



THE DEFINITION OF THE CONCEPTS OF 'MASS-VOID' AS METAPHOR; A STUDY ON İSTANBUL ABOUT THE CONCEPTS OF 'MASS-VOID'

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ABSTRACT

Metaphors help to describe things. Metaphors have been used for many years in many research areas, in explaining scientific terms, expressing feelings, explaining the mystery of the language of humor, and even describing diseases. The scope of this research is to examine the concepts 'Mass-Void' as metaphors. The study aims are to look metaphorically to the conceptual dilemma of 'mass-void'. By examining this conceptual dilemma of 'mass-void' metaphorically, it is emphasized that these concepts are related to many different branches. These branches include different perspectives and interpretations related to architecture, sports, art and philosophy.

The methods used during the study are research, observation and photography. Firstly, the concepts of 'metaphor' and 'mass-void' have been researched. Observations were made within the scope of the study. Fener, Balat, Galata and Eminönü regions of İstanbul were visited. During this visit, the details observed with a metaphorical point of view were examined. Within the scope of the study, Fener, Balat, Galata and Eminönü regions were investigated. Throughout the research, new perspectives have been discovered by approaching the topic metaphorically. The findings of the observations and studies that have been made, have reached the point that many areas of life and the city we live in are affected by the concepts of 'mass - void'. Architecture, art and photography have been linked. The findings were analyzed with the photographic technique and the perceptions during the study were interpreted.

Keywords: Metaphor, architecture, photography, mass, void.

1. INTRODUCTION

Metaphors help to describe things. Also, they help to simulate and compare something with something else. Metaphors do not have to be very clear. Sometimes solving metaphors can take a lifetime. The reason for this is that metaphors are as important and special as intelligence. The intelligence and perspective required to understand metaphors lies under the distinction of being a human being. This is one of the most important features that distinguish us from animals. Metaphors have been used for many years in many research areas, in explaining scientific terms, expressing feelings, explaining the mystery of the language of humor, and even describing diseases (Sontag, S.; 1988). Metaphors find meaning and play a major role in life, marketing, art and forms of expression.

'Mass-void' concepts also include methods to enable people express themselves in many areas, like metaphors. Some of these areas are; literature, music, cinema, photography, architecture, interior architecture, sports, philosophy, psychology, theater and painting.

2. PURPOSE, SCOPE AND METHOD OF THE STUDY

2.1. Purpose and Scope of the Study

The scope of this research is to examine the concepts 'mass-void' as metaphors. The study aims to look metaphorically to the conceptual dilemma of 'mass-void'. By examining this conceptual dilemma of 'mass-void' metaphorically, it is emphasized that these concepts are related to many different branches. These branches include different perspectives and interpretations related to architecture, sports, art and philosophy.

2.2. Method of the Study

The methods used during the study are research, observation and photography. Firstly, the concepts of 'metaphor' and 'mass-void' have been researched. Literature search was done. Resource books related to the subject have been researched. Information on previous investigations has been given. This information has been reviewed by the author. Observations were made within the scope of the study. Fener, Balat, Galata and Eminönü regions of İstanbul were visited. During this visit, the details observed with a metaphorical point of view were examined. These details are not always visible in physical form. For this reason, mostly intellectual and emotional resources have been examined. In the last section, there are photographs taken in İstanbul. When photographs are examined, interpretations are clear enough to be understood when looking at photographs, but they vary according to the perceptions of the people. Within the scope of the study, Fener, Balat, Galata and Eminönü regions were investigated. These regions have been chosen because they are used extensively both in history and today.

3. INVESTIGATION OF CONCEPTS OF 'MASS-VOID' IN VARIOUS FIELDS

3.1. Painting



Figure-1. Painting and Metaphor.

