

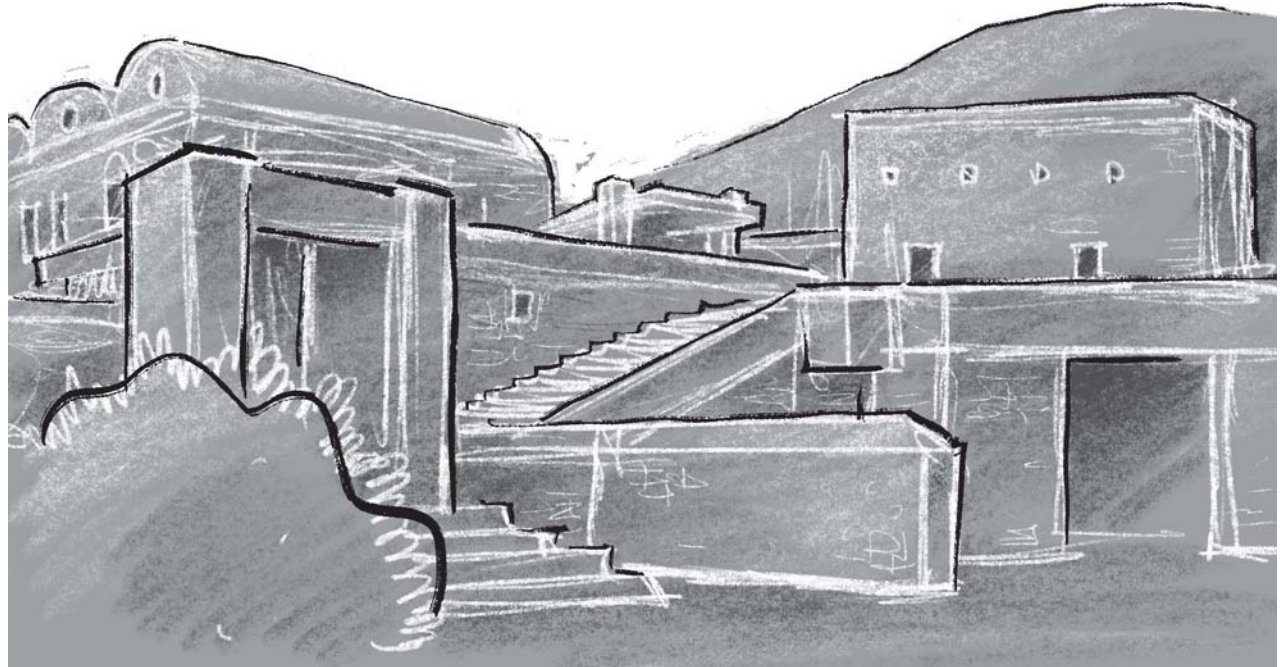
Tradition to Innovation Through Architectural Space: A Case Study on Turgut Cansever

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Abstract This study aims to reveal the spatial interpretations born of tradition and headed for new in a world where modern thought still influences the way space is handled. Reaching a contemporary synthesis with innovative approaches by realizing social values on a local scale seems a potential. Here, tradition is considered as an indispensable source of contemporary expansions for the future with its original historical data of the past. Reaching original works in the fields of design requires going beyond the formal approach, which includes global repetitions disconnected from context and tracking historical clues forming the tradition. It is seen that the repetitions of the past forms today cannot function as a dynamic synthesis. Thus primarily starting point should be intellectual production instead of formal production. So, architect-intellectual Turgut Cansever, aiming the change, transformation, the forward-thinking, and known for his thoughts never conceding his dissenting identity, constitutes the sample of this study. Cansever, following Western thought's footsteps, but positing against the context reproducing it formally, is considered essential. Therefore he is evaluated with his intellectual background to create the original, and his projects deserved the Aga Khan Award.



