

# REPRESENTATION(S) OF TOPKAPI PALACE

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FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

By

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September, 2004

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## ABSTRACT

### REPRESENTATION(S) OF TOPKAPI PALACE

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This thesis is based on a critical analysis of the problem of representation based on Platonic Idealism. Historically, this problem has been closely tied to the problematic opposition between notions of original and copy. In this study the assumptions behind this binary opposition and the existence of a reality that is accessible other than by its own representations are deconstructed. The notion of simulacrum is introduced to counter the original/copy argument in relation to the contemporary culture of consumerism. Within this theoretical framework the Topkapi Palace Hotel in Antalya is taken as a case study. Representations of Topkapi Palace preceding the hotel are analyzed including Ottoman miniatures, Orientalist paintings/gravures and the Topkapi Palace Museum. The basic premise of the thesis is that the notion of simulation destabilizes the model/copy binary which has significant repercussions in contemporary architectural discourse and practice.

**Keywords:** Topkapi Palace, Representation, Simulacrum, Simulacra, Themed Environment, Themed Hotel

## ÖZET

### TOPKAPI SARAYI'NIN TEMSİL(LER)İ

Emre Seles

İç Mimarlık ve Çevre Tasarımı

Yüksek Lisans

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Bu tez, Platonik İdealizme dayanan temsil sorununun eleştirel analizi üzerine kurulmuştur. Temsil problemi, tarihsel olarak, orijinal ve kopya kavramları arasındaki sorunlu karşıtlığa sıkı sıkıya bağlıdır. Bu çalışmada, bu ikili karşıtlığın arkasındaki ve temsil sistemi dışında bir gerçekliğin var olduğuna ilişkin savlar eleştirilmiştir. Simülakrum kavramı, orijinal/kopya argümanına karşı bir sav olarak ortaya konmuştur. Bu sav, çağdaş tüketim kültürü ile de ilişkilendirilmiştir. Bu teorik çerçeve içerisinde, Antalya'daki Topkapı Sarayı Oteli örnek çalışma olarak ele alınmıştır. Topkapı Sarayı'nın otelden önceki temsilleri analiz edilmiştir; ki buna Osmanlı minyatürleri, Oryantalist resimler/gravürler ve Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi dahildir. Simülasyon fikrinin, çağdaş mimarlık söyleminde ve pratiğinde önemli yansımaları bulunan model/kopya ikiliğinin dengesini bozuyor olması, bu tezin en temel önermesidir.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** Topkapı Sarayı, Temsil, Simülakrum, Simülakra, Temalı Çevre, Temalı Otel

*This work is dedicated in memory of my beloved father Olcay Seles*

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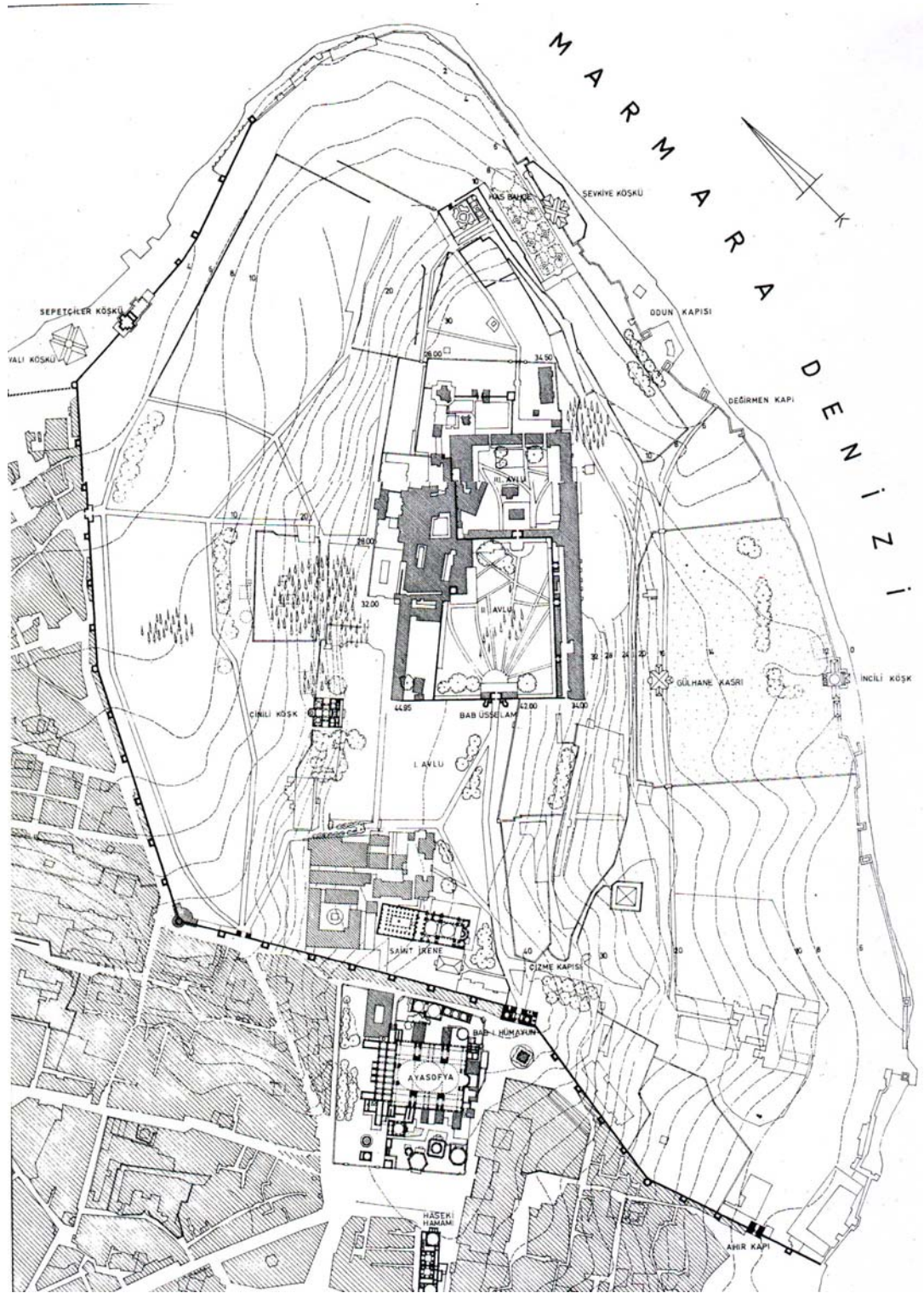
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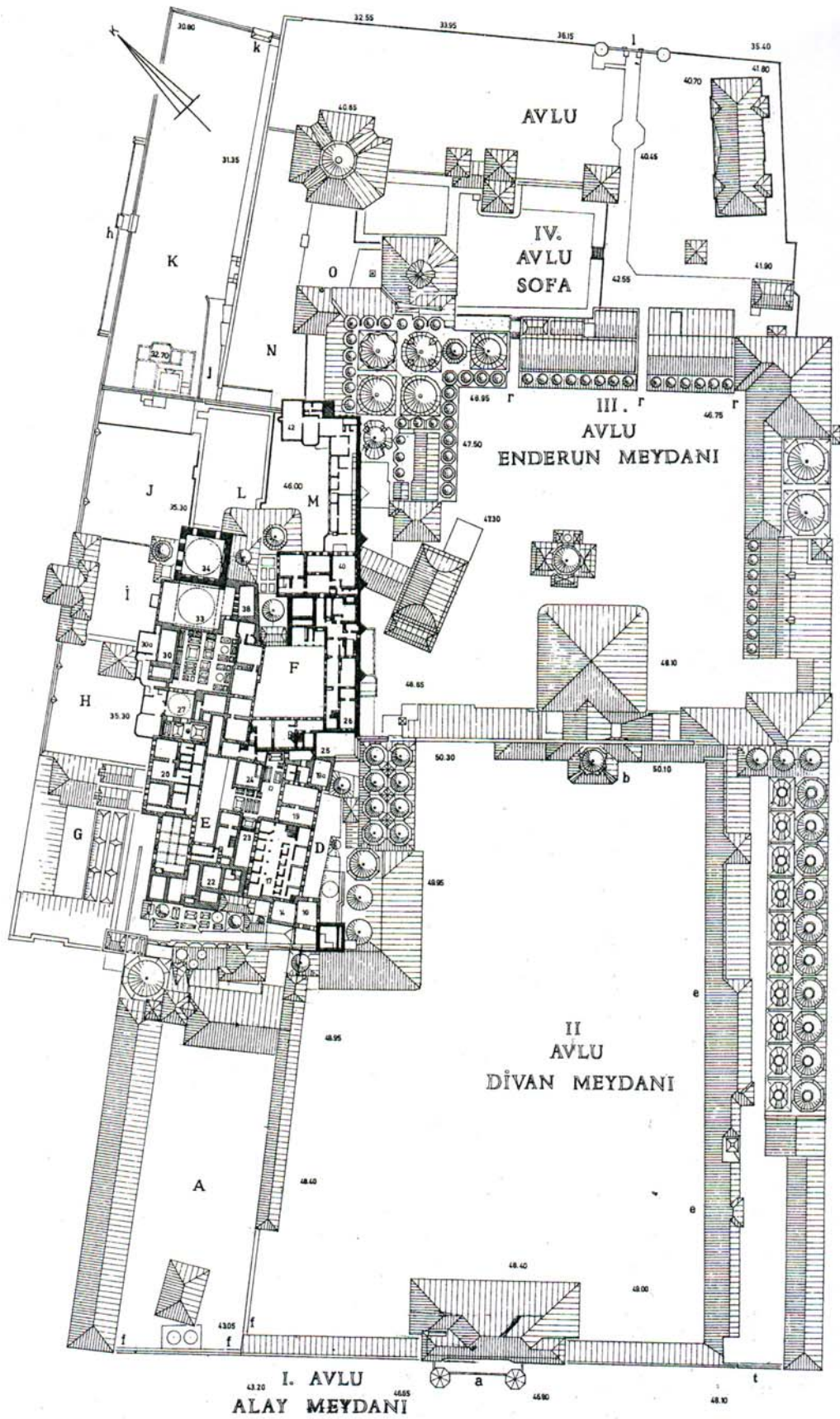
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\* All the photos whose references are not indicated in the text are the ones which were taken by the author himself.

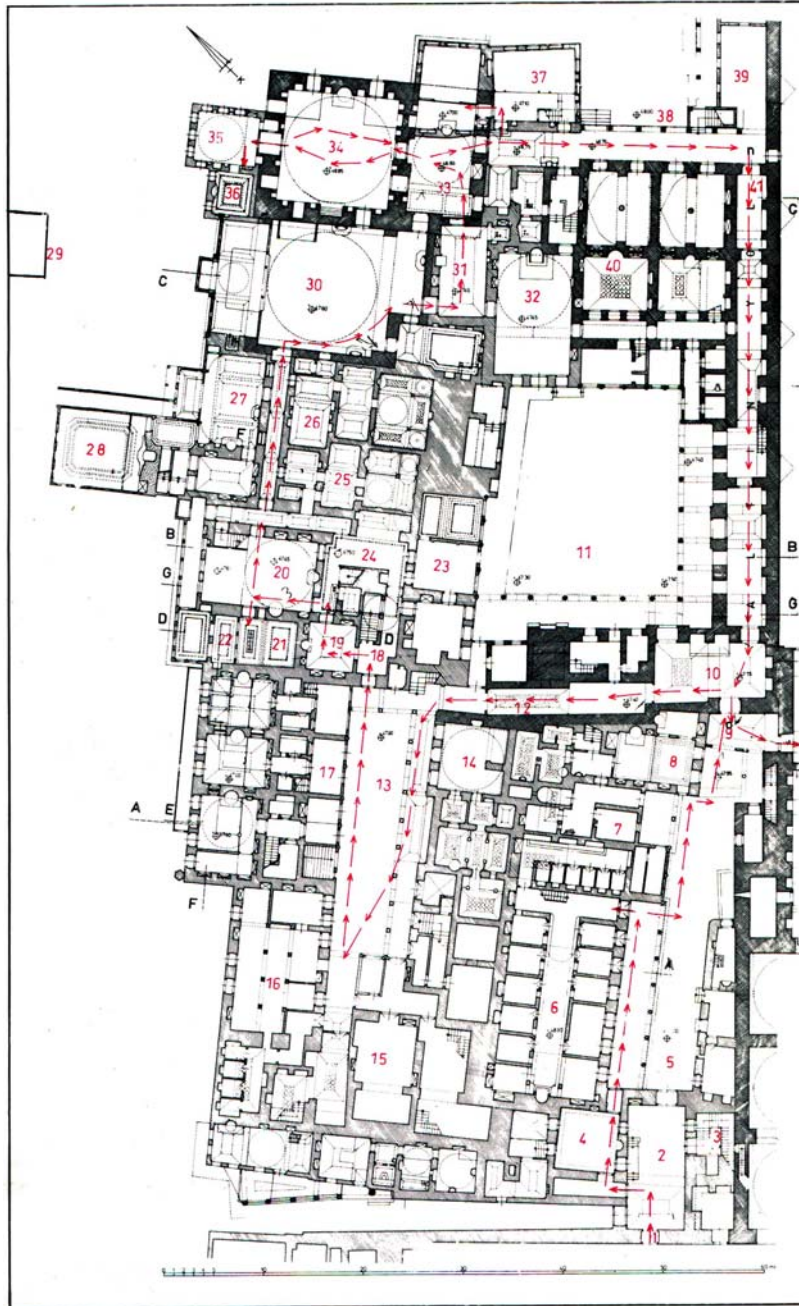
## **APPENDIX A**



Site plan of Topkapı Palace. (Eldem, 1982, p. 5)



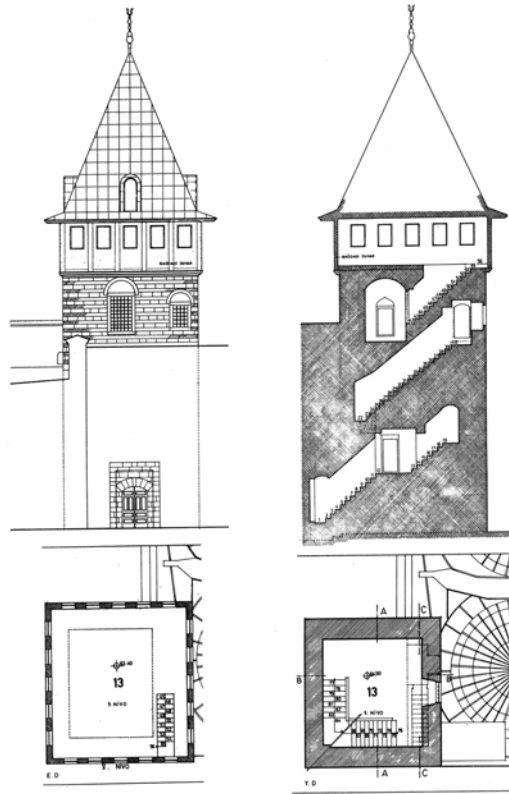
Plan of Topkapı Palace (Eldem, 1982, p. 25).



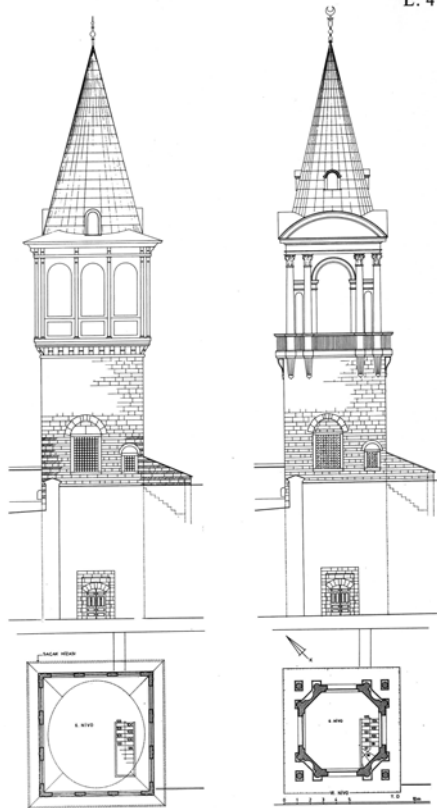
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- 5 - Stone courtyard of the black eunuchs
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- 8 - Chamber of the chief black eunuchs
- 9 - Main door of the harem
- 10 - Guard room
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- 13 - Courtyard of the concubines
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- 40 - Haseki's apartment
- 41 - The golden way

Plan of Harem. (Akşit, 1993, p. 40)



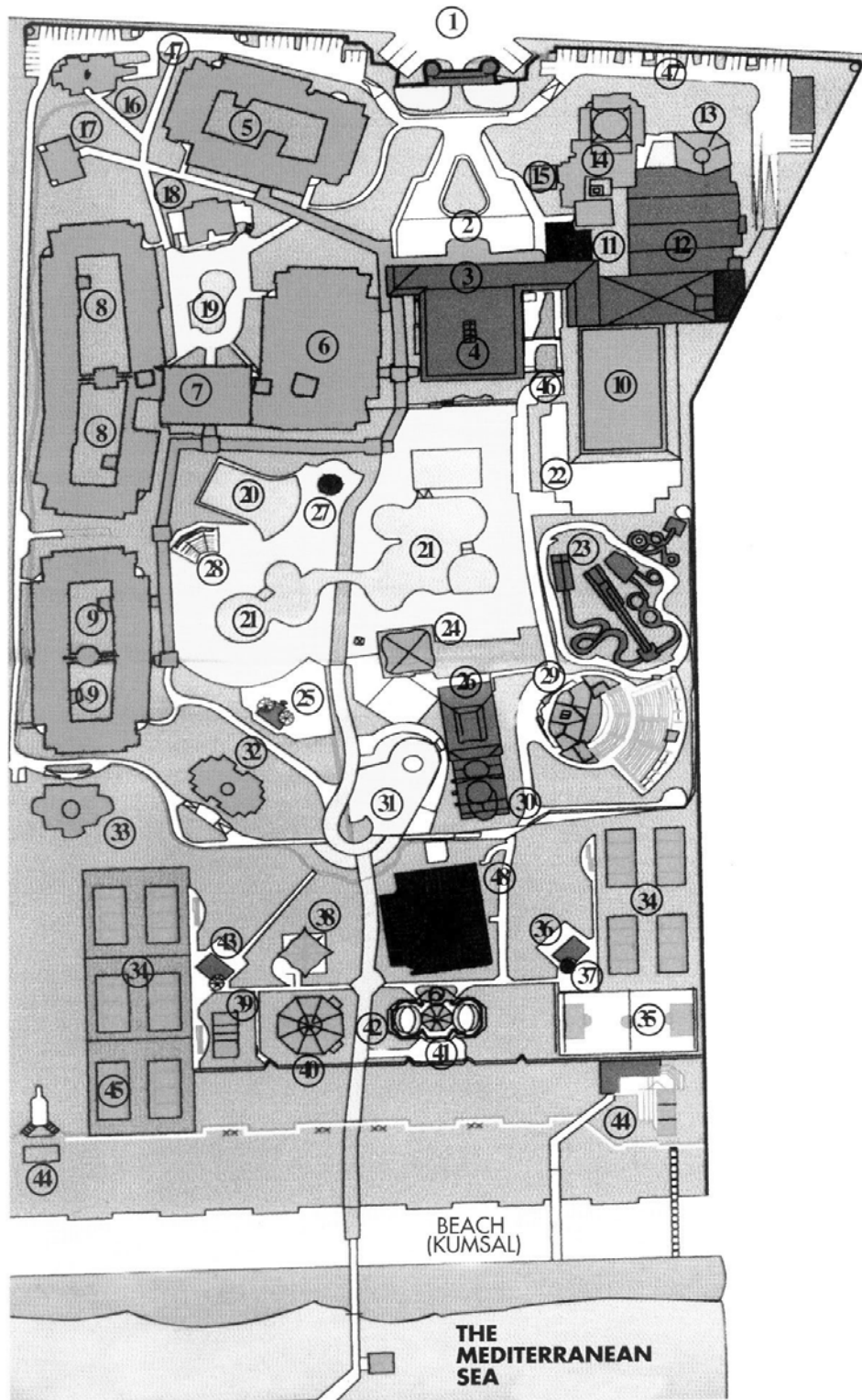
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Restitutions of Tower of Justice showing the phases of transformation through ages (Eldem, 1982, Plates 46-47).