In the art of painting, the most important of the elements that form the basis of formality is the 'mass-void ratio' (Cheng, F., 2006). The dilemmas created between mass and void invite the

viewer to enforce the limits of perception. Color and tonality, dark and open tension allows the interiors to create images (Fig.1). The sense of form in the paintings is explained by means of masses (Enlil, T., 2004). The composition, color, rhythm and balance follow the mass-void ratio. There is a book on Chinese painting about the concepts 'mass-void', written by François Cheng. It is mentioned in this book that it is impossible to hit the power of the line (mass) in the absence of the void. According to Cheng, the formation of Ying Yang also consists of the definition of mass and void as metaphor (Fig.2).



Figure-2. Ying and Yang.

3.2. Theater

In theater art, stage art is associated with life. There is no fourth wall. The distinction is not between the spectator and the player; it is between the theater and the world. So, theater is a ritual (Antonin Artaud). The stage is seen as a part of life, not as a representation. Stage and the coordinates of the stage, which is the space that created the real world of theater, are of great importance. In theater art; the most important of which constitute the scene coordinates are; 'depth - flatness', 'mass - void' and 'interior - exterior space'.

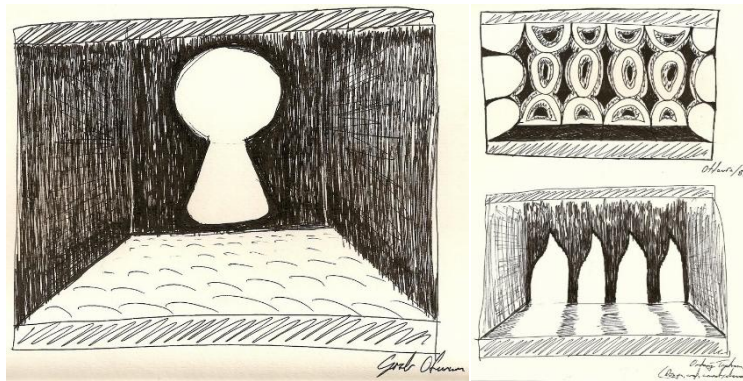


Figure-3. Theater Stage.

There are sketches drawn by theater artists (Fig.3). In these sketches, theatericians interpreted the various stage decorations with drawings. The artist tried to interpret how the concepts of heaven and hell would be reflected in the theater scene. The expression of sketch with masses and voids shows that both the theater art and the art of painting are connected with the concepts of fullness-space. In fact, it is the mass - void ratio which determines the interval of the stage and the creator of the interval of the stage. Audio - visual indicators, the location of the stage and the physical location of the actor are the interval of the stage (Fig.4).

Table-1.TheInterval of theStage.

Audio - visual indicators	‘THE INTERVAL OF THE STAGE’
The location of the stage	
The physical location of the actor	

**Figure-4.** The Interval of the Stage.

3.3. Literature

With the understanding of metaphor used in literature, it is argued that language changes the role of our mind. According to the authors, metaphor is a fundamental mind mechanism. It is defined as a mechanism that will allow us to use our knowledge of physical and social experience to provide us with the concept of and the creation of numerous literary artifacts (Lakoff, G., Johnson, M., 2005). The metaphors are the 'musts' of our lives because they have made the most basic experience understandable. Metaphors shape our perceptions and actions even when we are not aware of them. Thus, the metaphor's "masses" of expression makes us communicate with the unconscious through what we do and unconsciously. As a result, meaningless "voids" in our minds and behaviors are defined and transformed into actions.

One of the most beautiful examples of metaphors that can be given in the field of literature; it is written by Susan Sontag, 'Illness as Metaphor & Aids and it's Metaphor'. Sontag mentions that in every episode of society, they want to identify with 'evil' and that they need a disease that they will commit to 'the victims'. With 'evil' as a metaphor; plague, AIDS, cancer have established similarities between diseases. The aim is to refer to the fact that patients who are stigmatized through metaphors can not survive natural disease processes. It is told that illnesses that can not be handled by metaphorical thinking and the expectation that the patients are telling the stories of death rather than incentive for treatment but painful and unbearable.