1. Introduction

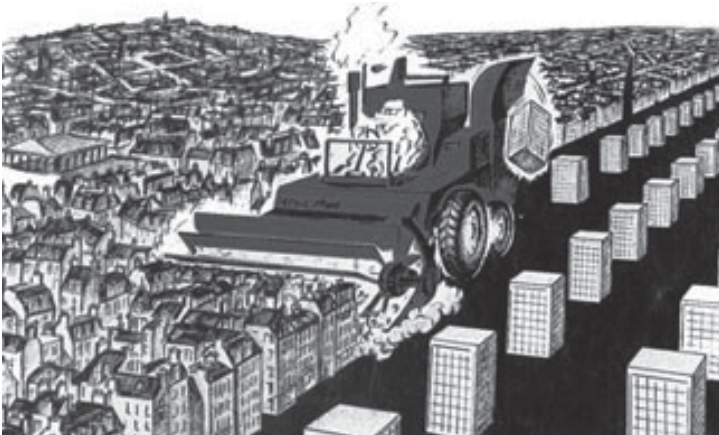
The main characteristic of modernity is that it offers a different way of life than the traditional systems before, and it is historically unique. This uniqueness also indicates a break from traditional systems. This rupture brings the concept of alienation that emerges with the speed of change. While science, technology, and industry are developing rapidly on a large scale, the socio-cultural structure is changing, and values are being lost. As a result of this, people become alienated from social life and its places. This study primarily deals with criticizing modernity and alienation and evaluating the relationships between tradition-essence-innovation as a part of the solution. Cansever and his Aga Khan Award winner practices with his interpretation of the relationship between tradition- essence-innovation have been examined as tangible examples that exist with their universal values.

2. Method

This study is a review. Here, the data obtained from the international and national studies have been revealed using descriptive research and analysis techniques. Some of the visuals have been obtained from printed and electronic sources, and the others have been specially created as an analysis form for this study.

3. Findings

In the modern world, everything is alien to what existed before it. There is no organic connection between the old and the new. Due to the relationship with the existent before itself, the present moment is also suspicious and known to be alien in the future. The next moment is a series of nothingnesses. The future is an unpredictable, foggy area. In such a world, there is no value or meaning that can be taken as reference. Modern consciousness continually lives in a suspicious perception of the present time, and everyday life experiences take place in this emotion (Yirtici, 2005). In this case, in Harvey's words, if modern life is indeed so suffused with the sense of the fleeting, the ephemeral, the fragmentary, and the contingent, then a number of profound consequences follow. To begin with, modernity can have no respect even for its own past, let alone that of any premodern social order. The transitoriness of things makes it difficult to preserve any sense of historical continuity (Harvey, 1992). While this situation has the effect of alienation, in Connerton's statement, alienation transforms the past into a foreign country and makes the present increasingly similar (Connerton, 2009). On the other hand, alienation refers to being "alien" against the mechanical system and machine based on causation, which is the product of the human's own activity (Tunalı, 2002).



Today, as Delanty states, while alienation comes into question both within the self and in the relations between the self and the other (Delanty, 2003), the alienated human being, which is an abstraction, has lost its connection with everything that is specific to the human. The human is reduced to performing an undifferentiated work on indistinguishable objects (Ollman, 1976). In this context, modernist design has become the home of intellect and eye, but it has made our body, other senses, and also our memories, imagination, and dreams become homeless (Pallasma, 2005). With this feature, alienation gradually weakens the bond between old and new while transforming the future into an unpredictable, uncertain space. In such a world, it becomes increasingly difficult to find value and meaning that can be taken as a reference for space and human for design areas.

But in Wittgenstein's words, the only flaw of a perfect picture of the world, free of all prejudices, free of values, naked and defined in a precise language, is that it looks like a flat surface covered with ice and without any friction. The floor has been polished, everything has been defined, and a foundation has been created for the mind where it has functioned flawlessly. But it is not possible to walk on this ground for this reason. Even if a foundation free from prejudices is found, if this foundation is not wanted to be lost when it is found, it should be made to be walked on. (as cited, Armağan, 1998). In this situation, in Cansever's words, for change to be meaningful, there must be something constant. When everything changes, change loses its meaning, so an environment of chaos can occur (Cansever, 2007). In this case, even to create an opposing idea, a data to be taken as reference and ground to be stepped on becomes necessary. At this point, "tradition" is considered one of the sources containing this ground with its vital relationship with the past, present, and future.

3.1. Tradition Concept

Although there are many expansions regarding the definition of tradition in the historical process, it is seen that the most basic way to define tradition is to emphasize its "hand-to-hand" quality. In the words of Armağan, both the epistemology of the word tradition in Turkish "gelenek" (from word "gelmek", "gel-e-n-ek") and the less-used Arabic equivalent of the word "an'ane" emphasize enough that tradition is something "coming" from previous people in terms of time (Armağan, 1998). The point that needs to be carefully emphasized here is that if the tradition cannot come to the current era, cannot live in it, and becomes alienated from it, it cannot remain as a tradition. In this case, it is seen that the continuation of the tradition depends on staying away from "formal" references. Here, it becomes necessary to stay contemporary with new syntheses and come up with contemporary answers and solutions to today's problems.

