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**EXPERIENCE OF LIVING
TOGETHER IN ISTANBUL
SOCIAL INTERACTION AMONG VARIOUS
RELIGIOUS GROUPS**

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by

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DEDICATION

For My Mom and Dad

ABSTRACT

Tuğba KİBAR

October 2010

EXPERIENCE OF LIVING TOGETHER IN ISTANBUL SOCIAL INTERACTION AMONG VARIOUS RELIGIOUS GROUPS

This thesis aims to analyze the experience of various religious groups living together in Istanbul. Listen to the life stories of inhabitants; I will look into social relations in abstract and physical space of Balat and Moda. I came to realize that as well as social relations in space, physicality of space in and of itself can be the foundation of coexistence. Based on the Foucault's concept of heterotopia and Baudrillard's notion of simulacrum, I will take coexistence into consideration in and through the situatedness of physical structures in space and the situated agents within that space. I will examine how interviewees' identities are constructed by their relation to space as they coexist with it socially and physically. Also, Miniaturk will be analyzed as an example of coexistence of situated vis-a-vis physical structures.

Key words:

Istanbul, Balat, Moda, Social Relations, Coexistence, Religion, Space, Heterotopia, Simulacrum

KISA ÖZET

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Ekim 2010

İSTANBUL'DA BİR ARADA YAŞAMA TECRÜBESİ ÇEŞİTLİ DİNİ GRUPLARIN SOSYAL ETKİLEŞİMİ

Bu tez, İstanbul'da yaşayan farklı dini grupların bir arada yaşama tecrübesini ele almaktadır. Tezde, Balat ve Moda'da ikamet eden farklı dini gruplara ait kişilerle yaptığım röportajlar doğrultusunda Balat ve Moda'da soyut ve somut mekanda sosyal ilişkilerin nasıl şekillendirildiği incelenmektedir. Bir arada yaşama tecrübesi, mekanın içindeki sosyal ilişkilerle şekillenebileceği gibi, bu mekanın fizikselliği üzerinden de şekillenebilir. Bu tez de Foucault'nun heterotopya ve Baudrillard'ın simülakrum kavramları doğrultusunda, bir arada yaşama tecrübesini fiziksel mekanın içinde karşılıklı konumlanmış yapılar ve insanlar doğrultusunda ele almaktadır. Sonuç olarak bu tecrübenin bireylerin kendi kimliklerini oluşturmadaki etkisi incelenecektir. Ayrıca Miniaturk de karşılıklı konumlandırılmış yapılar doğrultusunda bir arada yaşamayı örneklendirmek üzere ele alınacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler

İstanbul, Balat, Moda, Sosyal İlişkiler, Bir arada Yaşama, Din, Mekan, Heterotopya, Simülakrum

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INTRODUCTION

As you walk along Haliç coastline, you will start to notice half collapsed buildings, and then you will know that you are in Balat. You enter Balat through a historical door of the citadel which is not too imposing but indicates that you are about to enter a special place. Narrow slopes consist of old sequential houses which face each other. Houses are generally narrow faced with three or four stories. In front of the discolored houses on the stairway women sit around and chat. You may also see their husbands smoking outside in front of the door. Children are keeping the streets busy with their jumping, shouting and playing around.

The simple picture of Balat I drew above is a basis for my following point which lies upon this simplicity as seen from the outside. Behind this picture there is a more complex set of meanings which streets in general possess. Yet Balat is distinctive even among streets of Istanbul. As it is generally discussed about the life in modern cities occupants of the city space encounter with strangers at spatially and temporally limited occasions which render the interaction to be limited itself. On the other hand, in Balat the nature of the encounters within the space is more relational. Streets are part of everyday public spaces and according to Goffman, “everyday public spaces are subject to different uses and meanings. They are means and media of getting about, meeting places or places to hang around in, foGreeks of visibility and display, sites of protest” (Tonkiss 2005:69).

Figure 1, 2, and 3: These are photos of Balat's streets. You can see daily life in Balat in these photos. The first photo is the historical door of the citadel. In the second photo you can see a renovated house on sale next to old damaged houses.

Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Within these spaces we coordinate our existence according to physical presence and social relations within that physical presence. Within the limits of what is accessible to us from this physical presence and what can be transferred from us, one not just possesses relations but becomes constituted by them.

Balat is one of the places in which the flow of what has been transformed from physical to social, physical to physical and social to social is intensive, extensive and condensed; not just physical space but also its abstract space which speaks through its physical representations. In the streets of Balat, physical diversity of the religious symbols (mosques, churches and synagogues) and social diversity (overlapping categories of Greeks, Muslims, gypsies, Kurds, musicians, workers, etc.) order the space in a way that one can read it in so many different ways. But I will focus on interviewee's experience of the space in my thesis. Based on its physical presence, I followed the experience of some representative individuals which represent people from different religion, age, sex, occupation, economic background and nation. Listen to their life stories in an effort to read the subject with the help of how it is read by my interviewees.

Within the process of reading it, I will follow the traces of coexistence of different religions in abstract and physical space of Balat and Moda and in and through the situatedness of physical structures which are the dynamic fields of social memory. I take Moda into consideration since first of all; some of my interviewees live in there. Secondly, it is a neighborhood on the opposite side of the historical peninsula, Balat—Fener and similar to Balat it has been always a place populated by Armenians, Greeks and Jews. Like Balat, there are many mosques, churches and synagogues.

My analysis will be based on the Foucault's concept of heterotopia and Baudrillard's notion of simulacrum. This results in the following outline for the entire thesis which is basically divided into two parts:

In the first part; as the title of the chapter indicates I will analyze the social relations in abstract and physical space by looking into the cases of Balat and Moda. Through one of my interviewees who has been living there for about 50 years I will explain the importance of an analysis of Balat which takes into consideration social memory and physical change with its reflection on everyday experience. With its oppositions and similarities to Hikmet's narrative, I will also analyze the narrative of a 30 years old university lecturer who lives in Moda—Kadıköy since she was born. The concept of heterotopia will help me to understand what has been experienced by my narrators.

In the second part, using the voices of tree as a metaphor, I look into social relations of coexistence within the abstract and physical space of Istanbul as it is imagined. I will examine my point with the implications of Miniaturk and I will base my analysis both on Baudrillard's concept of simulacrum and Foucault's concept of heterotopia.

METHODOLOGY

Aiming to gain an understanding of experience of living together in Istanbul, this research consists basically of listening to the life stories of people who live in Balat and Moda. I found participants through my personal contacts. My friend Özge has a friend Ali who lives in Balat, who has now also become my friend. Since Ali lives in Balat he was able to arrange interviews with other people who live there. Although he didn't participate the interviews much, since he was present in the places I made interviews, I felt quite comfortable during the conversations. Some of my interviewees were also very relaxed too. With some of them, even if I closed the recorder and finished the interview, we continued to talk and drink tea. But not particularly about the details I wanted to know about them, about the details they wanted to know about me. Therefore, our connection continued afterwards. To provide this atmosphere was important since rather than quantitative value of making interviews, my analysis depend on representative values of the individual narrative.

I listened to their life stories basically and recorded the conversations on tape; even one of my interviewees let me to record the interview on camera. I conducted most of the interviews in Turkish except one. One of them was made in English since interviewee was an Italian who lives in Istanbul. By life stories one can mean *life stories* or *life stories* (Portelli 1991:118). Firstly, it can be claimed that *life stories* help us to catch a glimpse of what actually happened. What has been transformed through the interviewees are true and real stories. But also, it is possible to assume that the process of narrating a *life story* is not a pure process, but verbal stories shaped by self-perception for both the narrator and interviewer (1991:118). So, the product, what has been come out after participants tell their stories, is composed of two overlapped realms of existence. In the first layer, we have what happened,

the event itself and in the second layer what we got is the self percept of the interviewee. I am going to approach what has been narrated to me as reconstructed (in the sense that what just happened) real events.