As a result, it is desirable to emphasize through literature; metaphors are deep and vital in human life. Positive and negative metaphors affect our lives by shaping the mass and void spaces of our lives.

3.4. Philosophy and Taekwondo



Figure-5. Philosophy and Taekwondo.

From a philosophical point of view, there are many branches where concepts of mass - void are pointed out and metaphorically conceived (Fig.5). For example; In the Taekwondo sport, the most important rule of being a good taekwondo is to control yourself with your voids and your masses to cope with your opponent's attacks (Şahin, M., 2006). In fact, the concepts of 'void' and 'mass' complement each other. According to the researches, the concepts of "void and mass" are in the spirit and shape. "Void", as a thought; to save your mind and soul from all unnecessary thoughts for the moment, to empty it and to hold it for all that is necessary for the moment. "Mass" is used to mean the ability and ability to bring a new alternative to itself in response to something. The shape and metaphorical explanation of the transfer of all these findings to Taekwondo are; mass, superiority to your opponent and making no mistakes. 'Void' is the opportunity your opponent gives you to win the game. As a result, it is stated that a good taekwondo who has achieved 'mass' can benefit from his opponent's wrong attitudes and his 'voids'.

3.5. The Concepts of 'Mass-Void' and the Theory of Gestalt



Figure-6. Theory of Gestalt.

Working on basic forms and colors in relation to mass-void to be studied as a metaphor will provide a different impression on each aspect of the design and create different perspectives. The transition from the created two-dimensional compositions to the third dimension of the produced mass-void balance will be a metaphorical application that will lead to original designs (Fig.6). Studies on Gestalt Theory have contributed greatly to the explanation of human intellectual and cognitive processes. The essence of the Gestaltian approach is explained by the statement 'all of it is greater than the sum of its parts'. Human perceives the influences that surround it as meaningful, not fragmentary. In this way, "masses" can be defined in the presence of voids, and "voids" can reach full meaning besides the masses.

Principles set out as 'significance principles' (pragnanz principles) by establishing mass-void associations are applicable to perception and learning (Küçükahmet, 2002). The forms formed by the mass-void relation play an important role at the basis of the theory.

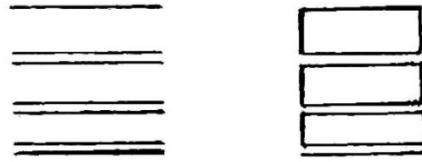


Figure-7. Proximity Principles.



Figure-8. Similarity Principles.

The 'proximity principle' indicates that those who are close to each other tend to group (Fig.7). The 'similarity principle' explains that similar "voids" tends to be grouped when it comes to the perception of multiple elements (Fig.8). When attachments to a shape or object that is not integral with the 'closure principle' are made (Fig.9), it is said that these joints tend to perceive the whole as a metaphor if they define a surface integral with that shape or object. With 'continuity principle' (Fig.10), the tendency of objects with "voids" extending on a line to be perceived as a continuous line is described (Küçükahmet, 2002). This theory is a useful form of thinking based on the perception of consciousness as a whole. It aims to gain insight instead of trial and error. It is a theory based on logic instead of an unconscious quest.

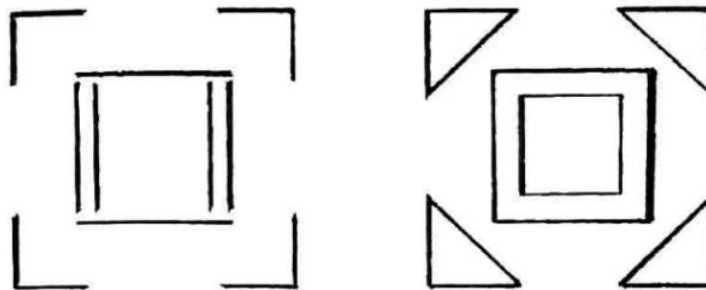


Figure-9. Closure Principle.