Özer (1993) states that tradition corresponds to all the activities, events, ritual habits, and the objects produced by them, coming from the past in the historical process but still valid and current. In the words of Bektaş (1999), tradition corresponds to what survived from the culture of living, which belongs to a region, a climate, a community. Those that have not reached this state cannot be called tradition; they can only be the subject of history. To be a part of the tradition, they have to be ahead of it, not somewhere in the past. Extending the line of tradition to the future can only be possible by creating a contemporary approach.

At this point, Hobsbawm states that all traditionally called practices are actually intertwined with practices considered modern. Tradition is not an unchanging phenomenon or situation that occurs in a particular place. Traditions are continually being recreated (Hobsbawm, 2006). In short, tradition corresponds to the past in the present, in Shils's words (Shils, 2002). And McLean (2004) points out that one of the most fundamental problems of the tradition is its relationship with the present. If the present is simply a

destructive repetition of what has already happened, life will lose its ability to move forward, progress will be denied in principle, and hopes will fade.

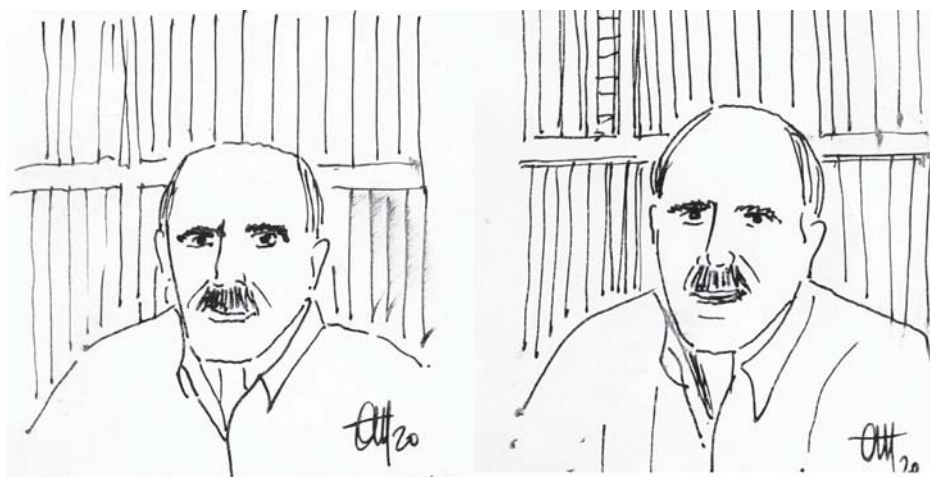
In this case, Gadamer refers to the relationship between tradition and free creation. According to him, although the tradition created by a great actor, director, or musician continues as a model, it is not the brake of free creation. On the contrary, it activates the "creative interpretative" powers of the artist (Gadamer, 2008). In this context, Cansever is evaluated with his interpretation of tradition with his discourse and practices that inspire those who come after him in architectural production. The architectural works that received the Aga Khan award are presented with the basic approaches behind their creations.

3.2. Turgut Cansever in the Relationship Between Tradition and Innovation

For Turgut Cansever, it is seen that every kind of tradition is more than a tool providing formal data. Cansever has interpreted the tradition to develop solutions for the future by benefiting from the historical experience with the essence and value system that constitutes it. As Cansever (2002) stated, tradition is not just about shape; the point is to develop a solution for the future, based on the "essence", "cultural content", "belief system" and "historical experience" that allow the tradition to form.

This effort of Turgut Cansever, who turned his direction to the West to understand it and traveled all over Europe, enabled comparison and cross-reading with the words of Sönmez and Selçuk (2016). It is primarily possible to see the effects of the East-West synthesis on his products created after these travels. What is meant by "product" here is beyond mere architectural work. There are many intangible and tangible products like architectural analysis, abstraction techniques, to establish his own representation system, to develop new methods on expression, to touch interdisciplinary fields with an archaeological approach by descending to the origin of the local and folkloric, to discover the power of cultural and sociological connections in modern architectural studies and to develop ways of looking and interpreting the world.

