

THE ORIGINAL CREATURE

A carpet is a picture of God. That is the essential fact, fundamental to the people who produced the carpets, and fundamental to any proper understanding of these carpets. This does not mean, in Anglo-Western terms, that a carpet is a picture of a man with a long white beard. God, the all-seeing, everlasting substance, is the target of Sufism — as it is of all the mystical religions. In modern language we might also call it ultimate oneness of everything. The Sufis, who wove most of these carpets, tried to reach union with God. And in doing it, in contemplating this God, the weaver actually tried to create a picture of the all-seeing, everlasting substance.

The essence of the view which lies behind this new understanding of the nature of Anatolian carpets, what we naively call beauty and experience as artistic force, lies in the creation of an object which speaks directly with my own own inner voice and says that there is at the heart of all things a single voice of universal blackness and thickness and light that speaks in all tongues and holds all force into itself.

A carpet, when it holds the almost magical force, which all carpet lovers recognize, holds this force because to some degree it embodies this original voice and lets us see this original animal force that exists in ourselves.

I believe the same is true of every artifact. As a builder, I am trying, every time I make a building, to reach a connection with this force and to make a thing which fills us with this animal and animistic force. The force, though primitive and almost alien, is that underbelly of ourselves which makes us human. Though unrecognizable and almost taboo, because it is by turns violent, lustful, peaceful, and absurd, it is nevertheless that thing which, to the degree it comes to life in us, makes us live innocently as people in the world.

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