## **APPENDIX B**





Site plan of WOW Topkapı Palace Hotel (*Hotel Brochure*, 2003).



WOW topkapi palace  
AKSU - ANTALYA

OTEL GİRİŞİ ( BAB-I HUMAYUN)	1	HOTEL ENTRANCE ( BAB-I HUMAYUN)
LOBİ GİRİŞİ ( BAB-US SAADE )	2	LOBBY ENTRANCE ( BAB-US SAADE)
SOGUK ÇEŞME SOKAĞI	3	SOĞUK ÇEŞME STREET
ALIŞVERİŞ SOKAĞI	3	SHOPPING STREET
LOBBY & RESEPSİYON ( ARZ ODASI)	4	LOBBY BLOK & RECEPTION
MİSAFİR ODALARI: 1100+	5	GUESTROOMS: 1100+
MİSAFİR ODALARI: 2100+	6	GUESTROOMS: 2100+
MİSAFİR ODALARI: 3100+	7	GUESTROOMS: 3100+
MİSAFİR ODALARI: 4100+	8	GUESTROOMS: 4100+
MİSAFİR ODALARI: 5100+	9	GUESTROOMS: 5100+
HÜNKAR ( ANA ) RESTORAN	10	HUNKAR ( MAIN ) RESTAURANT
ADALET KULESİ ve SEYİR BAR	11	JUSTICE TOWER & SEYİR BAR
OSMANLI BALO SALONU	12	OSMANLI BALL ROOM
TOPLANTI SALONU ( REVAN KÖŞKÜ )	13	MEETING ROOM ( REVAN PAVILLION )
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TÜRK HAMAMI & SAĞLIK KULUBÜ	15	TURKISH BATH & HEALTH CENTER
DOKTOR OFİSİ	16	MEDICAL CENTER
SARAY MUHALLEBİCİSİ ( MECİDİYE KÖŞKÜ)	17	SARAY MUHALLEBİCİSİ ( MECİDİYE PAVILLION)
SOFA CAFE ( SOFA KÖŞKÜ)	18	SOFA CAFE ( SOFA PAVILLION )
ASUDE HAVUZU	19	RELAX POOL
DALGA HAVUZU	20	WAVE POOL
ANA HAVUZ	21	MAIN SWIMMING POOL
OYUN MERKEZİ ( INTERNET CAFE ) & KUAFÖR	22	GAMELAND / INTERNET CAFE & HAIRDRESSER
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HAVUZ WC & DUŞLAR	28	POOL WC & SHOWERS
AMFİTİYATRO & ÇOCUK KULÜBÜ	29	AMPHITHEATER / MINI CLUB
KUBBE DISCO BAR ( AYA İRİNİ )	30	KUBBE DISCO BAR ( HAGIA IRENE )
KÖY MEYDANI	31	VILLAGE CENTER
MNG KONUT ( SEPETÇİLER KASRI )	32	MNG HOUSE ( SEPETÇİLER PAVILLION )
VIP KONUT ( GÜLHANE KASRI )	33	VIP HOUSE ( GÜLHANE PAVILLION)
TENNİS KORTLARI	34	TENNIS COURTS
MİNİ FUTBOL SAHASI	35	MINI FOOTBALL FIELD
PLAJ WC	36	BEACH WC
KİD'S BURGER	37	KID'S BURGER
ÇOCUK OYUN ALANI	38	CHILDREN'S PLAY GROUND
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BEACH BAR	41	BEACH BAR
BALIK EVİ	42	FISH HOUSE
TENNİS CENTER	43	TENNIS CENTER
SU SPORLARI	44	WATER SPORTS CENTER
BASKETBOL SAHASI	45	BASKETBALL FIELD
REVAN HALI SARAYI	46	REVAN CARPET PALACE
OTOPARK	47	CAR PARK
ÇARŞI & PERA CAFE BAR	48	GRAND BAZAAR & PERA CAFE BAR

List of buildings indicated in the site plan of WOW Topkapı Palace Hotel (*Hotel Brochure*, 2003).

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1. Aim and Scope of the Study**

This thesis is based on a critical analysis of the problem of representation based on Platonic Idealism. Historically, the problem of representation has been closely tied to the problematic opposition between notions of original and copy. Although the Platonic tradition constructs such referential binary oppositions, this work engages in the deconstruction of the assumptions behind the oppositions. The notion of simulacrum is introduced to counter the original/copy argument in relation to the contemporary culture of consumerism. Within this theoretical framework, the Topkapi Palace Hotel in Antalya is taken as a case study.

The problem of originality and copying in architecture was discussed in an article written by a Turkish journalist. The themed hotel projects in Antalya were described as “imagination projects” and they were characterized as very creative endeavors which have been dreamed of and demanded. Moreover, it was claimed that Turkey crossed beyond traditional, old investment areas at last (Özkök, 23). The Turkish architects responded and engaged in a debate by answering to that article continuing a predominantly journalistic language. They claimed that copied/mimicked buildings were far from displaying ‘creativity’ and they were no more than anti-progressive, negative, kitschy approaches. They contended that this

kind of approach was the indication of 'popular-arabesque culture', a 'black-comedy', and a rankless action (Kortan, 17).

WOW Topkapı Palace Hotel is claimed as kitsch, a tasteless bad copy; but what is a bad copy anyway? What is the status of the copied object? What kind of experiences does it produce and to what ends?

According to the architects who participated in that debate, there is 'Topkapı Palace' as 'reality' and the act of copying is a non-ethical, problematic act. They distinguish between the real/original one and its bad copy. Enis Kortan ironically states that "the designers of Topkapı Palace in Istanbul can not sue the architects of WOW Topkapı Palace Hotel in terms of 'copyrights'; because the architects are not alive" (17). The argument is mainly based on professional ethics with an elitist perspective, not on 'the act of copying'. On the other hand, some other architects point to another aspect of the problem. They claim that, imitation/copying is in the nature of representation. Within an online forum on the internet, the 'problem of imitation/copying and architecture' is being discussed. Metin Karadağ, as one of the attendants of that forum, addresses that problem by giving an example. A staircase, as an architectural element, repeats its own stairs. It is the repetition of the idea of an ascendant threshold. He wonders how a staircase contributed to the evolution of the culture of copy and imitation. (*Taklit Sorunu ve Mimarlık*, 17.11.2003). Either morally or aesthetically, copying and imitation seem to be on the agenda of all disciplines regarding representation.

Although it seems to be a positive approach that such an architectural problem is being discussed on the public ground, but the aim of this thesis is to direct the discussion to a deeper philosophical level. The basic premise of the thesis is that

the notion of simulation destabilizes the model/copy binary which has significant repercussions in contemporary architectural discourse and practice.

Throughout history, Topkapı Palace has been represented in a number of different ways and in different geographies. These can be summarized under the following topics; which will be elaborated throughout the thesis:

- Topkapı Palace as representation of an 'ideal imperial palace'
- Orientalist representations of Topkapı Palace
- Representations of Topkapı Palace in Ottoman sources
- The Topkapı Palace Museum as representation
- WOW Topkapı Palace Hotel as a representation / a simulacrum.

Each representation of Topkapı Palace paves the way for the 'Topkapı Palace Myth' because all the arguments about the idea of Topkapı Palace, the copies of that supposed idea and the simulacrum created by the Topkapı Palace Hotel form that myth. One may say that the image of Topkapı Palace is a product of its own representations.

The aim of this study is neither to criticize the kitschy state of Topkapı Palace Hotel nor to idealize it; on the contrary, the aim is to undermine these arguments by analyzing all the representations, including the hotel, in the light of the argument that there's no ideal/original Topkapı Palace as a proper model, thus the notion of a bad copy is philosophically invalid.

## 1.2. Methodology and the Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is based on literature survey and the critical interpretation of secondary sources. Following the *Introduction*, there are three main chapters which form the main body of the thesis. The *Conclusion* summarizes the thesis and poses pertinent questions evoked by this study.

The second chapter, *Representation*, forms the theoretical basis of the following chapters where the problem of representation and the original/copy problem are addressed. Then *Simulations and Simulacra* are explained as specific modes of representation in order to clarify the reason for choosing the Topkapı Palace Hotel as the focus of the thesis. The following section is a study on how representations are used in the consumerist culture creating a link to the analysis of WOW Topkapı Palace Hotel.

In the third chapter, *Representation(s) of Topkapı Palace*, the chronology and basis of the Topkapı Palace is explained as an imperial palace model. The following sections focus on different historical representations of Topkapı Palace paving the way to the viewpoint of WOW Topkapı Palace Hotel as a copy. How a myth of Topkapı Palace is created by those representations is explored in this chapter.

The fourth chapter, *WOW Topkapı Palace Hotel*, focuses on the hotel as a copy of the Topkapı Palace and as a simulacrum. The hotel will be evaluated as another representation of Topkapı Palace in the consumerist ideology.

The *Conclusion* summarizes the thesis and opens up questions and avenues for the problem of representation in the architectural realm.

## **2. REPRESENTATION**

Most of the meaning systems are based on identification of 'reality' and inevitably require representations. Identification and representation seems that they are inseparable issues. In fact, representation is a key concept that provides access to what is called 'reality'. For example, positive sciences try to contain and explain what is 'real' but often admit that it is impossible to cover all aspects of 'reality'. Fields like religion and philosophy also try to explain the problem of 'reality'. It seems like the more one tries to identify and reach 'reality' the more it turns out to be indefinable and unreachable.

Historically the problem of 'reality' has been closely tied to the problematic opposition between notions of original and copy. This has been addressed both as a philosophical problem and a social/cultural one with strong implications for the field of architecture. The following sections address the complicated relationship between these discourses.

### **2.1. The Problem of Representation**

Philosophy always considers the perception of 'reality' as a problem. Many philosophers through history, argued about the nature of 'reality' and our means of access to it. The Ancient Greek philosopher Plato (B.C. 427-347) created a theory of perception of 'reality' for the very first time. In his famous book, *The Republic*, he



metaphorically presented the earth as a cave and the people living on earth as dwellers of that cave. According to Plato's metaphor of the cave, the cave-dwellers look to the wrong direction and see merely the shadows of 'reality' cast on the wall in front of them by the glowing light and thus have no alternative but to accept these shadows as 'real'. According to that theory, the glowing light represents the 'real Forms' and the shadows on the cave walls are the appearance of that 'reality'. For Plato, these Forms are called Ideas and those "Ideas were not merely contents of our minds" (*The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, 386). He thought that those Ideas were somewhat transcendental and belonged to a world of Ideas and the appearances of 'reality' could only be the content of our minds.

"Picture men dwelling in a sort of subterranean cavern with a long entrance open to the light on its entire width. Conceive them as having their legs and necks fettered [chained] from childhood; so that they remain in the same spot, able to look forward only, and prevented by the fetters [chains] from turning their heads. Picture further the light from a fire burning higher up and at a distance behind them, and between the fire and the prisoners and above them a road along which a low wall has been built, as the exhibitors of puppet shows have partitions before the men themselves, above which they show the puppets. [...] See also, then, men carrying past the wall implements of all kinds that rise above the wall, and human images and shapes of animals as well, wrought in stone and wood and every material" (Plato, 747: *Republic*, Book VII).

By this metaphor, Plato views the object as the representation of an ideal form. That means there should be an ideal/original form of the object and what one perceives is its representation in the mind as a copy. Plato calls the world of appearances as the 'sensuous world' because the appearance of 'reality' is a matter of perception.

"Whereas the transcendent world was ontologically real, the sensuous world lacked the originality and was dependent upon the transcendent for its reality. The reality of the sensuous objects was directly proportionate to being faithful copies of the transcendent objects" (Sharma, 44). In that case Plato separates the transcendent world and the sensuous world. He creates binary oppositions between the 'real' as

Forms/Ideas and its mere copies as appearances; original and copy; absolute and temporary and so on. “According to Plato the concepts or forms exist over and above the particular things which exhibit them and since the particular things are replicas or copies of the concept or form, the concept is ultimately real while the particular thing has only temporary existence and reality” (Sharma, 46). In this scenario, one can only address the moral existence of a copy that is based on a model. It copies the ‘Idea’.

As a summary, according to Plato, ‘ideas’ have no materiality because they are transcendental. They are absolute entities and they do not change even if perception changes. Similar objects forming a class are based on a common idea. For example, although every human being is a different and an independent entity the idea of human exists beyond those differences. Ideas are perfect entities and distinct from copies:

- ‘Ideas’ are substances
- ‘Ideas’ are general and universal
- ‘Idea’ is not a material object
- A class has a single ‘Idea’
- Ideas are indestructible
- ‘Ideas’ are non-sensuous (Sharma, 48-49).

So far as the representation of reality is concerned, Plato sees two types of copies: bad and good copies of ‘reality’. Thus the mimetic reproduction of ‘reality’ of the mind has two forms according to Plato:

- a) Good copies are products of faithful reproduction
- b) Bad copies pretend to simulate 'reality' faithfully but deceive the eye with a simulacrum (a phantasm)

This division means that, the more the copy is reproduced faithfully the more it resembles the original/ideal Form. That makes a good copy for Plato. On the other hand, if this is not a faithful reproduction and if it is a fantastic representation, that makes the copy a bad one in all cases. The important point here is the only ones who may have access to that faithful representation are the philosophers. The ones who are not philosophers can only have belief in but no access to that knowledge. "According to Plato, knowledge is tied to forms: someone who denies the existence of forms, or incapable of apprehending them, can have no knowledge" (Janaway, 108-109). But this division doesn't answer the main problem of representation of 'reality' because according to Plato, there is an ideal form that exists beyond our minds' eye. If the knowledge of the 'real' is transcendental, how is one capable of differentiating the 'fantastic' from the 'real', the good copy from the bad copy? As Christopher Janaway explains:

X and Y are related as likeness and original when X resembles Y, but is not as real a thing as Y. Shadows and reflections are contrasted with the solid things of which they are merely likenesses; yet these things relate to the higher realm of Forms just as their own likenesses relate to them. Forms, in particular the Form of the Good, are the only elements of reality which cannot be viewed as a likeness of something else. This is another way of marking them out as 'most real' and as the proper objects of knowledge (110).

Although Plato states that the perception of reality is misleading and changeable (limitations of our minds) it is obvious that there is a contradiction in his theory of ideas/Forms and it needs to be underlined. According to *The Oxford Companion to*

*Philosophy* three major philosophical problems about Plato's 'ideas/Forms' are as follows:

- Ideas exist apart from our experience.
- Ideas are mental entities which have nothing in common with physical objects.
- If we are directly aware only of our own ideas, it becomes problematic how we know that anything exist other than these ideas (389).

All these issues point to the impossibility of perceiving the reality beyond the content of our minds. "All forms of idealism have in common the view that there is no access to reality apart from what the mind provides us with, and further that the mind can provide and reveal to us only its own contents" (*The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, 387). In that case it does not seem possible to accept the existence of ideal Forms and put a distinction between a transcendental world and a sensuous world. "The absolute distinction between the world of thought and the world of things is purely based upon abstraction as the form and the matter go together. Thus the modern man cannot accept the idealism of Plato" (Sharma, 166). Once one abandons the opposition of the world of transcendental ideas and its copies, it is impossible to claim that there exist good or bad copies of ideal forms. Hence one should consider a representational world rather than a transcendental world.

The Platonic conception of the world permeates much of our culturally constructed symbolic systems. We use signs to represent objects. Objects, words, and images can be signs. Sign means "anything that represents an object to someone who understands it or responds to it" (Angeles, 256). For example, to name an object is a representation. So, signs are tools in meaning systems at a denotative level.

Moreover, signs are culturally constructed vehicles of representing 'reality'. As Terry

Eagleton explains:

Each sign was to be seen as being made up of a 'signifier' (a sound-image, or its graphic equivalent), and a 'signified' (the concept or meaning). The three black marks *c - a - t* is a signifier which evoke the signified 'cat' in English mind. The relation between signifier and signified is an arbitrary one: there is no inherent reason why these three marks should mean 'cat', other than cultural and historical convention...Each sign in the system has meaning only by virtue of its difference from the others. 'Cat' has meaning not 'in itself', but because it is not 'cap' or 'cad' or 'bat' (84).

What is suggested here by 'signified' is not the object but the idea of that object. 'C -

a - t' refers to the idea of a cat rather than a specific one. This example shows that

essence is not separable from presence, thus meaning is not something

transcendental but cultural. In some cases signs/objects may work as symbols.

Mark Gottdiener calls objects that are signifiers of certain concepts, cultural

meanings, or ideologies as 'sign vehicles', because according to him they can not

be considered as only 'signs'. He continues that "every signifier, every meaningful

object, however, in addition, 'connotes' another meaning that exists at the

'connotative' level – that is, it 'connotes' some association defined by social context

and social process beyond its denotative sign function" (9). The object falls into the

symbolic realm rather than just being a sign. Signs/objects begin to act as symbols.

A symbol is "a sign by which one knows or infers a thing; or a word, a mark, a

gesture which is used to represent something else like a meaning, a quality, an

abstraction, an idea or an object" (Angeles, 285). Symbolism is a tool for giving

meaning to the environment and identifying and differentiating objects and concepts

in a cultural context. It is a socially constructed system of representation of 'reality'.

Both signs and symbols are culturally constructed entities but symbols work at the

connotative level. Symbols form codes in communities as social meaning vehicles.

As Mark Gottdiener explains:

Societies with a polysemic culture accomplish the task of communication by adhering to particular symbolic 'codes' that may also be called 'ideologies'. Codes or ideologies are belief systems that organize meanings and interpretations into a single, unified sense" (10).

We can obtain these symbolic representations from the cave paintings of early humans to Ancient Greek cities and even, up to date, today's modern cities. Painted animals and nature figures on the walls of the caves were symbols of feared nature or nature gods. Ancient Greek cities were symbols of mythological gods and goddesses. Symbolism was mostly based on religious motives and codes until the end of the middle ages. After the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, with the advent of modernization, the representation of objects and environmental phenomena abandoned religious symbolism. The church lost its importance which had given the symbolic meaning of pre-modern cities. Capitalist cities were based on industry rather than religion. The social ills of capitalist cities caused the emergence of a different symbolic treatment than the previous church-oriented meaning system. Cities began to be built as a celebration of industrialization and as symbols of mechanical reproduction. (Gottdiener, 15-28). All those examples indicate the power of symbolism as an ideological tool and show that, through history, humanity is in search of a unified sense of 'reality' i.e. a transcendental realm. Most of the meaning systems were affected/formed by Platonic idealism. Consequently, referential systems are based on that Idea/copy binary.

So, symbolism is a kind of meaning production; it is a kind of theming. But this is a complicated production. When a symbol is created, it may connote a range of

meanings. In the complex structure of modern environments such meanings can multiply. For example, a modern/progressive design of a residential area may be a symbol of functionalism on one hand and at the same time it may be a symbol of alienation and fragmented/distanced urban life on the other. As Christian Norberg-Schulz explicates:

Our 'orientation' to the environment is therefore often deficient. Through upbringing and education we try to improve this state of affairs by furnishing the individual with typical attitudes to the relevant objects. But these attitudes do not mediate reality 'as it is'. They are to a high degree socially conditioned and change with time and place (20).

