

**SPACE, IDENTITY, AND ABJECTION:
PURIFICATION OF BEYOĞLU**

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January, 2011**

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ABSTRACT

SPACE, IDENTITY, AND ABJECTION: PURIFICATION OF BEYOĞLU

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Beyoğlu provides uniquely rich material for a discussion on space and identity. Ever since its very foundation, the district has accommodated different nations, cultures, religions and architectural styles which were blended into a unique amalgam. Even if Beyoğlu fitted in the socio-political fabric of the Ottoman Empire, along with the Turkish modernization, there aroused a discontent over its identity. In the 20th century, Beyoğlu was turned into a contaminating element for the Turkish Republic and was subjected to various incidents that attempted to purify its complex identity. These incidents may well be read with Kristeva's "abjection", a concept that serves in identity construction by simultaneously inventing and excluding an element of fear, revulsion, and hatred. Abjection towards Beyoğlu and its components were commonly masked by a nostalgic discourse that invented a pure bygone identity. In the 20th century, Beyoğlu has become a defiled resource, serving to perform and generate identities; but mostly chauvinist, nationalist, religious, and moralist ones. This fact necessitates a critical distance towards the essentialist view of identity construction operating with abjection, where the abject figure is merely regarded as something to be annihilated. Supported with an ethical dimension, post-structuralist ontology provides a non-violent and sustainable approach towards identity construction that necessarily includes the excluded.

KEYWORDS: Beyoğlu, identity, abject, abjection, nostalgia, purification, chora.

ÖZET

MEKAN, KİMLİK VE İĞRENÇLEŞTİRME: BEYOĞLU'NUN SAFLAŞTIRILMASI

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Beyoğlu, mekan ve kimlik tartışması için eşi bulunmaz zengin bir malzeme sunmaktadır. Semt, kuruluşundan bu yana farklı etnik, kültürel, dinsel, dilsel ve mimari öğeleri barındırmış ve bunları heterojen bir alışımda kaynaştırmıştır. Her ne kadar Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun sosyo-politik dokusuna ters düşmemiş olsa da, Türk modernleşmesiyle birlikte Beyoğlu'na karşı bir hoşnutsuzluk baş göstermiştir. 20. Yüzyılda Beyoğlu, Türkiye Cumhuriyeti için hastalık yayan bir öğeye dönüştürülmüş ve karmaşık kimliğini saflaştırmaya yönelik birçok eyleme maruz kalmıştır. Bu eylemler Kristeva'nın, kimlik kurulumuna hizmet etmek üzere bir korku, iğrenme ve nefret ögesi üretme ve bunu dıştılamaya dayanan, iğrençleştirme kavramıyla okunabilir. Beyoğlu ve öğelerine yöneltlen iğrençleştirme sıklıkla saf kimliği geçmişte üreten bir nostalji söylemi ile maskelenmektedir. 20. Yüzyılda Beyoğlu, çoğunlukla şoven, ulusal, dinsel ve ahlaki kimlikler üreten kirletilmiş bir kaynağa dönüşmüştür. Bu gerçek, iğrenilenin sadece ortadan kaldırılacak bir figür olarak görüldüğü bir çeşit iğrençleştirmeyle işleyen özcü kimlik kurulumuna karşı eleştirel bir mesafe gerektirmektedir. Etik tartışmasıyla desteklenen yapısalcı sonrası varlıkbilim, kimlik kurulumuna yönelik olarak, dıştılananın içselleştirildiği, şiddet içermeyen sürdürülebilir bir yaklaşım sunmaktadır.

ANAHTAR KELİMELEER: Beyoğlu, kimlik, iğrenç, iğrençleştirme, nostalji, saflaştırma, kora.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Origin

For many centuries, Western thought was guided by the Euclidean conception of space, which assumes space as empty, homogeneous, calculable, and meaningless. According to this understanding, what really matters is the “things” that occupied space. In the 20th century, along with several ground breaking discoveries and theories in physics, philosophers contemplated also over space, exposing many dimensions to it concerning subjectivity, society and signification. Euclidean divide between the space and the things occupying it was commonly problematized. In his influential book *The Production of Space*, Lefebvre (1991) asserted that space is not a container, but a multi-dimensional construct that has a paradoxical relationship with the social; society produces space, but also is paradoxically produced by it. In parallel to Lefebvre’s point of view, post structuralist thinkers, such as Deleuze, Foucault, Derrida, and Kristeva gave serious thought over space; instead of the duality of the producer and the product, they all were interested in the term “production”. Space is accepted as a complex entity, which is produced as something pure through representation.

It is now a common presumption that space is essential to the production of subjectivity, society, and signification; but is this bidirectional production free of wastes, residues, or remainders? As an infinite reserve for identity production, space is often castrated by hegemonic forces, so that it ceases to proliferate alternate

identities. The domestication of space applies by excluding certain constituents from its representation. Nevertheless hegemonic “representations of space” are challenged by those who try to make out of them, their own “spaces of representation” (Lefebvre 1991: 38-9). Politics of space is about deciding which constituents should be cast off on behalf of which representation. Guardians of hegemony may fantasize or even attempt to literally purify the space according to a totalitarian identity.

With its complex spatial fabric, Beyoğlu –previously known as Pera- provides an excellent material for a discussion on space and identity. From its very outset, Beyoğlu has been a district where people of different races, religions, cultures and languages lived together, or at least, side-by-side. Within the precincts of Beyoğlu, dissimilar communities, cultures, religions, languages, architectural forms and styles have blended into a unique complex amalgam. This heterogeneity reflected itself on space, and this complex space produced complex identities.

For many centuries Beyoğlu fitted well into the socio-political fabric of the Ottoman Empire. However, along with the Turkish modernization, which was prominently accompanied by nationalism, there aroused a discontent over its identity. The discontent regarding Beyoğlu century seems to be related with the modern republican value of egalitarianism that has been mistranslated into an ideology of sameness. As a result of some unfortunate political decisions and decontamination operations between 1914 and 1974¹, the district went under a period

¹ Şen (Şen 2005) lists some major events, which explain the drastic demographical change in Beyoğlu; 1914-1924, the non-Muslim population started to abandon the country because of economic and political reasons; 1923-1924, the obligatory exchange of people between Turkey and Greece; 1948, the Jews started to leave Turkey and move to the new founded Israel; 1950s, The heavy immigration movement to Istanbul; 1955, attacks against non-Muslims; 1974, the majority of the remaining Greeks

of decline, and majority of the non-Muslim population gradually evacuated the district.