While the two layered process consists of what interviewees tell us, the second process is shaped by how I became a part of the story telling and at the end gets to be articulated as the third layer to the overall practice of narration which again I consider it as reconstructed real events. It eventually turns into a conversation or as it is better put by Gadamer (2004) “we fall into conversation” (p. 421):

The way one word follows another, with the conversation taking its own twists and reaching its own conclusion, may well be conducted in some way, but the partners conversing are far less the leaders of it than the led. No one knows in advance what will "come out" of a conversation. Understanding or its failure is like an event that happens to us. Thus we can say that something was a good conversation or that it was ill fated. All this shows that a conversation has a spirit of its own, and that the language in which it is conducted bears its own truth within it—i.e., that it allows something to "emerge" which henceforth exist” (P. 421).

Each conversation with my interviewees had its own spirit. With one of my interviewees, directly philosophical issues emerged once the interview has started. And another was started with the question of which movie she likes best in order to help her to feel comfortable and relaxed. Also, in these open-ended interviews, one of my interviewees had a lot to tell us and started directly at the heart of the issue which was for him his relationship to his Greek neighbors. Even though it is impossible to avoid a priori questions, conversation took place with the flow of itself. It was a process capable of leading me to deal with so many unanswered questions but my attention focused on their relatedness to abstract and physical space which was constituted by visual, social and physical attachments of coexistence.

Particularly, coexistence of various religious groups was my main concern. Therefore, among my interviewees there were self-identified Muslims and Christians as well as one who defines herself as agnostic.

Before arranging the interviews, I was nervous since I was going to demand from them to share their personal life stories with me. But once I met them I saw that they were willing to help and contribute which made the process very productive for both me and them. Perhaps as there was a person they know (people who arranged the interview), they felt comfortable to talk to. On the other hand, when there wasn't an interpersonal contact the interview couldn't take place once.

One of the mutual contributions was that Ali got to know one of his neighbors as well as they got to know Ali. Elio and his wife were willing to come to Ali's house and the interview was made on the balcony with tea and the view of the Haliç. Under normal circumstances, one probably won't have a chance to meet and listen to those people's life stories. At the end, this interview process has provided me to actualize myself in different state of affairs.

As Gadamer (2004) puts it, in listening to a particular individual's story, the aim is not to create a schema of how people evolve, not to gather universalized experiences of a law rather it is to understand how that particular individual's story "is what it has become or more generally how it happened that it is so" (p: 4). With this aim in mind, I will make use of what has been narrated to me in line with the idea that human interpreters are involved in a process of mutual recognition.

Also as Russon (2003) puts it:

We will see that human interpreters—free, self determining, bodily agents—are fundamentally involved in an inter-subjective project of mutual recognition or confirmation, and that it is this that provides the core to the formation of our identities, whether healthy or neurotic (P. 55).

Formation of our identities through coexistence and meeting diversity is one of the important points underlying in the following chapters. And space is the intersection area in which that diversity is constructed. It is produces and reproduced by its agents. Based on this relation between the space and identity construction, my first chapter follows as social relation in abstract and physical space in the Balat and Moda cases.

CHAPTER I

SOCIAL RELATIONS IN ABSTRACT AND PHYSICAL SPACE;

The Cases of Balat & Moda

Were the relationships between streets, homes, and groups inhabiting them wholly accidental and of short duration, then men might tear down their homes, district, and city, only to rebuild another on the same site according to a different set of plans. But even if stones are moveable, relationships established stones and men are not so easily altered. (Halbwachs 1980:133)

On the historical peninsula on the Western bank of Golden Horn, Fener—Balat districts are surrounded by Byzantine city walls from the 5th century and in where the Greek Patriarchate and the Orthodox Church are located. Even though inhabited mostly by Muslims today, Balat once was the center of coexistence of different cultural and religious groups: Greeks, Muslims, Armenians and Jews.

The name “Balat” is known to be derived from the words “platia” in Latin and “palatium” in Greek which means “palace” (Brill 1993:615). In contrast to its name, the inhabitants of Balat live under poor social and economic conditions as their houses reflect this. Even though many buildings are in ruins and others are empty, you can still feel the unique characteristics of its architecture. The social, cultural and physical importance of the districts attracted the attention of UNESCO and Fatih Municipality. A program named as “Rehabilitation of Fener and Balat Districts” started officially in January 6, 2003 as a joint

programme of the European Union and Fatih Municipality.¹ Within the process of this programme and also rising from its historical background, Balat is a space subjected to continuous and rapid changes.

According to Tuan (2001) “change creates a passion of preservation which arises out of the need for tangible objects that can support a sense of identity” (p.197). A sense of identity presupposes that one behaves in a certain manner by reenacting that which cannot be replaced. The constancy of what has been happening or what has been remaining within a daily life gives rise to the reenactment. When one goes out from his/her house, the street remains still the same, as do probably the same buildings, same asphalt or same trees. As Tuan continues, architecture creates “a tangible world that articulates experiences, those deeply felt as well as those that can be verbalized, individual as well as collective” (2001:100). Individuals pick up from all these tangible materials the ones they like, they relate deeply and tend to preserve them. At least for my interviewees their sense of identity is very much developed through the place they live in, the case was like that; they tend to preserve.

Maria, a 30 years old university lecturer, has lived in Moda—Kadıköy since she her birth. She explains her attachment to the place she lives in by saying:

I sometimes enter the car park. Men there think that I am crazy or something; she doesn't have a car but she enters the car park. I cannot explain them that once there was my grandmother's

¹ http://www.fenerbalat.org/index.php?&chlang=_t describes this program.

balcony. I spend my whole childhood there. With my grandfather and grandmother, we were eating our lunch there. It is a very special place for me.²

Her attachment to Moda stems not just from the fact that she has lived there since she was born, but also from the fact that her mother and even her grandmother and father lived there too. So her sense of identity is very much related to Moda. Even though Moda hasn't changed much compared to other areas of Istanbul, Maria wants to preserve what she had before:

Moda Çay Bahçesi was a very special place for me. [...] At the weekends my grandmother and grandfather would go to the park. At 1 pm they would eat their lunch. Coffee until 2 or 3pm. At 3.30 they would go to Moda Çay Bahçesi. They used to drink tea with my grandmother's sister and her husband. They chat until 7 pm and then everyone goes to their own houses. Nobody would go to each other's house for sure. This was happening every day in the summer. They were taking me too at the weekends. I was waiting at the balcony. I was fond of my grandmother. I wasn't allowed to go to the park. Me as if the grandchildren of Elisabeth somebody would kidnap me. (She smiles) Even there is a waiter still working there since the time I used to go with my grandmother. I look at him imploring; "Please don't go, don't leave here." (She smiles)³

Maria's attachment to the space is intense. She orders her relations according to her connection to space. She is having a different kind of experience from having and cultivating

² Arka taraf arada girerim otoparka. Adamlar beni deli zannediyorlar. Arabası yok otoparka giriyor. Ben şimdi o adamlara anlatamam benim anneannemin balkonuydu. Benim bütün çocukluğum orda geçti diye. Anneannem, dedem orda öğle yemeklerimizi yedik. Orası çok özel bir yer.