One can no longer talk about a fixed and direct relationship between the signifier and the signified. "Meaning is neither a private experience nor a divinely ordained occurrence: it is the product of certain shared systems of signification" (Eagleton, 93). Hence one cannot claim that meaning systems address an absolute 'reality' or an ideal Form because ideologies lead societies to believe in that kind of a unified sense.

Meaning systems require 'images' as well as 'words' because our perception is mainly based on visibility. Like Plato, "many philosophers...had assumed that images are things whose nature or existence is obvious to all human beings and that can most simply be described as 'copies' or 'pictures' of the external world" (*The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 134). Images are symbolic elements for giving meaning to the objects like language. Professor of logic Henry Habberley Price has stated that "both words and images are used as symbols. They symbolize in quite different ways, and neither sort of symbolization is reducible to or dependent on the other. Images symbolize by resemblance" (qtd. in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 134). So the 'image' of an object, i.e. its representation, may become independent

from it. The same 'image' may acquire different meanings in different cultures. Terry Eagleton explains that,

It is difficult to know what a sign 'originally' means, what its 'original' context was: we simply encounter it in many different situations, and although it must maintain a certain consistency across those situations in order to be an identifiable sign at all, because its context is always different it is never 'absolutely' the same, never quite identical with itself (129).

So, in the modern world there are no fixed meanings represented by images and other signs like religious symbolism once attempted. Those images are not produced as copies of an ideal Form anymore. They are in the field of symbolism that can be possessed by consumerist ideologies. Now, one can talk about the destiny of these meaningless images mingling around waiting to be objectified because "when a mental image is being used it is the object that is of interest to us, not the image itself" (*The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 135). So, if there is no ideal Form and no absolute representation, any image may parade as 'reality' and mask the absence of a profound 'reality'.

## **2.2. Simulations and Simulacra**

In order to be a simulation there has to be a former system preceding the latter. As a form of representation, simulation is a doubling act. Like Plato's original/copy argument, the model/simulation binary becomes problematic too. For example, images are signs but when they gain a connotative meaning they become symbols. Thus, images are used for their symbolic potential. They are visual meaning vehicles in terms of representing 'reality'. This image-using process can be stated as a simulation. The idealist notion of simulation is based on the original/copy binary, meaning that the former comes first and the latter comes after. Simulation however



is not a faithful representation of an idea like any other idealist representation. When a simulation is considered, there is no need for a former model. Jean Baudrillard states that idealist “representation tries to absorb by interpreting it as false representation, simulation envelops the whole edifice of representation as itself a simulacrum (*Simulations*, 11). Considering the argument that there’s no ideal ‘reality’ to precede its representation, the question now becomes which precedes the other; the image or the object?

There can be various ways of defining an image. Jean Baudrillard explains the image-using process by naming four historical phases of understanding the image:

- It is the reflection of a profound reality;
- It masks and denatures a profound reality;
- It masks the absence of a profound reality;
- It has no relation to any reality whatsoever: it is its own pure simulacrum (6).

This list shows the phases of representation of reality starting from the conviction in producing the exact model of reality to the production of distorted representation of reality or hyperreality. At the end of the list, it is indicated that, a simulacrum (i.e. a phantasm) is a kind of representation without a former model or referential reality. Baudrillard gives an example of Iconoclasts who are afraid of the visible machinery of icons being substituted for the Idea of God. They try to maintain a moral existence of images. According to Iconoclasts, “one can live with the idea of distorted truth. But their metaphysical despair came from the idea that the image didn’t conceal anything at all, and that these images were in essence not images, such as an original model would have made them, but perfect simulacra, forever radiant with

their own fascination” (5). According to the idealists, simulations are based on the idea of an original model but in fact simulacra stand on their own and don't resemble to any former Idea. “The copy is an image endowed with resemblance; the simulacrum is an image without resemblance” (Deleuze, 257). Simulacrum maintains the ‘image’ but not the ‘essence’ and it is an aesthetic existence rather than a moral existence.

The era of simulacra and of simulation, in which there is no longer a God to recognize his own, no longer a Last Judgment to separate the false from the true, the real from its artificial resurrection, as everything is already dead and resurrected in advance (Baudrillard, 6).

Myths are created in order to rationalize the model/copy theory and in search of a unified sense of ‘reality’. “Myth, with its always circular structure, is indeed the story of a foundation. It permits the construction of a model according to which the different pretenders can be judged” (Deleuze, 255). According to this argument, with the myth, it is much easier to detect the possible pretenders of an original model. The latter is nothing but to rationalize Platonism. Whenever there is a story of a root or a foundation, there are faithful representations as good copies and fantastic representations (simulations) as bad copies. Myths are ideological statements. But in the era of simulacra and simulations there's no distinction between the ‘real’ and its representation. According to Peter Eisenman, “the simulation of reality challenges the essence of presence” (50). For example, in the movie *The Matrix*, simulation covers the ‘reality’ and creates a ‘hyper reality’. Neo, who is about to be explained what the Matrix is, asks to Morpheus: “Is this not real?” While they are in a simulated environment (plugged in a computer program), Morpheus answers Neo: “What is ‘real’? How do you define ‘real’? If you are talking about what you can feel, what you can smell, taste and see; then ‘real’ is simply electrical signals interpreted by your brain [...] You’ve been living in a dream world, Neo” (*The Matrix*). This conversation

shows the potential of a simulation without an actual foundation. Simulation threatens presence.

Simulations are based on semblances. Modern cultures are promoted to experience simulations. In order to make people believe in / rely on simulations, ideologies use those semblances between a presupposed 'reality' and its faithful representations. "Jean Baudrillard posits a culture of hyperreality dominated by simulations, objects and discourses lacking a fixed referent or ground. Simulation is characterized by the precedence of models, an anticipation of reality by media effects he refers to as the precession of simulacra" (*Encyclopedia of Postmodernism*, 369-370). Now it is accepted that simulation is not a representation of a profound 'reality' so the necessity of the precedence of a model may be misleading. Baudrillard states that, "simulation is no longer that of a territory, a referential being, or a substance. It is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal" (1). He states that the difference between the 'real' and the 'imaginary', 'true' and 'false' is threatened by simulation (3). Because simulation destroys those binary oppositions.

As it is mentioned above, like all other representations of the 'real', simulation is a doubling act. Simulation both forms an objective 'reality' and changes it as a subjective representation in its Platonic version. It is a misleading representation of reality, a bad copy of a presupposed 'real'. "The copy can be called an imitation and imitation is now only a simulation" (Deleuze, 258). Simulation is claimed as an act of copying and every repetition creates a difference. Every copy, every image changes; transforms the model, although it exalts the original model by copying it. With the collection of those copies and images the Myth of origin is formed. If we consider an idea of an original model, it should be known that ideas are re-edited

and never concluded/completed. It is a never ending, two way process. There should be a 'copy' in order to talk about an 'original' and vice versa. So, there's no ideal model of 'reality'. One can not talk about a fixed 'reality' or a fixed idea of an original model. 'Reality' can not be reached or represented; it can only be substituted by resemblance. The reason of 'representation' is to give meaning to the external world. Norberg-Shultz states that "we can never experience or describe reality 'as it is', and that term is meaningless" (20).

Simulations are just impressions of a 'reality' that never exists at the beginning. According to Baudrillard, the 'real' does not precede the representation, nor does it survive it. He states that it is the representation that precedes the 'reality' which he calls precession of the simulacra and that engenders the 'real'. Baudrillard continues that, it is not the representation; it is the 'real' whose vestiges persist here and there in the deserts that are no longer those of external world, but ours: "The desert of the real itself" (2). This is to claim that 'reality' consist of its own representations. As Baudrillard explains:

The very definition of the real has become: that of which it is possible to give an equivalent reproduction...The real is not only what can be reproduced, but that which is always already reproduced: that is, the hyperreal...which is entirely in simulation (*Simulations*, 146).

There's a similar relation between the 'simulation-model' binary and the 'image-object' binary. Although a simulation is based on the possibilities of the representation of the 'real' and based on the capacities of our perception, a simulation can be generated without an origin as suggested by Baudrillard. So, a simulation creates a blurry effect by which the 'image' covers the 'real'. The 'image' begins to act as if it is 'real'. The image becomes a simulacrum. According to the *Encyclopedia of Postmodernism* "a simulacrum is a willed reproduction of a

'phantasm' that 'simulates' this invisible agitation of the soul" (367). It is to lose references and idealist binaries at once. As Baudrillard states, that kind of representation has no relation to any reality whatsoever: it is its own pure simulacrum (6). Simulacrum is a phantasm. It is the fantasy of accepting that there is an ideal 'reality' and reproduction of it as appearance. "Simulacra is a copy that does not totally function as a copy does, it is said to not have a model" (Erlevent, 8). Simulacrum breaks the original/copy, intelligible/sensible, Idea/image binaries. Simulacrum points to the reversal of Platonism.

"In Baudrillard's theory of simulation, humanity has reached the point in history where the machine of simulation has become full-operational and no longer needs its former model; the real" (Erlevent, 23). Myth is undermined with simulacrum because there is no foundation left. There is only an image standing as a copy without a former original. Simulacrum is only related with other copies. Scott Durham states that "simulacrum is the copy of a copy, which produces an effect of identity without being grounded in an original. This notion of the simulacrum is already found in Plato, who distinguishes between the good copy or icon and the false copy or the simulacrum" (7).

When there is no reference point for judging the bad copies, the hierarchy of representation of 'reality' collapses. "It is not even enough to invoke a model of the other, for no model can resist the vertigo of the simulacrum. There is no longer any privileged point of view except that of the object common to all points of view. There is no possible hierarchy, no second; no third..." (Deleuze, 262). Simulacrum marks the reversal of the binaries of idealism. With simulacrum, there is no pretender to be judged because there is no mythical origin as a reference.

### **2.3. Use of Representations in the Culture of Consumerism**

Human desire, memory, dreams and perception continue to exist, but have all been exteriorized, we are not so sure that our desire is our own or if the experience is our selves because the very codes of such things are presented to us as being transpersonal. They are continuously articulated and invented in mass media and institutional spaces as productive and performative uses of imagination, desire and memory (Erlevent, 46).

Modernity paved a way to the consumption/possession of images and their use in the capitalist system. With the help of advertising and mass media products, consumer desire is stimulated. According to Gottdiener “consumption itself was promoted as a form of amusement” (31) by the capitalist system and images could be used for consuming culture. This phenomenon was intensified by the end of the 1950s which marked the beginning of the age of simulations and themed environments. In the age of simulations, “an image is a re-created and a reproduced appearance. In other words, it is a system that covers a broad range of various appearances that are juxtaposed to function in an anticipated manner” (Altınışik, 36). Consumerist ideology re-creates images and re-narrates their meanings. Capitalism narrates ‘reality’ as a Myth.

Capitalism uses the theory of the impossibility of the ‘real’ and promotes a world of images, representations and simulations. Simulacra became the tools of the capitalist system of consumption. The more copies/images are re-produced, the more they will be recognized. “The image must also be repeated often for maximum effectiveness, especially because the time that we can devote to visual consumption is ever diminishing” (Croset, 203). Those images help to exalt the Myth of ‘reality’.

And that Myth of 'reality' paves the way for more images to be consumed. So, this circular system promotes a desire for reaching a foundation or truth: nostalgia!

Two cultural phenomena, the museum and the theme park, are exemplary in understanding the relation between simulacra and the consumer society/culture.

### **2.3.1. Consumption of History**

In the post-modern<sup>1</sup> era historical images began to be ripped off from their contexts and turned into objects of entertainment for the market. History museums began to compete with theme parks by being transformed into historical theme parks, such as open-air museums or restored/rebuilt historical sites. Sociologist Alejandro Baer states that "we're witnessing the proliferation of new forms shared outside formal historical discourse and traditional institutions of socialization" (491-492). Such institutions began to share the historical discourse with the public by means of creating a collective memory. History became something that belongs to public culture which can easily be consumed.

Hillel Schwarts asks: "is not a museum a knowing collection of illustrious or illustrative originals, stocked by connoisseurs, cleaned by restorers, annotated by historians?" (249). The museum space is a collection of objects and memories. It sets a stage for the representation of history. It is an institution. It is a place, an event, and a hot spot for the public. It is an instrument for articulating knowledge and identity.

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<sup>1</sup> In this thesis, I use the term post-modernism in reference to post-idealism and reversal of Platonism.

The main idea of a museum is to exhibit artifacts and objects for public use. In the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, there was no notion of exhibiting objects publicly. There were only private collections of landowners and royal/noble families. These collections consisted of cabinets and miscellaneous objects in them. Most of them were gathered as war spolia or collections of private traveling. Kevin Walsh describes them as cabinets of curiosities and states that “they were concerned with the naming and ordering of the universe” (18).

After the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with the industrial revolution, a new way of life emerged. The understanding of the ‘past’ transformed from the rural (pre-industrial) context to the urban (industrial) context. The ‘past’ became something to be consumed by the urban dwellers. While places were perceived as ‘time marks’ once, “the sense of the past developed by the new urban mass was one that had to be created, in the same way as their places had to be created” (Walsh, 12). The museum concept institutionalized within this historical framework. With the rise of the urban consuming culture, the exhibitions of objects were relocated from private cabinets to public museums.

Museums were institutionalized by the birth of archeology and history as new disciplines. Once, “scholarly work on museum collections was insignificant, for private access was granted only through the favor of the owner, and there was neither the necessity nor the means of communicating knowledge beyond the privileged few” (Ames, 16). Museums became places for institutionalized knowledge constructed by a curator.

In a museum display, the object itself is without meaning. Its meaning is conferred by the ‘writer’, that is, the curator, the archeologist, the historian, or the visitor who



possesses the 'cultural competence' to recognize the conferred meaning given by the 'expert' (Walsh, 37).

One can talk about the cultural power of the displayed object and the culture objectified through collection and exhibition. Once the object is chosen or collected for exhibition, it turns into a possession. Once it is possessed, it is didactically narrated by an invisible expert. This narration is written on a label or it is perceived by the arrangement of objects, antiquities, and artifacts that are exhibited. Thus, this narration creates a distance between the museum visitor and the object. It delineates the distinction between the self and the 'other'.

According to Walsh, "museums attempt to 'freeze' time, and almost permit the visitor to stand back and consider 'the past before them'. This is the power of the gaze, an ability to observe, name and order, and thus control" (31-32). It is a kind of representation of history as a fixed and un-questionable reality.

It is no surprise that the museums became an ideological tool for the education of masses and the articulation of national identity, showing off cultural/industrial power by placing culture on display. There's a hidden hand, writing the narration, behind the exhibition who is the curator or the historian. Moreover, there is also a more powerful hand behind the curator which may be the government or the owner of the museum or the investor. Although early museums emerged as products of local governmental bodies of modern societies, they were only welcomed as long as they remained in line with the established power structure. The exhibitions were supposed to have a progressive message. As Kevin Walsh explains:

The developing ability to place objects in ordered contexts often implied a unilinear development of progress. Such representations implied a control over the past through an emphasis on the linear, didactic narrative, supported by the use of the

object, which had been appropriated and placed in an artificial context of the curator's choosing. This type of display is closed, and cannot be questioned. The display case is a removed and distanced context, a context that can not be criticized. At the same time it is an artificial context, perhaps even a non-context (31-32).

This purposeful rationalization of time and space also distanced the public from the 'trusted expertise' that revealed the historical context and placed it on display. A feeling of loss of identification with the historical context emerged and that is why the concept of 'heritage' seems to be "a desire to maintain the only thing that nations can still call their own" (Walsh, 52). So, with the idea of 'heritage', history became a part of popular culture. Masses are promoted to identify the past as something that they can call their own and as a consumable thing. The desire for truth is promoted as 'nostalgia'. "The crisis of reality can be seen in the proliferation of this nostalgia for truth" (Eisenman, 54). The barriers between 'HI-story'<sup>2</sup> and popular culture disappeared. Masses began to look at history as 'cultural heritage'. "History is our lost referential" says Baudrillard, "that is to say our myth" (43).

Instead of promoting a world without meaning and creativity, mechanisms of consumption chose to create a simulation of the past, i.e. a past based on images rather than an idealist historical narrative with moral lessons. It seems a more familiar approach than a historical narration done by a distanced historian. The museum concept popularized in the post-modern era. It was based on a reaction to the modernist notion of history by combining public history with private memory. It is like a collage of historical styles/images and 'nostalgia' in order to create a memorable past.

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<sup>2</sup> What is suggested here by "HI-story" is a transcendental history represented as a fixed/ideal entity.

Gable and Handler discuss how history museums tend to transform public history into private memory. They claim that this can only be realized by collapsing the distance between the visitor's touristic or familial experience on the site and the reconstructed past of the museum (238). For them, theme parks compete with museums despite the fact that the latter display 'real' history rather than simulations (242). But this approach seems misleading as the concept of museum is based on a narration of history. So, it is a cultural construct and a simulation of an 'ideal historical reality' which never exists at all. By representing the past, in a way, history idealizes the past. So, it would not be proper to say that the museums represent 'real' history. In fact both the historically themed park and the representation in a museum setting are simulations. What is different is that historically themed parks are simulacra because they simulate the history that the museums claim to have. The theme park is a representation of a representation; it is a simulation without an original. Open air museums like Colonial Williamsburg in the USA or costumed interpretations as 'theatre of history' are again attempts to create a memorable past and are simulations of history (Fig. 2.1).



**Figure 2.1** Rebuilt copy of Governor's Palace at Colonial Williamsburg on the left and a gala event for large gatherings on the right (*The Official Colonial Williamsburg Guide*).

Recently, historically themed environments have been using historical images in order to create a memorable past. Theme parks, restaurants, hotels and many other

themed commercial spaces are being designed according to that approach. An eclectic architecture was born as a celebration of 'nostalgia'. It is an architecture that consists of selected images, forms of historical marks and historical styles. Kevin Walsh claims that "post-modern architecture with its unreferenced quotation of historical styles is in essence a form of historical plagiarism. It is the 'writing' of the built environment from misquoted sources, devoid of any historical order" (84). Post-modern architecture creates simulacra because there architectural images have no profound origin or 'reality'. It is an architecture to be consumed. Beatriz Colomina states that "the way in which architecture is produced, marketed, distributed, and consumed is part of the 'institution of architecture' – that is, of the way in which architecture's role in society perceived and defined in the age of mass (re)production and culture industry" (17). Post-modern architecture is predominantly in the service of the capitalist system.

### **2.3.2. Themed Environments**

A themed environment is basically a simulation because it is designed as a representation of the 'real' based on an original model but it is nothing more than the objectification of an empty image devoid of its original meaning. Theming is granting precedence to an image over reality. The image precedes the architecture. For example, there are famous buildings appreciated as 'great architecture'. But what makes a 'great architecture' great may be the continuous repetition of its own images. Copies of a building exalt the architecture of that building. The copies form a myth of architecture.

Most of our knowledge of great architecture comes from pictures. One could therefore imagine a situation in which embodied architecture – not the everyday buildings that we are used to, but buildings in the 'great works' category – was

hardly more than a rumor of an intervening state. We could, if we wished, treat great buildings that way, since they are anyway so completely surrounded by their own projected images (Evans, 20).