In 1980s, in parallel to gentrification projects in Istanbul, Beyoğlu once again turned into a popular topic of discussion among politicians, academicians, and intellectuals. These discussions were mostly centered on Beyoğlu's identity. For many, Beyoğlu apparently had been fallen away from its genuine identity. But what was Beyoğlu's "true" identity, and where should it be pursued? Is there an essence that governs and sustains its identity? If there is an essence as such, is it possible to save it from decaying; in other words, is there a way to resist the forces of time (i.e. social, political, or aesthetical changes) and keep the identity of Beyoğlu intact? Is Beyoğlu's identity obscure because it has been polluted by alien features? Is it possible to restore Beyoğlu back to its essence by saving it from the invasion of alien features? In order to discover the essence of Beyoğlu, a new history has to be written. But in writing this history one should be careful enough to discern and exclude the polluting alien features. Yet the difficulty lies in the fact that, Beyoğlu's history is full of ruptures and discontinuities; since its very foundation, which was unquestionably unplanned, the district has faced demographical and cultural changes, fires, and radical physical modifications. Maybe the only thing that has never changed is an inherent resistance towards being captured within a single identity. Therefore, one can righteously posit that, aside from the burden of translating Beyoğlu to the new Republican identity, there was also an apparent difficulty in fitting it into a constant, stable, and consistent identity.

left the country due to the conflict between Greece and Turkey about Cyprus; 1980s, the second immigration wave from rural areas to Istanbul.



Figure 1. 1. An element of surprise from 1930s, the provincial right in the heart of the urban. (Giz, 1997:33)

Both as a contaminating element for the Turkish Republic and as a fierce space resisting to be tamed by a single identity, Beyoğlu was subjected to various acts of cleansing and purification throughout the 20th Century. However the mission has never been accomplished; in each corner of Beyoğlu, one can still meet an element of surprise, an inconsistency, or a nuisance to complicate the recollections and generalizations about its identity (Figure 1.1.). Here, the rich and the poor, the sacred and the mundane, the western and the eastern, the rational and the irrational, the urban and the rural fit into a single frame. The desire of assigning a hegemonic identity to Beyoğlu has caused a series of violent attempts directed towards its unique complex characteristics. This study attempts to understand how and by which devices the hegemonic identity mechanisms applied in Beyoğlu. It also searches for the motives that helped justify such violence. But a more crucial question may be awaiting; is violence peculiar to hegemonic identities, or is it an inescapable symptom of the identity construction? This study aims at interrogating this question and looks for possible ways to approach spatial identity without resorting to any form of violence.

1.2. Conceptual Framework

When one talks about an identity –may it be cultural identity, national identity, personal identity, corporate identity, sexual identity, or space identity- he/she inevitably reflects an ontological position. There seems to be two major positions for approaching the most basic philosophical questions underlying the concept of identity: What is the basis of sameness, and of difference? Is sameness given or produced? How does the sameness persevere? First position bases itself over a presumption of timeless essence that determines an identity; and for an identity to stay intact, this essence needs to be preserved (Plato, 1973). At an age, where concepts like heterogeneity, fluidity, multiplicity, becoming, alterity, or hybridity seem to be much more popular than naturalness or ahistorical essence, it may seem that essentialism is losing ground. Nevertheless, moving from Beyoğlu, this study attempts to show that it still is a deep-rooted mode of thinking especially for the advocates of hegemonic identities.

According to essentialist conceptualization of identity, since the essence was always and already there at the very beginning, even before the beginning, identity construction necessarily operates in reference to past. If there is a discontent about an identity, it is because this particular “thing” has been polluted, contaminated, and degenerated in time; in other words, it has been diverted from its pure and timeless essence. The remedy is simple and clear, to recover the degenerate “thing” to its original form, where the essence used to govern its identity; and after achieving that, to try and keep it that way for eternity.

A major flaw about essentialism resides in its inadequacy to explain the effect of context on identities. For example, the adorable hair of the beloved may turn into something disgusting as soon as it starts swimming in a bowl of soup. Since things tend to degenerate when accompanied by some other things, or when contexts change, essentialism demands a strict, orderly, and homogenous sense of space (Plato, 1992). In that sense, there is a close affinity between Platonic orderliness and modernity. Zygmunt Bauman (1991) asserts that modernity is a political, organizational, and discursive practice whose sole aim is to produce a rationally designated order, which does not tolerate anything that escapes categorization. Therefore modernity accepts ambiguity and ambivalence as an undesirable waste product of the modern quest of order. For Bauman, intolerance is the natural inclination of modernity; he adds that modernity “calls for the rights, and of the grounds, of everything that cannot be assimilated –for delegitimation of the other” (1991:8).

The second position for approaching identity, the non-essentialist view, denies the sovereignty of metaphysical essence, and argues that identities are always and already temporary, unstable, and complex (Foucault, 1973; Derrida, 1982; Lyotard, 1984; Rorty, 1989). This perspective asserts that identities are not constructed once and for all; they are performed over and over again in each and every spatio-temporal context, always in reference to some extent of sameness and difference (Butler, 1990; Deleuze, 1994). Nonetheless, the non-essentialist position does not deny meaning, truth, and identity altogether. Rather, it considers them not as universals, but merely as spatio-temporal productions. According to the post-structuralist conception, what really matters is not to try and define what the

identities authentically correspond to, but to understand how they are constructed and how they are submitted to alteration.

Structuralist and post-structuralist thinkers approach the problem of identity from a non-essentialist point of view, and are mostly busy with the “how” of the identity. For them, what really matters is the structure, the process of production that made the contingent product called identity possible. Foucault, Kristeva, Derrida, and Deleuze have envisioned this structure necessarily with the concept of space. In 1974, as she wrote about the structure of language, Kristeva (1984) mentioned a concept called “chora” –a term borrowed from Plato. Chora refers to a pre-linguistic stage, which necessarily must be left behind for the meaning to arrive. In her later works, the concept of chora referred more and more to psycho-social spaces rather than textual space. Chora is a proto-space that needs to be abandoned for the space of the symbolic to appear; however it is never abandoned entirely.

In order to explain this radical transition and its haunting echoes, Kristeva refers to another concept that she calls “abjection”. In *Powers of Horror* (1982), she argues that emotions like horror, disgust, and loathing play a fundamental role in the construction of identity; and she refers to this amalgam of unpleasant emotions as abjection. During the preliminary production of the self, there is a critical instance, where the child, in order to claim an individual identity, abjectifies the mother. This is the very same instant that chora, the space where infant cannot differentiate borders between itself and its surroundings (particularly between itself and its mother), is abandoned. This primal act of exclusion structures infant’s entire economy of difference, and afterwards turns into a recurring theme in telling

differences among things and assigning meanings, truths and identities. In contrast to the essentialist assumption of the original purity, Kristeva declares that purity is only attained subsequently by exteriorizing the contaminating element that she calls abject (1982:28). What exists before the idea of purity is a heterogeneous space, a space of randomly welded beings, movements, and emotions. Without syntax, in the chora there exist only temporary structures made up with “and”s. Yet the chora and the Euclidean space should not be thought as binary oppositions. West-Pavlov comments about this problem:

[T]o conceptualize pre-Euclidean and Euclidean spaces as binary oppositions is to impose upon the former the very oppositions which underlie the latter – and which the former, as fluid domain of connectivity, does not know. The debate between these two modes of understanding time, space and meaning, then, is not simply a function of ‘the way things are’. Rather, it is the result of a power struggle between two competing modes of understanding the world (2009:50).