The basis of Cansever's mentality and the products he reveals are undoubtedly, his passion for painting, his architectural education from the Istanbul State Academy of Fine Arts after Galatasaray High School, the philosophy lessons he followed at the Istanbul Faculty of Literature, and his doctoral dissertation titled "Column Headings in Ottoman and Seljuk Architecture", his associate professor thesis on the fundamental issues of



modern architecture and the interdisciplinary thinking, working and synthesis ability he developed as a result of them. In this context, Cansever has been questioned the historical development of the form from part to whole, the place and structure of the form in the whole, and the meaning and values exist behind them.

Cansever, who uses his knowledge of art and architectural history to contribute to the intellectual dimension of his architecture, has always been interested in philosophical foundations and has been designed based on history, anthropology, theology, and sociology. In this context, with Kaplan's (2009) words, Cansever, who argued that people should have a deep-rooted but complete concept of existence, knowledge, and truth while creating work. In all theoretical and practical works, in life, science, thought, culture, art, politics, and daily life, he shows how a language, attitude, thought, and spirit can be produced not confrontational but liberating, not exclusionary, but embracing and also the principles, sources and horizons of those.

Cansever also exhibits an approach that sheds light on the present and the future by seeking ways to combine universal thinking with local solutions, except for the possibility of completely opposing or blindly devoted to tradition. This approach mainly contains a contradiction. As Cansever (2007) puts it, there is a fundamental contradiction in which all human enterprises are involved. The universal and the local, that is, the solution that will be valid forever, and the solution that is valid for a place and a time, can be thought of as if they have opposite purposes. But the resolution of contradictions is a human task. The greater the contrast in resolving the most opposing issues, the greater the solution emerges. Everything becomes meaningful with its contrast. The main point for human beings is to bring these contrasts together and to place both in a noticeable and resolved unity at the same time.

This is the state of being between history and the future and of being tied to the past and extending into the future. At this point, Cansever speaks of two responsibilities: Respecting the past experience and looking at how to find solutions to its teachings under current conditions, and also not forgetting that the solution to be brought forward is a responsibility for the future. In this context, Cansever believes that an architect has responsibilities (horizontal responsibility) towards art, people, his environment, and the world; He believes that this responsibility should be not only to today but also to yesterday and tomorrow (vertical-temporal responsibility). He makes these ideas visible with his words and projects in architecture and urbanism, which are the primary synthesis in practice. The most prominent of these projects on the national and international scale are the Aga-Han Awarded applications.

3.3. Aga Khan Approach and Turgut Cansever

Aga Khan Architecture Awards are given from 1977 to today, with the transfer of the primary source ARDN (2021), mainly to create effects on the modernist discourse, to respond to the needs and wishes of societies, and to support and encourage the development of innovative solutions to the problems they encounter. Besides the Western architectural discourse, successful embodiments of the architectural discourse rising from the East are evaluated with its characteristics of sustainability, human scale, adaptation to the climate, and quality of life. In this context, the most important criteria for the projects that apply for the award are to use local resources and appropriate technology in innovative ways and to be a source of inspiration for other projects. Projects that are candidates for the award must be implemented and used at least for one year to be evaluated. Aga Khan Awards are given every three years to all types of projects that set new standards of excellence in architecture, planning practices, historic preservation, and landscape architecture. These projects have been implemented in urban and rural contexts.

They have a wide range from small-scale buildings to large complexes, from detached houses to bus stops, from rural school buildings to skyscrapers, from infrastructure and transport systems to residential groups, from education and healthcare buildings to new towns, from urban conservation projects to projects focusing the reusing of areas containing hazardous materials.



