).

“Jung asserts that the process could be experienced by motivating the unconsciousness, the imaginary power actively or through images which are the contents of dreams. Dream images or fantasies are the symbolic forms of the deepest levels of unconsciousness” (Onat, p. 30).

“People who feel the deep division within themselves are oriented continuously towards creating in order to partially identify their own identities or discover them. In Jung’s words;

... If this is to be called a method, the patient could make himself independent in terms of creativity through this method. Thereafter he is no more dependent on his dreams or the knowledge of his doctor; instead he forms himself by depicting his picture. As a matter of fact, what he makes as a picture are the effective fantasies of those which are active inside him. What is active inside him is the very himself, because he now sees his ego as the object of the things that are active within himself. He tries to catch this inner effect by drawing numerous pictures and ultimately he discovers that this is something that will remain eternally unknown and strange, which is the secret foundation of the psychic life” (Storr, p. 283).

“Jung’s approaches contain rich materials which will contribute in our interpretation in an effective manner of the art works, literature products, tales, myths and dreams in particular. In addition to this, especially today there is a widespread tendency in the West towards explaining the mystical experiences with Jung’s approach. .... It is possible to say that individualization, which creates very powerful transformations in the human personality, is a religious process. It is beneficial to remind that according to Jung, the archetype of ‘God’

and the archetype of 'Self' can not be experimentally separated from each other. When the archetypes of the collective unconscious is examined, it could be seen that man has a 'religious function' and this function strongly affects man as powerful as sexuality and aggression stimulus in its own direction. Moreover, it could be experimentally shown that the archetypes of the collective unconscious are the correspondences of religious dogmas and these archetypes fit to all known religious ideas. In addition to this, individualization is a religious process and it also bears a religious content as of its results. At the end of this process, a person not only finds his own self, but also automatically has the ideal targets that the religious set out. Archetypes are revealed in the anonymous literature works such as myths, tales, dreams, as well as in the products of the artists" (Gürses, p. 80, 90).

"The spiritual life, to which art belongs and of which she is one of the mightiest elements, is a complicated but definite and easily definable movement forwards and upwards. This movement is the movement of experience. It may take different forms, but it holds at bottom to the same inner thought and purpose" (Kandinsky, p. 28).

"In each manifestation is the seed of a striving towards the abstract, the non-material. Consciously or unconsciously they are obeying Socrates' command-Know thyself. Consciously or unconsciously artists are studying and proving their material, setting in the balance the spiritual value of those elements, with which it is their several privilege to work. And the natural result of this striving is that the various arts are drawing together. They are finding in Music the best teacher. With few exceptions music has been for some centuries the art which has devoted itself not to the reproduction of natural phenomena, but rather to the expression of the artist's soul, in musical sound" (Kandinsky, *ibid*, 54).

"Artwork is a process of re-thinking towards the first aesthetical experience, this experience is like a mystical confrontation with the first creativeness of the cosmos, like a mystical meeting with creativity that lead to the emergence and continuity of existence" (Kuspit, p. 42-43).

### **I. 2. 1. Abstract Expressionist Painting**

Kandinsky emphasizes that the pure artistic composition comprises the elements of creating different forms which identify (1) the composition of the whole picture, and (2) the creation of the various forms which, by standing in different relationships to each other, decide the composition of the whole.

Kandinsky explains the second element as follows (ibid, p. 69):

“In the second element, many objects have to be considered in the light of the whole, and so ordered as to suit this whole. Singly they will have little meaning, being to importance only in so far as they help the general effect. These single objects must be fashioned in one way only; and this, not because their own inner meaning demands that particular fashioning, but entirely because they have to serve as building material for the whole composition”.

For instance, Cezanne’s ‘Bathing Women’ established in a triangle composition which is a good example of this. This is an old principle that lost its power with academic use. Yet, Cézanne gave life to the principle again and used it only for artistic purposes, not for ensuring a harmony between the groups. He distorts the form of human figure for an awesome justification. Both all figures and all organs follow the lines of the triangle. An example of using the triangle not for a mystical intention but only for making the group into harmony is the ‘Divine Family’ of Rafael.

“So the abstract idea is creeping into art, although, only yesterday, it was scorned and obscured by purely material ideals. Its gradual advance is natural enough, for in proportion as the organic form falls into the background, the abstract ideal achieves greater prominence” (Kandinsky, ibid, p. 69).

In this study, the journey of creation will be tried to be handled within the context of the effort towards reaching illumination and/or creativity together with the involvement of divine knowledge.

This study will deal with the mystical experiences of specific painters within the context of mystical inspirations in abstract expressionist painting. In addition to Wassily Kandinsky,

who is accepted as the leader of abstract art, artists such as Robert Motherwell, Barnett Newman, Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, who are among the pioneering figures of abstract expressionist movement, will be tried to be studied.





## Section II

### MYSTICISM AND CREATIVITY

Marion Milner\*, who is a successful painter in addition to being a mystic and psychoanalyst, emphasizes that the same psychological processes contain both creative expression and mystical experiences. .... Milner's mysticism and creativity is about a similar basic experience and that the principle of art is in a spiritual process.

Marion Milner collected creativity under three main headings:

- (1) The paradox of creativity is to deconstruct the space barrier between the essence and others, while it also protects this.
- (2) Mystics and artists share the same basic experiences. In both mystical and creative situations, pleasure (joy), integration, ecstasy, self-devotion, loss of consciousness and losing the concept of time are experiences. Mysticism is a dimension of the creative process.
- (3) Mysticism and creativity shall be considered within the context of mental health. Both creativity and mystical experiences are psychologically beneficial as they could remove themselves and others from distracted disintegration that arises from the tyranny of the conscious mind. However, neither mysticism nor creative expression singly has any healing power on their own (Raab, p. 79-80).

William James summarizes the mystical experiences in four different forms: Inability, noetic quality, temporariness and inertia. Underhill defines the mystical path with five different stages: (1) Awakening or transformation, (2) self-awareness or purification, (3) illumination, (4) submission or darkness of soul and (5) unity. According to Underhill, union, which is the real end of the mystical path, is characterized as a 'peaceful enjoyment under an intense security by empowered powers' Alternatively, Merkur defines the contexts

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\* Milner stated that she started to be interested in mysticism with his first book "A Life of One's Own". She made readings on mysticism that comes both from eastern and western approaches and discovered how the mystical experience will participate in her own physical awareness. Milner left aside his investigations about mysticism between 1940-1950 and directed herself towards painting. However, she came across with the problem of finding a subject for her paintings in 1950 and started meditative breath exercises and recognized that she could make use of two paints while painting the world (Raab, *ibid*, p. 83).

of spiritual awakening in four stages: (1) Preparation, (2) incubation, (3) illumination and (4) verification. At the illumination stage of Merkur, “the creative solution arises as the content of one or several religious experiences”. For that reason, James, Underhill and Merkur describe the idea of illumination as the “noetic quality” in the nature (Raab, *ibid*, p. 86). Following the spiritual discipline and long lasting preparations of acceptance, the person “acquires an active perception power” and reaches to the level of illumination (Scholem, *ibid*, p. 10).

Some explanations related to mystical experiences emphasize the ecstasy situation. For example, Laski uses the term ecstasy for defining a “range of experience” characterized by “being seen as derived from an unnatural resource, being entertaining, temporal, unexpected, rare, valued and extraordinary”. Maslow indicates that there are similarities between the pioneer experiences and mystical or acute identity experiences: In both situations individuals feel as if they are integrated with the world, work without effort, and become creative spontaneously deprived of any obstacles and fears (Raab, *ibid* p. 86).

According to Marion Milner, creativity and mysticism include the paradox of I and not I which coexist. For Example, Kakar says:

Kakar makes the following determination:

“... mystical experience is the most effective way of revealing the creative vein that goes deep into us all in some cultures and certain historical periods” (Raab, *ibid*, p. 80).

Hesse on the other side suggests the following:

“Although both the mystical life and the religious life of the society is a typical, general, and totally personal, these could only be experienced to the greatest depth by individuals, highly advanced people and the genius” (Hesse, p. 112).

Cemil Meriç, quotes as follows from the preamble of Jen Herbert, who translated Bhagavad Gita\* into French:

“Is mystical experience a reliable source of knowledge? The west says no to this. Religions have suspicions against the mysticism. According to philosophy, the water coming from this source is blurred. Out of logic: label attached to the forehead of the mystical experience. What logic? Reason is an indispensable comrade, however there are areas which it could not go into. ... No material and immaterial knowledge totally surrenders to this logic. ... The perceived reality and the word symbols do not fit one another. In fact the duty of logic is to ensure that we live in the world of visible things without getting into danger to the most possible extent” (Meriç, p. 143).

In his book named *Myths to Live By*, Joseph Campbell compares western creativity with the eastern creativity. The basic difference between two approaches is that they have derived from philosophical and religious concepts. According to Campbell, while the western creativity focuses on the personal success of the artist, ego (nefs) is not in the forefront in the east and is depressed. However, there is a need to emphasize that the west shall not be considered as a unique phenomenon and that the west shall be discussed within the context of time and space: Middle Age and Renaissance and Baroque artists demonstrate their own points of view. General understanding defines art as an area and describes it in dependence to religious and social traditions (Kedar, p. 13).

Campbell emphasizes that there is a significant (meaningful) difference between the system of values of west and the east: “The ideal path passes through the understanding of oriental individuals of the fact that himself and others are the essence of existence. The apparent purpose of the oriental religion is to enable the individual to experience and realize his identity in regards to this same essence. However, in the west, the ideal thing according to Bible is to have a telescopic relation with the created, therefore with the creator. It is to try to reach to the condition of the person at the very essence without feeling independent and being outside.

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\* Bhagavat-Gita is the pole star of India, perhaps the whole humanity. A creation of humanity, yet as divine as the God's words (Meriç, p. 145).

According to the far eastern understanding, being creative means being a part of life and death, namely a part of the nature, the creator. For that reason, it is necessary not to see the creativity as a final purpose and understand it only as a life experience (Kedar, *ibid*, p. 19-20).

Under the light of the foregoing discussions, this study examines the Western and Eastern mysticism under the component of introvert mysticism at the context of geographical spread as (1) Far East: Tao, Brahman, Tantric and Zen, (2) Western: Christian and Kabbalah and (3) Middle Eastern: Zarathustra and Sufi classification.

## **II. 1. Eastern and Western Mysticism**

Different perception of Eastern and Western mysticism principally arises from the understanding of expression of each experience that has been separated among themselves and use of the symbols. Mysticism in both groups will be compiled with references that go down to the source of divine knowledge.

“All knowledge that bears vitality, namely the knowledge that has an effect on the life has one single subject. Thousands of people are aware of this subject, it is declared in thousands of forms and is always the same reality. This is the knowledge of the vitality inside us, of the hidden magic within us, of the theology which each of us carry in our souls, a knowledge that all counter poles could be removed starting from the most inner point of our existence. An Indian calls this *Atman*, a Chinese *Tao* and Jesus the *compassion*. Compassion or Tao, continuously covers us. This is the light of God himself. If we open our heart gate for once, this penetrates within us, it fills into all children, all knowledge” (Hesse, *ibid*, p. 105).

Based on the fact that a mystic performs actively to the religious life of a community and does not come with the assumption that he acts in void, it could be said it lives within and above the historical experience when he strives towards transcendence (Scholem, *ibid*, p. 7).

“The wisdom of the Chinese Lao Tse, or of Jesus or of Indian Bhagavad-Gita, demonstrates clearly the common nature of the spiritual foundations of all of the nations similar to what art does in communities. The spirit of human beings which has the capability of loving, power of suffering, and longing for reaching to peace looks at us from any work completed from love, from any thought regardless this is from Plato or Tolstoy, or Buddha or

Augustinus, from Goethe to Arabian Nights Tale. However, one should not conclude from this that Christianity could be merged with Taoism or Plato's philosophy with Buddhism, or an ideal philosophy could be created by pouring into a vessel the worlds of thoughts which are separated from each other by time, races, climate and history. A Christian should remain as a Christian and a Chinese as a Chinese, and they shall continue their unique way of existence and thinking. Knowing that all of us could be considered as part of the eternal and endless being which have come apart, does not make any straight or indirect path followed on the earth, nor any single person or any single suffering indispensable" (Hesse, *ibid*, p. 110).

"Sufism is not different from the mysticism which is at the heart of all religions. ... All paths of mysticism are directed towards the same target, to the direct experience of theology" (Frager, p. 70).

Why does a Christian mystic always sees a Christian vision but not of Buddhists'; why do Buddhists see their own figures and not the Jesus or the Mary, why does Kabbalists see the only path of illumination in the Prophet Elijah. The answer to this of course arises from their own experiences and the symbols in their experiences (Scholem, *ibid*, p.15-16).

## **II. 1. 1. Far East**

### **II. 1. 1. 1. Tao**

Tao is generally referred to as the Yin and Yang, which entails the balance, seed, transformation and eternaty inside it.

"The wisdom of the ancient Chinese is a teaching of merit like any other wisdom, this is the Confucius\* part of the Chinese philosophy, however, this wisdom is also a mysticism for some part, it is a product of meditation in solitude, a breakthrough to the future, the most baking part of the spiritual life, and this constitutes the Taoist part of the Chinese philosophy. The common part of both of these is the respect and purity of soul, refraining

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\* Confucius (551-479 BC) was the founder of a conformist school of thought which was very influential in the social life of China and emphasized social obligations, etiquette and rituals (Lao Tzu, p. 20).

one self from any showing beauty and any sufism, an atmosphere of joy gliding over everything, a certain direction towards the world or worldly piety” (Hesse, *ibid*, p.111-112).

Taoism is the path of cosmic power of Tao, who created the universe, supports culture and state, saves goodness and punishes the evil. Tao in principle deals with the natural development; movements of nature and the living things blossom and weaken pursuant to natural cosmic laws.

Tao is the order: -it clearly demonstrates the rhythmic changes of the nature and its plexal processes. For that reason its progress could be foreseeable, understandable and definable. The forms which the Chinese name as “self so” or “nature” are that everything is natural from itself and as it is observed. However, Tao is super natural though it is within the nature- its deepest essence is the inner quality that makes everything as everything. This is managed by the laws of nature, however, it is still the laws themselves.

In Tao Te Ching (Daode Jing)\*, which is written by Lao Tzu (Lauzi)\*\*, it is mentioned of how everything develops from the alternating movement of Ying and Yang, and how it is shown that there is movement from one direction or another: Up or down, bright or dark, light or heavy, life or death (Kohn, p. 20-21).

In Chinese philosophy, the life rhythm, which has been vibrating throughout the universe, as well as the complementary principles are the actions of Yin and Yang.

“T’ai-chi T’u” diagram shows this principle. The symmetrical change of the dark Yin and the light Yang represents the circular changes.

Yin is related to the earth. It represents silence, feminine, intuitivism and power; it is a source of world and life; it provides what is required for surviving. Yang gives the power of the paradise, which is mobile and brings change; it is powerful, masculine and creative.

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\* Tao: Path, Te: Power/Wisdom, Ching: Inscription. These words make up the phrase. This was written about 2500 years ago. His contemporary Buddha was explaining Dharma (all of the Buddhist teachings) in India and Pythagoras was lecturing in Greece. Tao Te Ching is perceived as the most effective Chinese book of all times. It comprises 81 sections. It constitutes the foundations of the philosophical school of Taoism (Knierim, *ibid*, p.2)

\*\* It is assumed that Lao Tzu was born in Honan on March 24, 604 BC. His name means “Old-Young”, and he is called as the “Old Master” (Knierim, p.3).

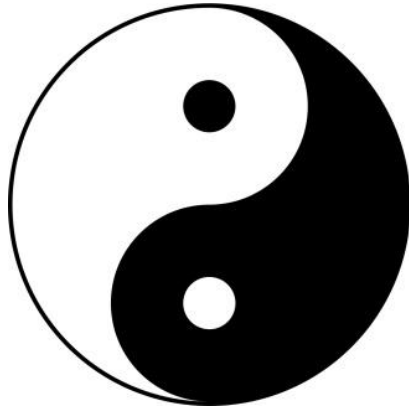


Table 1  
T'ai-chi T'u Diagram  
(Ione, p. 142)

When the Yin reaches to the pioneer, Yang gets back, when Yang pioneers, Yin is at the background: This is an eternal cycle. Points inside the black and white halves demonstrate that the seed of one is inside the other. Yin can not exist without Yang; and Yang can not exist without Yin.

Whereas Yin or Yang are “one” when they are single, “two” when they are together, and “three” when they unite in harmony; that is they create the final stage of existence (Kohn, p. 22). The ideal thing in the physical universe and the human world is the condition of being represented with the balance of Yin and Yang in the body and mind (Knierim, *ibid*, p.4). One who does this will re-balance the world. This perfect human being or the sage could be from any gender or class (Kohn, *ibid*, p.23).

## II. 1. 1. 2. Brahman

Brahmanism comprises the Veda\* teaching created by the Brahmins. Cemil Meriç (p.112) comments as follows for the Brahmins, which interpret Vedas and which are the older books of them,

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\* Veda means the Divine Knowledge. Vedas have four divine books comprising the hymns:

1. **Rid-Veda:** Vedas are the oldest, most valuable document of the religion. Each of 1028 hymns in Rid Veda constitute a whole. Rid Veda contains magic, puzzlement, philosophical and cosmogonic thoughts.
  2. There are interpretations in **Yacur-Veda** in addition to prayers to be read in sacrificial ceremonies. [*Recited with low voice in the sacrificial rituals.*]
  3. **Sama-Veda** gives the melody knowledge. [*Recited by the priests in the sacrificial rituals.*]
  4. The main subject of **Atharva-Veda** is magic. [*Recited in the religious rituals.*]
- (Meriç, *ibid*, p. 107-109)

“Brahmans are not an aura, they are a cloud. But that cloud is full of lightnings. But for the illumination scattered by these lightnings, a high portion of the Indian thought would have remained in darkness”

“The Creative Brahma created the material world diving into his own deepness in the yogic meditation condition by the help of immaterial tools within himself; however, he can not inspect or determine the images caused by it. These images make him surprised, muddled and distort his balance.

Nevertheless he faces with them, examines their depths from all aspects impartially, shows up against them with his own essence; because these images, though are seen as stranger and enemy, are the very products of his own essence. .... Brahma could see that, despite being comprised of the opposite, he unknowingly constitutes the creative foundation and the mutual effects and reactions of a crowded community of beings are important within the integrity that he unintentionally creates and thus the continuum of the world will be inevitable.

Unintentional creation continues to the future without encountering any obstacle. The process of creation does not continue every time as a cluster of facts organized according to certain fixed, internal laws. It maintains its existence with surprises that arise from itself.

Because creation is an uninterrupted process which knits the continuity of the universe, accompanies the global action from the beginning to the end, and transfers it to brand new starts. For that reason, Creation and Continuity are not two separate stages of wheel of life of the world which are written in a unique wording.

The thinking efforts intensified at the beginning, surprises that pass instantaneously during this effort and the granting comprehension which places what is not aimed at in the beginning what it deserves and makes it a part of the play, are the elements of the continuity of cosmic process which are effective in ensuring the cosmic ‘continuity’ which is in the meaning of ‘continuous creation’ ” (Zimmer, *ibid*, p. 287-288).



### II. 1. 1. 3. Tantric

The Tantric Buddhism which has arisen in India takes its roots from the divine texts which that are written in Sanskrit.

“During the bloody civil war which the central authority failed to ensure security following the collapse of Gupta Empire, those who needed protection and sought the remedy in the magical power of Siddhas\*, paved the way for the prevalent role played by Siddhas in the society.

Although the origin of Siddhas is the middle age India and its vicinity, they managed to affect Hinduism and Buddhism within a short period of time. The interpretation brought by Siddhas to the Indian religious ideology, and in particular to Shiva\*\* belief and to Buddhism, reached to a highly appreciated level as opposed to the traditional monastery Buddhism and lead to the creation of a new form of Buddhism. This is the Indian Tantric Buddhism.

Yantra, in its primary meaning, means any type of machine. ...-any type of mechanism that is constructed for providing energy for a certain purpose of human will. In Indian worship tradition, ‘yantra’ is the general name for the idols, paintings and geometrical diagrams of means of worship. ... Yantra is a machine used for stimulating the internal envisions, meditations and experiences. ...Envisions, meditations and experiences created by Yantra should not only be accepted as the reflections of the divine essence in the production and destruction of the universe, but also as the products disseminated from the spirit of the believer (since the global processes and stages of evolution are copied in the structure of human organism and its history). When used together with the yoga practice, the content of tantra diagram represents the stages of consciousness that enables the comprehension of the Universal Self (Brahman) with an introvert progress from the daily naïve ‘ignorance’

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\* In Sanskrit language, Siddha means the “perfect man” and means reaching a spiritual acquirement (Onat, p. 10).

\*\* Shiva is an important Indian Goddess who has five fundamental tasks: she is the creator, protector, destructor, concealer and inspirer. Shiva is responsible from the circular process that constitutes the creation, protection, melting and recreation of the universe. The title of burner is found to be suitable for Shiva, since she is responsible from the dissolving and recreation of the universe. The creation maintains itself by ensuring the balance between good and bad. When this balance is distorted, Shiva melts the universe and starts a new circle in order to detach the spirits from the physical world and leave them free (Onat, ibid, p. 10).

situation by means of degrees of yoga experience (Onat, *ibid*, p. 10-11).

“Tantras are the texts that by themselves explain the oneness of the creator to the human being, regardless of whether he is a Buddhist or not. Tantric hymn yoga practice was created in order to reach to this awareness. Indian Buddhism dissolved the yoga culture of unity of being within self, in other words, encircled the individual in an ancient cult that combines him with the universal spirit in a condition of ecstasy” (Onat, *ibid*, p. 12).

The art of Tantra has a common heritage even though it reflects the visual images with its own special methods (form diversity, diversity of tones and colors, powerful symbols, seek for knowledge away from aesthetical concerns and effort to create perception etc.); its foundations comprise the spiritual values encircling the Indian art (Mookerjee ve Khanna, *ibid*, p. 9).