It will be erroneous to assert that chora is beyond any meaning whatsoever, but then again, it will also be wrong to defend the opposite.

Lechte (2001:161) asserts that Kristeva’s work has been predominantly concerned with analyzing the unanalyzable, the inexpressible, and the heterogeneous; in other words with the radical otherness of individual and cultural life. The target of abjection is alien, since its production precedes the invention of the self and the other. Abject can never be fully comprehended within the difference economy of the self and the other; it is simultaneously both the self and the other, neither the self nor the other. One can say that abject is an irrational element somehow constructing the rationality. But above all, the abject, as well as beholding the power for constructing an identity, also has a power for destructing it. Therefore, even though it is an indispensable element for sustaining identity, it is often submitted to annihilation.

The purification attained by annihilation lasts until the consequent reconstruction of the identity, where another abject is invented or the annihilated abject returns as a phantom.

Beyoğlu, as a heterogeneous space, appeared as an abject figure both for the Western authors who visited Istanbul in 18th and 19th century, and for the authors and politicians of the Turkish Republic. In 19th century, Beyoğlu was declared as the model municipality of the Ottoman Empire; however after the declaration of the republic, it failed to fit into the paradigms of the modern nation state. Beyoğlu's identity abruptly became dysfunctional and transformed into a threat for the values of the modern state. The struggle for constructing and maintaining Turkishness can be traced in the 20th century history of Beyoğlu. The district has gone through violent attempts to redefine, homogenize, and purify its complexity; these acts of abjection targeted a wide spectrum of inhabitants, non-Muslim populations, transgendered subjects, street children, stray dogs, streets, buildings, or even signboards. One of the most interesting cases of abjection in Beyoğlu is the events that took place in Ülker Street in 1996. The abjection towards transgendered subjects is valuable for spotting and analyzing mechanisms of abjection.

Throughout the study, the relation between space, identity, and abjection will be discussed with the analyses of abjection incidents as such. These analyses also show that, there is a strong link between abjection and nostalgia; in several cases, nostalgia of the authentic Beyoğlu acts in cooperation with abjection as an apparatus for the essentialist identity construction in Beyoğlu. Concept of nostalgia describes a yearning for the past, always in idealized forms (Boym, 2001:xiii). Nostalgia seems

indispensable for the abjectifying parties in Beyoğlu, because it provides them a purified image that justifies the violence directed towards the targets of abjection.

The study attempts to disclose the intrinsic violence of essentialist identity building that necessarily operates by abjection in the context of Beyoğlu, and attempts to show that Beyoğlu has become a defiled reserve, which serves for performing and generating identities, yet mostly chauvinist, nationalist, religious, and moralist ones. In the name of purifying the space according to a single, stable, consistent, and absolute identity, essentialism actually lays the space bare². This fact calls for a critical stance towards the essentialist view of identity construction, where the abject figure is merely regarded as something to be annihilated. The study suggests that in order to stop this violence, the essentialist ontology should be rethought. Alternatively, being supported with an ethical dimension, the post-structuralist ontology provides a less violent and sustainable approach towards identity construction. Post-structuralism includes and embraces the excluded. The study aims to radicalize the concepts of abjection and chora; and by laying more emphasis on the problem of context and by introducing Deleuze and Guattari's concept of "concept", to attain an alternative conception of space that may be more functional to appreciate spaces with their intrinsic complexity.

² A term borrowed from Agamben's influential book *Homo sacer: sovereign power and bare life* (1998). The concept of bareness points to a person, life, or a thing that has been stripped off from its multiple identities by the sovereign power and left exposed towards attempts of termination, which require no punishment whatsoever.

1.3. Structure

The thesis is composed of five chapters. Following the introduction chapter, chapter two is devoted to the examination of Beyoğlu as a heterogeneous space from its foundation to this very day. After the portrayal of Beyoğlu, comes a survey of the discontent over Beyoğlu's identity in reference to the literary depictions of 18th and 19th century foreign authors and early 20th century Turkish authors. The second chapter, then concentrates upon the reasons why Beyoğlu, the once model district of the late Ottoman era, suddenly was transformed into an anti-model residing the sum of all low moral values. The successive incidents of exclusion show that, the district has developed a form of allergy towards its own kin throughout the 20th century. The chapter concludes with a discussion on the nostalgic identities which have emerged in the final quarter of the 20th century, as attempts of redefining Beyoğlu's identity as an integral part of gentrification.

The chapter three starts with the introduction of the concept of abjection, as an apparatus of purification. While discussing abjection, Kristeva's concept of chora is uttered for disclosing that abjection's primary target is heterogeneity. Then, nostalgia and abjection are linked as concepts in cooperation for the purification acts in Beyoğlu. The abjection acts in the 20th Century Beyoğlu are handled in two categories; in the first series of abjection, Beyoğlu has been targeted as a whole because it was seen as a threat for the values of the new state; and in the second series of abjection particular components of Beyoğlu has been targeted for assigning a purified identity to it.

The fourth chapter focuses on 1996 Ülker Street events, analyzing which abjection mechanisms have been exerted, and how transgendered body, as a perfected abject, correlates with heterogeneous space. Besides the abjection mechanisms, the identities pursued by different groups that took place in the events are analyzed. The abjection of transgendered community appears to aim at reconstructing Ülker Street as Muslim-Turkish and reflecting traditional family values of a nostalgic past. Yet, the study shows that purification of Ülker Street has never been fully accomplished.

In the fifth and concluding chapter, abjection is further problematized in reference to essentialist and non-essentialist ways of identity construction. Here, the ethical dimension of constructing identity through abjection is discussed. Departing from the violence of essentialism, an alternative perspective towards space is offered by replacing the concept of identity with Deleuze and Guattari's concept of "concept", which bears strong parallels with Kristeva's chora. Following Kristeva's argument that artistic experience, which brings out the semiotic, is a refined means of purifying the abject, this chapter also hints how architecture may be utilized to incorporate the abject.

1.4. Method

The study applies with a composite method; fiction and non-fiction books of foreign and Turkish writers from the past three centuries, newspaper articles, encyclopedias, paintings, photographs, and academic studies are referred to for

demonstrating the discourse of abjection on Beyoğlu. The second half of the 1980s and 1990s was a period when Beyoğlu's identity and future visions were widely discussed; therefore the main discussion centers itself mostly on the fourth quarter of the 20th century. However, some older materials are also incorporated for both portraying Beyoğlu's complex identity and falsifying nostalgic claims over its history.

For the Ülker Street events, personal interviews were conducted with the inhabitants and transgendered subjects. The interviews with the residents were conducted face to face in Ülker Street. But the interviews with the transgendered subjects were conducted sometimes face to face and sometimes through the internet. Only six of the inhabitants and nine of the transgendered subjects were interviewed, because most of the witnesses have moved out from the street and the ones who still live there are commonly uneager to talk about the events. Selek's interviews (2001) were also incorporated as raw material to be re-read in terms of an original linking between identity, nostalgia, and abjection.