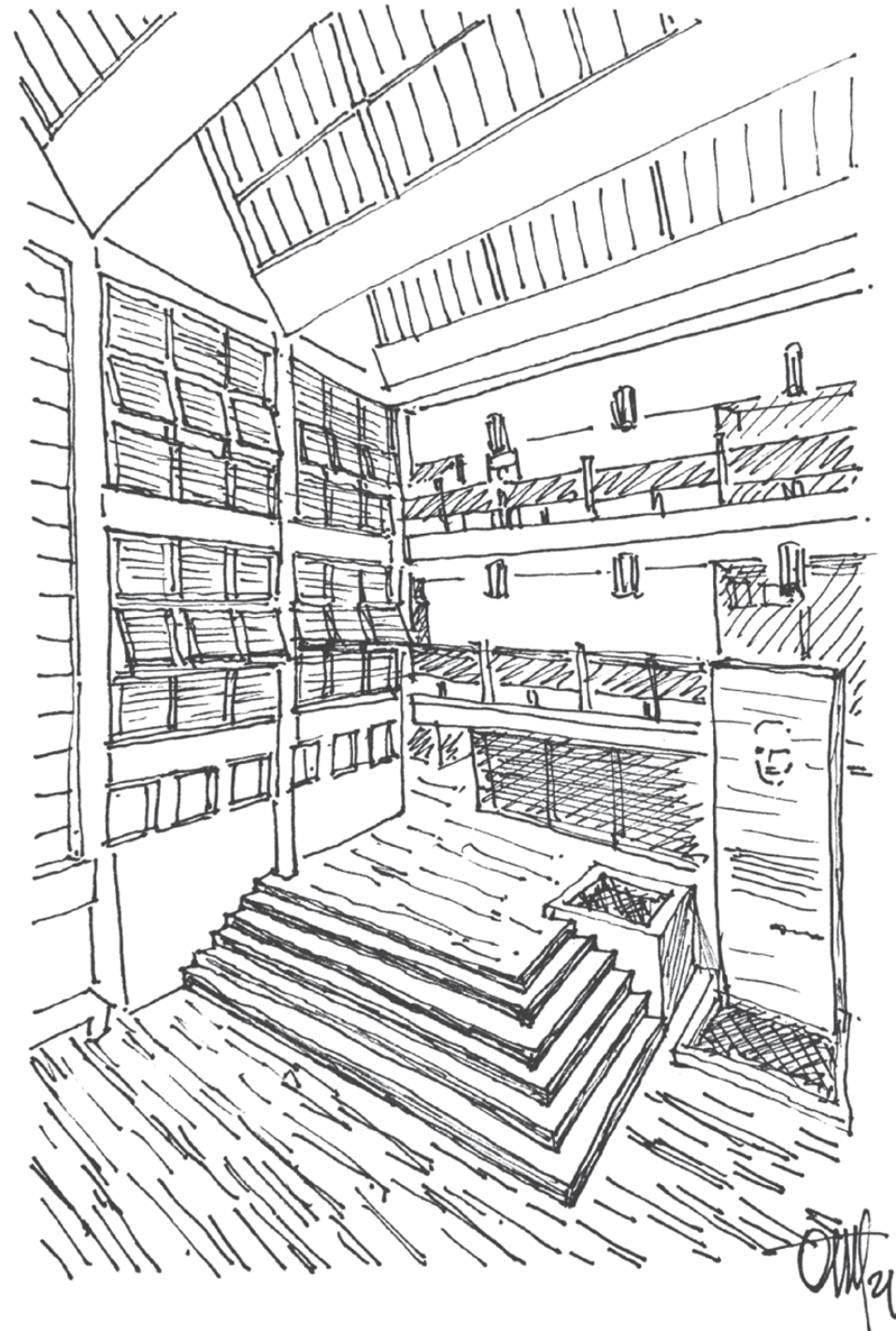
The projects are evaluated with detailed documentation on use, cost, environmental and climatic factors, construction materials, construction schedule, structural integrity and ongoing maintenance, and more importantly, design concepts, along with photographs, architectural drawings. It is also necessary to verify project data and to examine user responses on site. The jury has a multidisciplinary structure where architects, landscape architects, urban planners, and independent experts in history, philosophy, art, engineering, and architectural conservation come together.