All the reproduced images of post-modern architecture can be placed in the framework of the original/copy argument. The images create a myth of origin. "When the real is no longer what it was, nostalgia assumes its full meaning. There's a plethora of myths of origin and of signs of reality – a plethora of truth, of secondary objectivity, and authenticity" (Baudrillard, 6). Consumerist ideology promotes a desire for truth and foundation. The images mask the absence of a profound reality. In the capitalist system, commercial spaces do not sell goods without doing any extra promotion other than their proper function. The system encourages bombarding the consumers with images, connoted meanings, and themed environments (Gottdiener, 73). In order to sell more goods and make more profit quickly, the capitalist system promotes artificial demands for the masses. Simulations and themed environments play an important role in order to keep this system running, and continue the consumerist ideology. They are based on the acceptance of an 'ideal reality' and the capitalist system pronounces that one can own/experience that 'reality' as a consumer by the help of those simulations. Mass media plays a very important role in reproducing historical and cultural images. The capitalist system uses that strategy in order to sell the products of consumer culture and promote a desire for truth. The masses are lead to believe that there is an original truth/foundation and they may have a chance to experience that by simulations. Masses are in search of an original meaning. This original meaning was supported / formed by countless repeated images, artifacts and other documents.

The capitalist city has become a jungle of images, simulations and symbol-filled environments, which are offered to the hunters/consumers to satisfy their self-

fulfillment. Simulations and theming “reduce the product to its image and the consumer experience to its symbolic content” (Gottdiener, 73). The image precedes the product. With theming, ‘reality’ is turned into an ‘eclectic/nostalgic reality’. As Peter Eisenman explains:

Nostalgia involves, among other things, a desire for truth. In the transition from the authentic authored object to the banal “mass-produced” one there is thought to be a loss of truth...Authenticity traditionally involved an idea of truth, but because authored design has become cosmetic and aestheticizing it has lost the possibility for truth to reside in its facture (53-54).

Capitalism invented themed environments in order to recover the original meaning of Myths. Because theming is a narration and a nostalgic regeneration. Repeated images and themed environments of post-modernism filled the gaps of a mythical ‘origin’. After the 1960s, “new consumer spaces with their new modes of thematic representation organize daily life in an increasing variety of ways. Social activities have moved beyond the symbolic work of designating ethnic, religious, or economic status to an expending repertoire of meaningful motifs” (Gottdiener, 4-5). What is suggested by new consumer spaces are thematic spaces such as restaurants, shopping malls, retail shops, theme and amusement parks/hotels and even residential interiors. As Anthony and Patricia Wylson explain:

The desire to communicate diverse cultures or visual images of other countries, cultures or history, either as a caricature in a theme park or re-created in a live museum, is a justifiable indulgence in historic simulation...From the end of the nineteenth century, concurrent with the establishment of amusement parks and leisure attractions, the technology of experiential presentations, mechanical rides and feature structures were developed with the opportunities provided by the World Expositions (1).

Theming first started with the World Expositions where the aim was the representation and simulation of the idea of progress. After the invention of ‘theming’ at the World Expositions as a model for urban organization, a new concept in family entertainment was created by the Disney Corporation in the USA. Theming went

further with Disneyland which created a self-consciously phantasmagoric world to the public. This concept realized in 1955 when Disneyland, Anaheim, California was opened. According to that concept, the visitors should have the sensation of being in another world (Wylson, 10). This was a world of fantasies and hopes of American idealism. "A plaque in Disneyland's town square reads as follows:

To all who come to this happy place:  
Welcome.

Disneyland is your land. Here age relives fond memories of the past...

And here youth may savor the challenge and promise of the future.

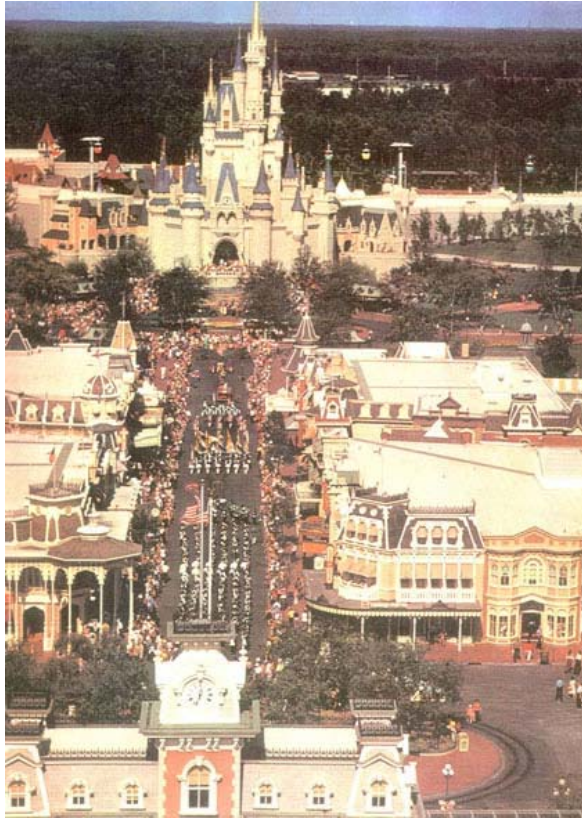
Disneyland is dedicated to the ideals, the dreams, and the hard facts that have  
created America...

With the hope that will be a source of joy and inspiration to the entire world.

July 17, 1955" (Finch, 393).

Disney's cartoons and films are representations of worries and pleasures of real United States of America. On the other hand, the park is designed as a simulation of Disney cartoons and films with its rides and attractions. So, Baudrillard claims that "Disneyland is a perfect model of all the entangled orders of simulacra...What attracts the crowds most is without a doubt the social microcosm, miniaturized pleasure of real USA, of its constraints and joys" (12). In that case a theme park as Disneyland is a simulacrum. It is a narration of the American Myth. It is an objectified phantasm that has never had relation with any 'reality' whatsoever.

Disneyland exists in order to hide that it is the 'real' country, all of 'real' America that is Disneyland. Disneyland is presented as imaginary in order to make us believe that the rest is real, whereas all of Los Angeles and the America that surrounds it are no longer real, but belong to the hyperreal order and to the order of simulation. It is no longer a question of a false representation of reality but of concealing the fact that the real is no longer real, and thus of saving the reality principle (Baudrillard, 12-13).



**Figure 2.2** Walt Disney World and Cinderella's Castle at the back, Orlando, USA (Finch, 1983, p. 397).

After the success of Disneyland as a family attraction center, Walt Disney World in Orlando (Fig. 2.2), and other replicas Euro Disney in Paris and Disneyland Tokyo were opened. More and more people experienced that illusionary experience of 'reality'. That reality principle collapses the similarity between Disneyland and its outside. It is based on aesthetic perspective rather than a moral one. Disneyland is a perfect simulacrum.

But how do the visitors enjoy that kind of simulated environment without a feeling of loss or fear of alienation? The answer is familiarity. Although Disneyland is a simulacrum, similar signs and images are promoted by the media every day. Moreover, Disneyland incorporates urban consumer codes: parading, shopping,



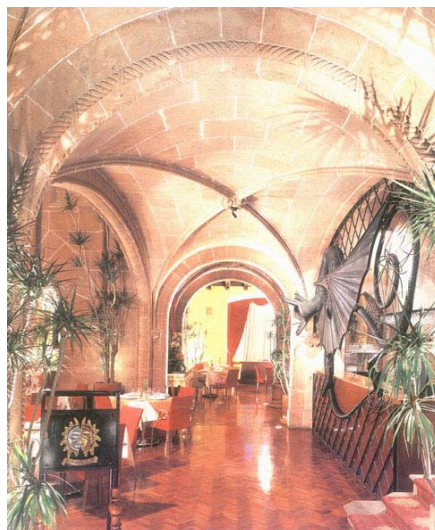
entertaining etc. Other than that, there is no negative effect left. All the negativity is sorted out. According to Michael Sorkin “Disney invokes an urbanism without producing a city. Rather, it produces a kind of aura-stripped hypercity, a city with billions of citizens (all who would consume) but no residents” (231). Disneyland provides a secure, healthy, and comfortable environment. Knowing that it is a sanitized environment makes Disneyland only more enjoyable for the visitor. “When people visit a themed milieu, they draw on the ideology they know best to interpret that space as enjoyable and meaningful” (Gottdiener, 146). Without a feeling of loss or fear of alienation “the park promoted an unproblematic celebration of the American people and their experience” (Watts, 392). Disneyland is an isolated environment promoting a selection of images and symbols.

While Disneyland is an early example of a themed family entertaining environment, Las Vegas is another important focal point of entertaining themed environments full of signs and symbols. Theming became a race for hunting consumers at ‘the Strip,’ which is located in a suburban district of Las Vegas. “The function of the Las Vegas themed environment is straightforward: to seduce the consumer. Las Vegas is a multidimensional experience of seducing pleasures – money, sex, food, gambling, nightlife” (Gottdiener, 107). Those seductive pleasures are promoted by resort hotels/casinos lined up along the Strip. Like Disneyland or Walt Disney World, Las Vegas is again a simulation of Hollywood ideas. Either in Las Vegas or any place in the world, one can obtain many connoted themes one after the other, such as the medieval castle (Fig. 2.3 and 2.4), tropical paradise, pirate island, shrunk and concentrated models of cities such as New York or Paris (Fig 2.5), ancient Greek or Roman motifs (Fig 2.6), Arabian Nights, Egyptian motifs and pyramids (Fig. 2.7 and 2.8), and many other Hollywood fantasies and symbols. (Fig. 2.9) The chosen

themes are mostly fantasies of American idealism and culture. But Las Vegas shows no sign of worry about the representation of the 'real'. What is concerned here is simulacrum instead. Gottdiener states that Las Vegas "as a whole has become a theme park" (114). It is an ocean of simulacra.



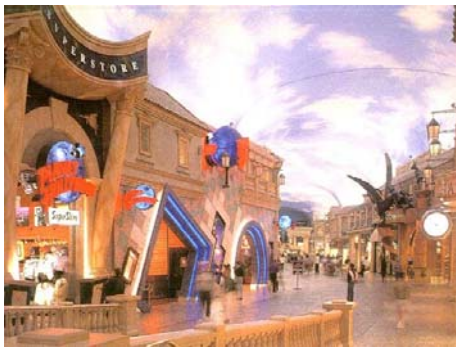
**Figure 2.3** A night view of Excalibur Hotel and Casino, Las Vegas, Nevada, USA (Muto, 1997, p. 50).



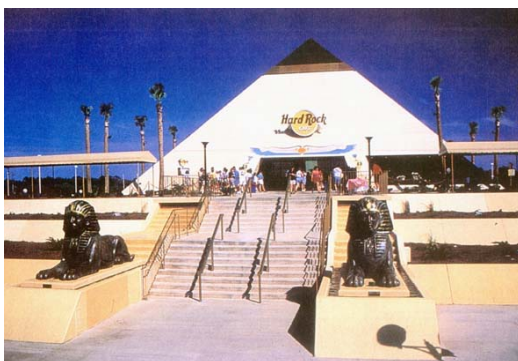
**Figure 2.4** Interior of El Divino Restaurant, Mexico City, Mexico (Kaplan, 1997, p. 152).



**Figure 2.5** A night view of southeast façade of New York New York Hotel and Casino, Las Vegas, Nevada, USA (Muto, 1997, p. 7).



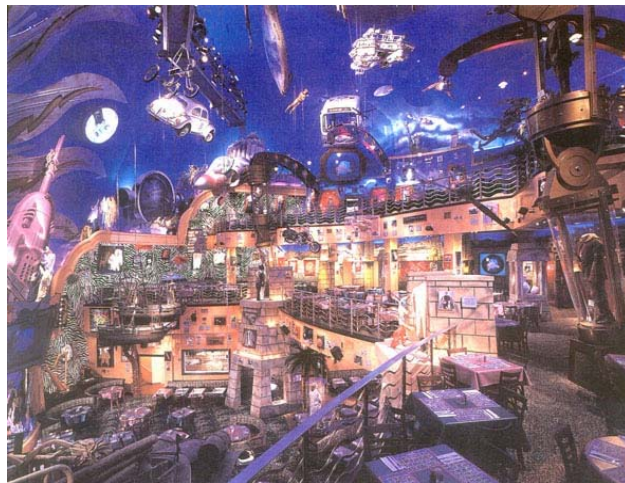
**Figure 2.6** Interior of the shopping promenade on the left and the Fountain of Gods on the right at Caesars Palace Hotel and Casino (Muto, 1997, p. 59).



**Figure 2.7** Pyramid formed Hard Rock Café on the left and its Egyptian themed interior on the right, Myrtle Beach, SC, USA (Pegler, 1997, p. 110-111).



**Figure 2.8** Pyramid formed Luxor Hotel and Casino with Egyptian motifs, Las Vegas, Nevada, USA (Muto, 1997, p.150, pl.1).



**Figure 2.9** Interior of Planet Hollywood full of Hollywood images, Orlando, USA (Kaplan, 1997, 159).

Robert Venturi examined Las Vegas with his associates and stated “the properties of fun & amusement center architecture as follows:

- Emphasis on the image
- An oasis quality in a hostile environment

- Exaggerated symbolism
- Ability to attract a guest/visitor to play a new role” (Venturi, Brown, and Izenour, 55).

The image is more important than other spatial aspects in simulated architecture. It provides security, luxury, comfort, and enjoyment at the same time, and has an oasis quality. Such architecture needs exaggerated symbolism in order to create an attractive simulacrum. Moreover, that attraction needs to be powerful enough to promote a visitor to play his/her new role in that simulacra. With its repeated images, re-creations, scaled copies, simulated attractions and cliché architectural styles, such exaggerated architecture like Disneyland and Las Vegas and many other themed environments are often classified as kitsch displaying bad and cheap taste.

Once kitsch is technically possible and economically profitable, proliferation of cheap or not-so-cheap imitations of everything is limited only by the market. Value is measured directly by the demand for spurious replicas or reproductions of objects whose original aesthetic meaning consisted, or should have consisted, in being unique and therefore inimitable (Calinescu, 226).

Although themed environments claim to provide an authentic experience, they just hide an aim behind the theming mask: profit making. “Any themed, commercial environment is always at the intersection of enjoyable or desirable personal experience and the corporate activity of moneymaking” (Gottdiener, 146). This is a true statement but only for a critical, elitist perspective and it doesn’t address the whole problem of simulacra. According to Eisenman “an authentic environment cannot be recreated; instead, recreations of the commonplace are kitsch...This is because design has been reduced to the aestheticization and cosmeticization of the banal. The traditionally authored object becomes an aestheticized simulation, an atopolis of time and place” (54). This statement addresses simulation from an

ideological perspective as a problem of professional ethics but not from a philosophical viewpoint. Eisenman explains 'authenticity' as "inherent in a correct or truthful artifact, that is, one that was truthful to a norm, a type, a category or a process" (54).

When authenticity is seen as an ideal, authorized truth, then all the unauthorized copies/replicas/simulations seem cheap and a product of bad taste: kitsch. "The whole concept of kitsch clearly centers around such questions as imitation, forgery, counterfeit, and what we may call the aesthetics of deception and self-deception" (Calinescu, 229). But to claim simulacrum as kitsch seems insufficient. Because the aim of simulacra is not to reproduce an authorized 'reality'. On the contrary, simulacra reproduce simulations that have no relation with any truth or profound 'reality'. Kitsch is only meaningful when there's a reference point; but a simulacrum destroys the notion of reference. The former is nothing more than returning to Platonism: good copies and bad copies of a basic 'reality'. Simulacrum is beyond that classical argument. It breaks the binary oppositions and referential yardsticks. If there is no model to form the copy, how does the copy exalt the model? Although simulacra have no relation to any 'reality', they pretentiously exalt the idea of a model. Themed environments are the products of the culture of simulation. The copy forms the model in a potentially creative way. If 'reality' is not accessible other than by its own representations, themed environments are representations of 'reality' in an aesthetic sense. Deleuze states that "the simulacrum is not a degraded copy. It harbors a positive power which denies the original and the copy, the model and the reproduction" (262).

### **3. REPRESENTATION(S) OF TOPKAPI PALACE**

Historically, the problem of representation of Topkapı Palace can not be separated from the general problem of 'reality' and it has been closely tied to the problematic opposition between notions of original and copy as it is explained in the previous chapters. This has been addressed both as a philosophical problem and a cultural/ideological one with strong implications for the field of representation of architecture. The following sections address the complicated relationship between these discourses.

#### **3.1. Topkapı as an Imperial Palace**

In 1453, Sultan Mehmet II conquered the capital city of Byzantium Empire, Constantinople. After that, he declared the Constantinople (which will be called as Istanbul later) as the new capital<sup>3</sup> of Ottoman Empire. This was a breaking point in history that announced the beginning of a new era and the breaking point for a new dynasty which ruled on the lands of three continents which are Asia, Europe and Africa until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

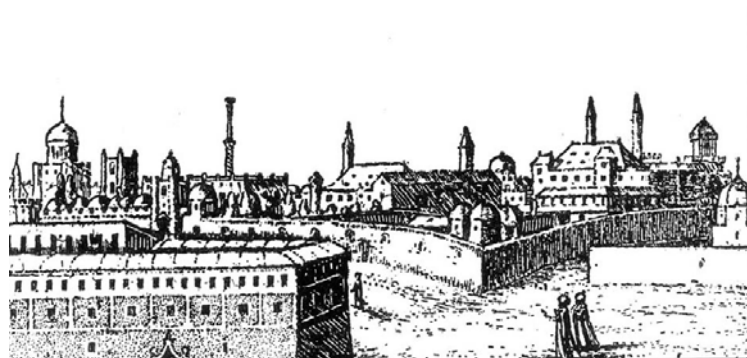
Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror wanted to build a palace in his new capital which would have been a symbol of the expanding empire. He wanted his architects to create an architecture that will be called as Ottoman. He had a palace built "in 1455

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<sup>3</sup> Previous capital city was Edirne.

where a monastery had stood on the site of the fourth-century emperor Theodosius I's Forum Tauri" (Necipoğlu, 3). After the declaration of Constantinople as the new capital of the Ottoman Empire the court of Edirne palace moved to that newly built palace. But soon after building that palace in İstanbul, Sultan Mehmet II wanted to build another new palace. Probably he had a vision of an 'ideal palace' in his mind and he might not be satisfied with the previous one. There are debates between the historians about the reason for this attempt but the fact that it was built on a strategic location to control and dominate the Bosphorus and The Golden Horn in İstanbul (see Appendix A). "The site chosen for this new project was the ancient acropolis of Byzantium where was partially a residential area by that time" (Necipoğlu, 4). The palace was built behind the tall Byzantium city walls and within the newly built palace walls (Sur-u Sultani) as an addition to the existing city walls. The main core of the palace was finished in 1478.

The palace built in Sarayburnu was called 'New Imperial Palace' (Saray-ı Cedid-i Amire) until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which is known as Topkapı Palace today. The other palace in Beyazıt Square was called "Old Palace" (Saray-ı Atik) (Fig. 3.1) and became a house for the previous sultans' mothers and the household of the previous harem. Later the Old Palace was totally demolished.



**Figure 3.1** The Old Palace. *Orientalisches Archiv*. Leipzig: 1911-1912, v.2 p.52 (*Gravürlerle Türkiye*, 1996).



Both the Topkapı Palace and the ones built in the previous capital cities of Ottomans “have features in common, the most important being the free association of clusters of buildings, divided by courtyards” (Sözen 22). Unlike the European examples, the palace is not centered around one main monumental building, although there is a cluster of buildings as a central unit which can be called as a core. This section was built at the late 15<sup>th</sup> century by Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror and it was not changed very much until the end of the dynasty. The other sections were added and linked to it by corridors, passages, gates or courtyards without touching the original core (see Appendix A).

The original 15<sup>th</sup> century spatial layout, built during the reign of Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror, could not be altered. It was this requirement that led to the formation of self-contained and autonomous structures that evolved around smaller courtyards. Furthermore, the individual structures were built in accordance to the dictates and needs of the various social and functional groups, corps, and classes for which they were created” (Sözen, 27-28).