2. IDENTITY OF BEYOĞLU

2.1. Historical Background of Beyoğlu

Today, it seems that cultural and art activities are what give Beyoğlu its identity; according to Istanbul Metropolitan Planning Bureau records, 39% of İstanbul's cultural and art activities take place in here (IMP, 2005). It has become a space that houses a vast spectrum of differences and events. Whereas, most of the Istanbulites and tourists cherish Beyoğlu's liveliness, cosmopolitan crowd, and the vast spectrum of choice it offers, intellectuals, politicians, planners, and architects cannot stop debating over its identity. From the color of pavements, to the order of signboards; from the questionable loyalty regarding restorations of historic buildings, to the socio-economic or cultural background of its residents; from the necessity or appropriateness of building a mosque in Taksim Square, to the precautions required for decreasing the crime rates, a variety of issues related with Beyoğlu come to be subjects of debate at a national scale.

There are numerous faces of Beyoğlu: decayed Beyoğlu, elite Beyoğlu, vulgar Beyoğlu, lively Beyoğlu, dangerous Beyoğlu, infested Beyoğlu, rebellious Beyoğlu, revolutionary Beyoğlu, unchaste Beyoğlu, degenerate Beyoğlu, festive Beyoğlu, bloodsucker Beyoğlu, pluralist Beyoğlu, chaotic Beyoğlu, inspiring Beyoğlu, Western Beyoğlu, fake Beyoğlu, and countless more. Astoundingly, all of these representations may hold true for the exact same space; if the history of the district is carefully investigated, it will be clear that each of them has or had relevant

grounds. The following sub-chapters focus on the history of Beyoğlu; due to the ruptural impact of the new modern nation state, the historical background of the district is going to be studied in two subchapters, as the pre-20th century Beyoğlu and the 20th century Beyoğlu.

2.1.1. Beyoğlu until 20th Century: A Heterogeneous Space

Beyoğlu has a fascinating historical background. It emerged first as an addition to Galata, an old settlement that even preceded the foundation of Constantinople. The archaeological findings show that Galata was an important settlement area in Greek Antiquity between 1200 BC- 195 AD (Baslo, 1998). However the district was not always known as Galata; Afife Batur (2001:1) declares that the coastal band stretching from the northern shores of the Golden Horn to Tophane and spreading to the slopes, was started to be called as Galata only after the 8th century AD. Formerly this area was known as *Sycae (Sykai)*, or as *peran en Sykais*, which means ‘on opposite shore’ (Batur, 2001:1). Following the Venetian and Genoese governance, *Sycae* was ruled by the Romans between 146 AD and 395 AD. Toward the end of this period, approximately around 330 AD, the settlement was bordered by citadels for further safety. After the foundation of Byzantium, with its busy port ruled by the Genoese, Galata functioned as a secured center of commerce for Constantinople. Due to the increasing volume of trade, Galata district grew rapidly (Figure 2.1.) and the constraining citadels were expanded accordingly (Baslo, 1998).



Figure 2. 1. Galata and Beyoğlu's stages of growth can be traced from the map, which was prepared by overlapping the findings of Baslo (1998).

Byzantines used to call the northern bank of the Golden Horn as Pera, which means “other-side” in Greek; the name referred to the region outside the Galata Citadels (Dikeç, 2002:227). At that time, Pera was still an agricultural area (Figure 2.2.). Owing to the security brought by with the Ottoman governance, especially after the 16th century, Galata started to expand beyond city walls towards the Pera Gardens. In contrast to Galata's orderly texture, Pera's early settlement resembled the country side (İnciyan, 1976:100). This prosthetic urban formation would in time start to be called as Beyoğlu. The name Beyoğlu comes from the Turkified name for “Baylo”, which was the name of a famous merchant whose palace was the most impressive mansion in the district (Kaptan, 1993:22).



Figure 2. 2. Vavassore's illustration of Istanbul and Galata (on the right side) in 1558 (Kayra, 1990:71).

After the Ottoman conquest, Sultan Mehmet II encouraged Greek resettlement within İstanbul, even re-established the earlier Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarchate; beside the Orthodox Greeks, he also welcomed Armenians and Jews to the city (Mansel, 1995). And having observed Galata's growth towards Pera, he demanded the upper portion of the walls of Galata be removed. He also agreed upon an arrangement with the Genoese, guaranteeing the privileges they had obtained during the period of the Byzantine Empire, and in return he demanded that they handled the district's acquisition of property to the Ottoman State. That was how Galata and Pera started to acquire special privileges under the Ottoman governance. For İnalcık that was one of the most significant consequences of the Ottoman conquest over İstanbul's urbanization (1996:34). The first Ottoman capitulations were those that Sultan Süleyman granted to French in 1535; then in 1580, the English citizens also secured the same rights as the French (Kuran, 2005:7). Owing to the

extensive liberty they brought, capitulations had a major impact on the forthcoming identity of Beyoğlu.

At the beginning, Beyoğlu did not develop according to a master plan. In the 16th century, Beyoğlu was a scattered district, where mansions of commercial colony members and ambassadors were built; but soon it was going to turn into Istanbul's international diplomacy center (Dökmeci and Çıracı, 1990:39). In providing space for multinational merchants, diplomats, and their employees, it will not be wrong to say that Beyoğlu was a district of diversity from its very foundation. Following the emergence of embassy buildings, ambassador residences, multi-lingual schools, churches of various sects, mevlevihane, monasteries, mosques, mansions³ of rich merchants, and retail shops selling imported goods started to eat up the Pera Gardens. Beyoğlu was also turning into a place for shopping and entertainment; together with the elite circle, Beyoğlu was at the same time serving for the sailors' and Istanbulites' demands for inexpensive entertainment.

From the 15th century to 20th century, the majority of Beyoğlu's inhabitants had French, Genoese, British, Greek, Armenian, Dutch, and Venetian ethnic origins; and religion-wise, beside the Turks –the name given to Muslims at those times- they were predominantly Orthodox Christian, Catholic Christian, or Jewish. However, this heterogeneity should be interpreted carefully. Edhem Eldem says:

What today is often retrospectively –and in a rather sentimental and nostalgic way- perceived as pluralism or even cosmopolitanism was in fact a diversity which could not possibly develop into any real integrative process... Ottoman state could only propose a formula of coexistence based on a systematic avoidance of potential frictions that might result from excessive contact and intermingling (Eldem, 2005:154).

³ Köşk and Konak.

Therefore, instead of quickly declaring that Beyoğlu was always a cosmopolitan district, it will be more accurate to point out that the district in Ottoman times was a space where people of diverse ethnic, lingual, and religious identities somehow lived peacefully side by side.