#### **II. 1. 1. 4. Zen (Esoteric Buddhism)**

Esoteric Buddhism, or Mikkyō in Japanese (Ch’an in Chinese) comprises complex symbols, meditation and ritualistic system which aim at conceiving the abstract Buddhist doctrines through ritual experiences. Zen Buddhism diverges from other Buddhist schools which are characterized exoterically depending on Mahāyāna [great path /big vehicle] and Hīnayāna [small path/small vehicle] traditions, and it defines itself as Vajrayāna (Abé, p. 1).

In this belief system, it is assumed that the esoteric Buddhist rituals, the six big elements, which are named as *rodukai* (earth, water, fire, wind, space and consciousness) affect both the course of nature and the humanity (Abé, *ibid*, p. 2).

Esoteric Buddhism developed strong application methods as in the case of Tantric Buddhism in India. Its terminology and the fact that it is natural point out that it is affected from Taoism.

Zen understanding arises directly from transmission from mind to mind in the context of master-pupil relationship. The ‘innate nature’ in the mind is characterized as the Buddha-nature (Harvey, p. 153-154). In other words, Zen artists (painters) integrate the artistic creativity with the Buddhist belief in order to enlighten themselves in the process of creating an artwork (Ho, p.1).

Methods developed by Zen aim at directly touching the real nature of the person. In order to do this, the mind is required to get rid of its former behaviors, prejudices, restrictive thinking and even the ordinary conceptual thoughts. The basics for doing this is to control the lifestyle especially in a monastery environment and sustain a disciplined lifestyle which expresses the ego-desires in a restrictive manner: thus the person could develop a naturality and spontaneity that comes from deep (Harvey, *ibid*, p. 156).

The Japanese Esoteric Buddhism and in particular the ritual system functions as a practical technology which has a direct effect between middle age politics and economics and the literature production. Japanese Esoteric Buddhism has undertaken an important matrix function for the integration of science, art and knowledge in various areas in the middle age society, and this directly affected the characteristic religious, political and cultural discourse of middle age Japanese intellectual elite society. Esoteric Buddhism has contributed in the development of middle age Japanese art and literature (Abé, *ibid*, p. 2).

## **II. 1. 2. West**

In the West, and in particular in Christianity, mysticism has maintained its existence in exoteric aspect. The reasons that no progress was accomplished beyond the exoteric understanding in Middle Age art are explained below with quotations.

“During the most important part of the Western history, art and religion have completely been one in another. Middle Age and Renaissance artists such as Fra Angelico, Michelangelo and Raphael, who were under the auspices of the Catholic Church, granted a visual form to the teachings of Church in a process which has arisen the most permanent masterworks of the Western art. ... Although the artists continued to paint what is taught in Bible with characters as part of the common cultural heritage, we would have to wait for the Reformation, the rise of mercantile class, nationalization of Christianity and synchronization of culture for the art production in Western world to detach itself from religion.

Namely the religious images protected their weight until the rise of modernism in the late nineteenth century when the alliance between art and organized religion totally collapsed in the West. The early modernists, who promise to throw away the old behaviors and

traditions, identified the organized religion with the reactionist and authoritarian powers of what is being under destruction everywhere. These artists, who put a distance between themselves and the orthodox religious beliefs, leveraged the art horizon still as a divine practice, and on the other side they would protect the rhetoric of a transcendence and spirituality. In the work titled “On the Spiritual in Art”, which is an influential essay authored by Wassily Kandinsky in 1910, he carried the experience of spirituality from the religious area to the area of individual emotions, and he mentioned about the ‘roots of art in the dept of mystical introvert thought’ ”(Heartney, p. 266).

## **II. 1. 2. 1. Christian**

“Primitive, Eastern and early Western myth and ritual worlds could be accepted as the magnificent stage units. Because in the history of our species, which is still young, the respect for forms that are inherently transferred oppressed the innovations. Themes which come from times occurrence of which only God knows have been continuing with minor changes for thousands of years. However, in the near history of the West, the situation has started to change since the second half of the twelfth century. In this century, the terrifying orthodox tradition which has developed, started to dissolve at an accelerating speed and with its collapse, the creative power of the ascending individual has become free. Even in theology which constitutes the prevalent area of the past but dependent area of today ....Various understandings of the Christian belief which could not have been estimated before have arisen. In literature, secular philosophy and art fields brand new approaches which are remove from theology, are wider, deeper and have an eternal variety have become the real spiritual guides of the civilization and its constructive power (Campbell, p. 13).

“In theology, the word ‘transcendence’ is defined as the ‘*opposite of the immanent*, namely the relationship between the God and the physical things and the universe of mortal spirits, when his immanent nature is prior to and above it and when they are separate from God as the real existence’. From philosophical, in particular Kantian point of view, the term ‘transcendent’ means ‘beyond all possible experiences and knowledge limits’, namely it is beyond all forms and categories of experience and knowledge, *time and space, quantity* (unity, multiplicity or universality), *quality* (reality, being negative or being limited),

*relationship* (transformation, causality or complexity) and *modality* (probability, factivity or necessity). All of these are the preconditions or preassumptions of human experience and thought” (Campbell, *ibid*, 588-589).

## **II. 1. 2. 2. Jewish (Kabbalah)**

Since in this study Kabbalah is taken as one of the main elements of esoterism independent of the contexts of arithmology, symbol and numerical values, the knowledge based and interrelated analysis of the literature are given below.

“Kabbalah, which literally means ‘receiving’, ‘accepting’ and ‘receiving as revelation’, has the meaning of communicating the Godly words. Kabbalah, which is used in Hebrew to mean “tradition”, also means ‘inspired’ and ‘comprehended’. Kabbalah, which means ‘receiving’ in the middle ages manuscripts and which derived from the root ‘qbl’, corresponds to the meanings ‘understanding’, ‘comprehending’ and ‘accepting’. In mystical terms, Kabbalah means ‘accepting’ and ‘consenting’ ” (Burul, p.1). In other words, the ‘divine tradition’ is the sum of Jewish mysticism (Scholem, p.1).

The foundation of Jewish mysticism, which takes its source from humanity reaching the mystical maturity, is Kabbalah" (Burul, p. viii). Kabbalists define the secrets of the universe as a reflection of the world mysteries and secrets of the divine life. Kabbalah has been important for centuries for the Jewish people to understand themselves. Two worlds, which are defined as different from each other in the understanding of mysticism in other religions, being brought together in Kabbalah has been important for Kabbalah (Scholem, *ibid*, p. 1-2).

As "Isaac Luria\* became a part of this tradition, Kabbalah has become a subject of study together with Torah (the first five books of the Old Testament). Kabbalah is a tradition which defends that Torah has a secret meaning other than the external meaning and this meaning could only be comprehended as a result of a special training.

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\* Isaac Luria (1534-1572) is the Palestinian Jewish rabbi who provided for the development of practical Kabbalism by uniting Kabbalah and law. Luria’s life style which is named as Ari (Lion) is known as the Lurian Kabbalism. Among the teachings of Luria are the struggle between good and evil in order to provide for the creation of the world, final salvation of the souls, migration of spirits and ascetic practices for encouraging spiritual development (Fenton, p. 254).

According to Jewish mystical belief, Torah has two meanings. The first is the Torah which is revealed to Moses in Sinai Mountain and which everybody can understand. Those which are explained here rely on the impressions those who read it acquired. The other is the verbal Torah. The verbal Torah is a book which is revealed to people who could see them with the eye of heart and God has sent it to the real pious who could understand it. The verbal Torah is full of secrets and there is a first need to experience mystical and a hard life for understanding this. Kabbalists accept that this second book has in fact arisen from the first source” (Burul, *ibid*, p. viii). Torah law constitutes the sources of cosmic law of Kabbalah and is acknowledged in the history of the Jewish as a symbol of the universal process. It is emphasized that correct understanding of these symbols require both having a phenomenological comprehension and an ability of historical analysis (Scholem, *ibid*, p. 3). “Kabbalah, different from all other mystical echoes, rely on a balance and its unique principles are important” (Burul, *ibid*, p. viii). The Kabbalistic echo relies fundamentally on the balance of giving-taking and it adopts a lifestyle within this principle. The principle of taking for giving leads to the creation of a very different echo. Although in general the Kabbalist tradition is accepted as a common point of view for many mystics, in particular with the beginning of sixteenth century, the influence of Luria became famous among the Kabbalist community” (Burul, *ibid*, p. ix).

“Kabbalah has three main written books. These are (1) *Sefer ha Zohar*\*, (2) *Sefer ha Yezirah*\*\* and (3) *Sefer ha Bahir*\*\*\* books. These sources are anonymous and comprise

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\* The “Book of Magnificence”, which is known as “Zohar”, written as “zhr” or “zühr” in Hebrew, comprises the compilation of such issues as God, Angels, Spirits and Cosmology in the form of short stories with a unique narration and interpretation (Burul, s. x).

\*\* The first section of *Sefer Yezirah* is the “Thirty Two Paths of Wisdom”, and the other section is the “Book of Genesis”. The subject of the first section comprises the description of self-development of existence: The question of how the Being, which is absolute and limitless, restricted itself and shifted to the condition of real being, is responded in the first section. The other section deals with the development of Being outside himself (Burul, *ibid*, p. x-xiii).

\*\*\* The written text comprising of the discourses given by the Rabbi Nehvuniah Ben Hakana in the condition of trance and ecstasy in his experiences pertinent to the Merkabah period, is called the *Bahir* (Book of Light). The compiler of this book, which appeared in Provence in the second half of the twelfth century, is unknown. However, it is necessary to accept this person, who expresses the rituals of Rabbi Nehvuniah which are hard to be understood, as a good Merkabah master (Burul, *ibid*, p. x-xiii).

various sections. It is thought that the written Kabbalah, which includes basically the practices based on rabita (connection), is affected from the eastern mysticism. According to Kabbalists, Torah book has a unique importance” (Burul, ibid, p. ix).

“Zohar is the mystical interpretation of Torah. Zohar, the most important book of the Kabbalist tradition, contains not only the past interpretations, but also the future ones. So and so that some Kabbalist communities acknowledged it so famous as to surpass the fame of Torah” (Burul, ibid, p. xv).

“According to Kabbalah, God has hidden in the Torah which is written with the divine Hebrew letters. Therefore, Torah has an esoteric meaning in addition to its exsoteric meaning. The Kabbalist should deal with this unseen meaning and reach God by means of the letters” (Burul, ibid, p. 10).

These aritmological theories in Kabbalah, which are known as gematriyah\*, are one of the main elements of the Jewish exegesis understanding and esoterism” (Fenton, ibid, p. 244).

“Each word of the Hebrew alphabet has a unique divinity. The letters Yod, He and Vav, which resemble the God like names, have their most glorious positions in this divinity. The pronunciation characteristics of letters during the experience of the deep and mysterious journey between the dimensions through the names of the God have unique importance. The Kabbalist examines the letters down to its atoms as if he was a physicist and tries to reach the source of letters by means of the letters.

Letters are the composition of names and letters that constitute the world. This world is a means to reach to the essence of the letter. Each letter is combines in order to create this world” (Burul, ibid, p. 44-45). “Each letter has a numerical value in Hebrew and by calculating these numerical values of the letters in the words, various interpretations could be derived. This method is also applied in Christian and Islam tradition” (Fenton, p. 244).

“Kabbalah covers the teachings on metaphysical universe of Jews mixed with lettrism and numerism. It takes its philosophical foundation from Neo Platonism. Human beings have received reflections from the Creator in addition to bearing the characteristics of the created.

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\* A method of interpretation used in Judaism by the rabbis for deriving hidden meanings from the words (Fenton, ibid, p. 244).

With these divine characteristics, a person could communicate easily with the superior universes when he is still on this earth before dying. Spirits which materialize and separate from one another in this world seek for each other in order to unite again. According to the tradition, spirits which complete their period of waiting for uniting with the arrival of Messiah and become one with God” (Burul, ibid, p. 1,2).

## **II. 1. 3. Middle East**

### **II. 1. 3. 1. Zoroastrianism**

Zoroastrianism is one of the leading ancient beliefs which had direct or indirect effects on humanity (Boyce, p. I).

“Zoroastrianism is a religion which is created in ancient times by Zoroaster as named by the Greek. It is the dominating world religion in the period of Persian Empire which has ruled in Middle East between BC 559-BC 651. It has great influence on other religions. Today, its requirements are fulfilled in various parts of the world, particularly in Iran and India. The poetical form of their divine book, Avesta, combined prophecy with a tradition related to oracle and fed by prophets who had strived for expressing the personal contributions related to God with sublime pleasures, and dependent on this content, Avesta is written in a rich and powerful style.

Zoroaster believed that a message that addresses the whole humanity is entrusted by God to him and he selected the method of re-suggesting this message to ordinary people using simple words. His teachings were communicated from generation to generation in verbal form and finally were written in the period of Sasanians, who were the lawmakers of third Iran Empire.

According to prophet Zoroaster, people could reach to their creator only by being honest in the face of the sinful appearance of the world, without giving any sacrifice, without any behaviors done due to repentance or without any religious ceremonies, or without depriving the self, and thus man could reach happiness and experience ‘inner mind’. Zoroaster announced that there is an eternal war in the world between good and evil, that man should



chose the path of honesty in order to win the victory in this war and reach happiness” (Solmaz, p. 13-14).

Bilgin (p. 167) refers to the cry of Zoroaster “resist against evil” as follows:

“Evil is everywhere. Seek it in your thought, in your mind, in your tongue and in your actions, and resist against it. Turn into yourself, listen your inside, you will hear the whispers of the evil trying to tempt you. You will catch the struggle between the fervent true and the fearful evil inside yourself. When you reach to this secret, you are the God. By reaching to this secret, you will have sent the evil to where it deserves in hell. Just let your inner personality, that divine being inside you shine, so that the ‘I’ inside you resists against evil.”

“In Zoroastrian religion, fire is divine since it is the symbol of light and goodness. However the fire is not worshipped” (Solmaz, *ibid*, p. 46).

“In Zoroastrian religion, prayers are five times same as in Islam and done in the temple. A fire is lit continuously in a glass covered and closed section in the middle of the temple. Only the priests could enter into that section. Priests who are called ‘Mobed’, dressed in white clothes, enter into the section where the fire is located and lite the fire. Similar to Christianity, a bell is played three times in order to indicate the time of worship. The worship is performed while the faces oppose the fire, with the Mobed in the front and the community (men and women mixed) behind, with hands raised to air and open, by reciting praters from Avesta, which is their divine book.

Zarathustrians opted the word “Bahdin” as a name for their religion. Bah or Beh means ‘good, beautiful’ and this word could also be used to mean the ‘good religion’, ‘fine religion’. ... In the sacred book of Islam, the Quran, Bahdinis are characterized as ‘Mecusi’. The word Mecusi takes its roots from the Magu priests of Media, which the Greeks call as Makus or Magi. Since the letter ‘c’ is used in place of the letter ‘g’ in the peninsula Arabic, Magus is converted into Macus in this language. Words ‘Macusi’ or ‘Mecusi’ are created in order to mean that a person ‘belongs to the religion of Macus’ ” (Bilgin, *ibid*, p. 164).

“According to Bahdini belief, the God (Ahura Mazda) is ‘the highest’, therefore Ahura Mazda is ‘one and only’. Ahura Mazda is the rewarding and electing judge. He knows everything. He puts the rules, He is the teacher. Ahura Mazda is the friend, the protector, the strengthener. He does not change. Ahura Mazda is honest; such honest character restricts his superiority. Because, in a logical manner, he ‘may not bear the responsibility of neither creating the crime nor letting it be created. Because, the universe of Bahdinis comprise two eternal parts, namely two independent powers which vehemently struggle. These are the two basic powers which have existed since beginning: good and evil’ ” (Bilgin, *ibid*, p. 179).

“The ‘divine sixes’ of Zarathustra are the distinguishing elements of the spiritual world:

1. Aša: This is the most important one among the sixes. It means the “order of rights” and it aims as providing for the orderly processing of the universe, providing the order of the world without any failure, putting the social and religious lives of people into order, action of the nature in harmony, and sustaining the lives of all creatures in the nature in an order.
2. Vohu Mana represents “good mind” and “good aim”. It represents the inner occupation of the man which expresses the (a) efficiency of the spirit involving its motion, battle and flow and (b) its intellectual aspect involving the activities of the consciousness, perception, thought and remembrance.
3. Khşathra: Divine sovereignty.
4. Armaiti: It represents the correct thinking. Bahdinis, who understand man as a sort of microcosmos, believe that the “respect of the created towards the creator” increases the resistance of the spirit against evil.
5. Havatat: Health
6. Ameretat: Immortality” (Bilgin, *age*, s. 170-178)

## II. 1. 3. 2. Sufi

Sufism is integrated with the concepts of trance, unity of being and the self. “It could not be clearly described what Sufism really is; that could only be understood within the framework of a Sufi training. It is easier to say what Sufism is not: It is not a legendary wisdom, the esoteric aspect of Islam, a way of teaching, a religious system. ... A secret path, magic, mysticism or tradition. But each of these could bear the seeds of Sufism. Sufism is not a teaching or an activity that is specific to a special time and place. Like Zen, Sufism has no dogma in its own” (Spiegelman et al , p. 23).

“A person who is subject to Sufism is called Sufi, *dervish* or the *faqir*. *Sufi* has various meanings in Arabic, including “pure” and “wool”. (Early period Sufis used to wear cloak and they used to chase after inner purification.) *Dervish* is a Persian term which is derived from the word *dâr*, namely the door. (*Dervish* is a person who is between the worldly consciousness and the divine cognition.) *Faqir* is an Arabic word which means poor. (Poor means the spiritual poor who knows the need towards Allah. Their hearts are devoid of any connection to anything other than Allah.)

One of the most widespread terms in Sufi psychology is the self (*nefs*). This term could be translated as “ego” or “spirit”. Other meanings of *nefs* include “essence” and “breath”. However, in Arabic *nefs* is generally used as “selfhood”. Majority of the Sufi thinkers use the word *nefs* to mean evil habits and tendencies. Even at moments when we are sure about what is true, a piece of us forces us to do the opposite.

*Nefs* is not a very stabile psychological structure as a process created by the mutual interaction of the spirit and the body. There is nothing wrong in the essence of spirit or the body. However, the process through which these two are connected could deviate. When the spirit enters into the body, it is detached from its abstract roots and the *nefs* starts to be shaped. Thus the spirit is detained in the material being and it starts to receive its characteristics. Since the root of the *nefs* is both in the body and in the spirit, it has both material and immaterial tendencies.

Many Sufi thinkers mention about seven different levels of the development of *nefs* relying on the reference in Quran (Frager, *ibid*, p. 70-71):

Nefs		
Level	Divine Name	Colour
1. Nefs-i Emare (Tyrannical)	La İlahë İllallah	Light Blue
2. Nefs-i Levvâme (Regretful)	Allah (c.c)	Red
3. Nefs-i Mülhime (Inspired)	Hû	Green
4. Nefs-i Mütmainne (Serene)	Hakk	White
5. Nefs-i Râziye (Pleased)	Hayy	Yellow
6. Nefs-i Marziye (Pleasing)	Kayyum	Black/Dark Blue
7. Nefs-i Sâfiye (Pure)	Kahhar	Colourless/Black

Table 2  
Evolution Levels of Nefs

1. “Nefs-i Emare” [Tyrannical] level, which is the “commanding nefis” “arrogant nefis” or “nefis which directs towards evil”. The meaning of the term emmare is “naturally or repeatedly commanding”; for that that reason this level could also be referred to as the level of “bothering nefis”. Those who are under the sovereignty of Nefs-i Emmare could be occupied with all external forms of the religion, however, this is solely an empty demonstration performed for affecting other people. We are directed by our mental capacity at the first stage. This is the intelligence which does not believe in anything other than ourselves. It is devoted to acquiring commodity and power and satisfaction of the ego regardless of what it takes. It has not conscience ethics. We can see this clearly in the case of psychotics who cheat, steal and even kill people without feeling any repentance (Frager, *ibid*, p. 73-74).
2. “Nefs-i Levvâme [Regretful]: The meaning of levvâme, which is an Arabic word, is the one who resists against sin and when he is conscious that he committed a sin, seeks repentance from Allah. At this stage, although we do not yet have the capability of changing, we start to understand the negative effects of our egocentric approach that we have been used to towards the world. We enter to the circle of making a mistake, regretting from our mistakes and again making mistakes.

The sovereign of this level is still the wordly intelligence and the prime minister of it is egoism. However, its attitudes are softer compared to the qualities of nefis-i emare. These qualities are pride, hypocrisy, solidness of belief, trust in alcohol or drugs, temptation and desire towards worldly enjoyments (Frager, *ibid*, p. 86-87).

3. “At the level of Nefs-i Mülhime [Inspired], we start to be pleased from prayer, contemplation and other spiritual activities. We start to experience the religious and spiritual realities which we had heard or read until that moment. This level is the start of the real Sufism practice. Among the qualities of this level are generosity, satisfaction with small things, submission to Allah, humbleness and repentance” (Frager, *ibid*, p. 89).  
“Nefs-i mülhime level has a complex structure with positive and negative areas as well as love and inspiration. Egoism, imitation and hypocrisy are still dangerous at this stage. This stage could be the most dangerous stage in the development of the nefis. As the first time, if the real spiritual experiences and cognition pass through the filter of ego, an excessive arrogance could come to existence. This situation is seen among the creative artists, writers, musicians and scientists. Such people could experience inspiration situations or creative explosions. The danger here is that they consider the inspiration is in themselves. Another danger that is specific to this level is that people believe that they completed their education and there is no further need for any more spiritual education” (Frager, *ibid*, p. 91-92).
4. “The sovereign of the Nefs-al Mutmainne [Serene] level is the wisdom, and the prime minister is love. Among its characteristics are trusting Allah, good deeds, spiritual pleasure, worship, being thankful and showing consent. The struggles that took place in the previous stages have generally ended. The person has got rid of the heedlessness. One of the foundations of this level is the opening of the heart. The light that comes out of the heart conflicts with the negative, deceiving tendencies of the lower levels of the self.  
The esoteric effort required at this stage is to decrease the feeling of being separate from Allah and to start to combine various identities and tendencies which we have developed” (Frager, *ibid*, s. 93-95).
5. “At the Nefs-i Râziye [Pleased] stage, we do not only be consent with what falls on our part, but we also consent to the sufferings and tests coming from the Allah. The stage of the consent nefis is generally different from the way we generally look at the world.