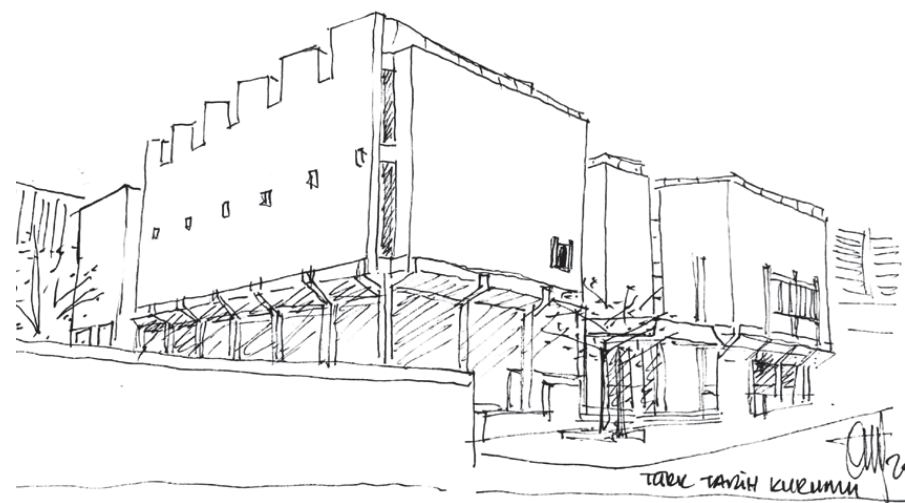
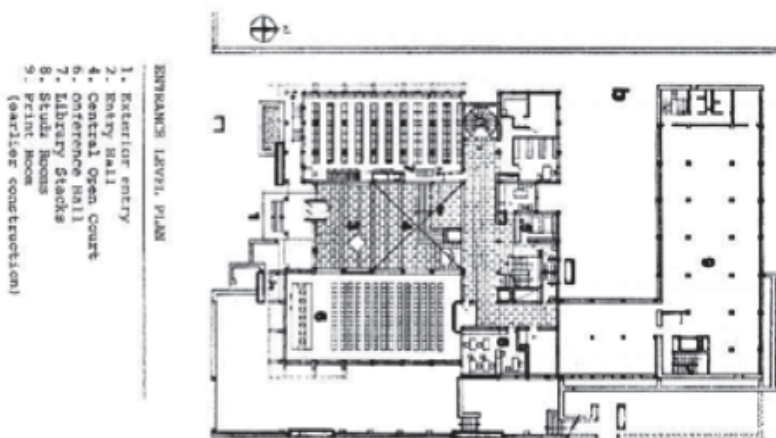
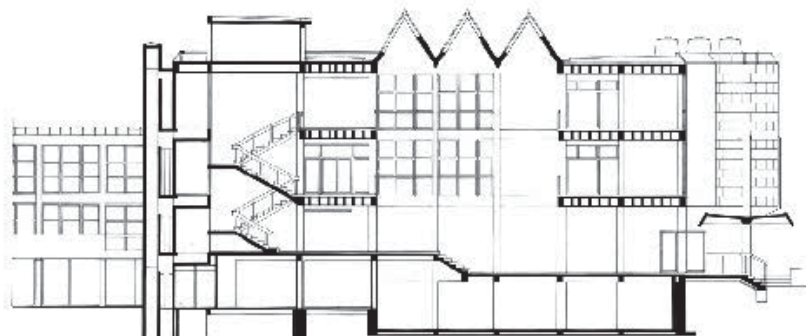
Since a winning project's success can be a product of various individuals, groups, and organizations, the award is shared among those who contributed to the project's success, like architects, other design and construction professionals, craftsmen, customers, and institutions. Turgut Cansever's projects, which are evaluated within this framework and have caused him to be the only architect to receive the Aga Han Architecture Award three times in the world, are Turkish Historical Society Building (1980), Ertegun House Project (1980), and Demir Holiday Houses (1992). Here, these projects are teachings with their main design approaches.

Turkish Historical Society

Completed: 1966

Cansever, worried about the one-sided rise of western architecture in Ankara since the 1930s, did not reject all elements of international architecture in the design of the Turkish Historical Society building but used the combination of this style with technology. Cansever, in general, has aimed to adapt the culture of the region that he is designing his building to architecture and technology. He has made the plan features and layout of Early Turkish architecture available to a new use through modern technology. The madrasa planning was used as a model in the building of the Turkish Historical Society. Examples of Seljuk madrasahs in Anatolia were used as a source of inspiration here, and the design of the building was taken from the madrasa's interior character. Spaces and circulation towards this area are arranged around a central inner courtyard used as the focal point of all activities performed within the building, reflecting the introverted character of traditional buildings.

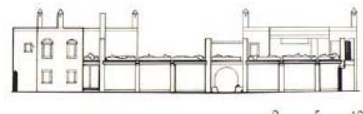
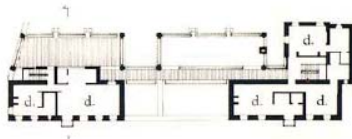
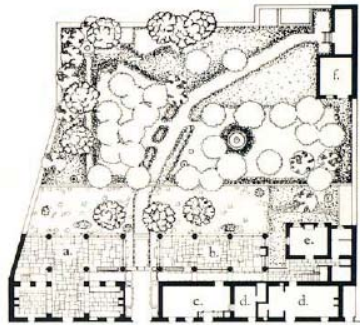
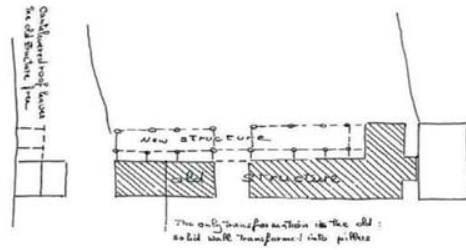