³ Moda Çay Bahçesi mesela orası çok özeldi. Çünkü böyle her gün yazları biz adaya gidiyorduk yazlığa. Ama onun öncesinde havalar sıcaktır okul hala açıktır hafta sonları benim ananemle dedem her gün parka giderlerdi. Saat birde öğle yemeklerini yerler. Saat ikiye üçe kadar kahve filan. Üçbuçukta filan Moda Çay Bahçesi'ne giderler. Ananemim kız kardeşi eşi orda böyle dördü çaylarını içer, sohbet eder yedi gibi kalkar kendi evlerine giderlerdi. Birbirlerine gitmezlerdi kesinlikle. Ama bu her gün oluyordu yazın. Hafta sonları beni de alıyorlardı. Balkonda beklerdim böyle gelecekler diye biraz böyle anneanne düşünüyordum. Oraya giderdik. Parka gitmem yasaktı. Ben Elisabeth'in torunu olarak sanki beni kaçıracaktılar. (Gülüyor). Hatta orda hala çalışan bir garson var benim annemle oraya gittiğim dönemden kalma. Gözünün içine bakıyorum. Ne olur gitmeyin sakın buradan ayrılma. (Gülüyor)

a “sense of place”. She has been rooted to it (Tuan, 2001:198). Similarly, for Hikmet, one of my interviewees, being rooted in Balat is a crucial aspect of his life, but in a different way. Hikmet works as a real estate agent in Balat. He is a 56 years old, married man who has been living in Balat for almost 50 years. He says:

I cannot live in a place like Nişantaşı. I cannot even pronounce the names of cheeses there, it is not in Turkish. Therefore the place I can live is here and this neighborhood. I cannot live in Etiler. For one thing there is the difference of culture that is the reason, nothing more. Where can I go? I can go to either my village or the place that I can go will be like my village.⁴

What can be deduced from what he said is that his sense of being rooted to this place is a constitutive part of who he is and maybe who he is going to be. When his memories of Balat are threatened by external forces such as regeneration projects, his attachments to the place are strengthened, which very much reflects the statement of Üstündağ (2005):

Belonging to urban space is a process negotiated through the stories and social acts constructed and committed in the everyday, and meanings attached to places and memories about places produce ‘a dynamic of affectivity, embodiment and interpretative processes that shape the performing of selfhood’ in relation to one’s own collectivity as well as to those that the subject considers to be her others (P.81).

From a particular process of attachment to place, Hikmet lives in the inner perception that his own self is shaped by his relation to space and in addition to that it is also formed by constructed social relations within that space. Before I proceed with their narratives, one needs to keep in mind what Piot (1999) says: “Individuals cannot be considered apart from their ontologically prior social context—from the community of relationship into which they

⁴ Şimdi ben bir Nişantaşı gibi bir yerde oturamam. Peynirin ismini söylemem ben orada, Türkçe değil. Onun için benim yaşayacağım yer burası ve bu civar. Kalkıp Ulus’da bile yaşayamam. Etiler’de yaşayamam. Çünkü en azından kültür farkı var. O rahatsızlık var başka bir şey yok. Ben nereye gideceğim. Ya köyüme gideceğim ya da gideceğim yer de köyüm gibi bir yer.

are born and within which they live” (p.17) In the words of Hikmet, the social context he and his family is situated in is one of coexistence with minority groups.

We had children, we raised them then we had grandchildren. While we were raising our children we got help from our Rum neighbors. There were our aunt Agabi, our daughter Eleni whom we call Lena and her daughter Katia. That is we were next door neighbors. So to speak, if there were Turks in a street, I mean they were Turks too, I mean you could encounter three Greeks and one Turk. We had solid neighborhood relations. Two of my children were born a year apart, they were like triplet. Be sure that even if my mother and sister did not help aunt Agabi would look after my children until evening. For instance, she knits things. She is dead but we still talk to her husband. I didn't know much about birthdays. We didn't celebrate birthdays etc. She used to call me from Greece from Athens. For instance, let's say today is Serpil's birthday, she would call and celebrate. We had such a relationship.⁵

Hikmet started to narrate his relationship with Greeks through his neighborhood relationships, similar to him; another interviewee of mine, Maria relates her relationships with Muslims through her neighbors:

While we lived here (she means her childhood flat in Kadıköy) it was an unbelievable building. All the doors were left open. As Christians there were us and my uncle. My uncle is sort of an interesting person, his door was closed anyway. My mother established incredibly close friendships and they still see each other. For instance there was Aunt Kumru at the flat below. And she had a daughter. She still says the same thing to my mother; “You prepared a birthday party for me. My mother never did that. She never bought me a cake. You were the

⁵ Çocuklarımız oldu. Büyüttük. Torunlarımız oldu. Hatta çocuklarımızı büyütürken benim hanımın yardımcıları genelde Rumlardı. Agabi teyzemiz. Biz Lena diyorduk Eleni kızımız. Ondan sonra Katia vardı kızı. Yani komşuyduk kapı komşusu. Tabir-i caizse bir sokakta üç tane Türk vardıysa, onlar da Türktü de, yani Rum üç tane Türk bir tane bulabiliyordunuz. Çok güzel komşuluklarımız vardı. Benim çocuklarımın iki tanesi bir yaş arayla geldiler dünyaya, üçüz gibi oldular. Emin olun annem, kardeşim yardım etmezken Agabi teyze akşama kadar çocuklarımın bakımını yapıyordu. Örneğin örüyordu bir şeyler. Hala görüşürüz kocasıyla kendisiyle değil, kendisi vefat etti. Doğum günlerini ben pek bilmezdim, pek yaşamıyoruz doğum günü filan. O beni arardı. Yunanistan'dan Atina'dan. İşte bugün Serpil'in doğum günü. Arardı kutlardı. Böyle bir ilişkimiz vardı.

only one that I remember doing it.” But for us special days are very important. We give importance to details.⁶

Talking about coexistence she continues with her family’s close relationships:

I had such an advantage. There are other minority families that lead more closed lives. There was Aunt Kezban, she was the attendant of the building. She was a very special person for me. When my mother and father would go somewhere, if they went to my grandmother’s Aunt Kezban would come. My mother would send me to Aunt Kezban. I used to go and help her. Perhaps if my family only had Armenian friends I would automatically be friends with their children. It did not happen as such. I was in that mix. No limitation. We didn’t talk about anyone’s religion.⁷

For Maria and her family religion was not a subject that constitute a boundary but it was also not something spoken of. Yet for Hikmet, deriving from his narrative, for some of population of the migrant in Balat entrance of a non-Muslim into their household was regarded as abomination. Hikmet narrated one such episode:

My aunt came to visit. Her son is a member of a *tarikât* (religious sect), he is a religious man. They call them *kafir* (nonbeliever). If a *gavur* (unbeliever but a pejorative term) enters a

⁶ Biz burada otururken inanılmaz bir apartmandı, kapılar filan açık dururdu Hıristiyan olarak biz vardı bir de dayım oturuyordu. Dayım biraz enteresan biridir bir onun kapısı kapalıydı zaten. İnanılmaz yakın dostluklar kurmuştu annemler hala daha görüşürler. Alt katta mesela Kumru teyze vardı, onun kızı vardı. Hala aynı şeyi der anneme sen benim için doğum günü partisi yapmıştın. Benim annem hiç yapmadı bana hiç pasta almadı. Bir onu hatırlıyorum senin yaptığını ama biz de böyle özel şeyler çok önemlidir. Biz detaylara önem veriyoruz.