Figure-10. Continuity Principle.

3.6. Architecture and Photography



Figure-11. Continuity Principle.

Studies in architecture and photography are the areas where the concepts of mass and void influence metaphorically (Fig.11). I think that the results of interpreting these two fields of work as metaphors will lead to results that contain people's feelings and give clues about their psychology. In architecture, the mass and void in the facade are, in the simplest terms, the ratio and balance between window and wall areas. The balance created can be asymmetric or symmetric. The product that the 'mass - void' balance brings to the fair should be aesthetic. It is also very important that this conclusion product responds to the needs of the people.



Figure-12. Continuity Principle.

On the buildings, the mass-void concepts are passed on the additions on the façade and on the plan. In this way, it is aimed to give aesthetics to the structure form. (Fig.12). In architectural design, forms converge, allowing the mass to be brought forward and perceived. It is more efficient to discuss how to create aesthetic in two dimensions rather than seeing a mass - void relation first in a building. The creator of this discussion is the art of photography and the art of drawing.

3.7. A Study on İstanbul about the Concepts of 'Mass-Void'

In the study, personal interpretations were made on Istanbul. Photographs are examined as 'masses - voids' and the comments on the photographs contain the emotions and perceptions of the author. The author is involved as an observer in the study. For the study, Fener, Balat, Galata and Eminönü regions of İstanbul were selected. The research included photographs, comments and explanations.



Figure-13. The Bosphorus Bridge.



Figure-14. The Bosphorus Bridge.

The Bosphorus Bridge can be interpreted as the 'mass' that connects the 1071 meters 'void' of the separated city (Fig.13 - Fig.14). Since 1973, Bosphorusbridge provides the flow of life.



Figure-15: The writing on the building in Balat.

The writing on the building in Balat becomes a 'mass' filling the gap on the wall (Fig.15).



Figure-16: Streets of Istanbul. **Figure-17:** Streets of Istanbul.

In Istanbul, even running children at the end of the street (Fig.16) or a music shop which can be reached by the gate at the end of a dark road (Fig.17) can be complementary to the void.



Figure-18: Streets of İstanbul.

Figure-19: Historic sales location.

The 'void' in the corner of an historic building is used as a parking space (Fig.18). Moreover, the existence of the attachment in the historic sales location (Fig.19) fills the 'void'. The filled 'void' is complementary even if it does not conform to the whole of the structure.



Figure-20: Hanging blue dress.

Figure-21: Hanging bridal dress.

There are many signboards hanging on the streets at Eminönü (Fig.20-Fig.21). Unlike this time, sellers are attracted to people by hanging the blue dress and the bridal dress that are seen in these photos. This type of sign emphasizes not only the product sold but also a living. It has the effect of filling the 'void' between two buildings.



Figure-22: Historic Agora Public House. **Figure-23:** Historic Agora Public House.

Photographs show inside and outside of the Historic Agora Public House in Balat (Fig.22). The gate of the Agora Public House seems to collapse at any moment and turn into a 'void', but the door remains strong and remains as a 'mass' (Fig.23).



Figure-24: Galata Bridge.**Figure-25: Galata Bridge.****Figure-26: Galata Bridge.**

There are fishermen on the Galata Bridge at all hours of the day (Fig.24). On Galata bridge, a fish caught by the fishermen fills the 'void' in the water bottle (Fig.25). In the sketch, it is desired to depict a moment in Galata Bridge (Fig.26).



Figure-27: Grand Bazaar.**Figure-28: Grand Bazaar.**

These two photographs show the Grand Bazaar. While the photo on the left emphasizes the sense of spaciousness and 'voids' of the Grand Bazaar (Fig.27), the photo on the right highlights the air 'voids' that open out to that space (Fig.28). In this case, the 'masses and voids' has been alternated. It is aimed to tell that the element perceived as a 'void' is actually a 'mass' within itself.