Rapid growth in Beyoğlu resulted in a crooked physical environment (Akın, 1998:22). Growth of the district was so overwhelming that whereas some of the writers were still using separate names for Galata and Beyoğlu, some of them started to merge them into one, under the name Beyoğlu (Tounefort, 1717:507-508). Grand Rue de Pera which is now known as Istiklal Avenue, although unpaved and narrowing down to 3 meters at some points, was the backbone of the district even back then. In 1696, authorities announced a building regulation for the both banks of the Golden Horn; according to this regulation all buildings would be built out of stone, clay or mud brick in order to reduce the fire hazards caused by wooden buildings (Cezar, 2002:354, Tanyeli, 2004:91). Dökmeci and Çıracı (1990) argue that this code had a major impact in the urbanization of Beyoğlu; after that, Beyoğlu's urban texture, started to get higher and denser, but unfortunately laying it more susceptible to fire.

Another major development that affected the course of Beyoğlu took place in the 18th century; along with the “Tulip Era”, the Ottoman Empire strategically inclined towards Westernization. This development had a boosting effect on the ever-increasing popularity of Beyoğlu. Whereas until the 1750s, urban texture resembled the Mediterranean towns, where buildings were arranged with empty spaces between them, in a way that they would not block the sea-view of each other

(Dökmeci and Çıracı, 1990:25); after 1750, Beyoğlu started to resemble European cities to a certain extent. The Grand Rue de Pera was elongated towards the future Taksim Square. Hospitals, libraries, military barracks, theatres, and a notable number of residential buildings were erected on the remaining gardens. This rapid urbanization once again led to emergence of crooked streets and irregular building clusters. At the end of the 18th century, Grande Rue de Pera was consisting of 3-4 story high buildings made of stone, brick, or stone-wood combination (Eldem, 1979).

In the 19th century, new transformations took place in Beyoğlu. The major change was that Ottoman economy got more and more integrated with the international capitalist system and as a result western values and aesthetics were widely introduced. During the first years of the century, Beyoğlu still looked like a suburb, filled up with villas in gardens. However, in the following years, as it gradually turned into Istanbul's center of finance, culture, shopping, and entertainment, the urban and architectural texture also adjusted to the change (Karpas, 2002:272). Along with the European style superstructure, a state-of-the-art infrastructure including tram and a short subway line was built. Beyoğlu's status as the new center for Istanbul was validated as the Ottoman palace was relocated into the Pera bank.

In 19th century Beyoğlu's population became predominantly high-income and non-Muslim (Shaw, 1979:268). The demographic change was related with the disintegration of the traditional "millet" system (Karpas, 2002:276; Uzun and Ataserver, 2009:2334). 1839 Edict of Tanzimat and 1856 Islahat declaration put an end to the autonomy of the non-Muslims, but also to the limitations that made non-

Muslims appear as second class citizens⁴ (Okutan, 2004:32). As a result of these developments, the Greek, Armenian and Jewish communities who had resided in the old city for centuries were obliged to move to Pera, and to the neighbor districts such as Şişli Kurtuluş and Maçka, which were growing northward of Beyoğlu (Karpat, 2002:276).

According to Ubicini, in 1849, Beyoğlu's population was around 30000, and was composed of approximately 1000 French, 6000 Greek, 1000 Maltese and Ionian, 1600 Austrian, 1000 Russian, and the rest Armenian, American, Dutch, Spanish, Persian, Toscan, Sartres, and Prussians (Ubicini, 1977:439). The records show that Beyoğlu's population in 1885 was 237.293⁵; and the religious composition was 21.8% Muslim, 7.4% Greek Orthodox, 12% Armenian Orthodox, 1.5% Catholic, 9.7% Jewish, 47% Levantines⁶, and under 1% Bulgarian, Latin, Protestant. 1882 and 1885 population counts show that in only three years, population of Pera increased 54%⁷ (Shaw, 1979:268).

In 1858, the Sixth Municipal District Office was established to undertake the administration of the precincts same as the present-day Beyoğlu. This office was going to have an immense influence not only on Beyoğlu's modernization, but also on reformation of Ottoman Empire's country-wide urban administrations. According to the 1860 plan prepared by the office, Galata citadels were demolished, giving way

⁴ Non-Muslim citizens were banned to wear clothes resembling the ones that Muslims wore; the heights of non-Muslims houses were not supposed to be higher than the houses of Muslims living around them; it was forbidden for a non-Muslim to ride a horse; the young non-Muslim men had to pay a tax to army (Okutan, 2004:32). According to a declaration of Selim III, Christians were obliged to paint their houses in black, and the jews in blue (Karaca, 1986).

⁵ In 1882, Istanbul's population was 873.575.

⁶ The non-Ottoman people who come from Europe and live in Istanbul.

⁷ In 1882 population count the Levantines were not counted, therefore when making the comparison the number of the Levantines was subtracted from 1885 population count, in order to avoid a possible misinterpretation.

to complete integration of the two districts; streets were widened for motorized vehicles; and the typical street pattern started to be composed of adjacent apartment blocks made of stone and brick (Demirakın, 2006:56). In 1865, foreigners were also accorded a right to purchase property and consequently many Levantines started to build their own buildings. Duhani writes that, from that moment on, it was a rare instance to see that Turks own properties on the Grand Rue de Pera (1984:77). According to the Census in 1885, this trend was so powerful that the number of Levantines exceeded the total number of all other populations (cited in Shaw, 1979:268).

Urban growth in Beyoğlu was interrupted twice; once with the plague that killed a huge number of the population in 1673 and later with an extensive fire, which burnt the majority of the buildings in 1870⁸ (Akın 1998:153). The 1870 fire killed hundreds of people and destroyed 63 streets and 3500 buildings, nearly two third of the district (Pardoe, 1836:67; Danişmend, 1955:232), from Taksim to Tepebaşı, Feridiye, Tarlabası, Balıkpazarı, Galatasaray, Parmakkapı and a great part of Cihangir (Tutel, 1998). After the fire, which provided a fresh start, the Sixth Municipal District Office introduced a building code that encouraged the construction of masonry buildings and played a key role in shaping of Beyoğlu's urban texture. The intention was to assign a new image to Beyoğlu as a European district that would also serve as a model. As the 19th century was closing, Beyoğlu became the urban model for the entire Istanbul; all modern urban improvements and services, only after they were successfully applied in Beyoğlu, were spreading to the rest of the city (Rosenthal,:164).

⁸ In 19th century, there were two other major fire-breaks which dated 1831 and 1847; but 1870 fire-break was obviously the one that swepted a huge number of buildings (Akın 1998:152-153).

At this period Grand Rue de Pera became an avenue for showing off, bestowing the first opportunity to women for being freely present within the public sphere. Due to the half-autonomy derived from the Capitulations, Beyoğlu offered a degree of freedom of thought and speech. Even though only 20-25% of Beyoğlu's population was Muslim at that time, many others came from other districts to enjoy the atmosphere. Some political groups like Young Turks, painters, writers, and intellectuals started to meet in Beyoğlu cafés. To sum up, 19th century Beyoğlu was prototypic and emblematic for the overall Westernization of Ottoman Empire.

For Beyoğlu, it was impossible to detect a single and pure stylistic character in terms of its architecture. L. Enault states that mid-19th century architects of Beyoğlu felt free to make use of an Italian Terrace, Parisien Façade, and then add a Maltese balcony, which would in total result in a great disparity for the architectural character of the district (cited in Akin, 1998:99). Monumental architecture in Beyoğlu, in form, function and ornamentation showed a great resemblance to its contemporaries in Paris, Vienna, and London. Not only Istanbulite architects, but also many talented architects who were educated in Paris Academy of Fine Arts contributed to the architectural expression of Beyoğlu.