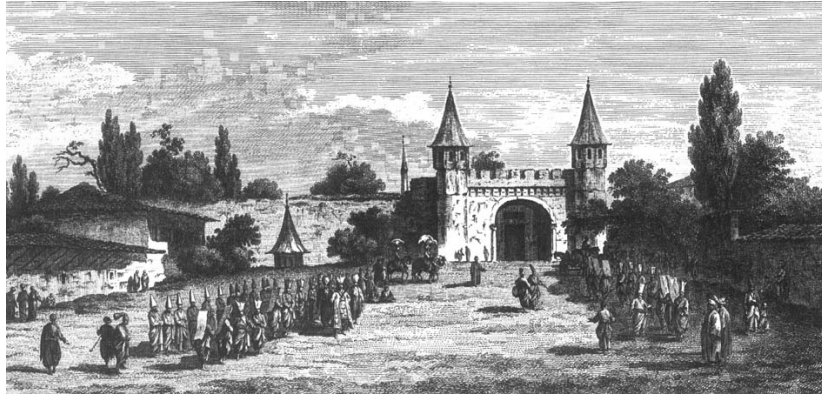
Each building in the palace was connected to the others by pathways and courtyards except a few sections. They were connected together with pathways and courtyards. In oriental cultures, it is possible to see similar examples of palaces evolving around courtyards like Topkapı Palace, such as those in China which already existed before the Ottomans. Sözen claims that the interesting point is unlike the European use of the courtyards as an integrating spatial tool, the courtyards in oriental cultures served as spaces implemented as a segregating special constraint (28). Courtyards are the main and most significant architectural elements in Topkapı Palace.

The use of clear, strong walls and courtyards as signifiers of the transition between and among sections of the palace is one powerful way of expressing domains. The special design of the Topkapı Palace is an expression of the social structure of the Ottomans. By blocking off certain clusters of buildings from others, unwanted interaction between certain palace residents can be controlled. In addition to these architectural barriers, the palace residents were prevented from interacting across hierarchical boundaries (Sözen, 28).

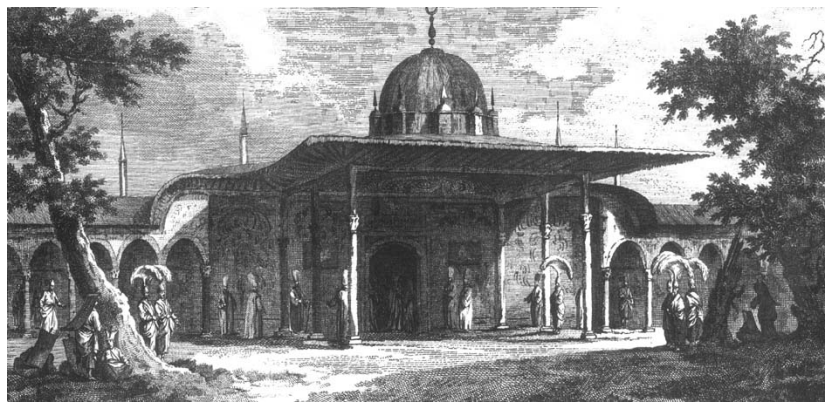
The Topkapı Palace is divided into three main sections. The first one is Birun, the outer section of the palace; the second section is Enderun, the inner palace; and the third part is the Harem. These three sections form a complex system. They are controlled by 3 main gates. The main gate which is the Imperial Gate (Bab-ı Hümayun) opens to the first court of the palace (Fig. 3.2). This section of the palace was open to public. The second gate of the palace, the Gate of Salutation with two towers on each side (Babüsselam), opens to the second court of the palace (Fig. 3.3). This section of the palace was open only to government officials and foreign guests. The last main gate is the Gate of Felicity (Babüssaade), which opens to the inner third court and the fourth court including privy gardens and kiosks (Fig. 3.4). The inner court was only open to the residents who were directly involved in serving the sultan. The Harem section of the palace was the most restricted area in the palace complex. It was only inhabited by the sultan and his family, his pages, and eunuchs serving the harem household.



**Figure 3.2** Topkapı Palace first gate. D'Ohsson, Mouradgea. *Tableau Général de l'Empire Ottoman*. Paris, 1820, v. 3, sc. 2, Pl. 138 (*Gravürlerle Türkiye*, 1996).



**Figure 3.3** Topkapı Palace second gate. Comte de Choiseul – Gouffier. *Voyage Pittoresque de la Grèce*. Paris, 1782-1822, v.2 Pl. 79 (*Gravürlerle Türkiye*, 1996).



**Figure 3.4** Topkapı Palace third gate. Comte de Choiseul – Gouffier. *Voyage Pittoresque de la Grèce*. Paris, 1782-1822, v.2 Pl. 80 (*Gravürlerle Türkiye*, 1996).

There are two opinions concerning the complex and labyrinth like planning of the palace. According to some books on the Topkapı, “the palace was built in a haphazard way with one sultan adding buildings to what had come before” (Meisler, 120). According to this view, the palace evolved and expanded over time. Every sultan added kiosks, baths, rooms and courtyards to the palace in addition to the original 15<sup>th</sup> century buildings. This was a representation of the expanding structure of the empire. For example, Sultan Murat IV ordered to construct the Baghdad Kiosk in 1639, upon conquering the city of Baghdad. Some modern critics claim that the sultans built small buildings for the palace instead of monumental ones, because they were modest people and they spent all their effort to built monumental

mosques instead. According to historian İlber Ortaylı, Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent didn't attempt to abandon the Topkapı Palace and didn't have his court architect Sinan build a bigger palace while he had The Süleymaniye Mosque Complex built (14). Moreover, it is obvious that there is distinction between the Eastern and Western palace traditions in terms of luxury and monumentality.

In Eastern and first in Turkish world, 'palace' is a space as temporary as house. There's no need for centers of sovereignty to have importance as religious buildings. Moreover, their having importance is something unwanted indeed. Hence, according to the observations on Nordic Turks and Ottoman Palaces, most of the small feudal lords of the West lived in much glorious and bigger residents than big sovereigns of the East (Eldem and Akozan, 62).

On the contrary, according to Gülru Necipoğlu of Harvard University, this is a doubtful situation. Necipoğlu says that she remembers the bewilderment of tourists who visit the Topkapı Palace, unable to fathom the compound's architecture: "I once heard someone walk out of the palace gate and say to his friend, 'Where was the palace?'" she recalls (Meisler, 20). The structure of the palace is confusing like a labyrinth. The Topkapı Palace's form may not resemble European examples and even other Islamic palaces. According to Necipoğlu, "what seems to us haphazard and modest is, in actuality, what Ottomans considered to be a symbol of power" (qtd. in Meisler, 120). That modest and haphazard appearance may be misleading. It is true that the sultans gave very much importance to monumental mosques and the scale/luxuriousness of the buildings/interior decorations may seem modest when compared to other palace examples but on the other hand the complex hierarchical form of the Topkapı Palace was a symbol of the expanding empire and the power of the Sultan as well.

Unlike a palace such as Versailles, which exuded power through its monumental size, the Topkapı demonstrated power through the inaccessibility and mystery of the sultan and his court. An outsider would typically move through the first two courts of the palace, transact business in various offices, perhaps catch a glimpse of the sultan in some ceremony, but never enter the inner sanctum. Visitors could measure

their importance by noting how close to the strict ceremonial etiquette of the palace allowed them to the sultan. But the living quarters of the sultan, his harem, his private gardens, his pavilions, were all off-limits to outsiders, no matter how distinguished or mighty (Meisler, 120).

This variegated non-axial organization of buildings was not an unplanned organic development. Meisler claims that “the palace is really a complex encompassing 173 acres of gardens, courtyards and vistas, workshops, kitchens and armories, baths and fountains, offices and halls and residential areas. In its heyday, the Topkapı resembled a small city, inhabited by the Sultan, his royal family and thousands of bureaucrats, soldiers, craftsmen and servants” (116). This small city was seen as the representation of the whole Ottoman Empire and Ottoman culture of ceremonies. This was the reflection/representation of Mehmet II the Conqueror’s universalism influenced by the lives of Alexander the Great, Hannibal, and Caesar (Necipoğlu 244, 249). To be an empire means to rule many other nationalities in several countries under the hegemony of one sovereign. It is obvious to claim that Mehmet the Conqueror, as a successor, may have been influenced by the styles of the previous Byzantine Palaces while building a palace representing the idea of his universalism. “Mehmet II may well have borrowed ideas from the Byzantine Palaces he came across on his conquests, not only in Constantinople, but in such centers as Trebizond and Mistra as well. Like the Topkapı, the Byzantine Palaces were composed of a series of loosely organized courts, monumental gates, porticoes, pavilions, and chapels in various styles, lacking strict axiality” (Necipoğlu, 249). Byzantine Palaces and other palaces composed of courtyards are alike in the sense that they do not necessarily resemble each other but they attempt to resemble an ultimate imperial palace idea.

One can understand that the 'idea of palace' was not a new idea when the Topkapı Palace began to be built. There should have been a model for Topkapı Palace. Mehmet II possibly affected by the legendary palaces described in the Ottoman manuscript *Shahname* or he might have seen some during his campaigns as the copies of that model. Moreover, the previous Ottoman palace in Edirne was the prototype of Topkapı Palace (Sözen, 22). Whatever the reason is, Topkapı Palace seems to be built to suit an 'Ideal Palace Idea' like all the palaces built before the Topkapı Palace. It is a palace that tried to be fit to the vision of Mehmet the Conqueror's universalism. According to Necipoğlu, the Topkapı Palace was "designed as a theatrical stage for the representation of imperial authority. The plan of the palace read like a diagram of absolutist rule, with the Sultan occupying the focal point from which all power radiated, and to which it converged. This was a coercive space, the space of power. Both architecture and ceremonial mutually translated into visual form a hegemonic imperial ideology" (250). Through their art and architecture, Ottomans represented their imperialistic vision. This attempt repeated throughout history of other empires which existed before the Ottomans. For example, Margaret Root points out a similar attempt in ancient Achaemenids. According to her, "lying somewhere between verism and fantasy, the image of the patron and his empire which he presented in his commissioned art must reflect the image of kingship which he himself wished to be surrounded by and to identify with, as well as the image with which he wished to be identified by others" (qtd. in Asena, 79).

Topkapı Palace was built as a representation of an 'ideal palace' of a ruling empire. So, it can be claimed as a representation rather than an original or 'real' palace. What is suggested here by 'real' is an 'ideal palace idea' which never exists and is

not reachable at all. It seems that Topkapı Palace seems no more different than the other previous or later palaces, in terms of the originality problem. What is different here is the representation of that 'transcendental palace idea' in terms of Sultan Mehmet II's universalism. It is the Ottoman version of that image. Whatever that image is, it never changes the fact that it is only a representation/realization of a fantasy of an 'ideal palace'. According to the Ottomans, the Topkapı Palace was built as the faithful copy of an 'Imperial Palace Idea'. As it is mentioned above, probably the reason for Sultan Mehmet II to build another palace beside the previous one, was his dissatisfaction with an unfaithful copy. He wanted Topkapı Palace as a good one, a faithful copy.

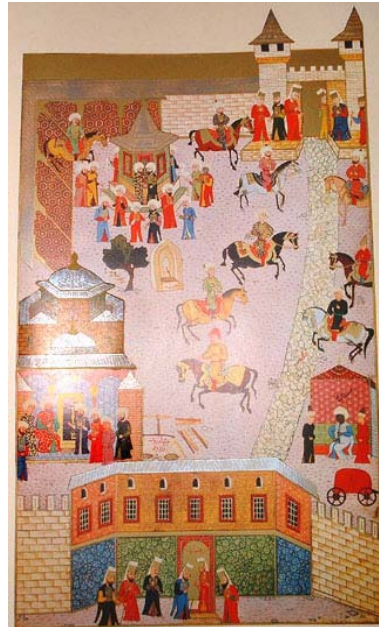
### **3.2. Representations of Topkapı Palace**

When representation is concerned, it is possible to claim that the Ottoman culture was influenced by former symbolic meaning systems. Both the Ottoman representations and the European representations continue the tradition of idealism, although these cultures seem very different from each other. When Mehmet II conquered Istanbul, Ottomans came into close contact with the West, and the influence of the two cultures on each other was inevitable. Both cultures based their systems of representation on model/copy binary oppositions. The only difference was their references.

#### **3.2.1. Ottoman Representations**

Most of the Ottoman representations of the Topkapı Palace fall into two main groups. The first one consists of literary representations describing the codes of the

ceremonial of the palace and the codes of the usage of the buildings in the palace. Gülru Necipoğlu lists the sources of those literary representations as follows: “...fifteenth- and seventeenth-century chronicles...anthologies of poems from the same period...the law codes of Mehmet II and later sultans...and seventeenth-century treatises on the Ottoman court’s organization...” (Introduction, xii). The second group of representations are the visual representations again showing the ceremonial and architecture of the palace. Necipoğlu states that “a large number of miniature paintings in illuminated Ottoman historical manuscripts, particularly those of the *Hünername*, show the buildings of the palace and the ceremonies performed in them, establishing the intimate connection between the two” (introduction, xii) (Figs. 3.5, 3.6, 3.7 and 3.8). But other than *Hünername* there are many other illuminated manuscripts representing the palace life/ceremonies, festivities, deaths, palace household and the architecture: i.e. *Nushat al-akhbar (al-asrar) dar Safar-i Szigetvar* (Fig 3.9), *Shahinshahname* (Fig 3.10), *Süleymanname* (Fig 3.11), *Surname-i Vehbi* (Fig 3.12 and 3.14), *Vaqa-i name-i Ali Pasha* (Fig 3.13).

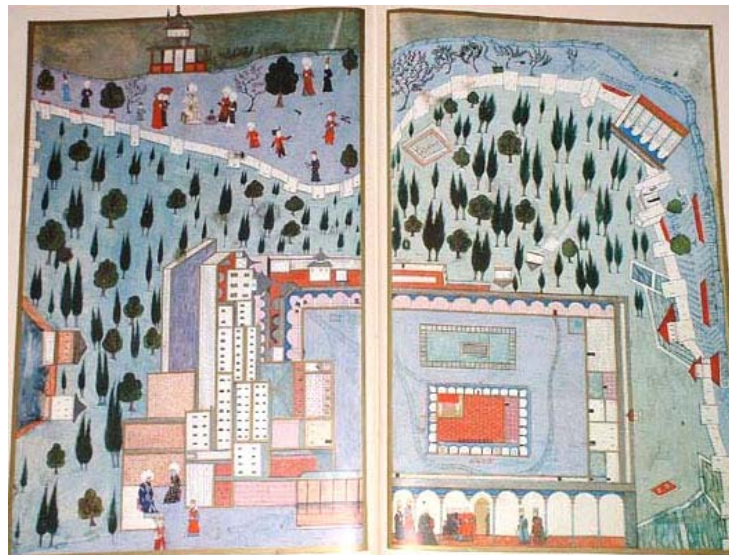


**Figure 3.5** First courtyard of Topkapı Palace by Molla Tiflisî. *Hünername* Vol. I, (Folio 15 b) p. 38





**Figure 3.6** Second courtyard of Topkapı Palace by Molla Tiflisî. *Hünername* Vol. I, (Folios 19a - 18 b) p. 39



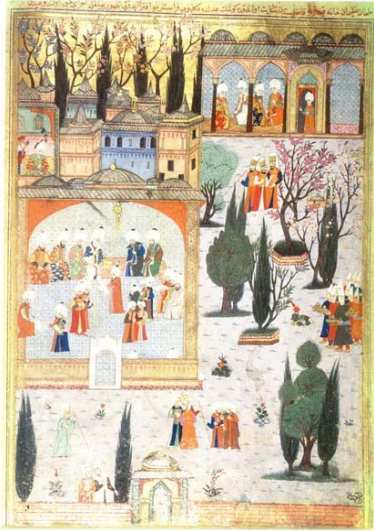
**Figure 3.7** Third courtyard of Topkapı Palace showing the house of petitions, Bâb-ı Âli, Imperial Palace Walls, sea and the kiosks by Molla Tiflisî. *Hünername* Vol. I, (Folio 231 b - 232 a) p. 40

What is more pertinent to this thesis are the miniatures in manuscripts which provide visual representations of the Topkapı Palace. Necipoğlu states that “ceremonial movement articulated and highlighted the imperial architectural iconography of the palace, adding a narrative dimension to its hierarchically ordered spaces, which drew the observer from one clearly marked ceremonial station to another”

(introduction, xvi). So its visual representations do the same: the figures appear in the foreground and the architecture appears as a theatrical background in the miniatures. What is interesting is the way of representing the architectural iconography of the palace. Many resemblances exist between the architecture and the visual representations of Topkapı Palace. Both the architecture and its representations are based on a model. The architecture's model was the ultimate palace idea, and the visual representations emphasized the court circles where the model was the essential idea of the Sultan who was the shadow of God on earth. All of them are claimed to be faithful copies of a transcendental idea.

The Ottoman dynasty was an Islamic one and the Sultan was the symbol and beholder of the Islamic Caliphate. All the visual representations in manuscripts were under the control/gaze of the Sultan. It is obvious to observe the domination of an Islamic worldview in the representations of those illuminated manuscripts. Şevket Mazhar İpşiroğlu states "it is well known that nowhere in the Quran is there to be found any passage in which the image is expressly prohibited. Nevertheless, Islam is not, by its nature, well disposed towards the image...Islam, unlike Christianity, recognizes no cult images" (9). He continues saying that "the imagery of Islamic art is based on forms that are essentially abstract signs and symbols; it employs a symbolic mode of expression very similar to a kind of picture writing. It is based, not on imitation, but on a revelation of the essential idea" (10-11). Although the projected images in Ottoman manuscripts do not resemble Christian iconography, it is obvious that they are done faithfully according to essential ideas in the Ottoman mind. Metin And explains the reason of objection against figural representations in Muslim countries as "a result of Islamic purists collecting *hadis*, or the sayings of Mohammed, which were supposed to support the condemnation of figural

representation” (13). So, as the beholder of the Caliphate, Sultans took manuscript illumination under their protection.



**Figure 3.8** Süleyman the Magnificent listening to a Divan session concerning the Kadı of Kayseri by Loqman. *Hünernâme* Vol. II (folio 237 b) Pl. 26 (Atasoy and Çağman, 1974).



**Figure 3.9** Selim II receiving the representatives of the Austrian Emperor by Ahmad Feridun Pasha. *Nushat al-akhbar (al-asrar) dar Safar-i Szigetvar* (Folio 178 a) Pl. 11 (Atasoy and Çağman, 1974).

The Ottoman miniatures can be seen as abstract, flat and even caricature like iconography, but they signify the imperialistic idea of the Ottomans which was centralized around the Sultan and his hegemonic power. The sultan was seen as ‘shadow of God on earth’ by the Ottomans. So, all the representations were based on that idea. “The sultan is represented neither as a hero nor as an embodiment of superhuman power, but rather as the ruler of an admirably organized state. In these illustrations we are given information on political and historical events, military campaigns, foreign conquests, court ceremonies etc.” (İpşiroğlu, 14). All this information gives the idea of an ‘ideal empire’ which was ruled by the Sultan who is the ‘shadow of God on earth’. If God is the ‘ideal form’ for the Ottomans, the Sultan is his shadow. This means what he represents is a representation of God.



**Figure 3.10** Funeral of the Sultan Mother by Loqman. *Shahinshahnama* Vol. II (Folio 146 a) Pl. 30 (Atasoy and Çağman, 1974).



**Figure 3.11** Accession of Süleyman the Magnificent in the Topkapi Palace by Ârîfî. *Süleymanname* (folio 17 b) Pl. 7 (Atasoy and Çağman, 1974).