⁷ Benim şöyle bir avantajım oldu. Farklı azınlık aileler var daha kapalı yaşayan. Bizim Kezban teyze vardı karşı apartmanın görevlisi. O benim için çok özel bir kadındı. Annem babam bir yere gideceği zaman anneannemlerle gideceklerse Kezban teyze gelsin. Annem beni Kezban teyzeyle gönderirdi. Giderdim hem ona yardım ederdim. Belki etraflarında sadece Ermeni arkadaşları olan bir ailem olsaydı, otomatikman ben de onların çocukları ile arkadaş olacaktım. Öyle olmadı. O karışımın içinde bulundum. Sınırlama yok. Onun dini vs. konuşmaz bizde.

house, angel and blessings will not. “My son, that Rum woman looks after your children until evening. She is here more than you are.”⁸

Hikmet’s mother and aunt intervened his relationships with the minority groups for religious reasons but Hikmet refuse to do so by saying “Sorry, but aunt Agabi will come even if you do not.” These concerns about entering to the household constituted a strain in his relations with his own family. However in later years his relatives came to ask him for assistance to communicate with the Christian habitants. Actually this is a very ironic tale. Yet the approach of the narratives takes an ironic turn in later years in the so called “priest spell” (papaz büyü) incident. This incident took place as follows; daughter of one of Hikmet’s relatives got sick. As they are from Trabzon and there are churches in Trabzon as well, someone they know told her that she was sick with Priest Spell and the only way she could be healed by was the prayer of a priest. So they called Hikmet and ask for his help since Hikmet was close with the patriarcharch. Hikmet considered that patriarcharch as a regular priest and he told them “your only hope is priest I can take you.” And they went as a crowd but not knowing that it was forbidden. Hikmet after all these years regards this ignorance about inner workings of the Christian church as funny.

Hikmet went as far as the patriarch as well and they couldn’t refuse him both since a priest’s wife valued him and he was insistent. They got into the patriarchate and priest told them that woman is going to fall ill after a while. “Woman seemed to be in her right mind. I smiled. Priest prayed and prayed. A little later the woman began to have convulsions. When priest was done with praying, the woman calmed down. I was impressed.” The prayer went on for three days. At first pries suggested to go to other appoingted churches. But since Hikmet once was impressed with this performance he wanted that particular priest to pray.

⁸ Teyzem geldi oturmaya. Oğlu da tarikat mensubu, dindar. Kafir derler bunlar. Bir eve gavur girerse o eve melek girmez, bereket girmez. Senin oğlun akşama kadar içeride Rum kadını çocuklarına bakıyor. Senden çok oturuyor orada.

When the priest refused, Hikmet went to his wife and complained about him. After being scolded by his wife the priest agreed to pray at home. Hikmet says that the prayer of the priest broke the spell over the women for 20 years nothing like that happened.

Looking into Maria's and Hikmet's narration, both articulate their relations with other religious groups through their neighborhood relations. Their memories of these relations sound constructive in the sense that mutual recognition of the other is based on understanding rather than hating of dissimilarities. But the process of how the environment and social relations within that environment has been through changes within time differs for Maria and Hikmet. While for Maria, Moda and social relations within Moda have not changed much, but for Hikmet not only the image of various religious groups' living peacefully together within the neighborhood of Balat has gone, but also the physical texture belonging to that image has been through profound changes.

The Rehabilitation of Fener and Balat District Programme is a powerful external force. The impact of the physical change brought about by this programme resulted in major social changes. Hikmet depicts this process as:

Suddenly all attention was turned here in 99, sorry in 97. Weird things happened here then. Different sorts of people began to come here. People we know from the media, people we always hear the names of began to search and wander around here. My office back then was at Haliç Street around Fatih Mosque. My house is here. Now I hear that there is mobility here. Journalists come and buy houses, we hear. Intellectuals, etc. I was surprised. I mean, while we are thinking of escaping from here why were they interested? It did not last long before the bomb was dropped. Within a year we came to know that people are buying places from here.⁹

⁹ Bir anda gözler buraya döndü 99 yıllarında. 97 yılında pardon. Burada bir acayıplik yaşandı o zaman. Tip tip insanlar gelmeye başladı. Medyadan tanıdıklarımız. Hep isimlerini duyduklarımız buralarda başladılar araştırmaya gezmeye. Benim o zaman ofisim Fatih Camii'in orada, Haliç caddesinde. Evim burda. Şimdi

Once the plan of regeneration has been heard, the local elite was attracted to Balat and the prices of houses increased suddenly, says Hikmet. But the local inhabitants of Balat—Fener was in shock and unable to understand what was going on. By this time most of the Rum population of the area had already left. The educated youth belonging to minority groups in the 80s have gone from here to Greece or America. Even though old Greeks did not want to leave, they also left in order to raise their grandchildren.

As an outcome of the regeneration Project, while earlier one could rent a flat for 50 or 100 TL, now 450 TL was demanded. Tenants began to leave and some house owners sold their houses with the idea of building a house in their village or to buy a flat from somewhere else in Istanbul. Since Balat is a protected area inhabitants are not allowed to renovate buildings. They cannot even fix the windows. With the project, one company was assigned for the renovation. Hikmet describes this process as:

Even if they are told that they will lose their houses if they don't renovate within three months they cannot afford it at all. House owners here are generally unemployed. They hit the button once. Probably their fathers used to live there and now they own it. In 2002 Balat was in demand and the prices were very high. Now the house market is static there since houses are already bought. Inhabitants of Balat are forced to leave since they cannot afford to live here anymore. The majority of the inhabitants are now upper class citizens.¹⁰

bakıyorum duyuyorum bir hareketlilik var işte. Gazeteciler geliyormuş, yer alıyormuş. Yazarlar çizerler vs. Ben şaşırımdım. Yani biz buradan kaçmayı düşünürken bunlar buraya, niye ilgi duydular. Ve fazla da sürmedi bombası patladı. 1 sene içinde baktık ki buradan birileri yer alıyor.

¹⁰İmkan da sağlansa ödeyecek durumu yok. Kredi uzun vadeli de olsa. O tür insanlar genelde işsiz güçsüz geliri olmayan insanlar. Zamanında dibe vurmuştu. Babaları da barınmış burada almış bir ev. Onlara kalmış. Para da ettiği zaman 2002 yılında çok iyi paralar ediyordu burası. Çok rağbet vardı buraya. Yalnız 2002' den sonra nedense burada da yapacaklarını yaptılar alacaklarını aldılar.

Figure 4, 5, and 6: In these photos, there are examples of renovated houses in Balat.

Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6



Balat, September 2010 Photos taken by Tuğba Kibar

Hikmet adds that: “I am a stranger here now.” On the other hand Maria, comparing Moda—Kadıköy with Balat, says that nothing much has changed there:

We do not feel any difference here. I can tell a story that belongs to every street (in Kadıköy). There is no such discrimination here. I have never felt like a stranger here as the population of this area is very accustomed to live with minority groups. But I cannot know what can happen somewhere else since I haven't lived anywhere else in Istanbul. Nothing happened with a Turk, a Muslim that would make me feel a difference. No one new entered my life anyway. Same people anyway.¹¹

Maria says that the only difference she feels is the population increase in Kadıköy. But she adds that people who choose to live in Moda are still from the same section of the society. According to her, there is an established continuity in the profile of the population of the area as opposed to Balat. In addition to what Maria tells us, Hikmet's sentences above about why he cannot live in Nişantaşı or Etiler also show that different parts of Istanbul are inhabited by different classes and transitions are not easy for both sides, both for the lower and upper classes.