Aside from the prestigious buildings like theatres, arcades, hotels and embassies, most of the apartment blocks were built by Armenian and Greek laymen⁹. The quality of the civil architecture is very much open to discussion. The ornamented facades frequently hide spaces which were cramped and confined. Tutel (1998) bases

⁹ In 1874 Amicis writes that nearly all Beyoğlu houses were built with wood, designed and built by ignorant and inexperienced architects and workers. Due to their low quality constructions which escaped control of the authorities, some of them used to crash down in the process of building, and many were unable to endure fire.

his impressions to the 1950 population count, where he visited many of the apartments: dark, depressing, oppressive, unventilated flats smelling moist. He also points out the influence of early modern flâneur culture, which explains the great concern about the facades. Talking about Beyoğlu's prestigious facades, one can easily state there was a powerful tendency towards historicism and eclecticism, yet the sources of this tendency were so vast; from Italian to Greek, from Arabic to English, there were countless historical architectural references; in addition, there were also various buildings reflecting Art Nouveau, Neo-Classical, Neo-Gothic and Orientalist styles (Çelik, 1993).

This brief historic background shows that, Beyoğlu had started as a parasite in Galata's body and in time possessed its host's body. Due to the extensive fires and changing plans and building codes, urban texture of Beyoğlu was reformatted several times in its history. Likewise, the composition of its population transformed many times; until the 20th Century, what remained uninterrupted in this unstable composition were the declining ratio of the Turks and the increasing ratio of the Levantines. The heterogeneity in the social composition seems to have found its double in the widespread hybrid and eclectic architectural style in Beyoğlu; Lefebvre's complex dialectics seems to be clearly apparent in the spatiality of the district. What was the binding dynamics that made Beyoğlu's heterogeneous social structure function for several centuries? Besides the pragmatic and economic benefits, obviously there were social and cultural reserves of Beyoğlu; and more importantly a form of cosmopolitan civility, which made cultural, ethnic, religious, and lingual differences amenable and allowed a civilized coexistence.

2.1.2. Foreign Literary Representations of the 18th and 19th Century Beyoğlu

Actually, Beyoğlu's heterogeneity was a characteristic, which was not peculiar to the structure of the Ottoman Empire (Figure 2.3.). Even though the empire was run by a governance of blood-bond successors, the dynasty had never been devoted to preserving the purity of their blood; quite the reverse, there was a pragmatic political strategy favoring the opposite. Ottoman Empire had a multi-lingual, multi-legislative and multi-religious structure that based itself on the millet system. Eclectic ways of Ottomans may also be traced in the imperial architectural style that mixed various styles of different geographies and cultures. Therefore, for many centuries, Beyoğlu's complex status was successfully justified and internalized. However with the introduction of modernity and the growing pressure of the concept of nation state, a discontent about Beyoğlu's identity started to grow.



Figure 2. 3. An illustration showing the heterogeneous crowd of Beyoğlu (Illustrated London News, 1879).

Ottoman Empire was seeking ways for overall modernization with attempts like Edict of Tanzimat; however it was not capable of dealing with the heterogeneity and inequality of its subjects (Makdisi, 2007:272-290). In 19th century, Beyoğlu started to be questioned by the Ottoman writers, due to the Western features it carried and to the extremely high ratio of non-Muslim citizens and Levantines in its population. Demirakın refers to several disapproving newspaper articles about the over-Westernized Beyoğlu and the Levantines who ruled Istanbul's economy, written by Muslim authors at the end of the 19th century (2006:80-82). For example, Şinasi criticizes the Sixth Municipal District Office due to the foreign names it assigned for the new streets; and Ziya Paşa talks about the increasing power of the Europeans (Levantines) within Istanbul's economy and the exclusion of the poor Ottoman Muslim citizens from the district with a worry that someday whole Istanbul would be handled to them; the daily newspaper *Diyojen* questions how and why the brothels in Pera were tolerated and accepted, linking it to the Sixth Municipal District Office's huge expenditures and liberal taxing policies (cited in Demirakın, 2006:81-89). These were some signs that Beyoğlu in the late 19th Century was started to be perceived as a threat to Ottoman lifestyle, culture, and economy.

From foreign perspectives too, Beyoğlu's identity was problematic. Beyoğlu, "the most polyglot town in Europe" was a meeting point for foreigners in the late 19th century (Walker, 1886:73). For several Western authors, who visited Beyoğlu at those times, the identity problem of Beyoğlu was evident. Romantic Chateaubriand (2005), as he was describing the 1807 Beyoğlu, observed a fundamental quality about the district; for him, the beauty and hideousness of the district equally lied in its ability to connect and separate two worlds: the East and the West. He stated that

this fact was the main reason behind the inconsistency between the people and places (Figure 2.4.). For the French writer Alphonse de Lamartine (1971), Beyoğlu apparently failed to possess a unique identity, character, or beauty.



Figure 2. 4. An illustration showing the diversity of lifestyles in Beyoğlu and the gap between the people and space (<http://prints-4-u.com/store/images/MAR1008/MAR1008697.jpg>).

In 1874, Edmondo de Amicis (1993:55) described Beyoğlu with a discontent about its heterogeneous features; he pointed out that all characteristics differentiated as he strolled each and every hundred meters in the precincts of the district; just as he felt as if he was in the slums of Marseilles, he turned a corner and fell into an Asian village; and the next corner took him to the outskirts of Trabzon. As he heard each different language, gazed into each face, or observed each architectural feature, he suspected that he was in a totally different country.



Figure 2. 5. Beyoğlu's diverse crowd from the early 20th Century (Gülersoy, 2003:23).

For Amicis, in Beyoğlu, fragments from France, colors from England, images from Russia were mingled within a single frame. He also criticized the overall urban planning; he told that once he stepped out of a theatre and found himself in a cemetery; he described fine streets surprisingly ending with an abysmal cliff. Gustave Flaubert's impressions (cited in Kaptan, 1993) were quite similar to Amicis'; he also talked about the vast variety in types of people, languages, mimics and clothes (Figure 2.5.). For him, with its dark and filthy streets, Beyoğlu was a degraded district with no distinct character at all. Famous American writer Melville, in 1857, likened Beyoğlu to the Tower of Babel (cited in Fortuny, 2009). Lady Montagu also called Beyoğlu "a place that very well represents the Tower of Babel; they speak Turkish, Greek, Hebrew, Armenian, Arabic, Persian, Russian, Sclavonian, Walachian, German, Dutch, French, English, Italian, Hungarian" (1825:204-205). She further articulated that:

[A]nd what is worse, there is ten of these languages spoken in my own family. My grooms are Arabs; my footmen French, English and Germans; my

nurse an Armenian; my housemaids Russians; half a dozen other servants Greeks; my steward an Italian; my janizarys Turks.