İpşiroğlu indicates a resemblance between Plato's cave allegory and the Muslim understanding of the earthly world. "As the divine truth is concealed from mortal eyes, the Muslim regards this transitory earthly world as essentially a world of illusion, and in the portrayal of such a world he can find no real interest...For the orthodox (Sunnite) Muslim what he sees, namely the shadows, is nothing but an illusion. Only the Sufi, who transcends this world and loses his own identity in the light of God, knows that these shadows are reflections of true reality cast by a divine light" (İpşiroğlu, 9-10). Sufi is the equivalent of a philosopher in Muslim Ottoman culture. It is obvious that for both Plato and the orthodox Muslim, there is a distinction between the sensuous world and the transcendental world. If 'real' is the transcendental Idea for Platonism, it is 'God' himself who possesses 'reality' for the Sunnite Muslim. The representations should be produced faithfully in order not to be claimed as sinful attempts and as bad copies in all cases.

For example when making of a bed is concerned, "Plato thinks of the relation between the ordinary bed which we use and the Form of 'what a bed really is' as a

relation between likeness and original. The Form is 'what is', hence the maker of the bed makes 'not what is, but something which is like what is, but is not that'" (Janaway, 111). Making a picture of a bed is again questioning that 'what a bed really looks like'. The more the picture resembles to the ideal Form of a bed, the more it becomes a good copy of the model. From the Muslim perspective, the representation of 'reality' is only accessible with faithful copies of God's vision. "The artist always attempted to grasp through the eyes of a faithful observer whatever he intended to reproduce in his picture" (İpşiroğlu, 113). Miniatures are faithful reproductions/copies. According to Metin And "the artists represent reality more really than a picture based on projective geometry. They do not view nature with an innocent eye but seek to discover an unexpected alternative" (140). The only reference is God or the Sultan as his shadow in Ottoman illustrations. The objects are represented as how God sees the world.

In Orhan Pamuk's novel, the miniature painting of a horse speaks to the readers:

"As you all know there is not any other horse exactly looks like myself. I'm only the picture of a dream of a horse in the illustrator's mind (252, trans. by the author).

Miniature painter (*Nakkaş*) becomes a master when he becomes a perfect copier of the previous masters and their templates. The only model of a horse is the horse in God's eye not in the painter's. So, there's no such specific horse but rather there is only the idea of a horse in a miniature painting.

Great masters know very well that the last specific horse they saw in flesh harm the idea of a perfect horse in their mind, because they have seen enough of horses and pictures of horses all through their lives. The pen/brush of the master *Nakkaş* (miniature painter), who has drawn ten thousands of times the picture of a horse, comes close to the image of a horse that God himself has designed and *Nakkaş* knows this through his soul and his experience (Pamuk, 292, trans. by the author).

Consequently, representations of Topkapı Palace in miniature paintings are based on the 'Idea of Topkapı Palace' rather than representations of what the eye actually

sees. It is a copy of an image that can only be seen by a faithful mind's eye. "While painting the library, at the ending pages of wonderful *Surname*, Levnî decorated the façade with sparkling glazed tiles with passion flower motifs. Although he already knew that the building was covered with smooth colored marbles, he represented this place much colorful in his mind" (İrepoğlu, 207, trans. by the author) (Fig 3.12 and Fig 3.23).

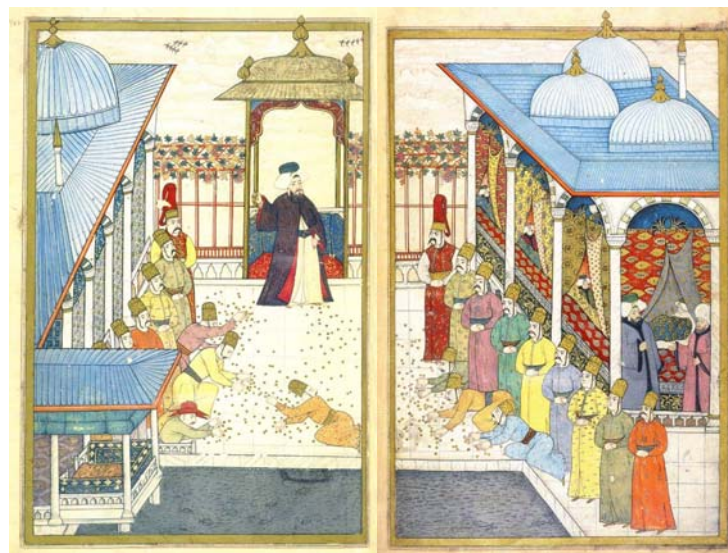


**Figure 3.12** Third courtyard of the palace by Levnî. *Surname-i Vehbi* (folio 173 b) Page 111. (Atıl, 1999).



**Figure 3.13** Ali Pasha departing from the Bab-ı Hümayun of the palace by Halet Efendi. *Vaqâ-i Nâme-i Ali Pasha* (folio 9 b) Pl. 40 (Atasoy and Çağman, 1974).

Miniature paintings' common features are aerial views as if it is the Godly perspective (not a human perspective), abstract, flat, floating and non-proportional templates of figures inherited from the legendary masters of miniature painting. It is possible to examine the miniature paintings and notice that the figures are flat and have no sense of perspective and accordingly claim that Ottoman miniature painters were unaware of such technique. This was partially true at the beginning but when the Ottomans began to interact with the West, European painting techniques affected the Ottoman illustration culture and threatened it. It is possible to obtain examples of miniatures in the 18<sup>th</sup> century that contain traces of both European and Ottoman techniques (Fig 3.14). But generally Ottoman painters resisted that influence. The miniatures are, in a way, projected as abstract representations on purpose. They are not the products of an insufficient technique. "European painters illustrate everything as how one's eyes actually see. They illustrate what they see but we, Ottoman *nakkaşs*, illustrate what we look at" (Pamuk, 197, trans. by the author).



**Figure 3.14** Terrace of Circumcision Pavilion by Levnî. *Surname-i Vehbi* (folio 175 a, 174 b) Pages 108-109 (Atıl, 1999).

### 3.2.2. Orientalist Representations

The first relations between Ottomans and Europeans emerged during the Renaissance. In order to examine Ancient Greek and Rome in Anatolia, those places were visited by western travelers. Just before close diplomatic contacts with the Ottomans, the image about them in the European mind was prejudicial. The reason is the fear and curiosity spread in Europe after the conquest of İstanbul (Constantinople) by the Ottomans (Sözeri, 43-44). After the campaigns of the Ottoman Sultans to Europe, there began the interaction between East and West. Europeans became aware of a new empire in the East. They sent their diplomats and dignitaries to the Topkapı Palace and the observations on the Ottoman lands awakened more curiosity in the West. According to Necipoğlu “the palace of the sultans, which came to represent the otherness of the East, continued to attract the curiosity of European observers during the eighteenth-century craze for *Turqueries*. A stereo-typed representation colored with vivid images of extravagance, decadence, and unbridled sensuality, became an almost obligatory *topos* in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Orientalist travel literature and painting, becoming forever embedded in the Western collective memory” (introduction, xiv). Mozart’s opera ‘*Abduction form the Seraglio*’ is a very good example of the interest of the Europeans in the Ottoman court life and the interaction with the West.





**Figure 3.15** Marching ceremony of the Sultan at Bab-ı Hümayun by Melling (Melling, 1969).

The curiosity of the Europeans increased during the visits to the palace because of the highly restricted codes of the Topkapı Palace and its architecture which stages hierarchy as a theatre. The first courtyard (Fig. 3.16) was open to the public and visitors but the second courtyard (Fig. 3.17) was accessible by only the palace household, government officers, and visitors/diplomats who have special permission to meet the officers. The Enderun part of the palace was a totally restricted section for the outsiders. It was a privilege to be accepted by the sultan or his viziers in the House of Petitions in the Enderun courtyard (Fig. 3.18). Few could see the Harem for example. These people were mostly the European visitors who came to fix the artifacts in the Harem section or diplomats had a chance to see the interior of the Harem by the help of a high-ranked Ottoman official while the Sultan was not in the palace or had a chance to see the inner court while they were giving diplomatic petitions to the Grand Vizier or the Sultan. Topkapı Palace was a “forbidden city” for the Westerners (Arslan, 73). All these people who visited the Topkapı Palace wrote down their experiences in the palace and represented what they have caught as a glimpse of the private lives of the Ottoman rulers. For example, Norman Mosley Penzer indicates that from childhood Western people have heard of the Turkish harem, where hundreds of lovely women are kept locked up for the pleasure of the

Sultan. He claims that most of the Western people still imagine that the Sultan was spending all his time in the harem with an ambiance of heavy perfume, beautiful fountains, and soft music. He was surrounded by a lot of semi-naked women, who were jealous and sex-starved, ready for the pleasure of their single master (13). The reason for the fantasy about harem in the Western mind may be because of the secrecy of the Imperial-harem (Fig. 3.19). There was hardly any reliable, fist-hand information. Another reason may be the representations of the harem in the Western world. They were very thin ill defined representations. As Theophile Gautier explains:

The ones from the north countries, who have read the Arabian fairy tales, maintain sparkling and exaggerated ideas on the grandeur and richness of the East. Even the indifferent ones can't stop imagining of dream buildings, columns made up of valuable stones, their golden capitals, emerald and ruby trees, crystal fountains sprinkling silver water. On the contrary, Arabic style is confused with Turkish style, which are both very different styles from each other. There Alhambra palaces are imagined on the site where the plain kiosks stood still in fact (qtd. in Arslan, 29-30).



**Figure 3.16** First courtyard of Topkapı Palace by Melling (Melling, 1969).

Most of the European representations of the Topkapı Palace are based on two main groups. The first one is the literary representations describing the ceremonial of the

palace and the usage of the buildings in the palace. The second group of representations are the visual ones showing the ceremonies and the architecture. Gülru Necipoğlu lists the sources of those representations as follows: "...endless stream of descriptions, treatises and illustrations by European visitors...European ambassadorial reports in Istanbul...numerous panoramic and bird's-eye views of the palace...These multiple, almost cinematic image sequences show how architecture acted as a stage for an elaborate ceremonial...These foreign sources are complemented by a rich array of Ottoman Turkish, Arabic, and Persian histories, poems written in praise of particular buildings, inscriptions, books of ceremonies, and miniature paintings that provide glimpses of the insider's view of the Topkapı Palace" (introduction, xii).

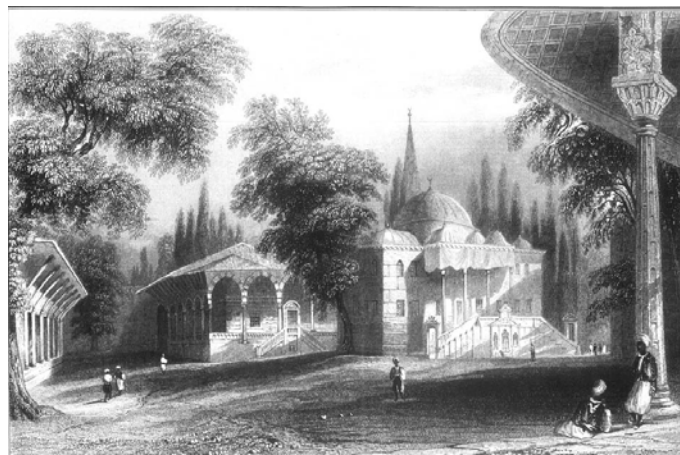


**Figure 3.17** Second courtyard of Topkapı Palace by Melling (*Minyatür ve Gravürlerle Osmanlı İmparatorluğu*, 1998, p. 52-53).

What is common in all those representations is the surprise and the disappointment about the planning of the Topkapı Palace. It was not like the European examples, nor like the previous Eastern palaces. Of course the Europeans had an idea of an 'ideal palace' in their Western minds. They expected more luxurious, more monumental buildings than the European examples. That is why they claimed the

East as the 'Other'. Their reference was the knowledge of the Orient or the 'Idea of the Orient' spread to Europe by Orientalist representations. All the representations of the palace show how it does not fit into the image of the 'ideal Oriental palace' in the Western mind. As Melek Zühre Sözeri explains:

While examining the books of travels and writings, what is indicated that the palace seems unpleasing in appearance in comparison to the greatness of the empire. It is frequently expressed that the palace is plain, it is not being worthy of the Sultan, and what attracts you about the palace is not the architecture but the greatness of the Empire (45, trans. by the author).

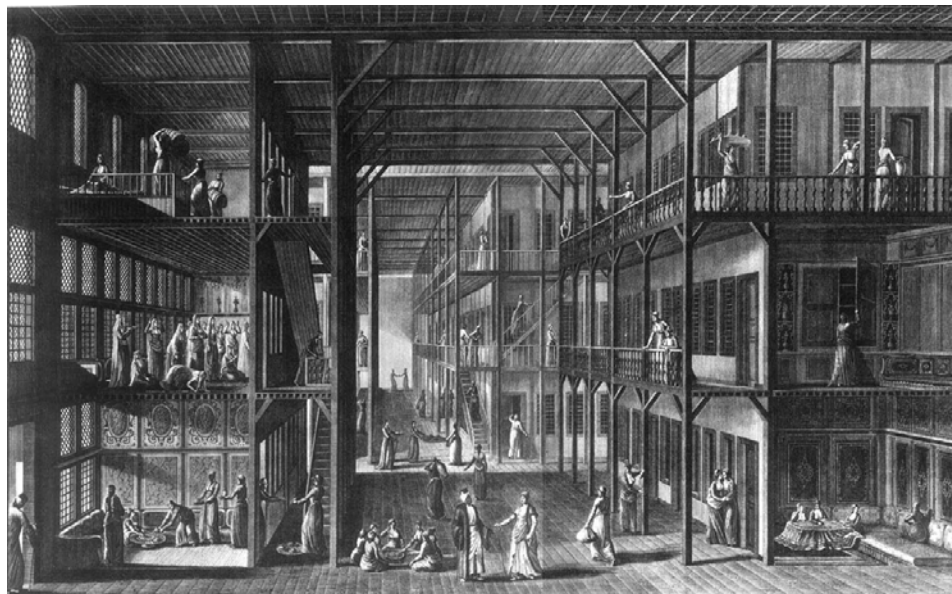


**Figure 3.18** Topkapı Palace Seraglio Point third court. Pardoe, Julia. *The Beauties of the Bosphorus*. London, 1835. Pages 70-71 (*Gravürlerle Türkiye: İstanbul*, 1996).

Edward Said explains the Oriental as a term which designates "Asia or the East, geographically, morally, culturally" (31). He continues explaining the term Western Orientalism as: "knowledge about and knowledge of Orientals, their race, character, culture, history, traditions, society, and possibilities" (38). So, Orientalism is the production of knowledge/Idea of the Orient. It is the objectification of the East by the West. When it is named as 'Orient', the image of the East is possessed by the West. Moreover, the Orient was seen as the opposite of the West. According to Said, there are two themes in Western Orientalism:

- a. Knowledge (objectifying)
- b. Power (when you know it, you can dominate it) (Said, 32)

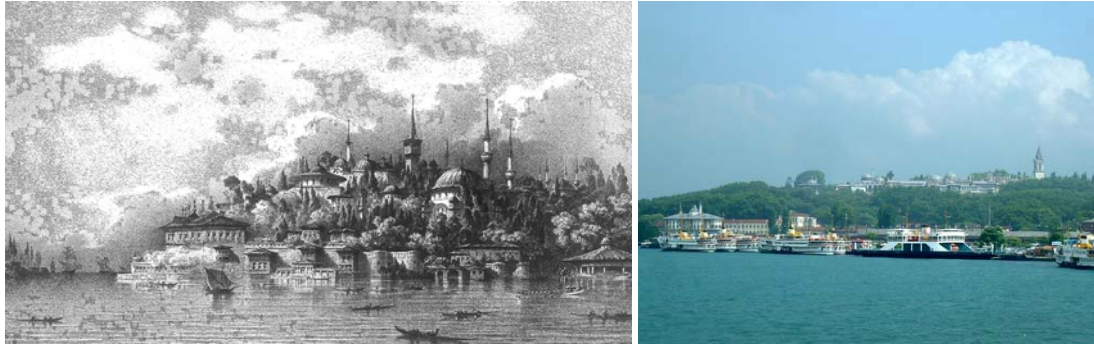
When something is known to us, it is the image of the object which is dominated. According to Bill Ashcroft and Pal Ahluwalia, “‘knowledge’ is always a matter of representation, and representation a process of giving concrete form to ideological concepts, of making certain signifiers stand for signifieds” (70). In Orientalism, the knowledge of the Orient is an ideological/representational creation. Orient is a transcendental idea of the West. “Texts can create not only knowledge but also the very reality they appear to describe” (Said, 94). So, representations of the Orient points to a transcendental idea of Orient as ‘reality’. Whatever is related to that idea of the Orient is claimed as Oriental. “Orientalism was ultimately a political vision of reality whose structure promoted the difference between the familiar (Europe, the West, ‘us’) and the strange (the Orient, the East, ‘them’)” (Said, 43).



**Figure 3.19** The Harem by Melling (Melling, 1969).

“After the eighteenth century ‘oriental’ forms, divorced from their ‘original’ contexts, were de-historicized and assigned various meanings depending on the time, place, and historical context in question” (Baydar, 19). Before the eighteenth century the cultural interaction between the East and West was weaker. For example when Antoine Galland first translated *The Arabian Nights* in the eighteenth century, people couldn’t realize the difference between the fact and the fiction (Penzer, 13). At that time the East was largely unknown to the Europeans. *The Arabian Nights* tales introduced the first Oriental templates to the West. Husain Haddawy indicates “the essential quality of these tales lies in their success in interweaving the unusual, the extraordinary, the marvelous, and the supernatural into the fabric of everyday life” (introduction, x). All those kinds of Oriental representations created the expectation of an exotic, fragile, phantasmagoric East. So, it is not a surprise to observe disappointments of the European visitors, who come from a Platonist tradition, when they experience the architecture of Topkapı Palace. They have probably thought that Topkapı Palace was a bad/unfaithful copy of an ‘Ideal Oriental Palace Idea’. “This complexity which was named as ‘Eastern disorder’ is, in fact, one of the evident characteristics of Ottoman-Islamic architecture” (Arslan, 76). Orientalists invented their own reference, which is the Idea of the Orient, in order to possess ‘reality’ and in order to judge the pretenders of that reality (bad copies).

According to Gülsüm Baydar, Orientalists’ sources had invented an ahistorical and homogenizing Oriental vocabulary of architecture which hardly allowed for finer distinctions” (9). There were no differences between Eastern cultures; all were seen as Oriental. Said claims that “the idea of representation is a theatrical one: the Orient is the stage on which the whole East is confined” (63). The only binary opposition was the possessed Oriental (East) and the possessor Occidental (West).



**Figure 3.20** An oriental engraving of the Seraglio Point on the left. *L'Orient*. Paris, 1853, Pl. 9 (*Gravürlerle Türkiye: İstanbul*, 1996) and the Seraglio Point today on the right.

Like the miniature painters, the European artists used such Oriental templates in order to create a faithful copy of the 'Idea of Orient'. "Most of the western travelers probably left the site after drawing several sketches, and used their imaginative memory to incorporate images that they had encountered in publications, or in other 'oriental' lands" (Baydar, 12) (Fig 3.20). When the Topkapı Palace is concerned, it was hard to catch a glimpse of the interiors especially the Enderun by the European artists. For example, one of the French artists Jean-Baptiste Vanmour, who lived in İstanbul in the era of Ahmed III, had a chance to enter the palace to accompany some diplomats. "When he entered to the marvelous Room of Petitions, which looks like a fairy tale house with its surprising decoration, he perceived his environment with excitement as a raving combination of red and gold colors (İrepoğlu, 288, trans. by the author). So, the representations of Topkapı Palace by European artists have a common quality of faithful reproduction of the 'Idea of Topkapı Palace' in the Western mind. Artists were affected by the culture of Orientalism and they tried to make good copies of the Idea of Topkapı Palace in order to possess the knowledge of Topkapı Palace.