Other qualities of this stage is the istiğna (being content), ihlas (good intention), contemplation and remembrance.

6. Nefs-i Marziye [Pleasing]: Ibn-i Arabî points out that this stage is the esoteric marriage of the nefis and the spirit. In Arabic, nefis is feminine and spirit is masculine. Ibn-i Arabî states that this esoteric marriage will give fruit a child that is settled in the heart. The spirit inspires the self in order for it to elevate itself and then the heart follows it. The esoteric struggle and the feeling of multiplicity have disappeared. At this stage, we perceive that all of the power of motion comes from the Allah and we may not perform anything on our own. We are no more afraid of anything and we do not want anything. We do not have any desire to talk or communicate. Our exoteric mand has been destroyed, however our esoteric mind has become a palace. Our heart is in the state of ecstasy” (Frager, *ibid*, p. 96-98).
7. “Rare people who reach the level of Nefs-i Sâfiye [Pure] have completely exceeded their intelligence. There remained no ego or self behind. Only there is this meeting with Allah. This stage is named as ‘dying before dying’. Those who reach this level are in a state of continuous praying, for that reason they have no worldly intelligence” (Frager, *ibid*, p. 100-101).

“Colors which correspond to each level of nefis are frequently used in the dream interpretations by the Sufi masters in order to evaluate the level of the dervishes. For example, if the dervishes see that they are dressed yellow in their dreams, this could be a sign that they are struggling at the level of nefis-al raziye. Then the master includes the remembrance word of Hayy (heart remembrance) into the spiritual practices together with other changes in the spiritual tasks” (Frager, *ibid*, p. 73).

“Sufis are divided into two big groups. Although the belief of oneness of being is the common belief in both of these groups, in order to reach Allah the first group remember the names of Allah at certain number and at each stage of the spiritual journey a special name of him, perform additional prayers in addition to obligatory prayers, eat less, speak less, sleep less and perform ascetism by refraining from the world and the graces of the world, go into retreat which is forty days, namely they pray singly in a cell which is narrow and

specifically constructed for this purpose, as well as relying on dreams, mystical discoveries and miracles, and all of the sufi paths which rely on this foundation are called ‘those who keep the path of names of Allah’.

The second group consider getting away from the public through solitude, ascetism, remembering the name of Allah, and even some special dressing like the cap as a hypocrisy. According to the members of this group, reaching to Allah is only through love and ecstasy. ... the fact that the being is single and absolute, which is Allah himself, and that all of the appearances of the being are solely the appearance and emergence of the absolute being, develops not through knowledge, but through vision, understanding, hearing and being. Music and dancing are almost obligatory for the seeker since these lead to ecstasy and ferment the transcendent.

Since the people of this second group ignore any condemnation by the public, and even they act in a manner to be condemned by others and they insult their own selves, this are called the “Melametis”, namely the “Condemners”.

Since the Melametis do not abstain from actions condemned by people and even they rely on the principle of being condemned knowingly and willingly, they are defined as a group that is more suitable for becoming esoterics” (Gölpınarlı, p. 177-178).

## **II. 1. 3. 2. 1. Mevlânâ Celaleddin-i Rûmî [Jalal al-Din al-Rumi]**

Mevlevi order is the most prominent branch of Sufism in Anatolian territories. “Mevlevi takes its roots from the Melametis that were mentioned above. Rumi has been a cheerful representative of the malamati style which started by his father and continued with Şems” (Gölpınarlı, ibid, p. 407).

“All resources indicate that the mevlevi path is a path of ecstasy and love, however that this ecstasy is not an ecstasy that will lead to abstaining from the world, but one which will let one reach the gnosis” (Gölpınarlı, ibid, p. 186).

“In mevlevi order, remembrance of God is done only by repeating the name ‘Allah’ and is not a pillar of the spiritual journey.

Rumi says:

Allah Allah Allah. We belong to Allah, we came from Allah, and we are destined to Allah' ” (Gölpınarlı, age, s. 187-188).

“Among the Sufi paths, one which pays most attention to the ritualistic practices, namely one which has the most ceremonies is the Mevlevi path” (Gölpınarlı, ibid, p. 358).

“In Mevlevi, ‘sema’ is a means to incur love and trance. Every Mevlevi absolutely knows how to make sema. The learn how to perform sema and make meşk [exercise simultaneously] is called ‘to perform sema’, and the Mevlevi who learned sema is called the ‘semazen’ ” (Gölpınarlı, ibid, p. 355).

Sheikh Nail Kesova mentioned about four parts of the sema ceremony, which he defines at a way of reaching the ecstasy:

1. Part: Approaching to God [towards God]
2. Part: Reaching the God [with God]
3. Part: Being a part of the God [in God] (this part represents the ecstasy)
4. Part: Coming back

Kesova says: “At the end, we try to understand our mission” (Simons and Broughton, ibid, 14’ 39’’ – 15’ 28’’).

Emine Mira Burke, who is an American painter, sculptures, performance artist and a second generation Sufi Mevlevi, supports this determination with the following words:

“There is this palpable stillness at the center of the whirling that exists that you can tap into. And you fell as if you’re in the eye of the hurricane. Everyone disappears, and it feels easier to remain whirling than to stop.” (Simons and Broughton, ibid, 20’ 07’’ – 20’ 25’’).

“Music, which is an inseparable pillar of sema, is one of the main principles of Mevlevi order since the time of Rumi. In the time of Rumi, rebâb and ney were particularly used to be played during sema. Rebâb is almost a divine musical instrument for Mevlevi order, however there is also ney” (Gölpınarlı, ibid, p. 419).

Gölpınarlı quotes from Halil Dikmen the following:



“In the recent times, our music which is called the classical Turkish music, has created masterpieces within their bodies for its two branches, being religious and non-religious. Mevlevi rituals, which are among our religious music, are monumental artworks in terms of their broad incorporation” (Gölpınarlı, *ibid*, p. 426-427).

“Rumi’s most famous poem begins with the sound of the reed flute, the ney:

Listen to the ney

How it laments its separation from the reed bed.

It’s a wonderful symbol for man’s separation from God. Kudsi Ergüner, comes from a long line of Turkish ney players. Thanks to Rumi, the ney is nothing less than an allegory for mankind. ‘When the reed flite is not played, so it’s not, it doesn’t have any spirit in it. So the human being is the same situation when there’s not the inspiration of God. There’s no any harmony, any melody in him.’

For the breath, which is the symbol of life for Sufis, Ergüner says : ‘Symbol of the life, symbol of the spirit, symbol of the animation of the material. And that’s why in Sufi ceremonies, the Whirling Dervishes. The ney becomes the beath who invokes the name of God.” (Simons and Broughton, 13’ 20’’-14’ 32’’).

Sheikh Nail Kesova underlines the fact that “The most important message of Rumi is ‘unity’: Rumi says: ‘We have come to unite, not to’ ” (Simons and Broughton, *ibid*, 15’ 42’’ – 15’ 51’’).

## **II. 1. 3. 2. 2. İbn-i Arabî**

It could be apparently seen that the basic problem for İbn-i Arabî is the being. Perception of this being is possible only through passing certain stages, as in the case of Rumi and Sufis in general. In the final analysis, the aim is to perceive that everything comprises the creator.

“The most famous scholar of Sufism, İbn-i Arabî, explains that there are four degrees of practice and cognitions in Sufism. Each stage is built on the stages previous to it.

- (1) Sharia (the law of religion) is the foundation of the other three stages. In Arabic, Sharia means the ‘main path’. Sharia comprises the teachings of wisdom and ethics, which is found in the majority of religions. A high majority of Sufis are Muslims and for that reason the sharia on which Sufism is traditionally built is the sharia of Islam. Sharia shows us the path of living honestly in this life. ... Without an orderly life established based on ethical principles, not any mysticism could be blossomed.
- (2) The literal meaning of the dervish order (mystical path) is the walkway which the Bedouins follow from oasis to oasis. This path is not a path which is clearly has no exit signs. ... Whereas sharia means the external practices of the religion, dervish order is the spiritual practices of sufism. The guide which we require for finding the true path is the Sufi master, sheikh. Sharia purifies our external and internal being. Dervish order is designed for making our inner clean and purified. These support one another.
- (3) Reality [truth] expresses the esoteric meaning of the good deeds and guidance to the true path, which are inherent in the sharia and dervish order. Truth is the direct expression of the mystical reality. Without this experimental conception, we are confined to follow by mechanically and blindly imitating those who have reached the station of truth. Reaching the truth confirms and reinforces the practices of the first two stages. Before truth, all practices are solely imitations.
- (4) Gnosis is the knowledge of deep wisdom [sageness] or spiritual reality. This is the knowledge of reality which could be obtained by very few people. This is the station of the prophets, saints and sages” (Frager, ibid, p. 14-15).

“pedant: either west or east

scholar: both west and east

sage: neither west nor east” (Cündioğlu, s. 78).

“İbn-i Arabî explained these four degrees. At the level of law (sharia), there is ‘yours and mine’. Namely, the religions law secures the individual rights and the ethical relations between people. At the level of sufi path (dervish order), ‘mine is yours, and yours is yours’. Dervishes are expected to act brotherly against each other - to open their houses, hearts and sacs to each other. At the level of reality (truth), there is ‘neither me nor you’. Sufis who

have reached perfection perceive that everything comes from Allah, that they are only servants and they do not own anything. Those who comprehend the truth have exceeded all externalities including the properties and in general all fame and positions. At the level of gnosis, ‘there is neither you nor me’. The individual understands that everything is Allah and no body is other than Allah. This is the final target of sufism” (Frager, *ibid*, p. 15).

In his book which it characterizes as

“It was the last day of Muharram month of the year 627 of the hegira. I was in Damascus. I have seen the messenger of Allah, our prophet Muhammed in a true dream, holding a book in his hand. He said to me: ‘This is the book of *Essence of Wisdoms*. Take this and announce this to humanity. Let everybody benefit from it.’ I thought it is necessary to comply with the orders of Allah and his messenger and obey to the orders of those who have the right to command us. As I was pointed out by the Prophet, without any addition nor any omission, I have accomplished my intention to explain this book titled *Füsûsu’l Hikem* to people” (İbn-i Arabî, s. 9).

İbn-i Arabî says the following:

“There is nothing other than good and evil in the existence. Nothing can pass to anything. It may only combine with it in a veiled manner. The one which is penetrated is veiled with the penetrator. The thing here is the inner thing, what is meshed with it is the external thing. Namely, the inner is a source of feeding for the exterior. Like the water passing through wool, it increases its dimensions and widens it. If Allah is to appear, men will be veiled and covered with ‘Him’. Men become all names and attitudes of Allah, even his seeing and hearing power and his perceptions. If men are to emerge, they are covered by Allah and become ‘Him’. Consequently Allah becomes the ears, eyes, hands, feet and all capabilities of mankind” (İbn-i Arabî, *age*, s. 48).

“The expression “*hüva lâ hüve*” (he/not he) as used by İbn-i Arabî is a very important key in terms of understanding the duality and even the multiplicity in his language” (Alpayağlı, p. 231).

“İbn-i Arabî diagnoses a magical power in the sage [insan-ı kâmil]. This is not a surprise; because sage is someone who has an extraordinary spiritual power by definition. In this sense, it is natural that his cognition engages in an activity which is extraordinary.

This extraordinary power is called the *himmet*, which means an intensified spiritual energy. According to İbn-i Arabî, an Arif [wise man], if he wants, may affect on an object by intensifying all of his spiritual energy; and even may transform an object, which is not in existence, into existence. Briefly, an Arif could make anything subject to his own will. He has the power of cognition” (Izutsu, p. 361).

Izutsu goes into the following discussion with Füsûs reference:

... what sort of a thing is this spiritual strength which is called the *himmet*? Perhaps we could perceive it easier by resembling our imaginative capacity. Namely, we can generate and imagine everything we want, even something which is not existing in this exterior universe. An object which is imagined in this way exists only in our own minds. Similarly, a real sage who has reached the level of authority may create something which does not exist by his spiritual power. He creates this so as to exist in this external world, not solely as an imaginative reality. This is apparently a sort of ‘creation’. However, one should not identify and mix this with the creation of the Allah” (Izutsu, *ibid*, p. 362, 363).

İbn-i Arabî states as follows:

“If a person stays in a dark place for a considerable period of time without seeing the light of the sun, and when that place is opened with colorful and variety of windows on one day, when the sun arises in the morning, a different light reflects on each of those glasses. A different color is reflected towards inside according to each glass the light touches. That person will claim: ‘The color of the sun is green; red...’ He will fall into dreams and imagination. However, sage will know the reality of the issue and act accordingly. He knows that: Color of the water is the color of the vessel. He

further knows that: It is the light of Allah which enlightens the whole being” (Muhiddin-i Arabî, p. 106,107).

İbn-i Arabî ends his opinion with the following phrases:

“You know yourself with a knowledge that is different from the one you have known before. After you know Allah, the spiritual enlightenment you have gain will lead you to know yourself” (Spiegelman et al, p. 49).

## **II. 2. Psychoanalytical Approach**

Various definitions are made on creativity since 1950s. The definition which is generally acknowledged by the psychologists is: It is used in the same manner in “technical and popular literature”. Namely, creativity is as unique as solutions, opinions, conceptualizations, artistic forms, theories or products (Raab, *ibid*, p. 87).

The term reverie is used within the contexts of creative expression and provides for an additional parallelism between neurophysiology, mysticism and creativity. For example, Willis Harman and Howard Rheingold tried to determine the place of creativity in a certain brain wave pattern characterized with low frequency alpha and teta rhythms. Harman and Rheingold use the concept of *flow* within the context of creativity:

Various creative people speak about the thoughts and inspirations as a being which flows in a spontaneous flow or as a being coming out of a source like a bubble. Despite the fact that the periods they live in, their nations and areas of interest are different, the descriptions of these people surprisingly demonstrate similarities. It is apparent that this is more than only a metaphor. Most probably the moment of the *flow* arises the time at which we have full access to unconsciousness opinion processor (Raab, *ibid*, p. 87-88).

According to Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, flow is marked with certain emotions found in the mystical experiences. In particular the mystical experience with the loss of consciousness of the self; the flow makes people experience “their awareness of themselves separate from the actions they perform”.

Csikszentmihalyi, discusses that religion, art and music also attempt to create order inside

the consciousness. For example, Yoga is one of the planned activities of the flow. He explains as follows: Both try to create a condition through concentration which is cheerful and self-forgetful. ... The basic difference is that while the flow tries to strengthen the self, the purpose of Yoga and Eastern technique is to try to suppress the self. Samadhi, which is the final stage of Yoga, is the threshold of reaching the Nirvana, which combines individualism with the universal power like a river that only joins to the ocean. For that reason, it could be said that the Yoga and the flow are directed towards totally opposite results.

Painting provides a safe environment where imagination (reverie) is safe, and both the painter and the audience can understand the logic of "I/not I".

According to Milner, mystical experiences experience the reality same as the painting does. Milner uses the divine foundation in order to express what will happen when the consciousness affects the whole body (Raab, *ibid*, p. 88-89).

For Milner, mysticism and creativity are not the same - the creative expression involves more resonance between the conscious and unconscious minds in order to create and art work. However, in mysticism, there is a permeable border between consciousness and unconsciousness; such that both I and not I exist together (Raab, *ibid*, p. 90).

As a result, Milner presents the relationship between mysticism and creativity with an interesting and non-traditional perspective. The effect of mystical experience on the mystical person is deeper than the impact of creativity on the artist. However, Ellwood emphasizes that, within the cultural contexts and as a result of interpretation, this situation is rather related to their natures than the experience itself (Raab, *ibid*, p. 94).

### **II. 2. 1. Carl Gustav Jung**

In the context of religious psychology of mysticism covers the aspects of studying whether the (a) roots in the process of brain; (b) its healing qualities towards pathologic effects, and (c) the religious experience which identifies the characteristics or its combination. ... A mystic uses his own experiences as a mystic and integrates this into his life in a meaningful manner.

William Parson summarizes three categories involving various psychoanalytical approaches towards mysticism. (1) The classical perspective approaches to mysticism as regressive and pathologic. (2) Adaptive school considers mysticism as a healing and therapy. (3) Transformalists permit mysticism to engage in dialogue with transcendent and epigrammatic arguments.

Since the transformalist school has newly arisen in the psychoanalytical community, most psychoanalytical approaches towards mysticism are included under one of the first two categories. For example, Freud represents the classical approach with his opinion that the mystical conditions express a situation of oceanic consciousness, namely where the separation between the object and the subject disappears.

The transformalist school (Jungian tradition) is related to the archetypes and collective unconscious concepts (Raab, *ibid*, p. 80- 81).

As in the case of mysticism, grouping of psychanalytical approach in relation to creativity focuses on one of two headings:

- (1) Creative expression is affected as a phenomenon dependent on the regression. However, scientists do not include pathology in this label. In his essay titled “Creative Writers and Day Dreaming” where he studied the creative process, Freud tells the following:

“The creative writer creates a fantastic world loaded with emotions with a great seriousness like a child playing a game and he separates this from the real world in a decisive manner. In other words, the creative expression could be perceived as a continuum of the childhood fantasies directed towards the desire of completion.”

In other words, the process of creation visualizes a memory that has been lived in the past. As a result of this a desire appears and this orientation is expressed through creative work. According to Freud, the creative product is like the continuum of the games played during childhood, such as a “day dream”.

Hanna Segal determined the roots of creativity in a depressive position: “A new work is

the product of a paradox that arises from the stimulus of re-creation or restoration.”

- (2) The second camp towards psychoanalytical views focuses on conscious or unconscious roots of creativity without any emphasis of regression. For example, Lawrence Kubie defines a creative person as “one who have the capacity to use his unconscious functions more freely compared to other people who could potentially have capacity at the same degree”

According to Rollo May, creativity is the expression of efforts towards disintegration; a struggle of emergence of new specifics of existence which ensure harmony and integration.

Marion Milner is named as the only psychoanalyst who overlaps creativity with mysticism in a meaningful manner. Despite the fact that Milner appreciates the polarity and mythological orientations in the personality typologies of Jung, she criticizes Jung since he does not sufficiently emphasize the physical characteristics (Raab, *ibid*, p. 82-83).

Freud basically emphasized pathology within the framework of the daydreaming model mentioned above. Freud allegorically identified the dream symbols, considered these as the masked traces of the psychological shocks that the dreamer experienced during his/her infancy related primarily to his/her parents, and shifting from dreams to mythology, consider the myths in question as the symptoms of equivalent shocks within the formation processes of the people they belong to.

In the *Totem and Taboo*, Freud says:

" we establish everything on the assumption of mass spirit as in the case of emergence of the spiritual processes in the life of an individual. ... Moreover, we think that the feeling of guilty felt for a work has been continuing for thousands of years, and that this continues its influence for the generations who would not have any idea about this work" Campbell, *ibid*, p. 51).

“It could be said that in an art work, we defend ourselves against the fantasies which Freud considers as the source of human creativity and which we define as the desire to realize an



intention in our unconsciousness, and meanwhile we respond to these fantasies so as to get into 'harmony'. Thus, within the framework of the daydreaming model, it is possible to consider the art work as an effort towards creating a meaningful image for both 'now' and also for the 'past'. Something important, remarkable or disturbing has happened in the past; the person has established sovereignty on this event which has turned into a fantasy or a daydreaming over time and he reached to a conclusion according to himself by expressing his sovereignty by means of an artistic product. On this axis, the art work is a work of 'reconciliation' which was appeared from the clash between a past event and today's conditions, similar to a clear dream. Whereas a dream looks like an art work, sleep resembles the 'mental condition that has gone into the creative process'. In other words, the trance condition of creativity looks like a twin of sleep. Whereas the day creativity reaches the art work under the 'trance' condition, the night creativity reaches the dream in 'sleep condition'. The mental conditions immediately before and after a sleep, constitutes a transition process between two thoughts" (Budak, s. 15).

"One of the most important discoveries in relation to dreams was that they were retrospective. To put it more clear, the point that the dreams express a 'regression over time'. Namely, dreams do not refer to the current time, but to desires and fantasies related to infancy-childhood times. If we approach the issue from the point of art criticism, we could easily say that, as in the case of fantasies that appear in dreams, there are unconscious fantasies in the art work and that these fantasies are related to the experiences in relation to the childhood period.

Dreams, similarly, demonstrate a 'regression in the formal sense'. The meaning of this is that the method of expression of dreams is childish. Both 'regression mechanisms' mentioned are important in terms of making explicit the relationship between the art work and the dream. In fact, it is generally accepted that an art work means such type of a regression.

Ernst Kris, who is known as the founder name of the psychoanalytical art criticism, characterized the creativity in the field of art as a 'regression under the control of ego'. When considered from this point of view, dreams are the most similar in many aspects to the

art work among the formations created by human mind. When considered from the point of view of dream types, the similarity between art work and dream is striking” (Budak, *ibid*, p. 19).

“Jung does not put the weight on history and biography in his dream and myth interpretations as much as he does for biology and he emphasizes on the fact that these institutions are valid during the life span in terms of the existence of these institutions and the structural formation” (Campbell, *ibid*, p. 657).

“Although the memories might have been forgotten at the level of consciousness, their traces still live at the unconsciousness. Additionally, these involve all unconsciousness perceptions and their effects so as to require minimum energy in order to come out to the consciousness. We should add these the ball of unconscious ideas which are weak enough not to exceed to the threshold and are hard to be distinguished. Finally, personal unconscious involve any type of spiritual content which does not compromise with conscious approach. These constitutes a group on their own and usually they are not accepted as ethical, aesthetical or intellectual and are suppressed because of their irreconcilableness. A man can not always think and feel the good, current and beautiful, while he maintains an effort to keep up an ideal level, those who fail to do this are automatically suppressed. As it can occur in everybody every time, if a function, for example thinking, creates and directs the consciousness, this means that the emotions are pushed back and thrown to unconsciousness to a high extent.

The other section of the unconsciousness is the part which I call as non-personal or collective unconsciousness. As the name resembles, its content is not personal but collective; namely they do not belong only to one person, but to all group of individuals and generally to the whole nation and even to the whole humanity. The content of this is not related to the life span of the individual, it is the product of instinctual forms coming from birth.