Residence of Ahmet Ertegun

Completed: 1973

The Ertegun House Project is an approach that includes the restoration, reconstruction of the house initially named as Salih Efendi Mansion, and these projects aimed at expanding the living space in the form of adding two rooms on the garden side and re-opening it. High standard local materials and craft are used in the building, an example of Turkish Mediterranean architecture. The building incorporates all the style and construction technology of the surrounding local architecture at the highest level. Designing a house that can change, creating the possibility of change, enabling the building to be opened and closed according to time and season summarizes Cansever's basic approach in this project. Cansever has used many materials to distinguish the old and the new. He has avoided imitation and decoration and showed that an old structure can be transformed into a modern and functional home. The building's approach is essential in terms of being a beginning for its immediate surroundings and Bodrum and setting an example for the coexistence of old and new. In Cansever's words, when we say a building restoration, it is necessary to realize what is beautiful there. As an architect, there are points when you say, "I want to take a strong step," during a decision. Where are the places that the person or persons who built the structure say we have to take a decisive step on their own? As a result, it is essential to understand well "what exists" and its constituent truth and period, the process it has gone through, and also essential to be able to multiply its value with the new structure and to say the right word.



- a. living
- b. dining
- c. kitchen
- d. bedroom
- e. study
- f. gardener

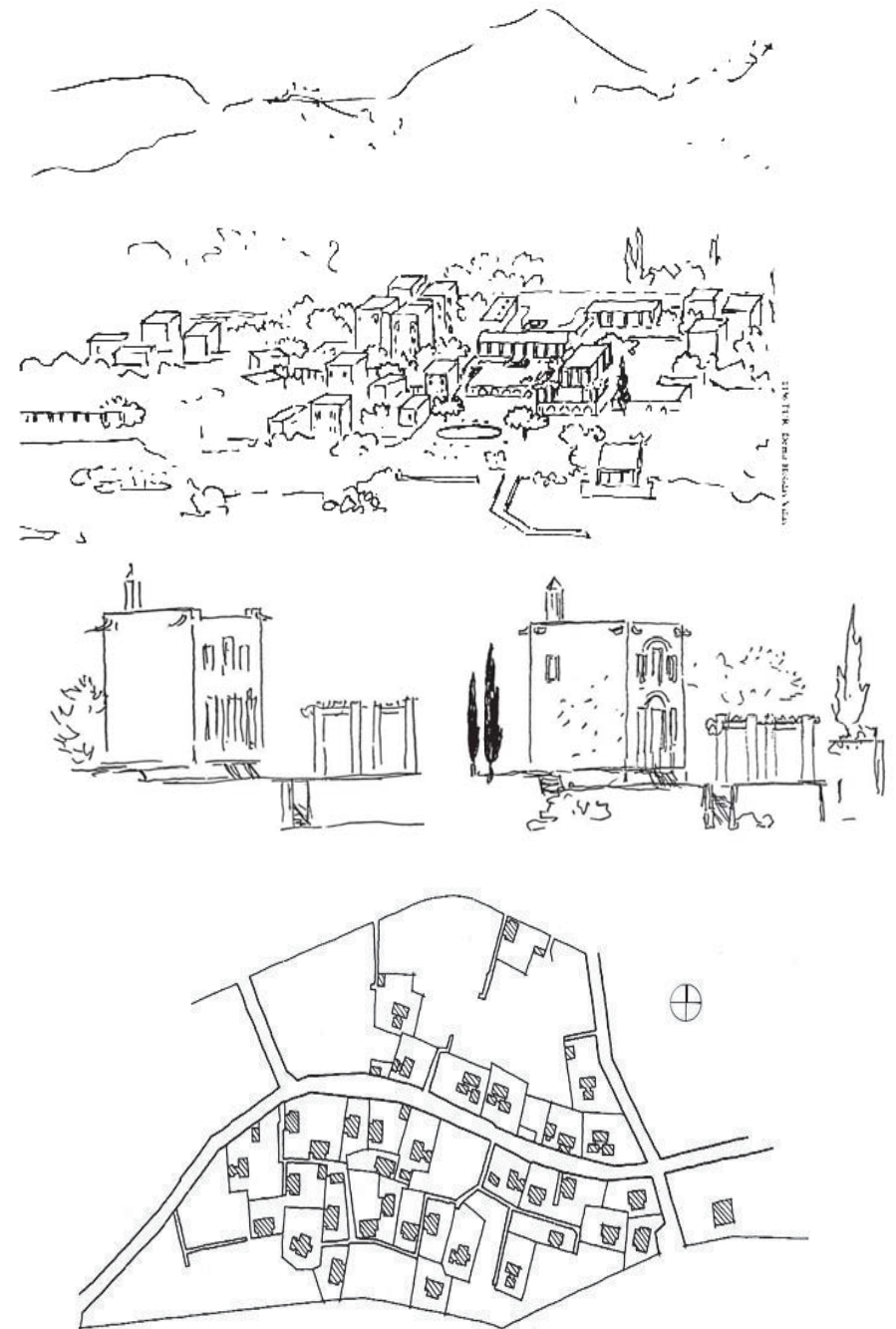


Demir Holiday Villas

Completed: 1987-1990

Demir Holiday Houses are the product of an approach that is compatible with the architectural heritage of the environment, namely the Greek, Byzantine, and Ottoman layers, by using appropriate local building materials and can be modern at the same time.

The main concern of Cansever, who integrates the planning of twenty villa types, and the main issue he considers is to protect the environment and focus on the region's comfort. The harmony of the cultural and natural environment and the newly designed has been ensured. The residences are placed in a way that they do not cross each other's sea views and are not positioned on any grid. The houses' mass values have been controlled to capture the effect of a natural residential area. The combination of old and new materials is well balanced, and a forward-thinking approach has been adopted on the redesign of traditional forms of local architecture. Creating a suitable environment for the inhabitants and designing understated interiors, well-made, and skillfully placed residences are high standard architectural design products. As a result, in this project, which is considered to have an architectural language suitable for the housing tradition of Bodrum, attention has been paid to the manifestation of values and behaviors such as composition, respect to the rules of nature, simplicity, clarity, neighborhood relations in architecture.



4. Results