**Figure 3.21** Council meeting at Topkapı Palace on the left and the Room of Petitions on the right by Vanmour (Luttermann, 1958, Pl. 29).

“The ‘production’ of Orientalist knowledge became a continual and uncritical ‘reproduction’ of various assumptions and beliefs” (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, 59). It seems that, an entity of the East is only ‘true’ and ‘real’ if its knowledge is possessed by the Western Orientalists. According to that assumption, the Topkapı Palace became an Oriental image which is classified with the rest of the Oriental images. According to the Orientalists, its representations are only acceptable if they are faithful copies and part of an Orientalist Ideal. Topkapı Palace is detached from its original context; there exists only the Oriental context. It is turned into an aesthetic entity; an image that can be possessed and consumed.

### **3.2.3. The Topkapı Palace Museum**

From Mehmet the Conqueror’s reign (mid 15<sup>th</sup> century) to Sultan Abdulmecit’s reign (mid 19<sup>th</sup> century), the Topkapı Palace was the House of the Ottomans for four hundred years. Then the Sultans’ “taste turned more Western and led them to a residence more like that of European royalty” (Meisler, 116). In 1853 they moved to the Dolmabahçe Palace at the Bosphorus. The Topkapı Palace became a house for

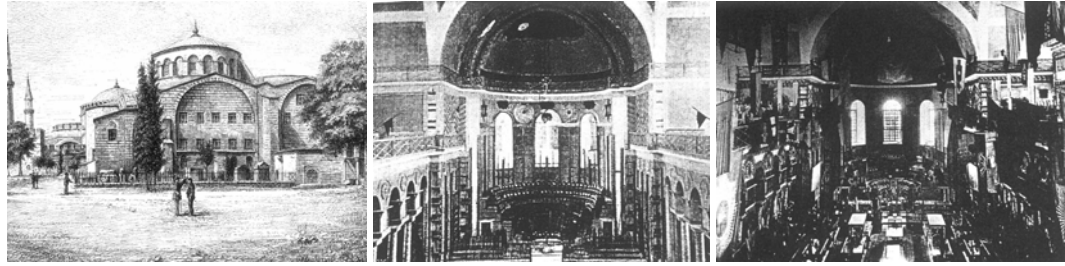


previous sultans' mothers and the household of the previous harem, just like Saray-ı Atik (Old Palace) once. Wendy Shaw explains that although demoted to a secondary palace, Topkapı Palace retained its importance as the home of the Prophet's holy relics, which the sultan visited ceremonially on the fifteenth day of the holy month of Ramadan every year (45). Moreover, before abandoning the Topkapı Palace, the treasury worked like a private premodern museum. Gülru Necipoğlu explains:

The Inner Treasury projected to the outer world as image of imperial luxury, wealth, and power. It was a majestic structure, worthy of housing the enormous treasure gathered by the successive sultans. The carefully preserved personal belongings of each sultan, venerated by every subsequent ruler when he acceded to the throne, turned it into a sort of family museum celebrating Ottoman dynastic continuity (141).

In the eighteenth century, the Hagia Irene Church (former Byzantium basilica) in the first courtyard of Topkapı Palace was used as the Imperial Armory. After a while it turned out to be a storage place for outdated weapons and the holy relics of both Islam and Christianity. The first courtyard of the palace was open to public but the House of Weapons was a restricted area except for the Sultan or a few selected guests who had a chance to catch a glimpse of the treasure. This made the objects, which were kept inside the House of Weapons, "more powerful in the public imagination" (Shaw, 32). With mythical and legendary spolia of war and holy relics, the House of Weapons became a significant place to show the outsiders the power of the Ottoman Empire as a successor of the past Byzantine Empire (Fig 3.22). As Wendy Shaw explains:

In 1846 Ahmet Fethi Pasha, the marshal of the Imperial Arsenal (Tophane-i Amire Müşiri) in the Ministry of War designated the rooms around the atrium of the former Church of Hagia Irene to house two collections owned by the sultan. He thus established the Ottoman Empire's first conscientious museological presentation of imperial collections (46).



**Figure 3.22** Hagia Irene Church as gravure on the left (Schlumberger, Gustave. *Un Empereur Byzantin au Dixième Siècle*. Paris, 1890, p. 11), as the Magazine of the Antique Weapons in the middle, and as Military Museum on the right (Shaw, 2003, p. 53 and 202).

Although there were many foreign diplomats and dignitaries visiting Istanbul, in nineteenth century, Topkapı Palace was still a mystery for the Europeans as a “forbidden city”. They wished to see the palace behind the high imperial walls and their wish was granted with special permission by the Sultan. Every time the palace was reopened to greet them. Although the palace was a house for the Sultan it was also a government center including the treasury. As Metin Sözen explains:

As the numbers wishing to visit the Topkapı Palace grew considerably, important logistic problems came about. For much time and energy were necessary to remove the jewelers, clothes, and porcelain from their vaults for display and store them back. It was Sultan Abdülaziz (1861-1876) who decided to set up permanent displays behind glass enclosures in the palace. This decision gave rise to the first movement towards turning the Topkapı Palace into a museum (182).

After the fall of the sultanate and the formation of the new Turkish Republic in 1923, the Topkapı Palace was established as Topkapı Palace Museum and opened to the public. Restoration work began for the buildings and the objects in the palace are cleaned and catalogued by the curators. Every year thousands of visitors from Turkey and all around the world come to see the Topkapı Palace in growing numbers<sup>4</sup>. Kemal Çiğ explains that “for the visitor the attractions of the Topkapı Saray (Palace) are thus twofold: the buildings which comprise the former Ottoman

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<sup>4</sup> According to the data of Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Turkey, in 2003, the Topkapı Palace Museum became the most visited museum of the year in Turkey with 2 million, 188 thousand and 218 visitors (*Radikal*, 5, trans. by the author).

palace; and its unrivalled collections. The buildings themselves are especially notable both on account of their architecture and for their interior decoration” (15).

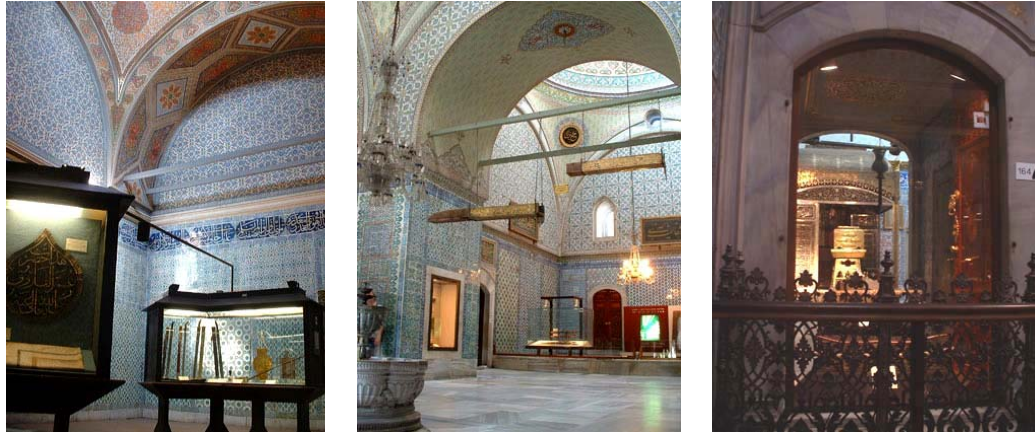


**Figure 3. 23** From left to right: House of Petitions, Ahmed III Library and the treasury.

Various buildings in the Palace are open to public and some of them are used for exhibiting clocks and watches, Chinese porcelains, arms and armor, costumes, embroideries, jewelry, etc. Some objects are exhibited in their original architectural setting. The rest of the buildings are restored just to show its architectural design and interior decoration. The palace evolved through the centuries and the palace is the evidence of the changing Ottoman taste through time in terms of architecture (Fig 3.23).

At that time, the confusing original structure of the palace gained a more confusing nature of a “hybrid-part museum like the Louvre in France, part historic building like Versailles” (Meisler 115). Although the palace was not designed for exhibition purposes some of the interiors were converted to exhibition halls. Filiz Özer of Istanbul Technical University states that “the Topkapı has to decide what it is going to be – a Versailles or a Louvre. I am an architectural historian, and I have spent much of my life in this palace. At every corner, I see something wrong, and it breaks my heart” (qtd. in Meisler, 115). According to some scholars the architecture is more important than the jewels and the objects should be moved to a modern museum.

On the other hand some of them say that removing the exhibitions will undermine the richness of the Ottoman times.



**Figure 3.24** Exhibitions of the holy relics at the Topkapı Palace Museum.

There may be a lot of reasons to keep the Topkapı Palace as it is, and to preserve it as a museum. In both cases, what is done is a representation of the Topkapı Palace and the Ottoman culture. Moreover, it is not possible to represent a culture by just showing its artifacts. It is not possible to reduce a palace complex into small objects. The Topkapı Palace is the representation of an imaginary 'ideal palace' and the Topkapı Palace Museum seems a (re)presentation of that 'imperial palace' in that palace complex. As Michael Baxandall explains:

Exhibitors can not represent cultures. Exhibitors can be tactful and stimulating impresarios, but exhibition is a social occasion involving at least three active terms (the maker-the object-the viewer). The activity the exhibition exists for is between viewer and maker. If the exhibitor wants to help or influence this activity, it should not be by discoursing either directly or indirectly about culture, which is his own construct, but rather by setting up nonmisleading and stimulating conditions between the exhibitor's own activity (selection and label making) and the maker's object. The rest is up to the viewer (41).

Here in the Topkapı Palace Museum, the method chosen for the exhibition of the objects may seem like an innocent attempt. But it is obvious that the museum

belongs to the Republic of Turkey and it is an institution which work under the Ministry of Culture. When it was a living palace, Topkapı was in the Ottoman context. But now it is treated as a museum and ripped off from its original context. The palace and the Ottoman culture are objectified by representation in the museum. It is an attempt like Ottomans conversion of the Hagia Irene Church into a museum. This is a context from a modern perspective close to the Orientalists'. The Turkish Republic was promoted as the successor of the Ottoman Empire rather than a continuation of it. "The past is not allowed to merely exist in individual memories; it is placed in the framework of particular conceptual structures to become part of collective memory. The way it is remembered depends on how it is represented" (Altinyıldız, 8). The ideology of the Turkish government guides the control and construct of the palace and reproduces the 'Idea of Topkapı Palace'.



**Figure 3. 25** From left to right: Exhibitions of the treasury, Sultans' clothing and Sultans' portraits.

Ottoman dynasty ended with the foundation of the modern Turkish Republic, so does the usage of Topkapı and other palaces of Ottomans. The palace was the symbol of monarchy. After the fall of the Sultanate, there was no reason for using

the palace as a government center or as the house for the government leaders and officers. The Turkish Republic, as the successor of the Ottoman dynasty, marked the Topkapı Palace as a decadent place. The attempt to resurrect the Palace from its ashes as a museum was somewhat not proper. “Its buildings, stripped of most of their original decorations and used as exhibition spaces, give little idea of the functional and ceremonial uses they once served” (Necipoğlu, 258). On the other hand those exhibitions in a way help to form a collective memory of the Ottoman dynasty. We are lucky that the palace was not demolished or the treasures, libraries, archives, and samples of architecture in different styles haven’t been looted. As Nur Altinyıldız states:

The Ottoman heritage suffers a double denial: refusal of life since it is not restored and refusal of death since it is not destroyed. It occupies the enigmatic threshold between life and death. Both its presence and its absence are at stake here. Its ruinous state masks its presence and defers its absence. On the verge of disappearance, it draws absence into the present. Tragedy of loss and pain of absence are avoided but presence becomes painful. Presence is mourned, not absence (12).

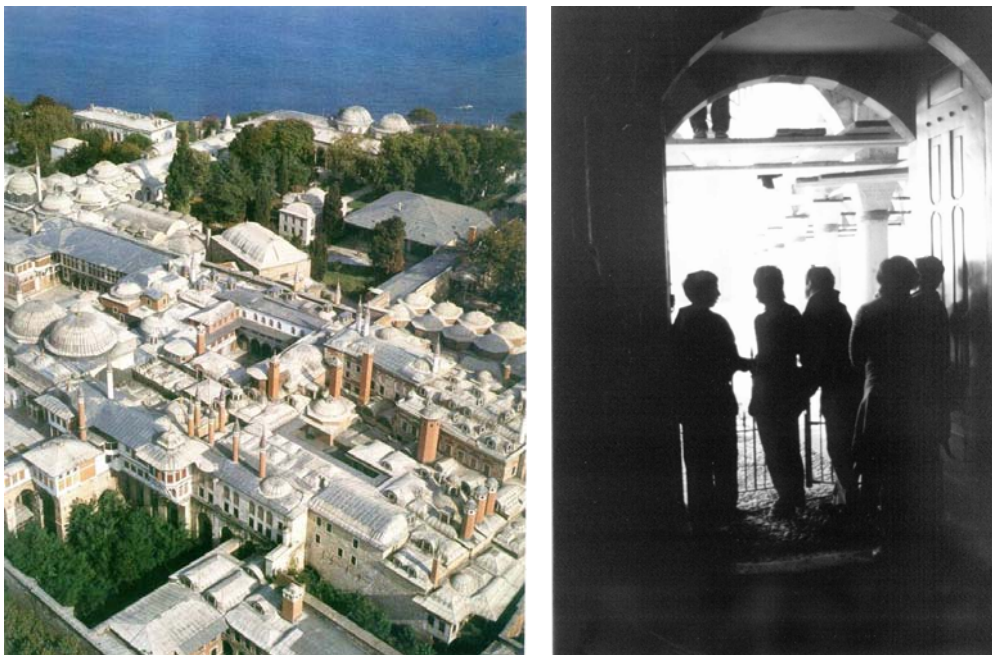


**Figure 3. 26** From left to right: Exhibitions of silver works, porcelains, and weapons.

Gülru Necipoğlu states that it is hard to correlate written and physical evidence for earlier period Muslim palaces except a few sources. “The Topkapı is exceptional because both the monument and a wide variety of sources documenting its

construction, its ceremonial, its institutions, and the life of its inhabitants survive” (introduction, xii). Moreover, those representations helped to create an ‘Idea of Topkapı Palace’ both in Ottoman and in Western minds. Today the ‘Idea of Topkapı Palace’ turned into an ‘idea of wonder’ as a continuation of the previous Orientalist representations. The palace is represented as if it is in its heyday. The image of Topkapı Palace became independent from its original context. The image that is represented by the museum precedes Topkapı Palace. As Stephen Greenblatt explains:

The modern museum paradoxically intensifies both access and exclusion. The treasured object exists not principally to be owned but to be viewed. Even the fantasy of possession is no longer central to the museum gaze; or rather it has been inverted, so that the object in its essence seems not to be a possession but rather to be itself the possessor of what is most valuable and enduring. What the work possesses is the power to arouse wonder, and that power, in the dominant aesthetic ideology of the West, has been infused into it by the creative genius of the artist (52).



**Figure 3.27** Aerial view of the Harem (Akşit, 1993, p. 9) and the visitors in the Harem.

Topkapı Palace in its heyday is idealized by the Topkapı Palace Museum and the museum represents wonders of the Ottoman dynasty possessed by the modern Turkish Republic. The museum claims to represent the Ottoman reality either with an Orientalist or modernist perspective. The Topkapı Palace Museum masks and denatures a profound Ottoman reality which is in fact an ideological construct. The selected image claims to be a faithful representation of the Idea of Topkapı Palace promoted by the museum.



#### **4. WOW TOPKAPI PALACE HOTEL**

The World of Wonders (WOW) Topkapı Palace Hotel was built by MNG (Mehmet Nazif Günal) Group of Companies in 1999 as the copy/simulation of its original (The Topkapı Palace in Istanbul). The project was formed by MNG Targem Co. Inc. which is one of the companies of MNG Holding. The logic was to use prestigious and familiar cultural images in order to replicate the original complex as a themed resort with a touristic approach. After building the Topkapı Palace Resort, the company decided to continue constructing other themed hotels beside it, such as WOW Kremlin Palace Resort Hotel and WOW White House Resort Hotel.

Moreover the site, where the Topkapı Palace Hotel is located, is becoming an area of themed hotels like in Las Vegas. As one critic states “the Coast of Kundu Village is significant as being the only touristic establishment in Aksu, composed of five themed resort hotels, labeled as ‘Realm of Palaces’ located alongside each other” (Küçükarslan, 89). In addition to the MNG’s WOW Hotels, there are two more themed complexes built nearby, which are Venezia Palace Resort Hotel and Green Palace Resort Hotel. The site is becoming a jungle of images, simulations, and symbol-filled environments, which are offered to the tourists planning to spend their holidays and to satisfy their self-fulfillment at the same time. The site has become a place for consuming aestheticized replicas and images.

The usage of the architectural and historical images, emptying their inside, and changing their function has serious cultural implications. The basis of the criticism

against capitalism lies in the possibility of the selling, buying and copying of the images in the interest of profit making. The desire for consuming such environments and images are promoted through mass media. As Murat Burak Altınışik explains:

Consumer culture engages in inducing anticipations in consuming range at the individual level and seduces the fantasies of the consumer by invoking aesthetic pleasure and excitement through various channels which intends the aesthetisation of life (21).

Kremlin and Topkapı Hotels are not the first examples of their kind<sup>5</sup>. The scenario which was promoted by the consumerist ideology and the age of images/simulations seems as a system failure/problem far beyond the problems of architectural ethics. In such instances, the commercial interests of the tourism industry override professional ethics. “The objects are not only instruments of utility but also the instruments of communication that are correlated with luxury, exoticism, beauty and appeal that mask their original content and function” (Altınışik, 22). So, consumerist ideology uses such images/objects for profit making. WOW Topkapı Palace Hotel is just another example of the same approach. The image of Topkapı Palace was one of the most known ones in the Orientalist context. It is obvious that to possess and experience such an exotic theme is thought to attract many tourists from Europe and around the world.

#### **4.1. The Architecture of WOW Topkapı Palace Hotel**

The WOW Topkapı Palace Hotel was built in Kundu Village of Antalya, on the Aksu beach by the Mediterranean Sea (Fig. 4.1) covering an area of 85000 m<sup>2</sup>. It is 20 km

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<sup>5</sup> There are various former examples like Disneyland, Las Vegas, and several other themed environments all around the world (see previous chapter 2.3.2.)

from the Antalya Airport and 25 km from the Antalya City Center (WOW Topkapı Palace).



**Figure 4.1** The site.

The hotel provides service with 908 standard rooms. The resort has five star hotel standards in its services and decoration. It is a resort hotel including three open swimming pools, one indoor swimming pool and water rides at the center of the site. All the buildings surround the pools (Fig 4.2).



**Figure 4.2** Swimming pools (*Hotel brochure, 2003*).

The main entrance of the hotel is the replica of “Babüselâm”, ‘The Middle Gate’ (Fig 4.3). But in the hotel information brochure, the main hotel entrance is named as

“Bab-ı Humayun” which is originally the main entrance of Topkapı Palace in Istanbul (see Appendix B). The original main gate and the first courtyard of the palace are excluded in the hotel (Fig 4.4). The first courtyard was open to public in Topkapı Palace and the hotel is not a public space but a semi-public one. Only the ones who can afford have permission to go inside the hotel. This may be the reason of the exclusion of the courtyard in the hotel.