Jung gives the following example in order to better explain the other part which he defines as collective unconsciousness which he mentioned above:

Despite the fact that a child does not have opinions coming from birth, he/she has a highly developed brain which operates in quite a specific manner. This brain genetically comes from his ancestors; it is the storage of spiritual processing of the whole human race. The child has a ready organ which carries the form of processing throughout the history of mankind. The first images have appeared in the brain which are the basics of human thought as well as the instincts-this is the whole treasure of mythological motifs...

Jung comments as follows:

‘Deeper levels of the spirit lose the individual singularity as one goes deeper towards the darkness of soul. As one goes deeper, he comes across with the spiritual systems that function autonomously; these increasingly become collective and at the end they become universal and disappear in the materiality, namely the chemical essence of the body. ...‘at the bottom’, spirit is simply the world’ ” (Campbell, *ibid*, p. 660-661).

However, it should not be thought that the spirit is the defining content of the “archetypes”.

Jung comments as follows:

“I repeatedly come across with the wrong opinion that asserts the decisiveness depending on the content of the archetype. Namely, it is thought to be a sort of unconscious opinion (if such a definition could be accepted). It should be noted once again that archetypes may not be determinative due to their contents, they can only be determinative depending on their forms and this is a very limited degree. A primary image could only be determinative when released to consciousness and therefore it is full of conscious experience material. ... Archetype is empty on its own and purely formative (*facultas praeformandi*-prementioned *prayer ability*), it is nothing else than this, it is an a priori given representation probability. The representation itself has not been hereditary, it has only taken forms and in this sense the

archetypes correspond to instincts from every aspect. They are only identified with the form. The existence of instincts can not be proved more than the existence of archetypes, because they cannot concretely show themselves” (Campbell, *ibid*, p. 661).

“Jung explained the transcendent function of psychology as the fuse and merger of unconscious and conscious contents. Treatment is the process of abolishing the separation between unconsciousness and consciousness and appearance of a new behavior. Dreams are the fantasies which occur automatically and the steered fantasies are the most important sources of materials that reveal the transcendent function” (Spiegelman et al, *ibid*, p. 153).

“Teachings of Jung and the teachings of Sufism are in a great harmony and both share many common opinions within psychology. Jung is aware of the importance of knowing the potentials which Jung wants to be revealed at the consciousness of the patient by means of transcendent processes. Sufis share the same idea with Jung in this matter; the guide (mentor or therapist) is asked to teach to the patient the qualities that are hidden in the patient beyond what is seen. The therapist could only make his patient reach to his own perception level” (Spiegelman et al, *ibid*, p. 160-161).

### Section III

#### ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONISM: MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE

The art of painting, under the influence of discovery of photography and gradual developments of camera technologies, got rid of the concern of transferring figure and nature identically on canvas. Many artists realize that they could transfer color and patterns in texture in abstract manner on the surface. Instead of describing the nature in a realistic manner, they started to paint their creativity and awareness to the canvas without any reservation. Many artists who directed themselves towards abstraction and started to get interested in mythology, psychology and belief systems. They reflected these systems to their own philosophical stance and interpretations related to existence.

Robertson and McDaniel express the definition in its simplest form when they said: “The strongest shelter of the spiritual art in twentieth century is the abstract (non-objective) art” (Robertson, McDaniel, p. 5).

Art historian Alfred Barr Jr. used the term abstract expressionism as the first time for defining the improvisations of Wassily Kandinsky in 1929. Art critic Robert Cuates used this term in 1946 in the New Yorker magazine. As opposed to other art movement, abstract expressionism has no historical or stylistic borders.

Abstract expressionist art movement finds its expression in the gestural and/or non-objective paintings. This movement which continued with New York center in between 1940-1955, is also named as the “New York School” or “Action Painting” (Jones, p. 1).

When studying abstract expressionist painting, Adolph Gottlieb, Franz Kline, Williem De Kooning, Robert Motherwell, Barnett Newman, Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko can be named as the core group. Cy Twombly, William Baziotes, Sam Francis, Hans Hofmann, Arshile Gorky, Gerhard Richter are among the representatives of this movement. An important part of those specified above were encouraged under the patronage of Peggy Guggenheim in the “Art of This Century Gallery” which was opened in 1942.

Abstract expressionist artists found the chance to get the payment of their creations by means of government organizations until 1943. Works Progress Administration (WPA), is a public organization which created employment power in order to be used in public projects in 1935 in the middle of the Great Depression (October 1929-1939) (Hills, s. 1). Federal Art Project (FAP), which was established within the context of WPA in order to encourage the artists to ensure that they produce public works and FAP continued its activities between 1935-1943. This project, which ensured putting weight on the public works by employing many abstract expressionist artist such as Pollock, de Kooning, Rothko etc., created an important influence on the scale of American painting which later will be covered the “Pop Art” painters in 1960s.

Although FAP ended up with few number of works that reached to perfection in terms of quality, it has broken the elitist perception in the public against art and integrated art into the society (Rodgers, “Federal Art Project”, p. 1). In summary, as it was put by Arshile Gorky: “poor art for poor people” (Anfam, *ibid*, “Abstract Expressionism”, p. 1).

Within the body of FAP, more than 5 000 artists created 2 500 mural paintings, over 17 000 sculptures, 108 000 paintings, 200 000 lithography, etching from 11 000 designs and 2 million silk screen posters from 35 000 designs. Whereas FAP banned nude works, the artists were encouraged to explain particularly the American Dream. In addition to this, around 2 million children were educated in FAP classrooms (Hills, *ibid* p.1). However, “as it was put by Holger Cahill, the manager of FAP, this project which aimed at integrating the daily life of the society with art, could not demonstrate the expected success” (Lynton p. 231).

“Abstract expressionists, which are named as the New York School, have never been associated, however, their common will was to reach to a compromise on ordinary issues and techniques, and more importantly to create abstract art that reflects the personality, spirit and emotions of the person in a dynamic and mobile form” (Fortenberry, Melick, p. 218).

“The creative power of the symbol could only move with the interaction of the innocence which is inside and outside, and the hidden content could only be revealed in this manner” (Zimmer, *ibid*, p. 11).

Transcendent beliefs are very important particularly for Pollock, Rothko and Newman (Plummer, “Abstract Expressionism”, 1). For example, Rothko and Newman are in the expectation that the audiences should experience the sense of diving into a deep meditation or reaching to a revelation when looking at the abstract surfaces or forms (Robertson, McDaniel, *ibid*, p. 5). It is observed that Pollock is inspired by Jiddu Krishnamurti\* before his maturity term (Plummer, *ibid*, “Abstract Expressionism”, p. 1)

When the age after the Second World War came, progress was made to the point of avoiding religious form from the subject and ignoring the religious beliefs of an artist while ordering a work. One result of this trend was the ‘Rothko Chapel’ in Houston, which was established by the Catholic believers in order to keep the paintings of the Jewish artist Mark Rothko as a place of meditation which they designed in order to serve as a non-sectarian worship place. Another series of work which exceeds the religious borders is a series of abstract paintings by the Jewish artist Barnett Newman in 1958-1964 in order to represent the “Stations of the Cross” (Heartney, *ibid*, p. 266).

After the World War II, a small group of artists who were poor and middle aged, ensured that the existence of the movement became clear in the international art arena (Jones, p.1). With this start, the movement created the first American visual arts in acquiring international status and creating widespread effect in the world (Anfam, “Abstract Expressionism”, p. 1).

The term Art Informel/Informalism/Lyrical Abstraction/Tachisme\*\* in Europe was used by the French critic Michel Tapié as a correspondence of a type of lyric abstract painting between 1940s and 1950s. This is equal to the abstract expressionism in USA. Tapié has

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\* Born in Madanapalle city of India, Krishnamurti was selected as the “world teacher” by Theosophical Society when he was 13. His speeches and writings are not connected to any religion. He never thought himself as an authority and never allowed pupils to gather around him. In his speeches, he points out that the reality is a country without roads and an individual could only reach to reality by awareness and by integration with life. He passed away in 1986 when he was 90 (Krishnamurti, p.1).

\*\* Abstract expressionism, which is in fact a lyrical way of expression, is different from the tachist paint art, which is also a lyrical paint expression, in terms of its paint texture. The tachist painter is faster compared to expressionist. Besides, paint calligraphies and stains are not oriented towards a structure destroying one another in the tachist. Expressionist is more destroyer from this aspect. In addition to this, the lyrism of the expressionist does not reflect a fineness and elegance. Abstract expressionist paint usage does not look like a lyrical abstraction. It has a depression, a pessimistic world, a psychological explosion, however a need for the color vitalism that painters having an inner depression reach (Turani, 1/4, p. 1).

made art informel popular with his book “Un Art Autre” which he prepared in 1952. Art Autre and Art Informel terms are used as synonyms. However, some critics take Art Informel narrower and Art Autre with wider tendency as it covers both figurative and the abstract works. In English, the term Informalism is used synonymous with Art Informel (Chilvers, p.1).

Art Informel, which was suggested by Michel Tapié in relation to the works of Wols (Alfred Otto Wolfgang Schulze), started in the midst of 1940s and developed in parallel to the action painting in 1950s.

In this type of abstraction, the form finds its meaning as it helps the artists express their motivation.



Figure 1  
Wols: *Yellow Composition*, oil on canvas, 730×920 cm, 1946–1947.  
Neue National Gallery, Berlin  
([www.oxfordartonline.com](http://www.oxfordartonline.com), 6.6.2017)



Art Informel pioneers are Jean Fautrier, Wols, Georges Mathieu and Hans Hartung, who are originally from Paris.



Figure 2  
Mathieu, Georges: *les capétiens partout*, oil on canvas, 295×600 cm, 1954.  
([www.cantrepompidou.fr](http://www.cantrepompidou.fr), 6.6.2017)

After the World War II, the generation which also included Hans Hartung, “first faced towards ‘figurative abstraction’ and then towards the ‘abstract’”. The only point that connected these artists, who perform experiments that are different from each other, was that they lived in Paris though each came from different countries. École de Paris (Paris School) previously covered artists such as Chagall, Soutine, Pascin, Modigliani who lived in Paris between 1910-1930 and who were not French. However, after 1945, the name was started to be used for all artists, whether French or not, who lived in Paris and who worked in abstract style. For that reason, it should be considered that the Paris School represents a very important period rather than being a movement or a group of artists. Charles Estienne, Julian Alvard, Michel Ragon ..., who were the critics and art historians of the period, published many papers in this issue, but yet failed to demonstrate a final definition” (Sönmez, p. 24-25).

Michel Ragon summarizes the situation with the following words:

“I totally reject this narrow definition, namely using the definition of Paris School in place of the painting art in the French tradition. To count only a couple of examples, Paris School is not only represented by Wols, but also Hartung ...” (Özerden, p. 22).

Guilbaut puts this more clearly as follows:

“As painting depends on aesthetics, pleasure and standards of rooted cultural tradition, at the very center of culture, painting requires a delicacy that is acquired as a result of a study, analysis and examination that lasts for centuries, painting could have only be done in France. French critics who were blinded with this prejudice, acted mercilessly while handling American painting, they looked at American paintings as if they were totally derived and based on the works of Paris school. ... art of every nation blossomed by means of Paris” (Guilbaut, p. 57, 73).

Following France, countries where the gestural painting movement was seen include Spain (Manolo Millares), Italy (Alberto Burri, Emilio Vedova, Antonio Corpora), West Germany (Zen 49 Group, Karl-Otto Götz), Holland (Ger Lataster), Belgium (Louis Van Lint) and Greece (Yannis Spyropoulos) (Cooper, p. 1).

German painter Gerhard Richter, who was born in 1932, is a student of Karl-Otto Götz. Richter, who leaves aside the traditional concerns in the subject and composition, focuses on the process not in terms of transfer of knowledge, but also in the context of influential power.

Richter was criticized because he worked in various styles. However, rejecting the formal consistency which is artificially maintained, could be defined as a conscious conceptual action which provides for free research of the basic foundations of painting.

Richter, who started to use shrill colors and grand gestures with his painting named “Abstract Painting 726” which he painted in 1977, quitted to create any more works related to subjectivity (Grisebach, p. 1-3).



Figure 3

Richter, Gerhard: *Abstract Painting 726*, oil on canvas, 250 cm x 350 cm diptych, 1990.  
Tate Gallery, London  
([www.tate.org](http://www.tate.org), 6.6.2017)

In 1954, the critic Charles Estienne, used the term *Taschism* in order to define second generation French painters. Estienne established the group named “*Salon d’Octobre*”, which comprises young artists including Jean Degottex.



Figure 4

Degottex, Jean: *Métasigne 2*, oil on canvas, 280 cm x 120 cm, 1961.  
Guttklein Art Gallery, Paris  
([www.guttkleinfineart.com](http://www.guttkleinfineart.com), 6.6.2017)

In his book named “L’Art Informel” which was published in 1962, Jean Paulhan emphasizes that Art Informel has destroyed all previous techniques and art philosophies. Besides, referring to the philosophers and poets who inquired the relationship between the foundations of reality and the relationship between ego and the world, Paulhan asserts that art informel brings a new perspective to the rational thought and to the world which experiences can not reach (Cooper, *ibid*, s. 2).

Critics separate abstract expressionist painters into two groups: (1) whereas Pollock, de Kooning, Kline, Motherwell and Francis are defined as gestural and action painters, (2) field painters include Newman, Rothko, Reinhardt.

Following the definition by Harold Rosenberg of the first group mentioned above, namely the abstract expressionist painters as “Action Painters” in *Art News* magazine in December 1952. After this, abstract expressionism was labeled as a style such as impressionism etc., (Plummer, *ibid*, “Abstract Expressionism”, 1).

Harold Rosenberg, who first found the name “Action Painting” and who is a leading representative of the modern American art states that:

“... museum directors and managers, art trainers and gallery owners show up themselves for organizing exhibitions and making explanatory labels long before the paint on the canvas dries. Critics on the other hand visit the studios of artists as if they were fame hunters in order to catch the art of the future and to grant fame to many new artists. Art historians on the other hand are ready waiting with their cameras and notebooks in their hands in order to make sure that they do not miss any uncommon detail. The tradition of the ‘New’ limited all other traditions to ordinariness.”

Change has tremendously speeded up due to the interest towards change itself (Gombrich, p. 611).

Clement Greenberg used the color field painting concept in his article named “American Type Painting” in 1955 in reference to the use of color in wide areas by the modern painting (Anfam, “Colour field painting” p. 1).

“The reason that expressionism uses deformation is to reveal the most important part of reality, its real existence which is powerful and shivering and the hardest to be shown. As it was put by Kuspit: *The reason for painting with various materials is not to deal with their absolute physical existences and make ‘art’, but, with a Baudelaireian approach, to protect the freshness of the power of imagination, and to remove from its place the secret logic of our relationship that is full of ambition towards reality, and to use it. In expressionism, the paint has a bad-tempered power of creating poem; this situation which arises is totally ironic and even unmeaningful, and the flow of poem that has arisen from there is different. Abstractness comes to us a new concrete image, a conceptual image by being used against its own content, and it comes so powerful that the experience it creates is like a wet and fresh piece of reality*” (Baykam, p.25).

In early 1940s, abstract expressionists emphasized that their works sit on the continuity of both ancient Greek philosophy and the native American belief system. [As it was indicated before, this continuity is diagrammed by Freud in *Totem and Taboo*.] Artists from New York placed themselves to the age before civilization and were experiencing their opinions over the so-called “primitive” reason (Jones, *ibid*, p. 2).

As opposed to the surrealists who were influenced by Freud, abstract expressionist artists were affected from the universal symbolism which recalled renewal, fertility and primitive motivation.

The basic interest of abstract expressionism arises from this tragic and eternal status of occurrence (Anfam, *ibid*, “Abstract Expressionism”, p. 3).

In the “Guardians of the Secret”, the guards both sides are on duty for protecting the maze comprising the lines in the middle. This is defined as the chaotic hidden corners of the collective unconsciousness.





Figure 5

Pollock, Jackson: *Guardians of the Secret*, oil on canvas, 122,9 cm x 191,5 cm, 1943.  
Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco  
([www.sfmoma.org](http://www.sfmoma.org), 6.6.2017)

Barnett Newman indicates that, although the path to access God is lost, the modern abstract expressionists are still in search of creating the sublime art.

Surrealists put the emphasize on the use of a technique called automatism and the unconscious creativity which they define as the most important variable of the first stage of abstract expressionism. In automatism, the artist tries to separate the drawing hand from the conscious control of the mind and to motivate it directly from unconsciousness (Jones, *ibid*, p 4). Traces that occur randomly are towards saving the unconsciousness from the bonds of logic and free it; and to create more permanent and deeper effects (Plummer, *ibid*, “Abstract Empressionism”, 1). According to Barbara Rose (Rose, 1967: 165), “The target of automatism is to present humans with the possibility of revealing the ‘symbols’ which are not perceived by the consciousness and which exists in the unconsciousness” (Gör, p. 65).

Whereas surrealists use automatism as a technical recommendation in order to start a more conscious process in the movement of drawing, for abstract expressionists automatism is the

primary tool to directly reveal the emotional condition of the artist based on the fact that the technique acquires a final value on itself.

As it was mentioned above, abstract expressionist painters are divided into two groups. Whereas Pollock, de Kooning, Kline, Motherwell and Francis are defined as gestural and action painters who use the calligraphic brush impacts and lines, Newman, Rothko, Reinhardt, who are named as the field painters create their individual traces with saturated hues created by soaking, scrubbing and brushing the wide pigment areas on the canvas (Jones, *ibid*, p 2-3).

As the works of abstract expressionist painters become mature, they shift from the figurative paintings of de Koonings and biomorphic forms of Gorky and Baziotes to the non-figurative paintings of Kline, Motherwell, Newman, Pollock and Rothko and they become more individual.

Pollock and Kline created their large scaled works using their whole bodies. Newman and Rothko used the big dimension with the concern of involving the audience inside their art works.

### **III. 1. Selected Painters**

In this study, American and Turkish abstract expressionist painters coming from different roots who were observed to realize their artistic experiences under the effect of philosophers, psychiatrists and poets who inquired the relationship between the foundations of existence, reality, ego and the world, were studied. Each of them were arranged in the order of date of birth among their nationalities.

This arrangement was supported by a letter summarizing in an article which consists five sections. The article contains the aesthetic views of Adolph Gottlieb and Mark Rothko which they sent to New York Times in 7 January 1943.

- “ 1. For us, art is an adventure in an unknown world which could be discovered by those who desire to engage to take risk.
2. This world of imagination is away from any illusions and is strongly against the conscience.

3. It is our duty as an artist to ensure that the audiences sees the world not by their own perspective, but through our point of view.
4. We prefer the simple expressions of the complex. We are on the side of a larger form, because it is more comprehensible. We want to present the plane of painting once again. We are on the side of flat forms, because it destroys the illusion and reveals the reality.
5. There is widely accepted opinion among the painters that it is not important what a person paints to the extent it is painted well. This is the essence of our academy. There is nothing like a good painting about anything. We asserts that the issue is very important and only the tragic and timeless subject is important. That is way we defend a spiritual relationship between primitives and the archaic art.

Therefore, if our works embodies these beliefs, that everyone who has connected spiritually to worldly things such as internal decoration, house paintings, paintings hung above the fireplace, American scene paintings, social paintings, purity in art, works made for earning reward money, to National Academy, Whitney Academy, Corn Belt Academy, horse chestnuts, stereotyped stupidities etc. should be despised.” (Guilbaut, *ibid*, p. 100)

### **III. 1. 1. American Painters**

#### **III. 1. 1. 1. Hofmann, Hans (1880-1966)**

American painter, teacher and theorist born in Bavaria. He opened his own school under the name “Hofmann Schule für Moderne Kunst” in Munich in 1915. His fame was spread after 1918. Due to the time he allocated for education, he produced works under the effect of Cubism until 1930s. After moving to New York in 1932, he gave lectures not only in “Art Students League” within the framework of Paris school, but also in “Hans Hofmann School of Fine Arts” which he opened in 1933. He again started to paint regularly in the summer school he opened in Provincetown in 1935. In this period, he produced paintings mainly in



portrait, figure, nature, interior and still life under the effect of Matisse. During 1930s and 1940s, Hoffman took a leading role in transferring the modernist theories and new artistic developments.

As he was giving lectures in 1958 and devoted himself to painting, he was started to be known as one of the leading actors of abstract expressionist painting.

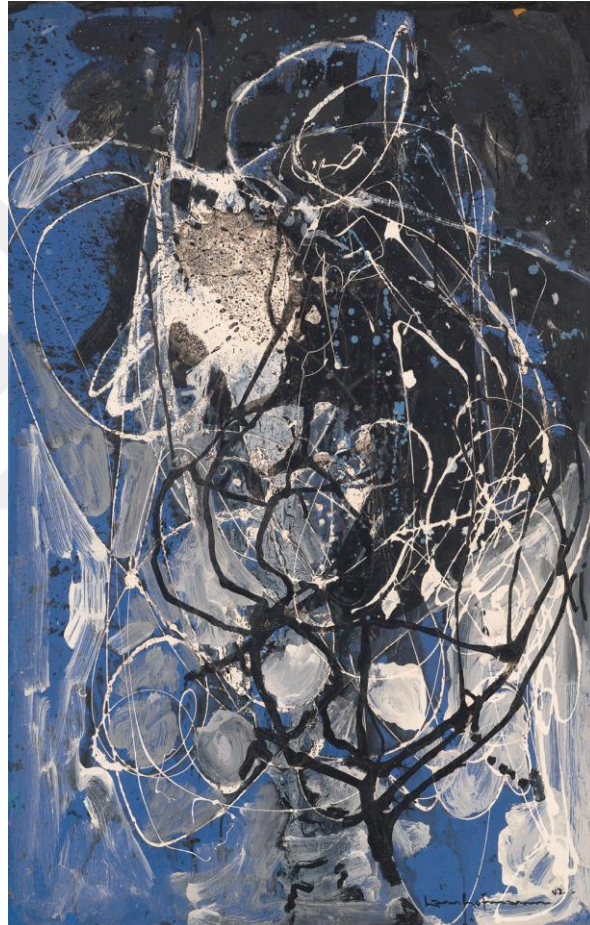


Figure 6

Hofmann, Hans: *The Wind*, oil, duco, gouache, India ink on board, 111,4 cm x 70,5 cm, 1942.  
University of California, Berkley Art Museum & Pacific Film Archive  
([www.hanshofmann.org](http://www.hanshofmann.org), 7.6.2017)

In 1942 when he met Pollock, “The Wind” (Berkley University of California, Art Museum), which he used oil, gouache and India ink on board, is one of the first examples of the action painting. With “The Third Hand” in 1947, Hofmann developed a different form based on colors, gestures and textural contrasts based on abstraction. In 1950s, following the dense surfaces and impulsive applications which he used in harmony with the action painting, the

pictorial dynamic structures which he created with a rigorous concern, spatial illusions and color relationships made his paintings distinguishable from others (Goodman, p. 1-2).