I am very lucky that I live in this place. People around me know what minority means, they grow with minority they are neighbors with minority after all. We've never felt the discrimination. But I don't know what I would encounter if I would have to live in Fatih. But I would be afraid.¹²

¹¹ Burada bir farklılık hissetmiyoruz. Gerçekten bütün sokaklarda bir şey anlatabilirim. Burada öyle bir ayırım yok. Buranın halkı azınlıkla yaşamaya çok alışık bir halk olduğu için burada hiçbir zaman yabancılik hissetmem, hissetmedim. Ama başka yerde ne olur bilmemem çünkü başka yerde yaşamadım. İstanbul'da herhangi başka bir semtte yaşamadım. Bir Türk ile bir Müslüman ile bir farklılık yaşamamı gerektirecek bir şey olmadı. Öyle yeni bir insan da girmedi hayatıma. Hep aynı insanlar zaten. Bu çevreye sonradan taşınan sonrada hayatıma girmiş insan da çok kısıtlı zaten.

¹² Ben çok şanslıyım böyle bir kesimde büyüdüm. Çevremdeki insanlar zaten azınlığın ne demek olduğunu bilen azınlıkla büyüyen azınlıkla komşu olan insanlar. Farklılık hiçbir zaman gözümüze sokulmadı. Ama şimdi ben Fatih'e taşınmak zorunda kalsam ne yaşarım bilemiyorum. Ama korkarım.

Maria's last words "I would be afraid" are crucial as a Christian living in Istanbul. But interestingly, Hikmet shares the same feeling too as a Muslim living in Istanbul. Different neighborhoods of Istanbul develop in such various manners that Maria is afraid to live in Fatih and Hikmet is afraid of how he can live with the new local elite:

I guess those people on the other side of the coast probably cannot share this place here with me, wouldn't want to live here with me. We've always been afraid of it after all. [...] Here in Istanbul we've always caused problems as citizens, been a burden so to speak.¹³

Living in Moda, Maria summarizes that "where I have been in Istanbul is very clear. I live here. I go to the university that I work in. University environment and Moda." When she went to live in Ankara for her education, she also lived there within the university. She explains that: "From classes to work and from work to dormitory, I haven't got that much chance to get involved with the city life. And also within the university, people were rich; they went abroad, wandered there. They were aware of it."¹⁴ She means that those students are used to living amidst cultural and religious differences.

For Maria what is important is her family and close friends. "If the people I love would come with me I can live anywhere in this world" she says. Emphasizing that it is not because of her religion, that she would be the same if she were a Muslim living here, she presents herself as a very cautious person:

"It is solely related to my character. I am in a determined environment. I don't have so many friends, I have close friendships. I only go to my work, go to my home. I go certain places and

¹³ Yani o karřıdaki karřı kıyıdaki vatandaş herhalde benimle paylaşamaz. Benimle oturmak istemez. Biz hep ondan korktuk zaten. Biz burada İstanbul'da sadece sorun yarattık vatandaş olarak. Hep yük olduk tabiri caizse.

¹⁴ Çok fazla şehir yaşamına girme gibi bir şansım yoktu. Dersten çıkıp çalışıyordum. Yurtta kalıyordum. Orada da o kesim de oldukça paralı, gezen tozan yurtdışına çıkan insanlar. Şimdi o insanlar çok farkındalardı.

I meet with certain friends. Even if it would be little, I would like to be with people whom I feel so close. I would like to be in places in which I feel peace.”¹⁵

She presents being cautious as one of her characteristics as a person. Yet taking into consideration her overall narrative, it seems to be Maria’s preference to limit her surroundings to certain localities and certain relationships which can be interpreted as not solely a certain characteristics of her personality but something that has been shaped by her historical background as well:

Some of my students say, “Really? You are a Christian and you speak Turkish. How can it be?” He/she is shocked by it but in a very natural way; s/he doesn’t have any malicious intentions. I don’t mention that I am a Christian particularly to some students. I can guess it from the attitude of the student. I don’t even want to teach the class if that student is in. We don’t communicate much. ¹⁶

Until here in this chapter, I tried to explain participants’ attachment to space within the context of coexistence and their self perception affected by constructed social relations within that space. I consider Balat with the Foucauldian concept of heterotopia since Balat is a place where the past survives and flows with its rich physical being into the future in the form of shaping the space according to the logic of modern reconstruction. The social existence

¹⁵ Ben zaten dışa açılmayı seven bir insan değilim ama bu benim dinimden veya başka şeylerden kaynaklanan bir şey değil. Bu tamamen karakterimle alakalı. Biraz dar bir çevre içinde olmak. Çok fazla arkadaşım yoktur çok yakın dostlarım vardır. Sadece işime giderim, evime gelirim. Gidip yemek yediğim yerler bellidir. Çıktığım arkadaşlar bellidir. Çok fazla kolay kolay hayatıma yeni insanları sokmam. Ama bu benim dinimden kaynaklanan bir şey değil. Ben burada yaşayan bir Müslüman da olsaydım yine aynı şey olurdu. Genel anlamda zaten seçici bir insanım. Çok az insan olsun ama kendime çok yakın hissettiklerim, kendimi çok huzurlu hissettim yerlerde olayım.

¹⁶ Şimdi mesela öğrencilerimden bazıları diyor ki “ ya gerçekten. Şimdi Hıristiyansınız ve Türkçe konuşuyorsunuz. Bu nasıl oluyor” şoka giriyor mesela. O kadar doğal bi şekilde şoka giriyor ki hiç bir art niyeti yok aslında. Bazı öğrencilere söylemiyorum mesela. Özellikle söylemiyorum. Karşımdaki öğrencinin genel olarak tutumundan tahmin ediyorum. Hatta mümkünse o öğrencinin dersine bile girmek istemiyorum. Fazla muhatap olmuyorum.

belonging to the past is not absent or forgotten, rather it is carried through by religious symbols such as synagogues, churches and mosques which attracts and creates new social formation within the space that differs from the rest of the city.

1.1. Balat as a Heterotopia

Michel Foucault (1986) proposes the concept of heterotopia in contrast to the utopias—“spaces that are by their very essence fundamentally unreal” (p.24) and explains that heterotopias are ‘real and imagined spaces that lie outside all spaces, in which our very selves are represented in there and transformed by it’ (1986:24). If we think through Foucault’s mirror example, while in utopia we see ourselves as an imaginary and unreal being, in heterotopias what we see in the mirror is also real and contextually related, and the mirror itself functions as the heterotopia through the reflection of which the being in reality is reconstructed (1986:24).

Before presenting Balat as a heterotopia, I am going to explain that Foucault uses heterotopia in six different ways: First of all, there is heterotopia of crises which “are reserved for the individual who finds himself in a state of crisis with respect to the society or the environment in which he lives: adolescents, women during the menstrual period or in labor, the old, etc.” (1986:24). Sacred places are one of the examples of heterotopias of crises. For instance, Maria told me that she likes it a lot to have a church around:

It is a place where I find peace. Even if I wouldn’t pray, going there and sitting in it gives me peace a lot. So it is nice that there is a church around here. I don’t have to take a bus. Within 5 minutes I am there if I walk. For instance I am going to move to Erenköy and I feel uneasy

about it. There is no church at all, I think there is a synagogue, and maybe I can hang around there. (Smiles)¹⁷

For Maria church is a place she finds peace in a state of crises. Similarly, for so many people sacred places function as places of relief and peace, therefore sacred places are an example to heterotopias of crises.