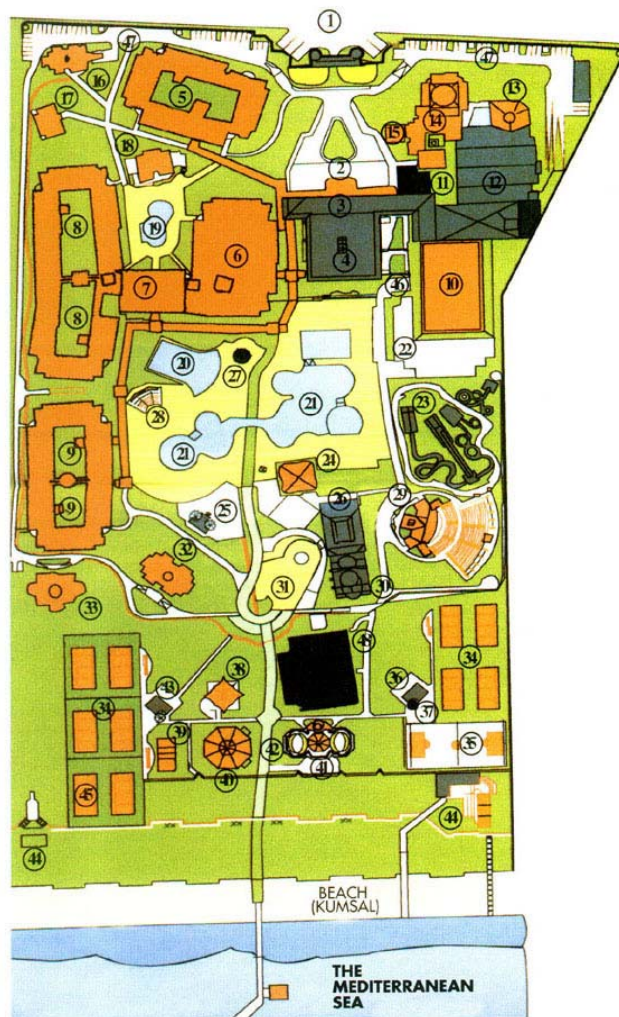


**Figure 4.3** Hotel entrance on the left and Babüselâm on the right.

After the main entrance of the hotel, one encounters a courtyard (Fig 4.5), a tower which is the replica of the Tower of Justice of Topkapı Palace (Fig 4.6), and the lobby entrance which is again the replica of “Babüssaade”, ‘The Gate of Felicity’ (Fig 4.7). Right after the lobby entrance there is the shopping street which is a small replica of Soğukçeşme Street. It consist of restored old traditional Turkish houses. Originally this street lies behind the outer walls of Topkapı Palace beginning just beside Bab-ı Humayun. The building including the lobby and reception area is the replica of the Chamber of Petitions (Fig 4.8).



**Figure 4.4** Bab-ı Hümayun and the Fountain of Ahmed III.



**Figure 4.5** Site plan of Topkapı Palace Resort Hotel (*Hotel brochure, 2003*).



**Figure 4.6** Panorama Tower on the left and Tower of Justice on the right.



**Figure 4.7** Lobby entrance on the left and Babüssaade on the right.



**Figure 4.8** Lobby building on the left and House of Petitions on the right.

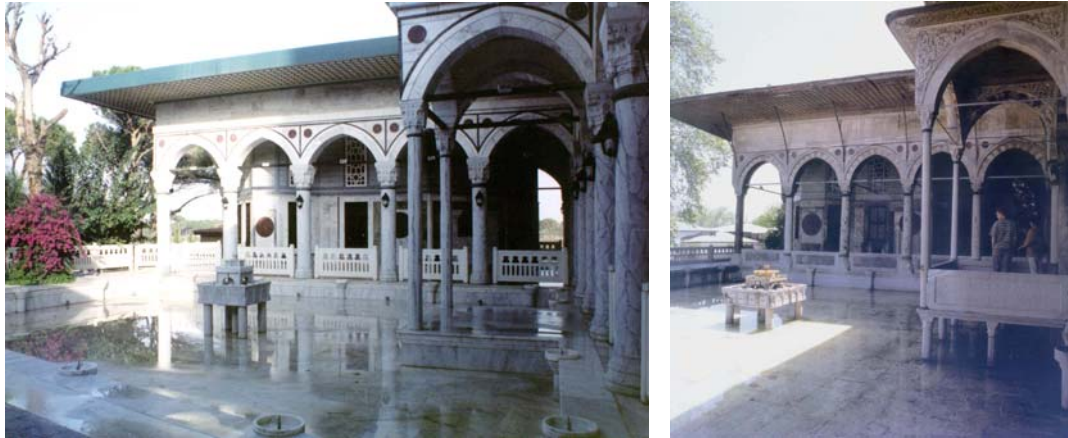
The main restaurant is the replica of the kitchens of the Topkapı Palace (Figs 4.9 and 4.10). Originally the palace kitchens are at the second courtyard which exists between Babüsselâm and Babüssaade. The ball room is a large space for meetings, conferences or congresses and there is the replica of Revan Pavilion which functions as a meeting room for special meetings (Fig 4.11). The indoor swimming pool, Turkish bath and health club, Panorama Tower with a bar at the top, the ballroom complex and the main restaurant are all connected buildings.



**Figure 4.9** The view of the main restaurant from the main pool on the left and the view of kitchens from the second courtyard on the right (*Hotel brochure, 2003*).



**Figure 4.10** The interior view of the main restaurant on the left and the interior view of the kitchens on the right.



**Figure 4.11** The meeting room on the left and Revan Kiosk on the right (Sözen, 1998, p.115).

Just beside the main swimming pool there is the Lalezar Bar which is the replica of Ahmet the Third Fountain (Figs 4.4 and 4.12). Originally the fountain exists outside the Topkapı Palace, just in front of the main gate. Although the fountain has originally a solid form, the form is transformed into a shell like building, its inside is emptied and a space is created in order to have the building function as a bar.



**Figure 4.12** Lalezar Bar.

There are five blocks of guestrooms which are designed with courtyards in the middle of each and they are connected to each other with colonnaded and domed



pathways. The guestrooms and colonnaded courtyards are imitations of the apartment buildings of the Harem. The original two or three storey Harem apartments are modified as four or five storey guestroom blocks (Figs 4.13 and 4.14).



**Figure 4.13** A courtyard surrounded with guestroom blocks in the hotel on the left and courtyard of the concubines in Harem on the right (Ertuğ, 1996, p. 158).



**Figure 4.14** Guestroom blocks' roof on the left and Harem roof on the right (Akşit, 1993, p. 41).

There are some landmark-like buildings standing independently in the resort site. Most of them are built in a smaller scale than their originals. There is the replica of Saint Irene Church which is originally a Byzantium basilica that exists in the first

courtyard of Topkapı Palace between the main gate and the middle gate (Fig 4.15). Its replica exists at the heart of the hotel site. The building includes a disco-bar and an Italian restaurant (Fig 4.16). The MNG Residence is the replica of the Basketmaker's Pavilion (Fig 4.17), the VIP Residence is the replica of Gülhane Pavilion at the outer gardens of the Topkapı Palace and Sofa Café is the replica of the Sofa Pavilion (Fig 4.18). The Saray Muhallebicisi that serves diary deserts is the replica of Mecidiye Pavilion (Fig 4.19).



**Figure 4.15** Disco-restaurant complex on the left and Hagia Irene Church on the right.



**Figure 4.16** Interior views of disco on the left and the Italian restaurant on the right.



**Figure 4.17** MNG House on the left and Basket Weavers Kiosk on the right (Sözen, 1998, p.179).



**Figure 4.18** The interior view of Sofa Café on the left and Sofa Kiosk on the right (Ertuğ, 1996, p. 86, Pl. 39).



**Figure 4.19** Saray Muhallebici on the left and Mecidiye Kiosk on the right.

The resort complex has many other buildings and facilities designed in the concept of ‘Ottoman wonderland’. Sultan’s Tent serves as a café, Grand Bazaar serves for shopping and the complex contains Pera Café Bar and other facilities for children.

There are many sports facilities including a beach volleyball field, tennis courts, a mini football field, a basketball field, and a water sports center. There is also an amphitheater for special shows, animations and Turkish nights (see Appendix B).

The comparison of figures (from Fig. 4.3 to Fig. 4.19) show that the hotel is a modified replica of the Topkapı Palace and using the aestheticized image of it rather than concerning an anxiety of being faithful to the original.

#### **4.2. WOW Topkapı Palace Hotel as Simulacrum**

The Topkapı Palace Hotel in Antalya, which was designed by Turkish architects, has emerged as a replica of the Topkapı Palace in İstanbul. The hotel was designed according to a 'wonderland' concept. The aim of the constructors is to promote/ (re)present the historical image of Topkapı Palace to the guests as it was described in the novel *'Arabian Nights'*: "...dream buildings, columns made up of valuable stones, their golden capitals, emerald and ruby trees, crystal fountains sprinkling silver water" and so on (qtd. in Arslan, 29-30). The Hotel is promoted as "a wonder land which was built as a replica of the unique architecture of Topkapı Palace famous with its sultans of the great Ottoman Empire, glory, harem, treasury, and with its mysterious stories" (*Brochure of World of Wonders*, 2002).



**Figure 4.20** Night view of WOW Topkapı Palace Hotel.

The hotel's official website and the hotel brochure contain promotional phrases as follows:

WOW Topkapı Palace: A little dream...a little magnificence...a little fairy tale (WOW Topkapı Palace).

WOW Topkapı Palace: The authentic palace of the wonderland (*World of Wonders Resort Hotels Brochure*, 2003).

WOW Topkapı Palace: "Binbir Gece Masalları!" = 'The Arabian Nights!' (*World of Wonders Resort Hotels Brochure*, 2003).

According to an interview conducted with the Operation Director of the hotel Kader Şanlıöz, "the aim of the Topkapı Palace Hotel, as management, is to provide the best for the visitor's comfort. Thus the Topkapı Palace Hotel offers quality services that visitors can only imagine in a 'palace'" (Küçükarslan, 113). The idea of 'palace' is identified with the idea of comfort, luxury and experience of history both by the visitors and by the hotel management (Küçükarslan, 113). The guests are promoted to have a similar experience to the sultans of Topkapı Palace. The architecture is formed according to that principle. Some of the buildings are selected and re-arranged/re-scaled, lets say modified, according to the requirements of the international five star hotel standards (Fig. 4.21) and according to the company's

financial program. But it is not an easy process to simulate the Topkapı Palace. There are too many buildings in the original complex and it is hard to control all details of the buildings and interior decorations.



**Figure 4.21** A standard guest room of Topkapı Palace Hotel.

Architect Serdar Canoğlu who is the director of the MNG Targem Project Group, lists the “intentions in the design of the Topkapı Palace Resort Hotel as follows:

- To satisfy the expectations of the visitors.
- To achieve a difference in form.
- To achieve a ‘difference’ by the choice of the model for the theme.
- To make visitors feel like holidaying in a palace in accordance with the theme.
- To create authenticity.
- To create a place in which the dimension of time disappears.
- To create a surprising place; a place like in ‘Alice in Wonderland’.
- To achieve a consistent pursuit of theme (Küçükarslan, 109).

But what kind of an experience does such a hotel provide for the customers and visitors? Is it an authentic experience such as in the Topkapı Palace in İstanbul?

The problem of authenticity is addressed by Cary Carson in similar cases of historical simulations as follows:

How much authenticity should be expected? Here's my short answer: at a minimum, enough to fool the general public, and, at best, enough to fool the experts – including ourselves. Authenticity is more than it's often cracked up to be. What we're really talking about is believability. Do historians have to succeed in re-creating a past that they believe in before they can persuade their audiences to believe in it too? But a believable past is not a fixed thing. If authenticity could be nailed down once and forever, historians would have been out of a job generations ago (qtd. in Hackney, 6).

Can the past be popularized and still address, today, authentically important issues of Ottoman history? Hackney asks what the big danger here is “the danger of having history overly romanticized or having it overly simplified or sanitized so that the conflict is taken out of it?” (8).

The Topkapı Palace Hotel is promoted as a wonderland, but the meaning of secrecy, complexity, and mystery of the original structure seems lost with the standardization. Strict hierarchy of the spaces, imprisonment of harem household, the massacres and intrigues happened in the palace, limitations of the sultan's life are not concerned or all excluded. In that case the experience of it seems like a “synthetic history” (Hackney, 13) rather than an authentic one. The representation of history seems more entertaining here than educating.

To simulate/replicate a historical architecture brings the problems of application.

Canoğlu also states some of the problems during the construction as follows:

- The constraints and requirements of the international standards of a five star hotel.

- The difficulty of achieving continuous theme appearance starting from entrance throughout most of the interiors because of financial problems.
- Technical problems with air conditioning and lighting fixtures (Küçükarslan, 110).

As many historians have argued; architects in Turkey mimic western architecture in order not be claimed as the 'other' by the west. Turkish architects on the other hand expect to be respected by their western contemporaries and compete with western architecture. Moreover, the western world has long identified non-western cultures as the 'Other' with an Orientalist or exoticist approach. Consequently in the case of the Topkapı Palace Hotel, the approach of the construction company and the architects of Topkapı Palace Hotel, seem like an 'Orientalist' one. The image used for the Topkapı Palace Hotel concept is the image known by the Western world: a palace like those described in the novel 'Arabian Nights'. On the other hand, because of the impossibility of replicating all the buildings and all interior decorations in terms of the company's financial capacity, the hotel is not a precise copy but rather an eclectic replica of the Topkapı Palace. It only consists of selected main images/buildings from the 'original' complex. Robert Venturi claims that traditional monumentality describes the societal unity which is possessed by big scale and combined architectural elements. But today's social, historical, political, and economic context does not call for such gestures to establish monumentality (51). The Topkapı Palace Hotel does not claim to be a copy of the original monument. It is a self-conscious simulation of it.

A simulation like this creates a contradiction between architectural forms/images and their function/meaning. As I mentioned before, the image of the Topkapı Palace



in İstanbul is taken as a model and selected buildings are modified for the hotel design. So the changes and re-arrangements of the buildings in the site create a shift of meanings. The image of the Topkapı Palace is ripped off from its context. What attracts the crowds most is without doubt the social microcosm, miniaturized pleasures of the 'real' Ottoman court life, of its constraints and joys like in the Orientalists representations. The aim of the hotel is not to create a faithful copy. The hotel has no relation to any 'reality' whatsoever. It has no relation to harem life or the hierarchy of spaces and codes. It is supposed to represent a simulated 'reality' but that 'reality' is a constructed one. The hotel attracts its visitors to play a new role in simulating the sumptuous pleasures of the Sultans. In fact it is based on the image of Ottoman life rather than its supposed 'essence'. It is based on aesthetic perspective rather than a moral one. WOW Topkapı Palace Hotel is a perfect simulacrum.

The hotel incorporates familiar urban consumer codes just like in Disneyland or in any other themed environment: parading, shopping, entertaining etc. Other than that, there is no negative trace of everyday life. All negativity is sorted out. The Topkapı Palace Hotel provides a secure, healthy, and comfortable environment. Knowing that it is a 'simulation' makes the hotel only an enjoyable environment for the visitor. They experience familiar five star hotel standards in a so-called aestheticized image of the Topkapı Palace. Without a feeling of loss or fear of alienation the hotel promotes an unproblematic celebration of Ottoman court life. WOW Topkapı Palace Hotel is an isolated environment promoting a selection of images and Orientalist symbolism which have been promoted by Orientalist representations for ages. The Topkapı Palace theme is just the fantasy of an Oriental culture. It is a simulation of Orientalist ideas.

Although Orientalists claim to represent the 'real' Orient, there is no such thing as a unified sense of 'real' Orient. It is just an ideological assumption. Considering the argument that there is no ideal 'reality' to precede its representation, the question now becomes which precedes the other; the image or the object? The hotel breaks the barrier between true and false; threatens the binary opposition of copy and original. The image precedes the so-called essence. It is a simulation based on an aestheticized image. "The simulation's referent is ever elsewhere; the 'authenticity' of the substitution always depends on the knowledge, however faded, of some absent genuine (Sorkin, 216). The Topkapı Palace Hotel is in perpetual shadow, propelling its visitors to an unvisitable past as Sorkin claimed. In the Topkapı Palace simulacrum, there is no referential perspective left in order to judge the Topkapı Palace Hotel as an unfaithful/bad copy.

## CONCLUSION

Platonism identified simulacrum as a bad copy of an original/transcendental idea. Most of the meaning systems have been constructed according to the Platonic idealism and referential binary oppositions. But today, in the age of simulations and simulacra, there is no referential ground to distinguish models from copies and copies from simulacra. Critiques of Platonism argue against the notion of a transcendental essence. All idealistic, transcendental meaning systems collapse with simulacra. The profession of architecture is strongly affected by this phenomenon. As Michel Foucault explains:

Architects are not the technicians or engineers of the three great variables – territory, communication, and speed. These escape the domain of architects. So, architects are not necessarily the masters of space that they once were, or believe themselves to be (354).

Maybe reason for reactions against the Topkapı Palace Hotel is based on the realization that architects are no more the possessors of their products. According to Foucault, the architect has no power over us anymore. Whenever an architectural project is realized, it is inevitable that its image is detached from its context at the same time. The creators were so proud of their faithful products once that they were

claimed to be the good copies of so-called ideal forms. Today, the architect is not the possessor of the image. The image possesses the architecture instead. If we come back to the first argument of the thesis based on the debate among Turkish architects, the Topkapı Palace hotel was criticized as kitsch, a bad copy of the original palace. But according to the argument of the thesis, it is insufficient to judge a simulacrum as kitsch since there is no such thing as a bad copy. 'Reality' consists of its own representations; it is not a referential entity. It is possible that the Turkish architects, who got involved in the debate, are discussing the problem from a traditional Platonic perspective. Moreover, they might have been bothered because architecture seems that it is bound to be a part of consumerist ideology. The way of consumption of the image of architecture may have been the reason for such accusations.

So far as the Topkapı Palace Hotel and the Topkapı Palace Museum are considered, it is claimed that they mark a nostalgic reproduction, a return to a foundation to be possessed by consumer societies. But again Foucault states that "one should totally and absolutely suspect anything that claims to be a return. One reason is a logical one: there is, in fact, no such thing as a return. History, and the meticulous interest applied to history, is certainly one of the best defenses against this theme of the return" (359). The Platonist understanding of history has been changed today. History is not a linear didactic narrative anymore.

In summary, both Ottoman representations and Orientalist representations, and even the Topkapı Palace Museum as a representation are based on Platonic meaning systems. They are all continuations of the philosophical tradition based on the assumption of the existence of referential grounds and binary oppositions. The

Idea of Topkapı Palace can not be a fixed and transcendental entity. The image of Topkapı changed even during the Ottoman era. Many buildings were added to the main core, several buildings were burned, demolished, transformed, and their usage changed (see Appendix A). Although there is not any unified/fixed representation of the evolving palace, all representations had a very important role in terms of creating a Topkapı Palace Myth which paved the way for the Topkapı Palace themed hotel.

The WOW Topkapı Palace Hotel is not a copy of an original; it is a simulacrum. The hotel is not a representation concerning an anxiety of being faithful to the so-called original. It represents the denial and reversal of Platonic idealism and referential meaning systems. It is not a return to a past and has no referential perspective. The hotel is a present entity and represents the culture of simulations and simulacra. It is a product of consumerist ideology. As Baudrillard stated for Disneyland, Topkapı Palace Hotel is presented as imaginary, a realm of an Oriental fantasy in order to make us believe that there exists a 'real' Topkapı Palace outside, whereas there is not. It is no longer a question of a false representation of 'reality' but of concealing the fact that there is no such 'reality' as it is promoted.

In the light of all those statements, the goal of this thesis is not to question the hotel from a critical, elitist perspective but generate a debate on a philosophical ground. It opens up questions and avenues for the idea of representation in the architectural realm: How does one distinguish between the philosophical/ethical and aesthetic realms? What role can architecture play in the era of simulations? Can architects be more creative when using the positive power of simulacrum? Can architecture play a critical role within consumerist ideologies or is it bound to be a part of it?

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