For Hofmann, with the effect he took from Pollock, it could be concluded that he could be evaluated within the framework of transformalist psychoanalytical approaches which associate archetypes and collective unconscious concepts. It was observed that Hoffman used his capabilities freely without incurring any regression.

### **III. 1. 1. 2. Gottlieb, Adolph (1903-1974)**

American painter and sculptor. In 1935, he founded “The Ten” with Rothko, Gatch, Baziotes and Bolotowsky. With the effect of the idea of surrealists that Freudian psychology and unconsciousness is an artistic material, he started to work for FAP in 1936 (Rand, “Gootlibe, Adolph” p. 1).

Gottlieb uses the shapes as a apperent symbol in his paintings in relation to crowded or empty space. This spacing is constructed in a meaning involving the universal signs such as; condition of sun, sound, explosion and being/not being (Hack, p. 145).

As in the case of “Blast I”, which is a part of “Burst”, the series of images which are radically simplified, on which he worked till his dead, two different shapes were used in the whole series: A black mass at the bottom part of the painting, and a red circle above it. These forms are directed towards maintaining not only the relationship between the object and the ground or name and verb in the landscape picture in terms of diversity of color, size and placement, but also the theatric conflict condition of the two protagonists as in the history of painting (Rand, *ibid*, “Gootlibe, Adolph”, p. 1-2).

Based on this determination, on the basis of the Burst series, it could be said that Gottlieb’s abstraction of two opposite elements while creating an atmospheric background using the canvas in a vertical position, reflects the opposites such as light/darkness, hot/cold, masculine/feminine, open/closed, day/night in harmony and cohesion within the context of Yin and Yang, which is the cyclic rule of the Taoist universe.



Figure 7

Gottlieb, Adolph: *Blast I*, oil on canvas, 228,7 cm x 114,4 cm, 1957.  
Museum of Modern Art, New York  
([www.moma.org](http://www.moma.org), 7.6.2017)

### **III. 1. 1. 3. Rothko, Mark (Rothkowitz, Marcus) (1903-1970)**

The American painter born in Russia (Latvia). He moved to the USA as refugee in 1913. He legally changed his name to Mark Rothko in 1959, which he first started to use in 1940. He earned most of his income from WPA, and part of it from the lectures he gave to children in Brooklyn Jewish Center.

In early 1940s, Rothko left expressionism under the effect of European Surrealism and the collective unconscious theory of Carl Gustav Jung.

Years from 1947 to 1950 were important in the artistic development of Rothko. First, he left working in figurative painting and was focused on not only the individual but also the universal human impulses. Thus, he leaved the previous influences and developed a very

specific approach to abstraction. His first paintings in this period comprises the amorphous mass of colors that spread across the entire surface on the canvas which he eliminated the figure, as in “Untitled No. 18”. In the paintings which he created by simplifying the soft luminous rectangular forms released on a stained field, which is exemplified in his work titled “Untitled” in 1949, it could be seen that he created a more radical solution. In the large scaled canvas of Rothko, reflection of shimmering and flickering lights and the colors that collusion creates the impression of a constant motion. Forms with intense color and form create a single unified image which merges the sum of each component on a single canvas.

As in the case of Rothko’s work titled “Untitled No. 13”, Rothko emphasizes that he puts the main idea always above the form due to the intention to directly express the profound human emotions.



Figure 8

Rothko, Mark: *Untitled No. 13*, oil and acrylic on canvas, 242,3 cm x 206,7 cm, 1958.  
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York  
([www.oxfordartonline.com](http://www.oxfordartonline.com), 7.6.2017)

Rothko has the following expression in “The Tiger’s Eye” magazine in 1949:

“The progression of a painter’s work ... will be toward clarity; toward the elimination of all obstacles between the painter and the idea, and between the idea and the observer.”

In his interview with Selden Rodman in 1957, he says the following:

“I’m interested only in expressing basic human emotions—tragedy, ecstasy, doom ... and if you ... are moved only by their color relationships, then you miss the point.”

(Clearwater, p. 1-5)

Traces of Rothko’s inspiration could be traced in reference to the motion within the order emphasized in the Aša, which is counted as the most important of the divine sixes of Zarathustra that is the distinguishing elements of the spiritual world in Zoroastrianism and which means the order of true right.

### **III. 1. 1. 4. de Kooning, Willem (1904-1997)**

The American painter born in Rotterdam, Holland. The artist, who arrived at the USA through illegal means, opened his first exhibition in the Charles Egan Gallery in New York in 1948. “de Kooning was a leading figure of abstract expressionism whose painterly gesturalism transcended the conventional definitions of figuration and abstraction and substantially influenced art after World War II” (Rodgers, "de Kooning, Willem", p.1 ).

de Kooning integrated the biomorphic and geometric shapes and lines, which he composed with high-key colors, with the architectonic structure in his abstract still lifes on which there is clear influence of Miro, Arp, Picasso and Mondrian in 1930s and early 1940s. His works are characterized by an inherent of stylelessness as he continuously tried for the different themes and techniques.

He worked in various projects within the body of FAP during 1935-1936. As it could be seen from his painting titled “Black Untitled”, during 1945-1950, he emphasized the irregular form compositions in his abstractions as he reduced the colors in his palette to black and white.





Figure 9

de Kooning, Willem: *Black Untitled*, oil and enamel on paper, mounted on wood, 75,9 cm x 101,6 cm, 1948.  
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York  
([www.metmuseum.org](http://www.metmuseum.org), 7.6.2017)

Between 1950-1955, relying on the explanation which he made while rejecting the dominant formative principles of abstraction, which is

“It’s really absurd to make an image, like a human image ... But then all of a sudden it becomes even more absurd not to do it.”

can be said that de Kooning did not leave figurative works, which is exemplified with the second “Woman” series (Grunenberg, p. 1-3).

Representation by abstraction; aesthetical autonomy which shows itself in the ceaseless oscillation between the figurative painting and the landscape painting shows itself in the works of de Kooning with a smooth transition from “Woman in Landscape” to the series “Untitled”.



Figure 10

de Kooning, Willem: *Untitled XIX*, oil on canvas, 202,6 cm x 177,8 cm, 1977.  
The Museum of Modern Art  
([www.moma.org](http://www.moma.org), 7.6.2017)

In his work titled “Untitled XIX”, brief and emotional dark colored brush strikes reflect the mysterious views of the human figure in the environment where de Kooning is located.

Reflection of the inner world of de Kooning, which could be defined as slippery, to his art with different indicators and changes, creates a situation which could be explained by an unintentional creation process of Brahmanism overcoming all obstacles and progressing towards the future.



### III. 1. 1. 5. Gorky, Arshile (Adoian, Vosdanig Manoog) (1904-1948)

American painter of Armenian origin born in Van (Dzov). At the beginning he was affected from the French Impressionists. In 1930s, he emulated Cézanne and created landscape paintings using prismatic colors. After that, based on the early period paintings of Picasso, he discovered Synthetic Cubism and related work by Léger. He worked with FAP (Rand, “Gorky, Arshile”, p. 3-4).

Gorky’s late period which started with the landscape works in 1942, carries the main examples of synthesis of different points of view, which is a characteristics feature of abstract expressionism. It was Gorky’s historical contribution to successfully implement his personal interests and love for nature, by means of fusing the structuralism of the abstract tradition and the surrealist images of the unconscious (Seitz, p. 15).

“Paintings of Gorky have a striking influence; soft, sometime decorated with bewitching color compilations; strained, from time to time coated with thin lines. In the paintings, the myth has been a motivating element” (Lynton, *ibid*, p. 238).



Figure 11

Gorky, Arshile: *The Liver is a Coxcomb*, oil on canvas, 186 cm x 250 cm, 1944.

Albright-Khox Galery, Buffalo  
([www.albrightkhox.org](http://www.albrightkhox.org), 7.6.2017)



The use of acidic color, biomorphic and calligraphic lines in the work of Gorky titled “The Liver is a Coxcomb”, characterizes the maturity period of Gorky (Plummer, Robin. "Gorky, Arshile", p. 1).

It could be observed that the myths brought by Gorky from his childhood were fed from the stories and tales in Anatolian culture; and he afterwards adopted the French school and represented a richness which is rare in the American modern painting. In summary, it could be seen that he has created a synthesis by assimilating the abstract expressionist echole of which he was a member and the Paris echole where the cultures could express themselves in a free way.

### **III. 1. 1. 6. Newman, Barnett (1905-1970)**

American painter, sculptor and writer. As a result of his anarchist attitudes against the order, he rejected to work for FAP (Plummer, Newman, Barnett p. 1). He destroyed most of the realistic paintings in 1922 and 1929. During 1939-1940, Newman, acting on the opinion that the great depression made the traditional subject and style invalid, stopped painting with the concern of seeking a fascinating content.

In the article titled “The Plasmic Image”, which was published between 1943-1945, Newman emphasized that he strives towards reviving the divine concept of the sublime “art which through symbols will catch the basic truth of life which is its sense of tragedy”.

Newman, who associated the universe and light applications in painting of Thomas B. Hess, who was the author of the book “Abstract Painting: Background and American Phase”, which was printed in 1951 and the first in its subject, with the mystical concepts involving placement, division and measurement found in Kabbalistic Jewish lore, explains his purpose with the universal terms as follows:

“The audiences, while standing in front of my paintings, shall feel that domes with vertical vaults encompass themselves. This necessity gives them the awareness that they exist in the whole universe.”

His attitude away from show off which he adopted different from the action painting which represents the gestural aspect of abstract expressionism that is highly appreciated, lead Newman to question his own art understanding and he did not create any work between 1956-1957.

In the titles in Newman's works, the single situations (Onement), moments (Day One), choices (The Way) and individuals (Ulysses) are to be highlighted. In the interview he gave to L. Alloway in Artforum in 1965, Newman indicated that "in titles I try to evoke the emotional complex that I was under".

With the "First Station" which is the first of the "The Stations of the Cross", which is a 14 series work completed in 1958-1966, Newman announced that he turned to more ascetic then before. The stations articulate an extraordinarily severe language.



Figure 12  
Newman, Barnett: *First Station*, magna on canvas,  
197,8 cm x 157,3 cm, 1958.  
Robert and Jane Mayer Hoff Collection  
([www.nga.gov](http://www.nga.gov), 7.6.2017)

It is observed that all of 14 works were made almost in the same dimensions. The background of the first station has a beige color. The opaque black vertical line located to the left side of the canvas expands the perception of the viewer. The inner sides of two thin lines on the right side are very clearly identified. On the other side, the black paint to the canvas with a curling movement, creates an impression of a smoke that is ascending by whirling.

As a conclusion, the religious references in the paintings of Newman express, by using excessive power with black and white paint on bare canvas, paints applied from one end to the other in order to create fiery spreads in particular around the zips, and a provoking open-ended dialogue between death and human sufferings end of which is unknown (Anfam, "Newman Barnett", p. 1-3).

It could be said that, with specific reference to the Stations of the Cross, the zips used by Newman represent the existence itself in reference to the "Thirty Two Paths of Wisdom" and "Books of Genesis" of Sefer Yazirah, which is the second of the books written in Kabbalah, and that the existence limited itself and tried to pass to the real being stage. Areas outside the zip create the impression that the development of the existence outside itself was the subject.

### **III. 1. 1. 7. Kline, Franz Rowe (1910-1962)**

American painter. He got his first academic training in Boston University between 1931-1935 and in London at the "Heatherly Scholl of Art" from 1937-1938 as an illustrator and draughtsman. These two main areas emerged at an early stage that would later develop into a powerful contribution to the "gestural" trend within abstract expressionism.

Kline, who was influenced by Gorky and in particular from de Kooning since 1949, has clearly seen that oil medium, as a material, has a calligraphic freedom; turned the figure and object traces into cipher shapes which occur sudden and fast collusion of the pure brushstrokes in the shallow space.

While his ink works performed on paper reinforced the black-white perception of Kline over the opposites, on the other hand this lead him to develop small emblematic compositions involving on interlocking curves and gridlike vectors.

In his painting which is called “Requiem” (1958, New York, Albright-Knox Art Gallery), he added a third type of work to his own repertory by allowing the previously clearcut monochrome divisions to merge into a more complex chiaroscuro. The emotional tone of which Kline may have had in mind when he mentioned in an interview in 1960 the “brooding quality” of certain “impending forms” (Anfam, "Kline, Franz", p. 1-3 ).

Franz Kline had great impact on the second generation action painters, for example Jasper Johns, Grace Hartigan, Larry Rivers and Jon Schueler (Hamilton, p. 88); and his works are considered among the monumental works of abstract expressionist painting (Anfam, ibid, "Kline, Franz", p. 1-3 ).



Figure 13

Kline, Franz Rowe: *Requiem*, oil on canvas, 257,81 cm x 190,5 cm, 1958.  
Albright-Knox Art Gallery, New York  
([www.albrightknox.org](http://www.albrightknox.org), 7.6.2017)

The emblematic compositions of Kline resembles the Yantras in the Indian Tantric Buddhism. The black wide area in the middle of “Requiem” represents the universe and the area comprising white brush strikes around represents the world processes and evolutionary stages, and the whole painting expresses the whole which provide for energy for a certain purpose with human will.

### **III. 1. 1. 8. Baziotes, William (1912-1963)**

American painter. He was influenced by the poet Charles Baudlaire in relation to the powerful emotions and bizarre stages of mind. While he was working in FAP during 1936-1941, he was also a teacher in the Queens Museum.

It is observed that Baziotes was affected from the rich colors of Persian miniatures, from grotesque characteristics of science and in particular natural history and in popular culture.

Based on the narration of Baziotes,

“At the background of my paintings, generally coincidental formations which we could say vague and uncertain coincidences take place; and this makes me feel very excited”

it could be said that Baziotes used automatism. Despite the fact that he applied translucent colors which he used for smooth surfaces on his paintings at different times on the same painting, he starts this process every time purified from his prejudices.

“The Dwarf” which he painted in 1947, is one of the maturity period paintings of Baziotes, managed to create a watery environment, and a perception of stained-glass and jewelry with brushstrokes leaving stain with thin lines.

Numerous bizarre creatures are present in the works of Baziotes. These creatures motivate feelings of imagination, fear and mercy. Baziotes describes The Dwarf, which has an image of a green and clumsy monster, both scary and comic, namely in a grotesque manner. The Dwarf hosts both a fatal eye of a reptile, and also sharp teeth of a crocodile (Mattison, "Baziotes, William", 1-2).

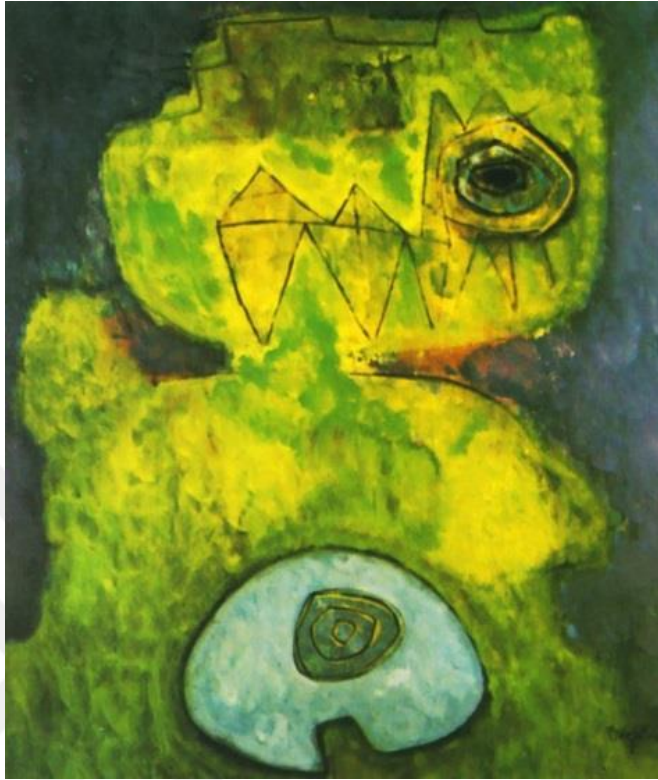


Figure 14

Baziotes, William: *The Dwarf*, oil on canvas, 106,7 cm x 91,8 cm, 1947.  
Modern Museum of Art, New York  
([www.oxfordartonline.com](http://www.oxfordartonline.com), 6.6.2017)

In the painting process, Baziotes demonstrates behaviors that are similar to the remembrance/zikr ritual which is based on continuous repetition defined as necessity in the development stages of the nefs. Falling into dreams (reverie) while painting makes it possible to refer to the daydreaming model of Freud.

### **III. 1. 1. 9. Pollock, Jackson (1912-1956)**

American painter. During his art training, he had the biggest influence from Krishnamurti, Indian mysticism and Jung psychology. He earned his fame with the work which he completed by dipping and pouring on the canvas laid down on the ground.

He started to work for FAP during the years of poverty of 1933-1935. The “Going West” painting which he completed under the effect of Benton and Ryder in 1934-35, involves most of the characteristics of abstract expressionist form and symbolism in Pollock’s works.

During his therapy period, he used the paintings which he made under the supervision of two psychiatrists, who adopted the Jungian approach, in the clinic where he stayed for treatment in 1938. This therapy process which he had, the style impact of Picasso and Miro and the theories of John Graham, it was possible to recognize the obsession of unconscious symbolism. Works which he created during psychotherapy involves the elements which have become personal iconography. “Male and Female”, which is an important painting of this Jungian approach, expresses the personality clashes of Pollock.



Figure 15

Pollock, Jackson: *Male and Female*, oil on canvas, 186,1 cm x 124,3 cm, 1942-1943.  
Philadelphia Museum of Art  
([www.philamuseum.org](http://www.philamuseum.org), 7.6.2017)

As the WPA ended in 1943, he opened his first one-man exhibition in the Art of This Century Gallery in New York under the curatorship of Peggy Guggenheim and continued this every year until 1947.

From 1947 to 1952, Pollock preferred numbering instead of naming in order to direct his audiences in his paintings which he created with his famous method.

In the work of Pollock “Number 2”, lines and drops are created with the method of pouring on dark red background. The work includes layering; the thin gray and white lines, series of dark black slopes, white and gradually paling pours totally entangled one in another, and yellow, silver and red touches (O’Connor, p. 1-2).





Figure 16  
Pollock, Jackson: *Number 2*, enamel on canvas, 968 cm x 481 cm, 1949.  
Munson-Williams Proctor Arts Institute  
([www.stonybrook.edu](http://www.stonybrook.edu), 7.6.2017)

“When an article was published in 1949 in Life magazine which included the photographs of the artist who was seen while painting with pouring technique, Jackson Pollock has almost entered into all houses” (Fortenberry, Melick, *ibid*, p. 218). In the process from the beginning of 1950s to the year 2017, the two opinions that were relevant among Pollock evaluations are summarized below.

- In the poured paintings of Pollock, the efforts to reveal the automatist roots of both the nature and the artist could be felt (Jones, p. 2).
- The fractal structure in Pollock’s paintings with the fractal systems explaining the nature (Lachmann, 40’75’’ - 58’01’’).

In addition to these two opinions, based on the idea that each painting has its own life, it could be said that in Pollock’s paintings this journey is almost performed in the mood of ecstasy. When the person exits the ecstasy mood, the artist meets the painting as the first time and a communication starts. In case that the communication is protected, the exchange continues despite the fact that the painting is completed. Within the framework of these determinations, with the Krishnamurti influence of Pollock, it could be understood that he opted the way to reach the reality only through deep awareness and integration with life. The fact that the issue underlines is the deep awareness, it becomes necessary to emphasize that Pollock also had been influenced by Carl Gustav Jung.

### **III. 1. 1. 10. Motherwell, Robert (1915-1991)**

American painter. Motherwell studied literature, psychology and philosophy in Stanford University in 1932. He decided to be a painter under the influence of Modern French



paintings during his journey to Paris in 1938-1939. In 1944 he created “Mallermé’s Swan” under the influence of French symbolist poetry, and in 1949 “The Voyage” under the influence of Baudelaire’s poem. While continuing his masters degree in philosophy in Harvard University, he expressed his own character with gestural brush strikes by being affected from the points of view in the expressions of individual identity in John Dewey, Alfred North Whitehead and David Prall.

Automatism, which is the tool to record the unconscious impuls used by the European surrealist artists on exile, had a permanent impact on the American painters such as Motherwell, Jackson Pollock and William Baziotes.

Both the influential brush strikes of the action painting and the wide scaled saturated colors of the field painting which are seen in the works of Motherwell, make an apparent emphasis on the European abstract art traditions.

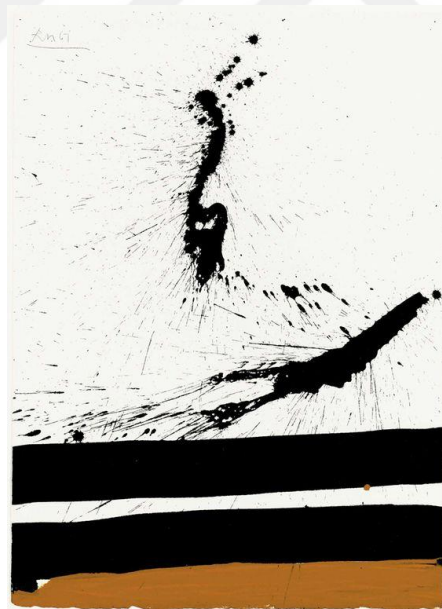


Figure 17

Motherwell, Robert: *Beside the Sea No. 45*, acrylic and ink on paper, 76,5 cm x 54,9 cm, 1967.