Secondly, there are contemporary forms of heterotopia which have never vanished but come to function in a particularly different way than their authentic forms, such as the cemetery. In a third type of heterotopias, a series of spaces alien to each other are juxtaposed in a single real space, such as the cinema and theater (1986:25).

Within the fourth kind of heterotopia, Foucault mentions heterochronisms as; “when people find themselves in a sort of total breach with their traditional time” (1986:26). Museums and libraries can be good examples of this type of heterotopias. The fifth kind of heterotopia is very much related to time as well. It “presupposes a system of opening and closing that isolates them and makes them penetrable at one and the same time” (1986:26) The last one “performs the task of creating a space of illusion that reveals how all of real space is more illusory, all the locations within which life is fragmented” (1986:27).

Looking into Foucault’s concept of heterotopia, I am tempted to analyze Balat as a heterotopia. Economically, socially and physically speaking, extremes poles come together in Balat. First of all, in terms of physical aspects which are related to its historical configuration Balat differs from other areas. The historical importance of Balat is related to its cultural and

¹⁷ Yakında bir kilise olması çok hoşuma gidiyor. Çok huzur bulduğum bir yer orası. Hiç dua etmesem bile gidip içinde oturmak bana huzur veriyor. O yüzden yakınımda olması çok güzel bir şey. Otobüse binmem gerekmiyor yürüyerek beş dakikaya gidiyorum. Onun için ben mutluyum yakınımda olmasından. Şimdi mesela Erenköy’e taşınacağım onun bir tedirginliği var. O çevrede hiç kilise yok, bir sinagog varmış oraya mı takılısam diyorum. (Gülüyor)

social importance in the sense that Balat hosted Greeks, Muslims and Jews. Even though today Balat is mostly inhabited by Muslims, the historical importance of its configuration attracted both the European Union and the local government which resulted in the regeneration programme.

The result was the transformation of the urban structure of Balat with a heavy influx of newcomers, especially a further group of working class people who were attracted by job prospects and the rather low rent. Wandering around Balat you can talk with Greeks, gypsies, Kurds and Arabs, but you can also encounter people from different professions such as photographers, musicians, carpenters and workers. You can see women who wear a jilbab walking down the street of Orthodox Church. Constant change in every sense, social, cultural, economical and physical, distinguishes Balat and enables us to attach a specific meaning there. Foucault defines heterotopias as 'real and imagined spaces that lie outside all spaces' (1986:24), Balat is also a real space which transforms itself out of ordinary order. Balat as a heterotopia is crucial for understanding the social practices within that space. Coexisting apparent contradictions nested in Balat in and off themselves show the interconnectedness of time as we human beings are prone to divide it into segments of past, present and future and shape space within this context. Based on this feature, interconnectedness of social relations in Balat rests upon a form of complex network which will be analyzed in the following chapter through the physicality of space and the image of coexistence within that space.

CHAPTER II

COEXISTENCE WITHIN ABSTRACT AND PHYSICAL SPACE OF ISTANBUL AS IT IS IMAGINED

Avatar, directed by James Cameron, is a movie which takes place in the future, on another planet called Pandora. People who live in Pandora are called Na'vi. At the heart of this Planet, there is the tree of voices called Utraya Mokri. When a Na'vi connects his/her tail to the tree of voices, s/he hears the voices of his or her ancestors who live within Eywa, the mother deity that protects the balance of life.

The tree of voices is a global network in which there are more connections than the human brain. Na'vi can access it; they can upload and download data and memories. The importance of the tree of voices for my thesis is that it works as a visual metaphor for the idea of how we connect with the world through space. The tree of voices in Pandora can be regarded as the signifier in this context. And the signified is multidimensional. First of all, it is an imagery that signifies the connectedness of people, society, history and space. As when the Na'vi connects to the tree they hear voices of the past, so in our world physical intimacy brings about intensive touch with history and society. And secondly, the tree itself is a living organism in which you can upload your memory data. When we inhabit a place, we also upload our own memories to physical structures through our everyday life experience which contributes to and is a part of social memory.

These physical structures, loaded with our feelings, memories, images create “abstract spaces in our mind” (Tuan 2001:17) in which we don't just upload, but we also download

images, memories, people and marks of epochs that effect our own being and experience. In this abstract space, one can find the implications of coexistence in a different manner. I coexist with past generations within this abstract space through their memories and images which they deposited in the space. There is an interconnection between what has been transmitted as a sign of their lives, particularly the signs on the space and me. Even if I wouldn't live in the same neighborhood with Greeks at the same time, even the spatiality and temporality doesn't correspond to mine, when I walk through the streets of Balat I enter that abstract space in my mind and coexist with the sign of their existence such as churches, synagogues, old and renovated houses and the totality of this physicality. Signs in the physical space subconsciously form the notion of loaded abstract space in the subject's experience.

When one is posed the question of coexistence of different religious groups, family ties and neighborhood relations are the first things and most of the time the only subject matter that is discussed. During my conversation with Elio, I came to realize that physicality of space in and of itself can be the foundation of coexistence.

Elio is an Italian architect and a photographer with a focus on buildings and physical structures and therefore of the city itself in general. Living in Istanbul since 2002, Elio was married here for the first time of his life and plans to stay in Istanbul from now on.

According to Piot, "social relationship is presupposed, if the person is always an aspect of various relationships, we should see this person as composed of, or constituted by, relationships, rather than as situated in them. Persons here do not "have" relations; they are relations" (Piot 1997:18). How Elio expresses his relationship with people supports the idea of Piot:

There is no shock for me because I don't have any problems of identity in the sense that I was always used to, how can I say, to meet diversity. I mean the problem of identity is being

solved with meeting different people. So, I believe in what we may say, cannibalism. Intellectual and spiritual cannibalism which means that I see you, you are different from me. [...] So I cannot have any shocks about Istanbul and the people in Istanbul. But I find myself. Yes, I always find myself through diversity, through meeting diversity.

But even though Elio describes himself as being constituted through relations, his reason for being here in Balat— Istanbul is the physicality of space. In his own words; “I fit quite well in here because of the physical rather than the social.” Within this direction, his coexistence encompassing both the physical and social is rooted in this belief of his. A more specific point, the notion of “abandonment” reflects his attraction to Balat and illuminates his understanding of the social through the physical:

The forgotten. Which fits very well the idea of last look on things. Because it is very close to that. Because all what we see, all what falls into the visual perception is something that has to die. Let’s go straight to the point [...] that is why I am attracted to abandoned things.

For Elio being driven towards abandonment is the main core of looking at physical existence. He mentions that when he looks at something it is not with the first look of a kid but as if it is the last look to physical reality. As he answers the question of whether he has an urge to fill the space with his own memories as he conceptualizes it through the last look or not, he mentions that he feels cold passion:

No, nothing like that. I just intellectually avoid all these aspects of reality. Exotism. A kind of sweet honey feeling toward memory. If I would be aware of something like that I would want to erase it, destroy it. No Nostalgia at all. It is more understandable if I say that there is a scientific look. It is more detached, I try to be detached. I prefer to feel cold passion.

In contrast to Elio, Maria sticks to her memory. She even wants the waiter to be still working at the Moda Çay Bahçesi she used to go with her grandmother. Walter Benjamin

says that “For an experienced event is finite- at any rate, confined to one sphere of experience; a remembered event is infinite, because it is only a key to everything that happened before and after it” (Portelli 1991:1). A remembered event is infinite since it is being reconstructed through one’s own imagination. A remembered event is like the image of a dream in which one sees oneself within an occurring image. Actual event is being experienced by the agent of the dream and remembered by the owner of it. Listening to Maria’s life story, as mentioned at the beginning of this paragraph about Moda Çay Bahçesi, Moda keeps together the chain of events belonging to her past. Her experience of today is organized according to Moda not as a place but as a space that is constructed with images, events and memories. Also for Hikmet, Balat is the main element of organizing his life experience. Since regeneration project’s transforming effects began at a time in the past but continues, intensity of his memories remains. By means of constant reference to remembered events, former experiences of Hikmet keep the latter alive.