Figure-29: Streets of İstanbul.**Figure-30: Streets of İstanbul.**

If we accept the city as a 'mass' with its buildings, the streets are big 'voids'. The masses passing through these voids are; laundry ropes, cars, street lamps, children. The photo on the right was taken from Balat and the photo on the left was taken from Galata tower (Fig.29-Fig.30).



Figure-31: Sultanahmet Square.**Figure-32: Sultanahmet Square.**

Sultanahmet Square was photographed at a rainy day. Despite the fact that the square was empty, the place looks completely 'massed' with a sales car (Fig.31). Similarly, the empty space of the Eminönü New Mosque Square looks completely 'massed' with the person selling bird seed (Fig.32).



Figure-33: Beyazıt Madrasah.**Figure-34: Beyazıt Madrasah.**

The windows of the Beyazıt Madrasah are decorated with ornate iron bars. The newspaper, which is stuck in the broken part of the bars, is an embarrassment which is both funny and sad (Fig.33-Fig.34). In these photographs, the irony of the 'void' is encountered.



Figure-35: Streets of Eminönü.**Figure-36: Streets of Eminönü.**

These photographs were taken in the streets of Eminönü. The red rose in the photographs filled the 'void' in the gaze of the lifeless model (Fig.35-Fig.36). The feeling of that red rose has been interesting in this research.



Figure-37: Wooden house in Balat.**Figure-38:** Wooden house in Balat.

We can meet children, animals and plants in the city. Through this encounter, we realize that we value the objects very much. It should not be forgotten that it is the individuals and animals that make up the city. A cat sleeping in front of the window of an old wooden house in Balat (Fig.37), a little girl looking out the window (Fig.38) or a balcony full of flowers of a burned, old house (Fig.39). All these individuals and animals fill the 'voids' of the city.



Figure-39: Balcony full of flowers of a burned, old house.

Children and animals are the most innocent and the most silent observers in the city. Sometimes they come out in the space behind the truck, with their emotional voids in them. The 'for sale' sign hanging from the wall of a house in Balat seems to mean them (Fig.40). It is the emotional emptiness (void) within these children to be emphasized.



Figure-40: Children in İstanbul.



Figure-41: Craftsman in Grand Bazaar.**Figure-42:** Craftsman in Grand Bazaar.

The person who appears in the photo earns money with his art in Grand Bazaar. (Fig.41-Fig.42). When he is photographed, he is so occupied with his work, that all that is happening around him is a cosmic 'void'. The only 'mass' in his mind is the clock and its repair, which he directs his interest.



Figure-43: Child in Eminönü.**Figure-44:** The sketch.

At Eminönü, a child selling toys was photographed while playing with the toys he sold (Fig.43). At that moment, a sketch was also drawn. (Fig.44). This photo wants to tell us that the toy of the child is playing has stripped away him from the crowd (mass) and has taken him to a 'void', utopian place. He has been away from the 'masses' of his surroundings.



Figure-45: A warning sign.**Figure-46:** A tombstone.

Various types of deaths are encountered in Istanbul. For example, when a house in Balat died as a metaphor, a warning sign is placed in front of it and placed like a tombstone in the void (Fig.45). Also, when a person dies, sculptures are made on the grave that tells about the moments of his life (Fig.46). As a result, each sculpture is a combination of 'masses' and 'voids'.

4. CONCLUSION

Throughout the research, new perspectives have been discovered by approaching the topic metaphorically. The findings of the observations and studies that have been made, have reached the point that many areas of life and the city we live in are affected by the concepts of 'mass - void'. Architecture and art photography has been linked. The findings were analyzed with the photographic technique and the perceptions during the study were interpreted. As a result; the definitions of 'mass - void' as metaphor were made in many different ways and a different approach to Istanbul was exhibited.

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