Courtesy of Bernard Jacobson Gallery, New York

([www.jacobsongallery.com](http://www.jacobsongallery.com), 7.6.2017)

Motherwell created the “Beside the Sea” series comprising 64 paintings, including the work named “Beside the Sea No. 45”, by splashing the oil color on the pieces of cloth with all the

power of his arm in order to animate the spray effect of the sea in front of his studio in Provincetown where he lived during summer time (Mattison, "Motherwell, Robert", s.1-3).

The acceptance that the abstract art aims at closing the gap, and depth which are the individual feelings to occur between the world and oneself arising from all mystical experiences that develop in the historical conditions, becomes concrete in the course of Motherwell's relationship with nature, namely in his art.

### **III. 1. 1. 11. Francis, Samuel Lewis (1923-1994)**

American painter. While working within the body of American air forces he was diagnosed with spinal tuberculosis as a result of an accident and he started to paint in 1944. During his graduate and undergraduate education in Berkley University, he was influenced by surrealism and abstract expressionism, and in particular by the styles of such painters as Pollock, Rothko and Still. He developed his own style in 1949-1950. "For instance, in 'Opposites', dripping, corpuscular shapes painted in fluid red circulate freely around canvas, indicating what was to become a preennial concern with 'ceaseless instability'."

With the sensitivity of sensuous color and light in his works, Francis carries concerns different from most of the abstract expressionist artists within the contexts of being affected, iconography and energy.

After he moved to Paris in 1950, for example with the "Big Red" which could be characterized as a vibrant and energetic painting of intense hue, which he painted in 1953, Francis was included in Art Informelism. However, Francis preferred not to define himself as a member of any movement.

Following a trip he had to Japan in 1957, he converted use of white area into a more asymmetric composition in his work titled "The Whiteness of the Whale". He returned back to California in 1962 and produced "Blu Balls" series. Under the influence of a psychiatrist who had Jungian understanding whom he met in 1971, he created the mandala series comprising squares, rectangles and circles located to the center a sin the case of "Untitled Mandala" (Moszynska, s. 1-2).

Based on the observation that the situation of mandala used in the past and in our time is directly related to Indian and Buddhist mysticism, the opinion arises that San Francis is inspired by the Tantric Buddhism. Tantric mandalas appear as a perfect expression of Buddhism as all separations in micro and macro structures disappear. In the work of Sam Francis titled “Untitled Mandala”, it could be said that the difference of these structures is emphasized with the color variety, and Francis tried to explain the logic of wheel of life that transfers the opinion of the essence using the same forms of rectangles one in another.



Figure 18

Francis, Samuel Lewis: *Untitled Mandala*, acrylic on canvas, 93 cm x 94 cm, 1975.  
Madison Museum of Contemporary Art, Wisconsin  
([www.mmoca.org](http://www.mmoca.org), 7.6.2017)

### III. 1. 1. 12. Twombly Jr., Edwin Parker “Cy” (1928-2011)

American painter and sculptor. The period he had in Black Mountain College between years 1951-1952, was very important in his entrance to abstract expressionism. His unique handwriting which he developed based on the action painting was instrumental for him to develop a literature style painting.

“The art philosopher Ronald Barthes indicated that in Twombly’s paintings, writing has lost its meaning and its function as we know it, and he used only the performance of writing/drawing. ... Words that are not understandable, symbols meaning of which is vague and which seem to have been a work of a young child stood on the canvas and we, based on these, thought that there were some words in the canvas standing before us. Namely, the painting was reduced to writing, the writing was converted into performance/action” (Kahraman, p. 54).



Figure 19  
Twombly Jr., Edwin Parker “Cy”: *Untitled*, 1952.  
([www.wikiart.org](http://www.wikiart.org), 7.6.2017)

In the painting “Untitled”, Twombly used the long brushstrokes in contrasting tones against a dark background, only to paint partly over them again. The transformation between the

visible and the hidden, which shows itself in clear and murky forms that is a unifying theme in the paintings of Twombly, is interpreted by the critics as the struggle between the memory and oblivion (Wijnbeek, p.1-2).

The comment that Twombly reduced painting to writing reveals the understanding that the limits of the reality could only be drawn with the limits of the language. Yet, it could be said that Twombly exceeded these limits to reach to the essence of existence relying on the traces of the past without regarding any time and space within the integrity of eternal images.

### **III. 1. 2. Turkish Painters**

#### **III. 1. 2. 1. Elderoğlu, Abidin (1901-1974)**

“He started his art education in Denizli High School in 1919 and he travelled to Paris in 1930 to receive art training (Bayramoğlu, p. 12)”. “After returning from Paris, he worked as painting and art history teacher in middle school and teachers’ schools in Denizli and İzmir. After retirement he moved to Ankara” (Büyükişliyen, 1991, p. 40).

The art critic Kaya Özsezgin describes Elderoğlu as follows:

“... Elderoğlu was one of the artists who tried to find a way out in between the cultural values of the past in relation to our modern painting. Until 1940, he maintained a colorist style based on figures with stable lines on a semi-impressionist and semi-expressionist narrative, after which he was directed towards an abstract understanding source of which could be found in the rhythmic arabesque of the ancient scripture. This period, in which the black lines intersect with one another with wide curves, and bare colors filled the intersecting forms, is characterized as determinative in the art of Elderoğlu” (Büyükişliyen, 1991, ibid, p. 41).

“Abidin Elderoğlu, or Abit Elder as he used in his signature in his paintings, had a character who continuously researched in the process of development and did not confine himself to what he did. After the simple clear line and color composition which he reached, he gave

examples which figures and spatial formations as well as fantasia where the color reached to a quality of dough” (Büyükişliyen, 1991, ibid, p. 42).

“Asian art and formative specification to nature started between 1935s and 1940s in his paintings. Abidin Elderoğlu thinks that, in his arabesques, he found the solution by seeking an answer for each curve with an opposing curve. We witness the “S” movements, which occurred in many of his paintings and which create a rhythmic dominant, during these years” (Büyükişliyen, 1989, p. 23).

“Elderoğlu, who started his first works reaching towards abstract in 1947, used calligraphy with spontaneous style. In the paintings of Elderoğlu after 1960, the spontaneous calligraphic impact was started to be felt clearly. Calligraphy was not used in his paintings with its own meaning and formative character used in writing. Forms in his paintings carry us the internality of the forms that belong to us. The circles and curves of calligraphy, and the rhythmic forms that recall the forms of tughras, take us to the writing forms” ( Kılıç, p. 330). “Following the abstractions he made ... within the limits of possibilities provided by calligraphy, he created a net of lines and provided the surface with a unique rhythmic appearance” (Bayramoğlu, p. 13).

The work of Elderoğlu named “Life Under Water”, was interpreted by the art critic Kaya Özsezgin as follows:

““The composition created by uninterrupted, curved and straight lines with the rhythmic movements of the brush, remains a mosque and a minaret appearance, and it could be seen that the artist wants to reach the calligraphic harmony which such appearance mediates, rather than such only appearance itself” (Şener, p. 103).

Although it is indicated by the critics that the paintings of Elderoğlu are open for being interpreted as calligraphic, the energetic spiral structure which he created by bright and powerful light source remains the whirling dervishes in accompany with the ney sound. The movement in the painting tells the tranquility of whirling in the magnitude of a spiral structure similar to a whirlpool; and the rhythm tells about the ney sound.





Figure 20  
Elderoğlu, Abidin: *Su Altında Yaşam* [*Life Under Water*], oil on canvas, 73 cm x 92 cm, 1970.  
(Şener, p. 101 )

### III. 1. 2. 2. Orhon, Mübin (1924-1981)

Orhon, who went to Paris in order to complete his PhD in political science in 1949, refrained from his PhD studies and decided to paint and opened his first one-man exhibition in 1956. Orhon, who is considered as one of the important representatives of post-war Paris School, is called as Mübin independent of his surname.

It could be seen that Mübin's paintings are examined by being named as Geometric Abstract, Lyrical Abstract, Poetic Abstract and Monochrom periods that follow one another within the atmosphere created by the influences of artists who came to settle in Paris from different cultures between 1945-1955; however Sönmez with this opinion, he brought a different dimension to the interpretation of these classifications:

“Although the paintings of Mübin has characteristics that could be examined by dividing into certain periods in classical terms, in all of his works there is

an ‘integrity of systems’ which we could quote from Bilge Karasu\*. What grants an extraordinary character to this integrity is that in all of his works, there prevails a power of imagination based on ‘pure abstraction’ ” (Sönmez, ibid, p. 23).

The following words by, Bénédicte Schribaux, daughter of Mübin, are important:

“Considering the fact that his physical tiredness increases in his last years and he preferred cheaper materials when he had no money, it is normal that works performed on paper with gouache are important among all works of Mübin, however, these works are also characterized as being distinctive in relation to the evolution of art” (Schribaux, p. 22).



Figure 21  
Orhon, Mübin: *İsimsiz [Untitled]*, oil on canvas, 130 cm x 97 cm, 1961.  
(www.sothebys.com, 30.12.2017)

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\* Bilge Karasu (1930-1995), master of modern/postmodern Turkish literature. His works are often seen as eclectic/cosmopolitan in terms of their experimental/avant-garde works in terms of narrative form (Aji, p. 15). Bilge Karasu says that master-pupil relations are one of the main traits of his works and these relations are described as the most fundamental associations of life (Zengin, p. 78).



While interpreting the paintings of Mübin, the most important value is the usage at colors. His daughter puts light on the meaning of Mübin's color usage with the following words:

“Mübin was telling his preferences to me and underlining once more the purification which he reached and which constitutes a source for his works. Color is a result of this purification; same as the whole richness of life being a result of oxygen, hydrogen and carbon atoms coming together” (Schribaux, *ibid*, p. 21).

Sönmez contributes these meanings with the following words:

“Mübin expresses the fact of ‘existence’ which he is interested in by means of the light he expresses in his paintings. Whereas this light could be seen in a composition in its classical meaning, different from the ‘impressionist’ light created by applying on a darker color or ‘expressionist’ light usage by adding white to the instantaneous light colors, it is almost an ‘existentialist’ light which has come out of the color itself, from its shell” (Sönmez, *ibid*, p. 37).

The following words of Mübin's daughter:

“Although he is not a religious person at all, it will not be a mistake to resemble the painting of Mübin with a whirling dervish. ... Disappearance of the body in the territories of the throat [as in throat chakra] is the disappearance of the dervish in the rhythm of whirling; disappearance of the dervish in the rhythm of whirling is the disappearance of Mübin in his paintings.”

“...The implicit silence-which exists at the foundation of the Sufi music which Mübin used to listen frequently while painting.”

“Mübin used to think that his family came from within the Sufi tradition.”

“He does what he can not do during daily life while creating a work; this is where the alchemy is. ... There is a strong similarity between the space photographs of NASA and the paintings of Mübin: Both are a translation of the fact that the universe will not exist forever; what determines the

spirituality of the matter or the vastness of space is the movements of rays in the first, and the hand movements in the second. This is where the success of the works lies: He has cracked the shell of human brain is made of codes which it had since the birth and which he acquired afterwards. This is the objective of Sufism, which has been anchored in the religion of Islam” (Schribaux, *ibid.* p. 18-22).

These opinions are in contradiction with the thought of many writers that Mübin should not be mentioned together with mysticism.

### **III. 1. 2. 3. Turani, Adnan (1925-2016)**

“Turani’s painting interest started in 1933 with a pure childhood enthusiasm. While he was being educated as guest student in İstanbul Teachers School, he also continued to İstanbul Fine Arts Academy as guest student. In 1945, he entered to the Painting Department of Gazi Educational Institute, and in 1953 he was educated in Germany first in Munich and then after one year in Stuttgart, and he continued his education in Hamburg in 1956. In 1959 he studied in Gazi Educational Institute, and in 1970 in Hacettepe University Department of Art History, and in 1986 in Bilkent University. After retirement, he opened his own studio” (Deveci, p. 6, 10, 38).

Adnan Turani said the following words in relation to color in an interview:

“...I had divided the canvas into big opposite color pieces. Thus not the object, but the vast color contrast was taken as basis. In short, responding the color with color also revealed the abstract. To put it better, the infrastructure of the painting is abstract” (Erzen, 1983- 2/10, p. 11).

“The line comes after the color. At the point where concrete and abstract merge, he used the lines in a unique, comfortable and harmonious style as a plastic element” (Deveci, *ibid.*, p. 36).

As put by Adnan Turani “Leitmotiv, the main motif which is repeated at certain intermissions between the flow of motifs, is the theme which provides a composition with characteristics by repeating. ... The work of Turani titled ‘Calligraphic Arrangement’ has

arisen as a result of the conscious preference which he made in order to catch the climate of the country, as Adnan Turani calls” (Akder, p. 29).



Figure 22

Turani, Adnan: *Kaligrafik Düzenleme* [Calligraphic Arrangement], oil on canvas, 70×60 cm, 1976.  
Turkish State Painting and Sculpture Museum Collection  
(Akder, *ibid*, p. 30)

This work of Turani has multi-layers. The orange color at the first layer applied to background functions as an external frame. After that, each of black, blue and white which come one on the other is framed within themselves. Non-gestural, controlled white calligraphic brush strikes, which constitute the frame in the middle, do not have any meaning though they evoke a writing.

It is observed that Adnan Turani is one of the representatives of lyrical abstract painting in Turkey. As explained by Antmen (p. 152), it could be seen that paintings such as George Mathieu and Hans Hartung, who were included in Art Informel, were interested in calligraphy after having interest in the mysticism of the eastern art. Although he is included in this movement with his style and technique, Adnan Turani separates the abstract expressionists and lyric abstractionists from each other in his writings with definite lines. He emphasizes that the fineness and elegance in the lyric expression are not seen in the abstract

expressionist painters and that they have a pessimistic world, a psychological explosion and an internal depression. Based on these discourses, the trace of mystical inspirations were not followed in Turani.

### **III. 1. 2. 4. Gençaydın, Zafer (1941- )**

“After graduating from Akçadağ Malatya Teachers School, he worked in Adapazarı for three years in 1959. He completed Ankara Gazi Educational Institute Painting Department in 1965 and Berlin Fine Arts Academy in 1977” (Büyükişliyen, 1991, ibid, p. 90).

“Gençaydın established the group “Ara Ara”, which he named, together with his classmates in Berlin. According to the members of Ara Ara Group, the fact that the artist is in a continuous search is very important. His views on art are towards developing an attitude that is suitable with the requirements of the age and beyond the traditional formations that are repeated and consumed for hundreds of years, and to discover what is new. Most of these artists adopt a ‘language of painting’ which is abstract expressionist or abstractionist” (Ateş, p. 60).

“For the audience who are used to see sketches or studies made out of nature, and watch works that will awake love of nature and longing for a shore as transmitted mostly from the nature, the paintings of Gençaydın are characterized as being both startling, both impulsive and unsettling, and meanwhile forcing one to think” (Büyükişliyen, 1991, ibid, p. 91-92).

Gençaydın summarizes his thesis about abstraction as follows:

“Is it an image of a tree that we could perceive? Are they the branches and leaves which are real, or the vegetative cellular structure? Is knowing the structural life of a tree more important than knowing its external appearance? Even the insects could perceive the external image. However, what makes the tree an image is the human thought. Abstracting the realities from the images does not mean to change the substance. On the contrary, it means weeding out from the details, and saving from the complexity. For that reason, I try to reflect the reality with abstract elements and dive deep into the essence” (Ateş, ibid, p. 60).

“Abstract and the abstract expressionism pursuit is the path of Zafer Gençaydın has opted for expressing himself” (Atakan, p. 32).

Gençaydın, who is characterized with his sensitivity against nature and social events, says:

“On of the basic of understanding of nature is the intuition. Intuition arises from a strong mystery. And it is the basis for discovery” (Atakan, ibid, p. 31).

And in an interview with İnci Aral, he showed his standing as follows:

“The dynamism, vitality in my paintings are a result of the cause and effect relationship between me and the society and the nature. I suppose it relates to the attitude that I adopt against life. Dynamism comes from the will for resisting against the problems of society that we live in. I think making stable and lethargic paintings in our universe where we have so many motivations can not be explained with sensitivity, no doubt that the reaction will be hard against a hard stimulant” (Atakan, ibid, p. 41).

In the words of Kaya Özsezgin, the critic who interprets the relationship between Gençaydın and the audience in the most striking manner, “Since the abstractive form of understanding is loaded with certain invocations prior to the visual memory of the viewer who gets into contact with the painting, the viewer could find a scale of expression, he could produce meanings according to himself” (Atakan, ibid, p. 38-39).

“Art historian and art critic Prof. Dr. Kıymet Giray supports this idea when she said: ‘Spontaneous and fast working method attracts the audience to the essence of the subject at the first encounter. While the inner tension is elevated with deep life sequence and opposing impacts of contrast colors, the color tones encircling the environment takes the subject to a skill and balanced expression.’

Despite the fact that the object of nature is the starting point for the art of Gençaydın, he abstracts it in his mind as soon as he starts to paint. As if he was making a simultaneous translation, the object of nature turns into an art form. Even when walking amidst the crowds, the artist says that he sees the people flowing like a flood as a sort of ‘order of compositional color elements’ ” (Ateş, ibid, p. 63).

“Instead of dark color tones which have been close to one another since the beginning with generally decreased chroma, there are contrast colors and elements with expressionist characteristics. In the use of contrast colors and entry of expressionist elements in his paintings, the ‘psychic life’ which the artist was engaged in during that period, was an important factor. While transferring the instant excitement to the canvas, he adopts a fast and quick use of brush, tries the tempera technique (mixture of powder dye and egg) since this fits his nature and he feels joy from this; separate from the illusive impact of the oil color, fast drying of the tempera and its plain effect fit his purpose.

Although the bright colors based on the contrast that he uses in his paintings are found to be odd by some of his academic friends, this encourages the young artists being raised to ‘use the color in freedom’ ” (Ateş, ibid. p. 60-61).

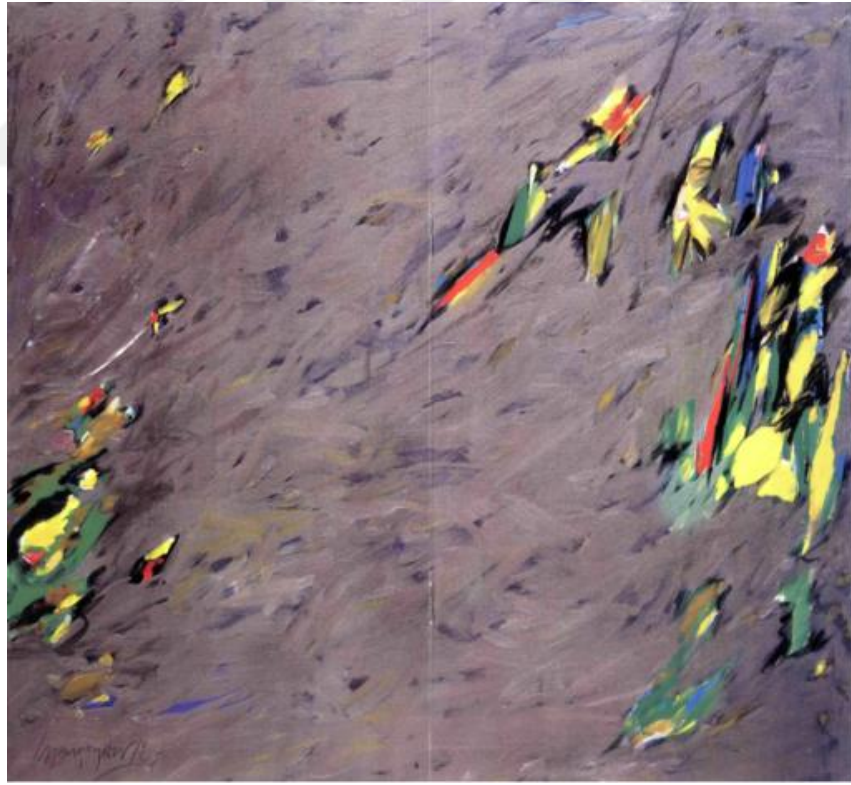


Figure 23

Gençaydın, Zafer: *Sonbahar İzlenimi* [*Autumn Impression*], oil on canvas, 130 cm x 200 cm, 2005. (Atakan, p. 95).

Gençaydın's "Autumn Impression" seems to be created with abstract expressionist pouring technique. As opposed to this, the different color distributions located in background were created using both brush and different materials. Despite the fact that autumn colors were not used, only based on the name of the work, the audience feels the leaves which swing and are dispersed with the autumn wind, the trees and branches, in this bright and lively color distribution, making one feel the concern of aesthetical order in addition to opposites. In particular the two yellow small colors on the left upper corner of the composition in the context of balance, ensures that the dynamics and integrity of the painting is completed by view of the audiences. Both the use of contrast colors and the tension and motion in the context, create excitement in the audience.

The relationship between Gençaydın and nature demonstrates the aesthetical understanding centered around the concept of "sublime", which is found in artists such as Barnett Newman and Mark Rothko. The eternity seen in the pictures of Gençaydın describes the unlimited power of nature. This situation seems to be parallel to the harmonious action of the nature, which is a target in the divine Aşa that is one of the distinguishing elements of Zarathustra's spiritual world in Zoroastrism, and the life of all living things in nature which is sustained in an order.

### **III. 1. 2. 5. Büyükişliyen, M. Zahit (1946- )**

Büyükişliyen, whose painting adventure started as one of his painting was ranked the second in a painting contest organized in Korea in the second grade of elementary school. Büyükişliyen was studied in Painting Department in Gazi Educational Institute.

"During his position as a teacher in İvriz between 1967-1970, his purpose was to catch a form of expression for himself by accelerating his unique printmaking works that will create the path for a 'semi-abstract' painting inspired by nature" (Özsezgin, p. 23). In his own words:

"The sky-all out wide blueness, always a horizon line, always somewhere-sometimes snowy, sometimes green, sometimes gray. Path to abstraction

started from there. To decrease to few elements, to express with few elements” (İnatçı, 06’23’’- 06’45’’).

He performed his first abstract experience in his paintings with the effect of the nature which he considers to be different (Art TV, 02’47’’- 02’50’’).

“The artist, who was sent by Turkish government to Kassel, Germany in order to complete his expertise in art in 1971, faced towards the conceptual and expressionist elements in his paintings under the effect created by being involved in activities where the limits of art were abolished. Büyükişliyen says ‘my abstract expressionist period started here’ ” (Art TV, ibid, 03’30’’- 03’33’’).