Before we arrived at the place in which we were going to make the interview, while we were passing through Kadıköy streets, Maria began to tell her memories belonging to those streets. But once we got there, she was not able to narrate her memories that well. Even at a certain point the lack of the physical intimacy of those spaces caused interruptions in her narration. At this point I find what Bachelard (1994) writes on the topic of the relation between time-space and memory illuminating to understand Maria’s narrative and interruptions in her narration:

Here space is everything; for time ceases to quicken memory. [...] We are unable to relive duration that has been destroyed. We can only think of it, in the line of an abstract time that is deprived of all thickness. The finest specimens of fossilized duration concretized as a result of long sojourn, are to be found in and through space. The unconscious abides. [...] The more securely memories are fixed in space; the sounder they are (P. 9-10).

Maria's relation with space isn't just saturated with her memories but gains meaning with them. She says that, "For me my family and my close friends are very important. For me, it is not Turkey or Istanbul. It is Moda." ¹⁸

The experience of space is also reflective in the flow of the narrations of my interviewees. While Hikmet narrates his story in a chronological and articulated manner, Maria's life story is conveyed through scattered sentences and thoughts flow according to her stream of consciousness. Their personal experiences of coexistence reveal themselves as an underlying reason. The place Hikmet is familiar with has been through constant mobility, on the other hand environment that Maria lives has always been static and devoid of radical change. Relating being static with abandonment, Elio uses this word in a different sense:

Feelings change. And I need something permanent, not something which changes. I don't believe in trusting feelings. Of course I live through feelings. But they change and they are not so important. [...] Nothing is important in comparison to what doesn't change. The absolute doesn't change. I usually take pictures of something which falls apart, which is abandoned. So I think that the notion of abandoned is something. It is a permanent concept. Does not change, the abandoned.

Elio's photography consists of images that fall apart, which reflects his understanding of how he sees the physical reality. Within this aspect, I wondered how Elio perceives Istanbul. Istanbul comes out to be a lucky city for Elio:

E: A lucky city. For ever since ever. Before the Byzantine period. The Constantine. And then the great Ottoman conqueror Fatih. And then go on and now. The essence of Istanbul is lucky.

¹⁸ Benim için ailem ve çok yakın çevreye girmiş dostlar benim çok önemli. Benim için Türkiye değil ya da İstanbul değil. Benim için Moda. Beyoğlu. Ben dünyanın herhangi bir yerinde yaşayabilirim ama benim çok sevdiğim o insanlar da geldiği sürece.

Lucky because God gave the beauty of geography. Look, just look how it is made! Marmara Sea. Narrow thing; Bosphorus. The greatest aesthetic. The greatest artist of the world of all time is God. The real artist is God. So it is a lucky city from a geographic point of view and from an artistic point of view. The artificial. Natural and artificial. Geography and geometry.

T: What kind of geometry does Istanbul have?

E: As natural. Fractal numbers. Not Euclidean, it is fractal. Architectonic speech, language we may say is fundamental geometry of physical space. Because here you have Ayasofya. All the work by Sinan wouldn't have been what it is without Ayasofya. It is really fundamental. You can have a lot of basic building types.

When we consider the flow of Elio's talk as quoted above, we can say that Elio experiences coexistence in Istanbul by the positioning of physical structures as he exemplifies by Mimar Sinan becoming what he is vis-a-vis Ayasofya. For Elio regarding coexistence in and through the situatedness of physical structures constitutes the fundamental aspect of coexistence. That is why he repeatedly emphasizes the physical rather than the social throughout of his narrative.

As an architect and photographer, Elio sees the city differently from many other people I have encountered. The difference stems from his ability to regard entities in a manner that is not taken for granted but by looking at the essence lying underneath. While Elio constructs his conceptualization through positioning of structures vis-a-vis each other, I come up with the idea that Miniaturk can be examined as a place consisting of vis-a-vis positioned structures in which one can experience beyond one's own physical being. How is the spatial imaginary of existing or once existed structures of Istanbul constructed into a compressed and intense space?

Miniaturk, which is a miniature park, as described in the official website, is “a fairy tale space that is closed in itself.” It aims to create an environment which brings together historic structures of Anatolia, Istanbul and former Ottoman territories. It is established on a total area of 60,000 m² (650,000 sq ft) with its 15,000 m² (160,000 sq ft) model area, 40,000 m² (430,000 sq ft) of green and open space, 3,500 m² (38,000 sq ft) of covered area, 2,000 m² (22,000 sq ft) of pools and waterways and a parking lot for 500 cars. Done in 1/25th scale there are 120 models. Some of the structures are Ayasofya, Galata Tower, Bosphorus Bridge, Safranbolu Houses, Sümeli Monastery, and Temple of Artemis etc.¹⁹

Juxtaposition of the structures from the contemporary era such as the Bosphorus Bridge and the municipality building with edifices from previous ages such as the Temple of Artemis is a highlighted example of what Bachelard (1994) means by space containing compressed time:

The cleverer I am at miniaturizing the world, the better I possess it. But in doing this, it must be understood that values become condensed and enriched in miniature. Platonic dialectics of large and small do not suffice for us to become cognizant of the dynamic virtues of miniature. One must go beyond logic in order to experience what is large in what is small (P. 150).

In order to see what is large in what is small for the example of Miniaturk, I will use Baudrillard’s concept of simulacrum as a conceptual tool. As Baudrillard explains simulacrum as what never conceals the truth –it is the truth which conceals that there is none (Baudrillard, 1983:1), naming the park as Minia-TURK is a perfect example of what simulacrum is. Structures in the park are exhibited to construct the sense of being Turkish, yet

¹⁹http://www.miniaturk.com.tr/ana_sayfa.asp?gorev=tek_sayfalar_oku&id=25

Figure 7: An overall view of Miniaturk.



Figure 8: Structures of Ayasofya vis a vis Sultanahmet Mosque in Miniaturk.



August 2010. Photos taken by Tuğba Kibar

Figure 9, 10, and 11: Examples of miniaturized structures in Miniaturk: Istanbul Atatürk Olympic Stadium, a miniaturized tunnel in transit European motorway, Istanbul Atatürk Airport I saw a 5 or 6 year old boy here. He was asking his mother to get the car out of the miniature tunnel to play with it. We shared a similar perspective with that boy about the park at large.

Figure 9



Figure 10



Figure 11



August, 2010. Photos taken by Tuğba Kibar

in this park you can encounter structures which weren't built by Turks. Therefore the name creates the concept of being a Turk. As I was walking around the miniatures, I saw a 5 or 6 year old boy. He was asking, insisting that his mother get the car out of the miniature tunnel to play with it. In his perception, the miniature car in the miniature tunnel was a toy to play with. For me, this little boy was my reflection as we shared a similar perspective about the park at large. The importance of this boy's reaction is that it shows the bridge with reality that this park establishes, which is actually promised by its makers in its official website: to be a fairyland. This park creates polyphony in which various spaces, times and cultures are all gathered and presented under the name of minia-TURK.