As Baudelaire was very quick to see, if flux and change, ephemerality and fragmentation, formed the material basis of modern life, then the de notion of a modernist aesthetic depended crucially upon the artist's positioning with respect to such processes. The individual artist could contest them, embrace them, try to dominate them, or simply swim within them, but the artist could never ignore them (Harvey,1997). With his identity as an artist and a designer, Cansever was able to make all these inquiries aimed at creating the original and made his synthesis open to us, the readers, through the projects mentioned above. What makes Cansever valuable is that he can create a "work" based on solid foundations without losing the connections with the tradition and, after all, reading the tradition and the era deeply. With the words of Turgut Cansever, what is wrong today is that we have closed our eyes to most of history. Conversely, it will be possible to see how small a place western modernism occupies in human history. Instead of confining ourselves to that small place, we should look at history's integrity and see that modernism also has points to be overcome. We should perceive it not as an unchangeable goal but as a stage, a new realization point. With the integrity of all of these, like our own historical experience, we should offer complete and continuous solutions to humanity.

5. Discussion

It is seen that different people and studies are questioning what the place and importance of Turgut Cansever in Turkish architecture is. Some of them argued that Cansever was an interpreter of modern and Islamic architecture. Some of them asserted that he was one of the essential representatives of regionalism discussed in the post-modern period or a part of the historicism movement. The study has been handled with the awareness of all these discussions on Cansever. Here, his way of creating, which sheds light on the present and the future by seeking contemporary ways of combining local solutions with universal thought, except for the possibility of blindly loyal to the tradition or completely opposing it, especially examined. With the discourse of Kuban (2015), creation takes place in thought or art. Creation is revealed in the synthesis where the present, not rebelling against tradition but absorbed the past, melts the contrasts. Isn't a sensitivity that has moved away from prejudices a characteristic of the real artist?

6. Suggestion

In this study's scope, it is essential to consider historical data in the field of culture as a source that feeds contemporary inspiration and to consider tradition as an indispensable area of data specific to a dynamic background and future expansions. With the words of Cengiz Bektaş, it is evident that the tradition must first be contemporary to continue, and the way to do this is to avoid making formal copies (Bektaş, 2016). In the creation of innovation, the view that tradition constitutes the basis for new interpretations and that it always contains valuable data for today and the future has been tried to be put forward. In this direction, Cansever's views and the projects that received the Aga Khan award have been evaluated with an exemplary approach in ensuring historical continuity with contemporary interpretations fed by tradition in our country. It is expected that the obtained data will form the basis for raising awareness on the subject.

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