“His words ‘severe motions occurred in my paintings’ show how the chaotic social events were reflected his paintings” (İnatçı, ibid, 09’07’’- 09’11’’).

“Due to the fact that Büyükişliyen’s painting is triggered only by its own inner dynamics, it does not reveal this despite continuous changes. To put it more clearly, the audience sees the same painting, however the painting is at the threshold of being open to a continuous search as its language” (Ergüven, p. 36). Büyükişliyen summarizes this situation with the following words:

“I do think that my paintings comprise ideas. Being under the effect of thought, namely supporting the painting in terms of its concept, will not give any damage to the plastic of painting, and will give audience the chance to interpret. The important thing for me is not to give a message; my job is to deal with the plastic of painting and to paint for the sake of painting. ... the audience shall contribute something to my painting when he looks at it by thinking. Namely, a painting that could be perceived in any manner by the audience, should be different perceptions of people: ... a painting will live long to the extent it is perceived differently and interpreted variously” (İnatçı, ibid, 10’07’’- 11’09’’).

According to Büyükişliyen, giving a title to the works is only an element of motivation; it enables the audience to start the work of the artist from a point.



Özsezgin says:

“Büyükişliyen builds the painting on an ‘abstract’ plane, he allocated a wide share to the ‘lyrical interpretations’ in the context of this message” (Özsezgin, ibid, p. 29).

Aral (p. 80) says:

“Despite the fact that his paintings were seen abstract, it could be interpreted by the audience. Because Büyükişliyen did not feel a lyrical concern while demonstrating a taschist and colorist attitude. He took an object, a figure which was analyzed with a color tone to the conclusion with a colorist tendency, serial brush strikes.”

The expression of Özsezgin (ibid, p.47): “While the life or life experience are re-blended under the ecstatic joy of retrospective emotional perspective, [1] the colorist attitude which has been prevailing to the art of Büyükişliyen since the beginning, [2] has come to the threshold of a new stage with the serial and quick brushstrokes,” is supported by the following detailed explanations.

[1] “Zahit Büyükişliyen has always been very successful in using the colors without distorting their own natures but so as to create very different interactions. He was very talented in providing any known color more functions than that particular color, and in abstracting the content of that color with its purpose. Very different meanings can be understood to its simple, clear, open and pure status. Each color carries only the concern of the place it is located and thus it acquires a character that is independent from lines. This pure color richness, which enables sovereignty on the canvas with live motions, is the most important factor that provides for personality to the picture of the artist” (Aral, ibid, p. 186). “Despite the fact that the paintings of Büyükişliyen gives the impression that they are colorful, we see that they demonstrate consistent attitudes. ... What is seen as colorful is the joy of the artist which blesses the act of painting. The color has taken its place in the arrangement by throwing the load of belonging to something” (Ergüven, ibid, p. 35).

[2] “Serial and confident brushstrokes, based on detail with elements at minimal level for contrast colors, return back from the scene and create a spiritual effect on the person who looks at the painting” (Özsezgin, ibid, p. 63).

“In addition to an ‘inner connection’, which integrates the periodic studies with common formal and thematic relations and makes it possible to explain them by comparing with one another, we witness the effort to reach more ‘mature’ results by purifying the paintings among themselves in a formative and coloristic perspective” (Özsezgin, ibid, p. 11).

“Büyükişliyen, who at the beginning left the process of occurrence of the painting to its own flow, does not stop from small scaled interventions in this process from time to time” (Ergüven, ibid, p. 39). “Whereas Zahit Büyükişliyen makes an erase-deconstruct intervention against the real appearance of the nature, we see that a geometry comprising splashing lines is placed in an environment which is seem to be uncontrolled but which is vital at the same time” (İnatçı, 2011, p. 5).

“While the nature which is painted by Büyükişliyen is assigned as the main actor of the motion of occurrence of the space, the space appears as an energy that provides for movement. This aesthetical relationship which is established between the order of occurrence of the nature and the order of existence of painting involves a tendency that internalizes the ‘order of existence’ of the surrealists who faced towards automatism” (İnatçı, 2011, ibid, p. 5).

In the beginning of 1980s

“in his paintings, abstraction of the natural images by alienation, could be determined as a new feature of him that has come to the foreground. The composition of the mixture of sky and prussian blue with peace and in the form of an atmospheric impression, demonstrates how he adopted both the volumetric and the structural elements” (Turani, 1/7, s. 1-2).

“In his paintings which he draw in 1988-1989, he leaves a more geometrical effect compared to the previous ones in terms of visual description. ... The painterly tools of

creating this effect is also meaningful. Industrial dyes, press and photo-technique” (Aral, ibid, p. 124).



Figure 24  
Büyükişliyen, M. Zahit: *Çernobil'den Karadeniz'e* [From Chernobly to Blacksea], oil on canvas, 110 cm x 100 cm, 1988.  
(Aral, p. 122)

“The painting of the artist titled ‘Visual Notes Following a Long Lasted Winter Season in Ankara’, undertakes and leads to becoming an elegant a priori for Büyükişliyen” (Aral, ibid, p. 146-148).



Figure 25  
Büyükişliyen, M. Zahit: *Ankara'da Uzun Süren Bir Kış Mevsiminin Ardından Görsel Notlar* [Visual Notes Following a Long Lasted Winter Season in Ankara], oil on canvas, 100 cm x 110 cm, 1992.  
(Aral, p. 150)

“Oil color-acrylic mixture, which we could characterize as an interim work, round compositions are striking as the works that took his ‘abstractionist’ steps further. These works which are the extension of abstract paintings in radical terms in 1992, brought to the agenda the new dimension and composition approaches of the artist, and he totally gets away from the dualistic structure which hides the image of nature in his previous paintings” (Özsezgin, ibid, p. 65).

“The softness and controlled expansionism in wide colors and expressionist duality between the dynamic leaps giving the sense of agility and speed in the lines, refers to the conflict between nature and the science which wants to take nature under supervision. ... Warm colored touches scattered in the form of minor explosions in the widespread compositional elements are included as the dynamic-physical actors representing the formation of the earth. ... Massive black colors recall the earth crust which is carbonized, and yellow and hot colors resemble the crust which experienced the process of formation. On the same composition, the color masses having a consistency of light (transparent-warm) and lightlessness (intense), which are in the form that walks one inside another, make the audience feel the existence of an imagination” (İnatçı, 2011, ibid, p. 5).



Figure 26

Büyükişliyen, M. Zahit: *Yoğun Gecedan Sonra* [After an Intense Night], oil on canvas, 70 cm x 100 cm, 2016. (Ergüven, p. 70)

The work of Büyükişliyen, named “After an Intense Night”, which could be counted as one of the most important examples of Turkish abstract expressionism. As one of the late period paintings of Büyükişliyen, “After an Intense Night” is considered to be valuable in terms of emphasizing *the depth in abstract* in the context of both composition and color selections.

In the middle of the canvas, the lower layer color is used as reminder, which makes an emphasis on the essence. Büyükişliyen’s own life and experiences are transferred in an energetic form.

In addition to sharing with the audiences of his works that he created with diligent, refined, dynamic and unique expression, his attitudes in his academic life, refers to the relationship between master and pupil, namely the transmission from mind to mind, which is highly important in Zen understanding. In addition to this, taking into account the social sensitivities of Büyükişliyen, the Japanese Esoteric Buddhism comes to the agenda once more, which constituted an important matrix for the general integration of science, art and knowledge.

### **III. 2. Selections from the Paintings of Ş. Cem Onat**

Prof. M. Zahit Büyükişliyen explains his opinions about the works of Onat in his one-man exhibition which was under the title of “Acting Intuition” in the Ziraat Bank Tunnel Art Gallery in Istanbul between 7-25 March 2016.

“Şevket Cem Onat is a young artist who shares an intellectual life in his relationship with the external world, with polyphony in his artistic background. His analysis of the concept of time with a view of universe full of musicality gives him an additional point...

The calligraphy in an art work has been used by many artists up until now... and very important artists who associate this with the magical world of music have always existed in the process of art. However, in my opinion, putting the connection of a musical environment with the philosophy into a problem is the first marks of a new conscious form... Onat’s interest in music, creates a unique rhythm for him which he wants to create in his works ... His desire to

demonstrate various contrasts such as structural balance and harmony that could be defined such as saturation-space, motion-inert, darkness-light, hot-cold, is promising in his great scaled canvases.

In particular, with a burst of energy and his gestural experience based on spontaneity, the agility in his handwriting extends to the action painting as if he is signing the canvas. It could be said that I have been granted the taste of life as I feel the breeze of a new breath in Turkish painting.

The young artist Şevket Cem Onat presents a new sensitivity of form using heavy and massive masses in compositional elements which slip and mix with one another on yellow or beige or red which he applies to the background, sometimes fractal lines which surprise with slightly transparent and multi-piece elements.

As conclusion we can say that Şevket Cem Onat, who tries to reflect the sensitivity of form in its own plastic perception, combines in this exhibition the music and calligraphy in a mystical approach which is unique ...”

Büyükişliyen’s emphasis on music seems to be in harmony with the following references:

- Tao is principally an order which explains the rhythmical changes and organizational processes of the nature,
- Similar to Christianity, a bell is played in Zoroastrianism three times in order to indicate the time of worship, being different from the Azan,
- The melody knowledge given in Brahman which is voiced by the priests in the sacramental ceremonies of Sama-Veda,
- Mübin Orhon’s paintings in accompany with Sufi music and Georges Mathieu in accompany with live church music.

Onat makes readings on issues which he is interested in during the process of creation of an art work, and after that he starts his works in which he adopts the style of action painting of abstract expressionism. In each of his works, he first creates the form of the main element of the painting with his grand gestures, after which he leaves the painting and himself for a period of brewing for some time. When he feels that he is ready, he shifts to the stage of

brushstrokes and in this way completes his sketches and associates the discourses which constitute the main backbone of his inspirations and detaches his actional relationship with his painting.

The reason Onat is connected to abstract expressionism is that the standpoint mentioned in this thesis could only be made concrete with abstract expressionist style such as the mystical, psychological and philosophical approaches.

He lives the creation as a process in connection with a mystical pattern. His primary purpose is to reach to “being one” with his own painting. It could be said that what he is in search of the thought which is “painting become painter and painter become painting”. This idea represents, painter and painting should be eternally in harmony. It is emphasized that this harmony could only be realized in the form of ecstasy by the audience. From the point of the audience, understanding this harmony requires the aesthetic pleasure.

Different from the opinion of creating works independent of the context of subject, which is explicitly seen in Rihter and Pollock, Onat prefers to label his inspirations. He uses this preference as a means to reach the harmony and aesthetical pleasure tried to be explained above, in addition to the opinion of Edward Alden Jewell that “... nowhere could be reached with a mass of audiences to those who has no dictionary in their hands” (Guilbaut, *ibid*, p. 104).

Selection from the series of paintings created by Onat with the action painting style comprising the inspirations in the context of sufficiency in art, is given below on the basis of discourses.

### **III. 2. 1. Acting Intuition**

Inspired by The Critics of Shigenori Nagatomo\* to The Philosophy of Nishida Kitaro\*\*

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\* Prof. Dr. Shigenori Nagatomo (- ) has been interested in the mind-body problem with a particular emphasis on Yogic, Buddhist (Zen), and Daoist meditation methods, and supplements these with Jungian psychology. He has been teaching twenty-five years in the department of religion at Temple University where he is Professor of Comparative Philosophy and East Asian Buddhism.

\*\* Nishida Kitaro (1870-1945) was a prominent Japanese philosopher, founder of what has been called the Kyoto School of philosophy. Nishida's original and creative philosophy, incorporating ideas of Zen Buddhism and Western philosophy, was aimed at bringing the East and West closer. In the last ten or so years of Nishida Kitaro's writing career, he occupied himself with thinking through such topics as the (historical) body, practice, *poiēsis* (ποίησις), how the world forms itself and its logical structure, Hegel's dialectic, and the world-view that harnesses all these topics coherently. Nishida Philosophy is capable of solving all problems inherent in dualism and thus provides the key to a philosophical non-dualism.





Figure 27

Onat, Ş. Cem: *Becoming*, oil on canvas, 125 cm x 250 cm, 2014.  
Artist Collection

To see a thing by becoming it, and to act by becoming it.



Figure 28

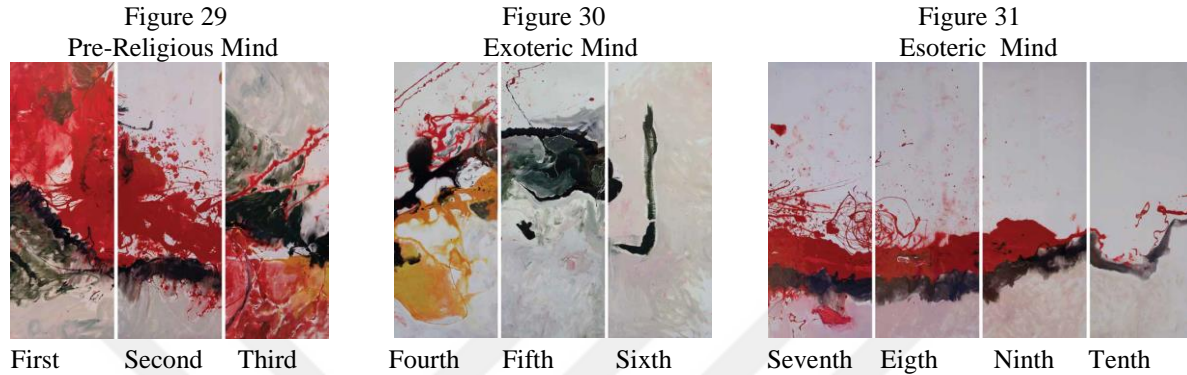
Onat, Ş. Cem: *Poiēsis*, oil on canvas, 125 cm x 250 cm, 2014.  
Ziraat Bank Collection

Acting-intuition means a contradictory self-identity between the thing and the 'I.' The self throughly becomes a thing acting-intuitionally: in the direction moving from 'I' to thing, arts are establish.



### III. 2. 2. Ten Abiding Stages of Mind

Inspired by Kūkai's\* verses (Ryūichi Abé, The Weaving of Mantra)



Onat, Ş. Cem: *Ten Abiding Stages of Mind*, oil on canvas, 200 cm x 75 cm, 2014.

Pre-Religious Mind: Akdeniz Gallery Collection;  
Exoteric Mind and Esoteric Mind: Artist Collection

#### First

##### *The mind of lowly man, goatish in is desire*

Lowly men are blind to the difference between good and evil;  
They do not believe in the law of cause and effect.  
Being tempted by the prospect of immediate gains,  
They are unaware of the blazing fire in hell.

#### Second

##### *The mind that is ignorant and childlike, yet abstemious.*

A man ignorant and childlike has come to know  
A little about the evils of greed and anger.  
Suddenly he thinks of the excellence of being abstemious.  
The seed germinated within grows into a desire to do good.  
As the bud progressively unfolds,  
He appreciates more and more the norms of good conduct.

#### Third

##### *The mind that is infant like and fearless*

Scorched by the fivefold heat, they torment their body and mind.  
With pleasure as their aim, they believe in nihilism or eternalism.

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\* Kūkai (Kobo Daishi) (779-835), who was responsible for the introduction to and initial dissemination of Esoteric Buddhism in early ninth century Japan, was indisputably the single most popular Buddhist saint in medieval society.

#### **Fourth**

*The mind that recognizes the existence of psychophysical constituents only,  
not that of permanent ego*

Eternalists and nihilists!  
They are confident that their dogmas are the profoundest.  
Yet they are not free from vexations!  
They argue in vain that the subject is real,  
Or that the objects are real.  
But they are in the cycle of birth and death.

#### **Fifth**

*The mind freed from the seed of the cause of karma*

They gain supernatural power by a hundred aeons' discipline.  
Extinguishing their karma, actual and potential defilements,  
They aim at complete cessation of their body and mind.

#### **Sixth**

*The mind with sympathetic concern for others*

The sea of Mind is forever tranquil  
Without even a single ripple;  
Stirred by the storm of discriminations,  
Billows rage to and fro.  
Men in the street are deluded;  
They are fascinated by phantomlike men and women.  
Heretics are crazed;  
They adhere to the grand tower of mirage.  
They do not know  
That heaven and hell are fabricated by their own minds.  
Do they come to realize  
That "mind-only" will free them from their tragedies?

#### **Seventh**

*The mind that realizes that the mind is unborn*

Casually conditioned phenomena are devoid of immutable self-nature;  
They are empty, temporal, and yet ultimately real; all are unborn.  
Waves which no sooner appear than they disappear are non other than the water itself.  
The One Mind is like water; it is originally clean and serene.  
Man's wisdom is penetrating when he realizes the unity between being and nonbeing;  
Then he will see clearly the truthfulness of the double standard of truth.

#### **Eight**

*The mind that is truly in harmony with the one way*

The experience of enlightenment of his mind is not yet genuine.  
The one way, unconditioned and signless, is spotless;  
It unfolds the teaching of non duality of neither being nor non being.

When both the seeing and the seen are negated, the eternal ground of quiescence will be found.

### **Ninth**

#### ***The profoundest exoteric mind that is aware of its non immutable nature***

All phenomenal existences are interrelated like the meshes of Indra's infinite net;  
And that which is secretly and perfectly diffused like light rays is the Mind.

### **Tenth**

#### ***The glorious mind, the most secret and sacred***

I have realized that which is unborn;  
It is what language cannot communicate;  
It is free from all defilements;  
It transcends causality.  
I know that it is void like space,  
I have gained the wisdom to see things as they really are.  
I am free from all darkness;  
I am the ultimately real and immaculate.

### **III. 2. 3. Formless Substance**

Inspired by verses of Lao Tzu (Gia Fu Feng, Jane English & Thomas Knierim, The Tao Te Ching)



Figure 32

Onat, Ş. Cem: *The Sage*, oil on canvas, 80 cm x 100 cm, 2015.  
Haşim Keleş and Can Beden Collection

The Sage avoids extremes, excesses and complacency



Figure 33

Onat, Ş. Cem: *Overcome*, oil on canvas, 100 cm x 120 cm, 2015.  
Haşim Keleş and Can Beden Collection

Teaching without words and work without doing are understood by few.



Figure 34

Onat, Ş. Cem: *Ignorance*, oil on canvas, 100 cm x 120 cm, 2015.  
Ökdem Family Collection

Knowing ignorance is strength. Ignoring knowledge is sickness.



Figure 35

Onat, Ş. Cem: *Purity*, oil on canvas, 80 cm x 100 cm, 2015.  
Vicdan Ufluoğlu Collection

See simplicity in the complicated. Achieve greatness in little things.



Figure 36

Onat, Ş. Cem: *Acting Sage*, oil on canvas, 100 cm x 120 cm, 2015.  
Mehmet Onur Akdeniz Collection

The Sage has no mind of his own. He is aware of the needs of others.



### III. 2. 4. Self-Cultivation Practices

Inspired by Shigenori Nagatomo's article "Dōgen's\* "Do No Evil" as "Non-Production of Evil": An Achievement and its Micro-Macrocosmic Correlativity.



Figure 37

Onat, Ş. Cem: *Practical Transcendence*, oil on canvas, 80 cm x 60 cm, 2016.  
Artist Collection

Practical transcendence is necessary to overcome the conditions of karmic causality.

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\* Dōgen Zenji: (19 January 1200-22 September 1253) was a Japanese Buddhist priest, writer, poet, philosopher, and founder of the Sōtō school of Zen in Japan.



Figure 38

Onat, Ş. Cem: *Unenlightened*, oil on canvas, 80 cm x 60 cm, 2016.  
Selin and Murat Balkara Collection

Regarding how to understand what evil is: evil exists for the unenlightened, because the unenlightened are prone to commit it, and hence it is “not empty.”



Figure 39

Onat, Ş. Cem: *Enlightened*, oil on canvas, 80 cm x 60 cm, 2016.  
Artist Collection

On the other hand, evil does not exist for the enlightened, because the condition for committing it is non-existent, i.e., the enlightened is incapable of producing it.





Figure 40  
Onat, Ş. Cem: *Dualism*, oil on canvas, 60 cm x 80 cm, 2016.  
Tülin Kaptan Collection

The whole is divided into two, either into “yes” or “no,” “good” or “evil,” “white” or “black,” and the host of other pairs of opposites.



Figure 41  
Onat, Ş. Cem: *Non-dualism*, oil on canvas, 60 cm x 80 cm, 2016.  
Artist Collection

Ego-logical orientation is “dropped” as a viable way of understanding reality, particularly one’s self.

### III. 2. 5. Projection

This serie of paintings are based on the writing process of my PhD dissertation and inspired by all of the readings that I have embraced.



Figure 42

Onat, Ş. Cem: *Self-Understanding*, mixed technique on canvas,  
80 cm x 140 cm, 2017.

The one is in the exploring phase.



Figure 43

Onat, Ş. Cem: *Self-Genuineness*, mixed technique on canvas,  
80 cm x 140 cm, 2017.

The one is reflecting inner-self.





Figure 44  
Onat, Ş. Cem: *Self-Development*, mixed technique on canvas,  
80 cm x 140 cm, 2017.

The one is aware of the limits of self capabilities.



Figure 45  
Onat, Ş. Cem: *Self-Lessness*, mixed technique on canvas,  
80 cm x 140 cm, 2017.

The one doesn't need oneself.



Figure 46

Onat, Ş. Cem: *Self-Respect*, mixed technique on canvas,  
80 cm x 140 cm, 2017.

The one is aware of everything.





Figure 47

Onat, Ş. Cem: *Self-Description*, mixed technique on canvas,  
80 cm x 140 cm, 2017.

The one shares knowledge with others.

## **Section IV**

### **CONCLUSION**

Based on the facts that

- mysticism is a concept which reflects the philosophy of both monotheist religions and polytheists religions and
- summarize, in literature, philosophy which occurs at the focal point of the religions is pointed out as the reference point at the source of the mysticism

this study was carried out on the basis of deep awareness in the condition of ecstasy in the mystical experiences which involves the eternal religions.