It is quite thought-provoking to see that Beyoğlu and Tower of Babel were linked by foreign authors, just to be negated instantaneously. None of these authors seemed to be eager to celebrate or at least to question how such a social structure had been functioning in peace for several centuries.

Foreign literary figures' discontent about Beyoğlu appears to be deriving from the ambiguous identity of Beyoğlu. All these writers desperately attempted to capture an essence to Beyoğlu, but failed in achieving it. They were surprised, repulsed, and horrified by the heterogeneity of the space they faced. Of course in these foreign writers' imagination there was an orientalist point of view that romanticized the East as a pure identity for building the West as a category. The common attentiveness of these writers towards the one and only district that resembled their home is symptomatic of that suggestion. Considering fascination of the same authors about the authentic Istanbul districts, which apparently called for more criticism in the sense of urban development, their discontent about Beyoğlu, seems to be deriving from its suspension between East and West, and its hybrid qualities which they could not succeed in categorizing. It was of course easier to enjoy oriental Istanbul; what they witnessed was more or less already in line with what they had been expecting. However, Beyoğlu was equally similar and dissimilar to what they categorized as the East and the West; and therefore constituted a burden to be dealt with by negation for the sake of their acquired Western identity.

2.1.3. 20th Century Beyoğlu: An Allergic Space

First quarter of the 20th century witnessed the few last touches to the architectural texture of Beyoğlu that we perceive today. In 20th century, although never has been officially declared, Beyoğlu undeniably became Istanbul's social, cultural and financial center. However, peaceful times in Beyoğlu was coming to an end; first the outbreak of the world war, then the exile of some intellectuals from Istanbul's Armenian community (Gürün, 2013; Walker, 1997:252), and later the brutalities of 1915 which were directed towards Armenians living in Anatolia gave way to distress among Levantines and non-Muslims citizens. After the defeat in the world war Istanbul was invaded by European armies and they were cheerfully welcome by the majority of Levantines and non-Muslims citizens living in Beyoğlu. After the Turkish War for Independence, and due to the growing idea of Turkishness that had ripened in the preceding 20 years, the Ottoman Empire was abolished on behalf of the Turkish Republic. The new Republic, unlike its predecessor, was fundamentally a unified cultural and linguistic entity. Although the ethnic diversity of Istanbul did not disappear completely, Greek, Armenian, and Jewish populations was going to play a less significant role in the republican Istanbul. The non-Muslim inhabitants of Beyoğlu were not safe anymore, bearing accusations of being traitors and even accomplices of the enemies. There was a growing resentment towards the wealthy non-Muslims, who not only had got away with the citizens' obligation to protect the Empire as soldiers, but also had been enjoying the economic advantages of Capitulations during the war (Maurits, 2003).

1923 Lausanne Treaty became a breaking point for the district; as the Capitulations were suspended, the majority of the international financial companies and the non-Muslim citizens, who were now accepted as minorities, had to abandon Beyoğlu. In line with the “Convention Concerning the Exchange of Greek and Turkish Populations”, which was part of the Lausanne negotiations, more than 2.000.000 Greek and Orthodox¹⁰ citizens were forced to abandon their country, excluding the Greeks who lived in Istanbul, Gökçeada and Bozcaada; and 400.000 Turks and Muslims were brought to Turkey, excluding the Turkish minority in West Thrace (Hirschon, 2003:107; Ahmad, 1993:94-95; Aktar, 2002). Many of the remaining non-Muslims moved to other fashionable districts, which provided a more comfortable lifestyle in improved apartment buildings with better sanitation services, heating installations, bathrooms and elevators. The vacuum of the non-Muslim population was filled by the migrants coming from provincial Anatolia. Turkish high-income elites and intellectuals also started moving to Beyoğlu. Gülersoy describes this situation with the analogy of “a honey comb emptied off of its honey and filled up with something alien to it” (Cited in Dorsay 1991:119-120).

Remaining minorities were tormented and expelled first with discriminating laws, later with the unjust 1942 wealth tax, and finally with the 1955 pogroms. Despite everything, Beyoğlu’s cultural, physical and social milieu prevailed by somehow adjusting to the new circumstances. After 1950s, fueled by urban factors like the sudden boom of Istanbul’s population, the increasing motorized traffic and the invention of new fashionable districts for the rich, Beyoğlu’s elite look faded. Some buildings collapsed, many streets resembled ghost towns, and most of the

¹⁰ Including Orthodox Turks.

abandoned buildings were invaded. But maybe the worst thing that had happened to Beyoğlu was the construction of the new Tarlabaşı Avenue at the cost of annihilating a large portion of the district, which would also divide the district into two.

Turkish Republic started to carry out a Turkification policy. Signs of Istanbul's Turkification may well be observed in changing names of the districts; for example "Phanariots" district was renamed as Fener; and the name İstiklal¹¹ was suited to the Grand Rue de Pera, symbolizing its salvation from the non-Muslim inhabitants. As a part of the Turkification project, Taksim Square was baptized with a nationalist monument and hereby declared Turkish for its future use as İstanbul's official square for national ceremonies. Eksen (2002) argues that Turkification, which has been applied with a coalition shared by all political parties, has been quite successful. By the end of the 20th century, in comparison to the population count of 1924, one can observe the dramatic drop in the population of non-Muslim citizens living in Istanbul: Greek-Turkish citizens from 200.000 to 3.000, Armenian-Turkish citizens from 80.000 to 50.000, Jewish-Turkish citizens from 70.000 to 25.000 (Eksen, 2002:39; Hirschon 2003).

From the mid-1980s to the late-1990s identity and future visions of Beyoğlu were widely discussed. According to Akin (1998:314), a reason for that sudden interest in Beyoğlu may be the intellectuals' urge for constructing a new Istanbulite identity and, for doing so, their tendency to identify with the old Beyoğlu culture. During this time span, the municipality came up with projects, which aimed at integrating the district back to the city life; İstiklal Avenue was pedestrianized,

¹¹ The word İstiklal means liberty in Turkish.

constituting a backbone for shops, cafés, patisseries, restaurants, pubs, and clubs, as well as bookshops, theatres, cinemas and art galleries. The tram which runs on Istiklal Avenue, between Taksim Square and Tünel, was also re-installed in the early 1990s as a nostalgic spice for reviving the historic atmosphere of the district.

Today, Beyoğlu is the most popular entertainment and shopping district for Istanbulites and tourists; and its residents come from all races, religions, ages and economic backgrounds. Most of the Istiklal Avenue carries a 19th century metropolitan character, with many elegant buildings. Many restoration projects have been carried out since the 1990s, and today only a few of the apartment blocks are in bad shape. The close vicinity of Istiklal Avenue and Taksim gained popularity once again, among intellectuals, artists, foreigners, authors, and high-income group of people. Today there is a vast heterogeneity among the visitors as well as the inhabitants of the district. The neglected neighborhoods such as Tarlabası has become home to Kurds, who were subjected to forced migration from their towns; and also to Gypsies, who have taken over the vacated and ruined houses of the non-Muslims. The state has encouraged the changing of hands of the property so that the history of Beyoğlu can be erased and it can only be shown as a touristic and cultural entity, not as a living entity with its intertwined ecology but merely as a decor composed of buildings of the past.