As well as the concept of simulacrum, the Foucauldian concept of heterotopia which is mentioned in the previous chapter is a productive tool in the analysis of Miniaturk. Miniaturk is a place which fits the third and fourth kind of heterotopia. The third kind of heterotopia has “the power of juxtaposing in a single real place different spaces and locations that are incompatible with each other” (Foucault 1986:25). In Miniaturk we can see different miniaturized historical building, spaces and locations which are incompatible with each other not just spatially but also temporally. That is why it also fits the fourth kind of heterotopia which is linked to the compression of time.

The importance of analyzing Miniaturk as a site of simulacrum and heterotopia has multiple implications for the subject of coexistence. First, Miniaturk aims to show how Istanbul is a rich city in the sense that it embodies various cultures' and religions' long lasting artifacts belonging to different periods of time. With the help of the concept of simulacrum, we questioned why this park is named as minia-TURK and what kind of implications this naming has. According to Tuan (2001):

The small mirrors the large. The small is accessible to all human senses. Its messages, being confined within a small area, are readily perceived and understood. Architectural space—a house, a temple, or a city—is a microcosm possessing lucidity that natural features lack (P. 100).

Miniaturk supposedly reflects the large within a small area. It is a space that shows us facets of coexistence different than what natural features show both physically and socially. According to Baudrillard (1983), simulacrum is either “the reflection of a basic reality” (p. 8) or “it masks and perverts a basic reality” (p. 9) or “it masks the absence of a basic reality” (p. 9) or “it bears no relation to any reality whatever: it is its own pure simulacrum” (p. 9). The question of ‘as a simulacrum does it conceal the truth underlying construction of national identity based on Turkishness’ is beyond the confines of this work and it requires in depth analysis.

Secondly, with the help of the concept of heterotopia, seeing Miniaturk as a space that contains compressed time and compressed space in which various structures are brought together reflects on the idea of Elio. One can experience coexistence in Istanbul by the positioning of physical structures as he exemplifies by Mimar Sinan becoming what he is through vis a vis Aghia Sophia. According to Tuan (2001), “the mind discerns geometric designs and principles of spatial organization in the environment. [...] Human beings not only discern geometric patterns in nature and create abstract spaces in the mind, they also try to embody their feelings, images, and thoughts in tangible material” (p.17).

As physical structures coordinate accordingly, the abstract space created in an individual’s mind with its attachments of embodied feelings, images and meanings coordinates with other minds. Here by coordination I mean mutual recognition, reciprocal positioning and identification of self and coming into being. As mentioned at the beginning

of this chapter, as Piot says, we don't "have" relations but we are composed of relations (1997:18). For instance, Elio tells us as I wrote at the beginning of Elio's narrative, he always finds himself through meeting diversity, through meeting different people. We as human beings become what we are through social interaction with other people. As Piot (1994) depicts we are "fluid and diffused" and "multiple, permeable, and infused with the presences of others both human and nonhuman" (p. 19).

CONCLUSION

I started my thesis by searching for the traces of coexistence in Istanbul. As so many different areas of Istanbul were worthy to investigate for the subject, one specific place dominated to the others for me; Balat. Balat was the center of the coexistence of different cultural and religious groups such as Greeks, Muslims, Armenians and Jews. One can see so many churches, synagogues and mosques there. Even though it is mostly inhabited by the Muslims today, you can encounter people from different cultures and professions such as Greeks, gypsies, Kurds, Arabs, photographers, musicians, carpenters and workers.

As I were able to arrange the interviews from Moda which has been always a place populated by Armenians, Greeks and Jews, I was able to contrast Balat with Moda through my interview's narratives. Balat consists of more complex set of relations than Moda. Balat's social, cultural and physical importance attracted the attention of UNESCO and Fatih Municipality which is ended up with a program named as "Rehabilitation of Fener and Balat Districts." In the sense of coexistence, Balat already has been through profound changes until the program has started in 2003. But since then with this program, it has become a place in which contradictions take one's attraction directly. Now one can see all kind of differences there. Near a damaged old building one can see a renovated house. You can encounter very poor people as well as the rich ones. You can see a worker or a musician. You can talk to a headscarved women or a priest. You can visit a church or a mosque there.

On the other hand, Moda as a place which also embodies different cultures and religions hasn't changed much. I've realized that Balat is a real space which transforms itself out of ordinary order, which defines Balat as heterotopia.

Based on the idea that Balat is a heterotopia, in the first part, I looked into the social relations in abstract and physical space of Balat and Moda. Through my interviewees I've realized that coexistence works through neighborhood relations for them. As they share the same space, as they get to know each other, they develop solid relations which carry itself out of neighborhood. But the fear of unknown is still there. While Maria was afraid of living in Fatih which is a place famous for its Muslim inhabitants, Hikmet was afraid of sharing Balat with new local elite. While Hikmet relates this to the culture differences comes by different economic background, presents itself as a cautious person as a reason to her unwillingness to live outside the place she used to live i.e. Moda. But when I look into her overall narrative, it seems that it is not solely a certain characteristics of her personality but something that has been shaped by her historical background as well. Since she used to Moda and social relations in Moda, she wants to preserve it. While for Maria, Moda and social relations within Moda hasn't changed much, but for Hikmet not only the image of various religious groups' living peacefully together within the neighborhood of Balat has gone, but also the physical texture belonging to that image has been through profound changes. Remaining physical presence keeps Maria's memories alive. She feels at home in Moda. On the other hand, Hikmet feels like a stranger in Balat even he has been living there for about 50 years. Therefore, physical intimacy to the space affects the flow of memories from physical to social and social to physical and shapes our identities. I follow this idea in the second part of my thesis.

I used the metaphor of "the voices of tree" in order to explain the connectedness of people, society, history and space. As the tree itself is a living organism in which you can upload your memory data, the space we inhabit is like a living organism which is loaded with our feelings, memories and images. We upload our own memories to physical structures through our everyday life experience which contributes to and is a part of social memory. In

return, we also download images, memories, people and marks of epochs that affect our own being and experience.

This was the foundation of my consideration of what coexistence means. I used coexistence in the sense that I coexist with the past generations within this abstract space through their memories and images which they deposited in the space. There is an interconnection between what has been transmitted as a sign of their lives, particularly the signs on the space and me. Signs in the physical space subconsciously form the notion of loaded abstract space in the subject's experience. Therefore, the physicality of space as it forms the notion of abstract space of individuals, in and of itself can be the foundation of coexistence.

Particularly, I take into consideration the positioning of structures vis-a-vis each other with the physicality of space as a foundation of coexistence. I examined Miniaturk as a place consisting of vis-a-vis positioned structures in which one can experience beyond one's own physical being. This spatial imaginary of existing or once existed structures constructed into a compressed and intense space ends up with the name of Minia-TURK. A self-identity of being a Turk is developed through these structures vis-à-vis each other. Similarly, as we coordinate our existence according to physical presence and social relations within that physical presence, we construct our self-identity. As I also analyzed my interviewees' life stories relational to the physical and abstract space they are in, it can be said one not just possesses the relations of what is accessible to us from this physical presence and in return what can be transferred from us, but becomes constituted by them.

I want to finish my thesis by adapting what Kant says about our sense data to my process of writing the thesis. Data I gathered from my interviewees and personal experience of wandering around Balat, Moda and Miniaturk, "gave me a mass of chaotic images which

had to be organised by my mind. The mind used categories such as Space, Time and Causation in order to organise this data but these categories did not come from the world itself. They were, rather, like internal filters in the brain” (Allen, 2004:69). As I made the claims above, I would like the readers to keep in mind that all these conclusions are filtered by brain and organized through the categories in my mind.

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