#### **IV. 1. Basic Experiences**

As it was explained above (see, p.11) based on the idea of Marion Milner that “mystics and artists share the same basic experiences. In both mystical and creative situations, pleasure (joy), integration, ecstasy, self-devotion, loss of consciousness and losing the concept of time are experiences. Mysticism is a dimension of the creative process”, this thesis tried to study the journey of creation, within the scope of reaching creative process with the participation of the divine knowledge.

##### **IV. 1. 1. Pleasure**

Zimmer says “we need to stay dilettante”.

“In Italian, ‘dilettante’ means a person who gets pleasure (diletto) from something (this is the simple tense of the word dilettere which means to feel pleasure). You can read this word as ‘amateur’. However, the amateurship here is not a condition that is defined with lack of knowledge, lack of consciousness and motivation with a temporary enthusiasm, but this emphasizes a brave and unconditional attitude that is devoid of any impulse and orientation that restricts professionalism” (Zimmer, *ibid*, p. 9-12).



According to Csikszentmihalyi, flow/creativity is a condition where a person participates in an activity where no other thing is seen as important; the experience itself is so joyful that people are ready to pay big prices only for doing that (Raab, *ibid*, p. 88).

#### **IV. 1. 2. Unity of Being**

It could be seen that the unity of being can be found in both Eastern and Western mysticism as shown in the examples below.

As it was indicated in the previous sections (see, p.17), explained by Kohn, “Yin or Yang are ‘one’ when they are single, ‘two’ when they are together, and ‘three’ when they unite in harmony; that is they create the final stage of existence” in **Taoism**. The idea of Knierim states that what is ideal in the physical universe and the human world is the condition of being represented with the balance of Yin and Yang in the body and mind, and Kohn concludes that one who does this will re-balance the world.

**Indian Buddhism** entails an old system of belief which combines the individual with the universal spirit in the form of ecstasy in order to reach the awareness mentioned in the Tantras which are defined as the texts that explain the oneness of the creator as well as themselves to humanity.

According to **Kabbalah**, man bears the reflections of his creature; however, spirits which become perceivable with emotions and leave each other in this world, will become one with the coming of prophet and become “one with the Creator” and “same with the Creator”.

As it was specified on pages 36-37 above, Ibn Arabi tells there are four levels of practice and cognition in Sufism, and he adds that at the level of sharia there is “yours and mine”, at the level of dervish order, “mine is yours and yours is yours”, and in reality (truth) level “there is neither mine nor yours”, and at the gnosis level there is “neither me nor you”, where he suggests that everything is Allah and no body is other than Allah. The key “he/not he” of **İbn-i Arabî** covers the versatility.

According to some philosophers, there are differences between mysticism and creativity in the context of the condition of awareness and condition of awareness. Whereas there is a very intense resonance between the conscious and unconscious mind in the creation of an

artwork, mysticism talks about a limit where the “I” and “not I” exist together. Based on this, it could be said that the art of painting could provide for the whole of natural and material conditions for both the painter and the audience to conceive “I” and “not I”.

Csikszentmihalyi indicates that a person does not really lose himself during the flow /creation but only loses his consciousness; ... this experience is an interaction that creates a feeling of unity which is rarely found with foreign beings (Raab, p. 88).

#### **IV. 1. 3. Consciousness and Awareness**

“The basic issue in **Sufism** and **Analytic Psychology**, is the development of awareness and consciousness that leads to higher levels of consciousness than the current unawareness condition of man. In both of the models, the path is considered as a process of transformation that takes to the Nefs” (Spiegelman et al, *ibid*, p. 22).

The Pakistani Sufi musician Ms. Abida Parveen says:

“We have two eyes, but we may not see the whole picture. There is another eye which is in our heart. It see that which is unseen: Holy radiations. When these reach the listener through Sufi music and poetry than this is Sufism, this is purity, this is spirituality” (Simons ve Broughton 33’ 56’’ – 34’ 31’’).

“As it is said by **İbn-i Arabî**, if a person fails to shift to the point of superiority when the person sees God with God’s eyes, the person could only estimate the quality of the archetype as an example. In fact, knowledge that is obtained by conceiving “divine archetype” in the person, is only the first level of the Sufism” (Spiegelman et al, p. 49).

“According to **Jung**, the unconscious comprises two parts required to be definitively separated from one another. One is the personal unconsciousness, and this covers the whole mental content forgotten in the individual life. The other part contains the share unconscious brought by birth; which belongs to the whole humanity” (Campbell, *ibid*, p. 660).

Based on the words of Ellwood,

“Secular and religious **ecstasy** are almost the same. ... as emotions comprise, biologic gland, occur at the same time. The triggering and symbolic

interpretations used for maintaining the condition of consciousness and emotions differ from one another” (Raab, *ibid*, p. 85).

This suggests the idea that the artist could create a work only through a sort of **ecstasy**. The trance status required that the artist is outside himself, and inside the work itself.

What will be studied in this paper is the discussion on the basis of reaching **deep awareness in the condition of ecstasy** in mystical experiences which covers the eternal religions.

#### **IV. 1. 4. Continuum/Process**

In **Brahman**, creation is defined as a worldly action from the beginning to the end based on the principle of creation and continuity of the universe, and as an uninterrupted process.

“The perception of a result is an illusion, so is the perception of beginning, what exists is only the process, only the eternity, only the eternal now” (Cündioğlu, p. 52).

**Tantra** is the creative mystery that causes us to transform our actions gradually more and more towards inner awareness: It is not ending the action, but transforming it into creativity (Mookerjee and Khanna, *ibid*, p. 9).

**İbn-i Arabî** defines the four stages of practices and perceptions in the movement streams in a hierarchical structure.

In the art of **Zen**, the value of the painting is not in the completed canvas, but in the act of painting itself, namely the various shapes where the aggression and spiritual exercises are expresses (Ho Samuel p. 1).

#### **IV. 1. 5. The Reality of Nature**

“In universal terms, mysticism involves the mystical aspects of all religions. Religion is a tree which has ritualistic practices with exoteric roots. The branches of this tree is mysticism, and the fruit is reality” (Frager, p. 13-14). For example, as it is stated by Irina Tweedie, “Sufism is a shapeless reality” (Spiegelman et al, *ibid*, p. 23). “A great part of Sufis believe that there is a basic reality in all religions and that all religions are same in their essence” (Frager, *ibid*, p. 13-14).

The Mawlawi Sheikh Kesova says:

“The whirling ritual of the Whirling Dervishes, we don’t say it is a dance. It’s a prayer. Everything is whirling in the world. From the smallest cell, up to the galaxies of the universe. Everything is turning. Our whirling is to join to this universal prayer.” (Simons ve Broughton, *ibid*, 10’ 15’’ – 10’ 51’’).

This is supported by Kandinsky’s words (*ibid*, p. 55): “a painter who finds no satisfaction in mere representation, however artistic, in his longing to express his inner life, cannot but envy the ease with which music, the most non-material of the arts today, achieves this end. He naturally seeks to apply the methods of music to his own art. And from this results that modern desire for rhythm in painting, for mathematical, abstract construction, for repeated notes of colour, for setting colour in motion.” It is indicated that the Zen painter, who draws a powerful and balanced circle with a bodily movement, tries to catch up the balance of cosmos (Ho, *ibid*, p.2). Tapié defines the abstract art which is expressionist and is not geometrical, as a method of establishing intuitive communication and discovery, which constitute the basis of the reality of nature (Chilvers, p. 1).

For example, Paulhan exemplifies the similarity between the paintings of Wols and the photos of nerve cells, underlining the closeness between the microscopic images and art informel works (Cooper, *ibid*, p.2).

In this study, the fractal systems which “create repeating circles and vortexes at scales that minimize till eternity”, which explain how the nature created the world, as given in Annex 1, and the fractal structure in Pollock’s paintings are explained: “Because despite seeming abstract, it actually mirrors the reality of the world around us. ... It really is the basic fingerprint of nature.”

#### **IV. 2. Mystical Influences/Inspirations in the Selected Painters**

The **abstract expressionist** movement is divided into two different styles, being the **field** and the **action**. This study focused on the techniques, spiritual foundations and gestural actions of the action painters.

It is understood that the group which adopts this style refers to the philosophers and poets who question the relationship between the basis of reality and the relationship between the ego and the world and bring a new point of view to the rational idea to the world where the experiences can not reach.

**Automatism**, which creates a permanent impact on the painters such as Motherwell, Pollock and Bazziotes and which presents the opportunity to reveal the images that human beings can not consciously perceive and which exist at the unconscious mind, is considered as the primary means of directly revealing the emotional condition of the artist based on the fact that the technique itself is perceived as a value in abstract expressionism. As it was indicated before (see, p. 71) despite the fact that Bazziotes applied translucent colors which he used for smooth surfaces on his paintings at different times on the same painting, he starts this process every time purified from his prejudices.

#### **IV. 2. 1. Artists' Discourses**

Mark Rothko and Adolph Gottlieb explained as follows in a radio broadcast in 1943:

“Those who think the world of today is more gentle and graceful than the primeval and predatory passions from which these myths spring, are either not aware of reality or do not wish to see it in art. The myth holds us... because it expresses to us something real and existing in ourselves.” (Jones, *ibid*, p. 3).

In an interview they gave to New York Times magazine in 1943, Mark Rothko and Adolph Gottlieb said:

“There is no such thing as good painting about nothing. We assert that the subject is crucial and only that subject-matter is valid which is tragic and timeless.” (Anfam, *ibid*, “Abstract Expressionism”, p. 3).

Barnett Newman thinks that modern abstract expressionists are still in the process of creating the sublime art; they try to construct the concept of divine for a metaphysical art that will demonstrate the fundamentals of reality which is by using the symbols.

For the “Woman as Landscape” painting in 1955 and for the “Woman in Landscape III” in 1968, de Kooning says: “The landscape is in the Woman and there is Woman in the landscape (Grunenberg, ibid, p.4).

Atakan (p. 36) states that, Gençaydın, in his words “Contemporary artist has reached to abstraction not from the uncertainty of primitive thinking fell into, but through an affirmative idea as a result of an evolution of thousands of years”, defines abstract expressionism in reference to Jungian psychology.

#### **IV. 2. 2. Artists’ Works**

Specifically about various works of the selected artists, it is considered that:

**Hans Hofmann**, is affected from the words of Pollock “I am the very nature” and he used pouring technique,

**Adolph Gottlieb**, under the influence of surrealists and the effect of Freud, the artist works contains the importance of directly revealing the emotional status,

**Mark Rothko** , under the influence of surrealists and the effect of Freud, the artist reflected into his works the importance of directly revealing the emotional status of the artist, (Clearwater, p. 2),

**Willem de Kooning** thinks that “although I am not interested in making abstractions, I study abstract painting since I could transfer my opinions related to drama, hatred, pain, knowledge, idea and space” (Grunenberg, ibid, p. 4),

**Arshile Gorky**, as interpreted by Lynton (ibid, p. 238) “thinking that myth was a motivating element, but was of a more personal character bearing clear memories belonging to his home and family arising from the Gorky’s myths, public tales and public art”,

**Barnett Newman**, as specified above (see p. 67), explained his purpose as “the audiences, while standing in front of my paintings, shall feel that domes with vertical vaults encompass themselves. This necessity gives them the awareness that they exist in the whole universe”, as expressed by Thomas B. Hess, by associating his

paintings, universe and light practices with the mystical concepts in Kabbalah involves placing, dividing and measuring,

**Franz Rowe Kline**, in an interview he gave in 1960, hosted an emotional resonance while emphasizing the type / characteristics of “the brooding quality” of certain “impending forms” that will occur (Anfam, "Kline, Franz", p. 1-3 ),

**William Baziotes'** archetypical forms invoke numerous characteristics simultaneously; these formations where the forms may concurrently turn into sea creatures, flora, animals or creatures are uncertain and unexpressible beings that emerge from unconscious independency of form and color (Seitz, *ibid*, p. 287-288),

**Jackson Pollock's** idea that human existence performs a ritual by living the awareness, sleep, deep sleep and ecstasy,

**Robert Motherwell's** showing this in his works by saying “abstract art is a form of mysticism” as told by Ashton (p.159),

**Samuel Lewis Francis's**, work “Untitled Mandala” comprises squares that recall the microcosmos and macrocosmos having the same form set in the midst towards the center from the sides of the canvas from a Jungian point of view,

**Edwin Parker Twombly**, “characters from classical mythology and antique figures and sites... became the focus of his abstractions. They were evoked by cryptic scraps of words, pictorial metaphors and elusive signs... a careful reading of Twombly's images permits the viewer to penetrate an apparent chaos to arrive at their inner silence and the opening of a window on the classical past” (Wijnbeek, *ibid*, p.1),

**Abidin Elderoğlu's** traces of the spiritual depth brought by being an eastern artist as shown in the figural elements created in the synthesis of east and west” (Kılıç, *ibid*, p. 330),

**In Mübin Orhon**, as evaluated by Sönmez (*ibid*, p. 37), “... the color layers in his paintings, as could be understood with a careful look, are like the noctiluca which appears and disappears on the night sea and have ‘instantaneous qualities’, and this could only be discovered by the ‘seeing eyes’ as suggested by Rumi”,

**Adnan Turani**, as specified by Akder (ibid, p. 29), “questioned the efforts to benefit from the tradition due to the context of the lines he used in his painting titled ‘Calligraphic Arrangement’ ”,

**Zafer Gençaydın** studied the nature within the framework of the historical mind and pictured this with an abstract expressionist style,

In **M. Zahit Büyükişliyen**, as determined by Ergüven (ibid, p. 43), although there are characteristic difference in his works, nobody would go into any doubt which direction he advances; he is in the search of taking ‘refugee in one’s own self’ through purification.

#### **IV. 2. 3. Artists’ Relations With Audiences**

The dynamic encounter between the work and its audience became a hallmark of Abstract Expressionism (Anfam, Abstract Expressionism, p. 6).

Transcendent beliefs were an important art of the Abstract Expressionist movement, in particular to Barnett Newman, Mark Rothko, and Jackson Pollock (Plummer, “Abstract Expressionism”, ibid, 1). For example, Rothko and Newman are in the expectation that the audiences should experience the sense of diving into a deep meditation or reaching to a revelation when looking at the abstract surfaces or forms (Robertson, McDaniel, ibid, p. 5).

From 1947 to 1952, Pollock preferred numbering instead of naming in order to direct his audiences in his paintings which he created with his famous style. Büyükişliyen supports this method by saying “... a painting should be perceived by various people.” As Onat accepts two different approaches:

- according to Büyükişliyen, “putting a title to the works is only an element of motivation; it enables the audience to start the work of the artist from a point.”
- Rothko has the following expression in “The Tiger’s Eye” magazine in 1949:

“The progression of a painter’s work... will be toward clarity; toward the elimination of all obstacles between the painter and the idea, and between the idea and the observer. ...”



The secret of seeing is losing at everything and absorbing the world around us. Art is as important as Science, Science as important as Politics, Politics as important as Economics, Economics as important as Literature etc. If you do not confine the spiritual eye, your physical eyes will be able to see more (Kedar, p. 61).

Kandinsky's comments, in the Pyramid that music could reach to results more than painting could reach in processing the form; on the other hand that painting is advanced from music from some aspects, that whereas music has an order tied to the time, the painting presents its message to the audience instantaneously whereas the music has an order tied to time.

Onat's association of texts which constitute the essence of his inspirations as part of the name of each painting in his series seems to support what Kandinsky claims (ibid, p. 71-72)

“Must we then abandon utterly all material objects and paint solely in abstractions? The problem of harmonizing the appeal of the material and the non-material shows us the answer to this question. As every word spoken rouses an inner vibration, so likewise does every object represented. To deprive oneself of this possibility is to limit one's powers of expression”.

and as explained by Kandinsky this time in the Pyramid

“And so the arts are encroaching one upon another, and from a proper use of this encroachment will rise the art that is truly monumental. Every man who steep himself in the spiritual possibilities of his art is a valuable helper in the building of the spiritual pyramid which will some day reach to heaven” (ibid, p. 72).

### IV. 3. Master-Pupil

This dissertation could be summarized as perceiving the importance and value of disseminating in the whole painting education curriculum the understanding, which is based on the expectation of Papanek who demonstrated for his students:

“in the name of *forcing* brand new patterns of thinking into new association of ideas ... confronting with the problems that are highly away from the realities of daily lives, demonstrating continuously the nature of various obstacles to students....and to ensure that students recognize their creative ... hidden strengths (Papanek, p. 60).

and as suggested as an advice by Büyükişliyen, as a professor open to innovations, to his students;

“Whatever you do, let it not be fine, let no one like it, even you do not like it, but that must be something of your own” (İnatçı, ibid, 09’35’’- 09’45’’).

and as quoted in the words of Ho (ibid, p.1), inspired by the Zen mysticism arising from the path of direct transmission from mind to mine in the context of master-pupil relationship;

“ It is the decanter bends, not the glass; the master, who is deep and full bends neck, not the pupil” (Cündioğlu, p. 56).

The ultimate suggestion of this dissertation is to consider oneness and coexistence of the creative power of the lecturer-student. Both lecturer and student need to create their works separately only by themselves without any interventions. After this process, when they unite, they will achieve the unity of oneness and this will lead us to restructure of teaching methods of curriculums in the context of creativity.

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Wols: iv, vi, 50, 51, 52, 118



***“The Code: Nature’s Building Blocks” Season 1: Episode 2 (Video file)*****Presented by: Prof. Marcus du Sautoy**

This barn was home to one of the artistic revolutions of the 20th century. The painter who worked here had become disillusioned with conventional painting techniques. In fact, he stopped painting altogether, and started splattering. He was as controversial as the art he produced. An arrogant, self-destructive drunk. And, perhaps, a visionary. His name was Jackson Pollock.

The floor, you can still see, is covered in paint. What Pollock would do is to lay a canvas out on the floor. And then, often intoxicated, he would drip and flick the paint all over the surface. He’d come back week after week adding more and more layers, more and more colors. The result was extraordinary. They’re huge outburst of abstract expressionism. Just covered in paint scattered all over the place.

Pollock’s paintings sent shockwaves through the art world. No one had ever seen anything like this before. LIFE magazine declared him “Artist of the Century.” Others derided his efforts as the substandard dross of a drunken lunatic. But though Pollock’s paintings courted controversy, they were incredibly influential. Not least because the apparent random squiggles are strangely compelling.

Many people have tried to copy Pollock’s techniques. Some in homage, others in attempted forgeries. But nobody seems to be able to reproduce that magic that Pollock brought to the originals. Pollock’s paintings seem to have captured something of the wildness of the natural world. But for a long time, no one could define exactly what it was that made his work so appealing. Until it came to the attention of artist and physicist Richard Taylor [University of Oregon].

His unique approach was to invent a machine that could mimic Pollock’s eccentric painting style.

T: It’s all based on this apparatus called the “Pollockiser”.

S: The “Pollockiser”? That’s lovely.

T: What it is essentially though, is, what’s called a “kicked pendulum”. And as you know, a basic pendulum is very, very regular like a clock, but at the top here what you’ve got is a little device that can actually knock the string as it’s swinging around, and that induces a very different type of motion called chaotic motion

S: So, this would be like Pollock’s hand. This would be what he’d be trying to achieve, with that sort of off balance, painting that he’d do.

T: Absolutely, so they’re very similar processes.

S: It’s very effective.

By recreating his technique, the “Pollockiser” is able to mimic one particular aspect of the artist’s work. And that is that it appears more or less the same, no matter how closely you look.

T: To keep on seeing these patterns unfolding in front of you. And with a Pollock painting, all of those patterns at different size scales look the same.

This a property known as “fractal”.

S: So, if I took, pictures at these different scales and showed them to somebody, in some sense they wouldn’t be able to tell, which one was the close and which one was far away?

T: Absolutely. So as long as you can’t see that canvas edge, then you have no idea whether you’re standing 30 feet away or two feet away. They’ll both have exactly the same level of complexity.

More than any other painter, Jackson Pollock was able to consistently repeat the same level of complexity at different scales throughout his paintings. The fractal quality of his work appeals to us. Because despite seeming abstract, it actually mirrors the reality of the world around us.

T: When we started to actually analyze the “buried” patterns in there, this amazing thing emerged. Deep down hidden in there is this level of mathematical structure.

S: So it’s this really delicate interplay between something that looks messy and chaotic...

T: Yeah.

S: But actually lit has structure and some underlying code hidden inside it?

T: Absolutely, and you can see it not only in his paintings, but you see it everywhere. You know, like a tree outside. You look at the tree from far away, you see this big trunk with a few branches going off. Superficially they look cluttered and they look incredibly complex, but your eye can sense that there's a sort of underlying mathematical structure to it all. Pollock was the first person to actually put it on canvas in a direct fashion that no other artist has ever done. It really is the basic fingerprint of nature.

And that's what's most fascinating about Pollock's art. ...

Fractals are how nature builds the world. Clouds are fractal, because they display the same quality. Giant clouds are identical to tiny ones. And it's the same with rocks. From appearances, you can't tell if you're looking at an enormous mountain or a humble boulder.

And then there are living fractals like this tree. ... Trees also demonstrate the great powers of fractal systems. Their great complexity stems from very simple rules. Now the reason the tree makes this shape is because it wants to maximize the amount of sunlight it gets. ... you just need one rule to create this shape. What the tree does is to grow, then divide. And by using this one rule, we get this incredibly complex shape we call a tree. This is the same pattern repeating itself at a smaller and smaller scale. ... you never get a perfect tree. But allow for some natural variability, different growing seasons, the wind, an occasional accident, and the result is a very real looking tree.

We find the same fractal branching system time and again throughout nature. This idea that the patterns of nature may be inherently fractal was pioneered in the 1970s by French mathematician Benoit Mandelbrot. This is his most famous creation, the Mandelbrot set. Its systems of circles and swirls repeats itself at smaller and smaller scales forever. And this infinite complexity was created from just one very simple mathematical function. Mandelbrot's quantum leap was to suggest that similar simple mathematical codes could

describe not just trees, but many of the seemingly random shapes of much of the natural world. ...

...We also need to appreciate the complexity of that geometry playin out against the competing forces of the natural world. And that means grasping how even the apparent randomness we see around us is underwritten by mathematical rules like fractals. Rules that can explain the pattenrs in everything, from the chaos of Jackson Pollock's paintings to the structure of trees and the realism of virtual worlds (Lachmann, 40'35'' - 58'01'').