During the 20th century, the desire of a homogeneous district has brought about a kind of allergy into Beyoğlu. Allergy has a unique position in medicine; unlike infections there is no specific agent that causes one to become allergic. External entities, which a person has been living in contact with such as dust,

animals, pollens, or preservatives, may suddenly become causes for allergy. The word allergy comes from the Greek *allos*, which means “other”. Haraway (1991) argues that immune system discourse, and by the same token the disease discourse, are structured around the concept of identity and individuality. The primary task of the immune system is to identify the difference between the self and non-self, and to organize the defense against foreign intruders. Allergy occurs when the borders between self and other become transitive. In other words, what was once regarded as belonging to the self passes to the domain of the non-self that should be reacted against.

Allergy is a symptom indicating the fragileness of the order. In addition to Haraway's view that the immune system is an icon of symbolic and material differences, Mackenzie (1996) reads immunology as a discourse of immunity. The Latin root *immunis* suggests that immunity attempts to free the self from an obligation to others. But how does one set himself free from obligation to others? There are two possible ways to realize that; the first way is to avoid any possible interaction with the others, and the second way is to exclude or exterminate the others. Both solutions intend to obstruct the resonance between entities, as an act of restoring the hygienic environment, which is commonly the main reason for the emergence of allergy at the first place. As the order fortifies itself with isolative solutions, like hygiene, it becomes even more fragile to external forces, and when it becomes fragile, level of isolation gets even higher. That was exactly what happened in Beyoğlu throughout the 20th century; the immune system which attempts to hygienize the space has become more and more allergic towards its own components and to the heterogeneity.

2.1.4. Turkish Literary Representations of 20th Century Beyoğlu

The early Turkish literature seems to have inherited the tone of discontent in foreign writers' portrayals of Beyoğlu, but not as same; this time the discontent is driven by nationalist and modernist ideals, and dressed with a reference to Westernization and Turkishness. Beyoğlu has been the east for a western gaze and the west for an eastern gaze (Ortaylı, 1987: 98). For the Tanzimat and Meşrutiyet period reformers, Westernization and modernization did not denote two clearly separated phenomena. Therefore, Westernization was highly valued in line with the desire of modernization. Despite the discomfort that Western culture was not fully compatible with the Turkish culture, nonetheless it was accepted as an indispensable ally for the modernization project.

New literature style (Servet-i Fünun) was based on the western style of writing and in its main theme¹² was 'erroneous westernization'. For Uşaklıgil, as depicted by way of dishonorable characters like Behlül of Aşk-ı Memnu (1983/1899) and Behiç of Kırık Hayatlar (1944/1924), Beyoğlu was the embodiment of the Western lifestyle in Istanbul. In his Beyoğlu, all sorts of "high life" were dressed up with entertainment and shopping; the area staggered upon the border between consumerism, decadence, and depravation, and elegance, taste, and cultural blossoming coming with the Western lifestyle.

This cultural dilemma, in the representations of Beyoğlu, shows itself in almost all works of the most important authors who wrote during the early periods of

¹² Tevfik Fikret, Recaizade Mahmud Ekrem (Araba Sevdası), Ahmet Mithad Efendi (Felatun Bey'le Rakım Efendi), Halid Ziya Uşaklıgil were some significant names of the style.

the Turkish modernization. The cornerstone experience of the invasion of Istanbul in 1918, and openly celebration of this incident by the non-Turkish Ottoman citizens in Beyoğlu left an unforgettable mark in the way Beyoğlu was imagined and represented. For example, in the works of Nazım Hikmet (2002/1921), Salah Bırsel (2002/1983), and Semiha Ayverdi (2009/1973), Beyoğlu was represented as a corrupt district that should be pulled down to pay for its sins and then should be rebuilt as Turkish.

Along with the identity of Beyoğlu, the bohemian life and artist frequenters of Beyoğlu were also called into question themselves in the light of growing national cause (Bırsel, 2002/1983:202; Beyatlı, 1922). In this period, modernization was separated from Westernization. Total modernization was rejected and a selective attitude was adopted; it was better to select the technical/institutional out of what was envied in the Western and to preserve the national in the culture. It was a time that Western culture was fiercely criticized. Being the synonym of Western culture in Istanbul, at that time Beyoğlu's identity in literary works always appeared as morally corrupt and ideologically treacherous; and these two qualities were tightly knit into each other.

In the novels of the period, this double corruption of Beyoğlu was expressed through alcoholic, luxury and prostitution-addict, war-profiteer male characters (Mahir Bey in "Mahşer" of Peyami Safa, 1992/1924) and unchaste (Şadan in "Ben Deli Miyim?" of H.R. Gürpınar, 1981/1925; Leyla in "Sodom ve Gomore" of Y.K.Karaosmanoğlu, 1966/1928) or fallen female characters (Şefkat in "Kokotlar Mektebi" of H.R.Gürpınar, 1973/1928; İffet in "Bir Kız Böyle Düştü" of C. Ataç,

1946/1935). The moral deficiency of these characters was unquestionably rooted in their ill-desire for the Western lifestyle of Beyoğlu which was viciously charming.

Mustafa Hakkı Akınsel (1943), in his essay published in Çınaraltı magazine, declared Beyoğlu to be the center of alcoholism, prostitution and debauchery, blaming the district for contaminating the moral values of the Turkish youth (Figure 2.6.). Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar (1946) argued that Beyoğlu had nothing to do with the old Istanbul which was in harmony with nature, and that Beyoğlu was sole artificiality as a bad imitation of Western –Parisian- architecture.



Figure 2. 6. Cover of a book named "The Beyoğlu Chicks" from 1940s (Belser, 1963).

In *Istanbul: memories of a city*, Orhan Pamuk (2005) points the hypocrisy behind the contemptuous depictions of Tanpınar about this corrupted and impostor district, which contrasted the newly invented authentic Istanbul spirit. Even though Tanpınar and Kemal criticized Beyoğlu harshly, they both preferred to live in this

very district. The corrupting Westernization spirit materialized in Beyoğlu actually provided them a more liberated and comfortable lifestyle.

Such representations of Beyoğlu reflect an urge to deny any claim of Beyoğlu for representing Istanbul, which was attempted to be appropriated by a nationalist imagination. In Halide Edip Adivar's "Sonsuz Panayır" (1987/1946) Beyoğlu was portrayed as devoid of a soul and intolerably superficial. In "Anahtar" (1947) of Refih Halit Karay, the prime character, Kenan Bey depicted the life in Taksim with shame and contempt.

After 1950, the concern shifted from the Western to the rural invasion of the city and the cultural and spatial unfolding of this development in Beyoğlu. Beyoğlu was condemned for being the center of popular culture and infusion of the life of newly migrated rural population to Istanbul (Arkan, 1988). This profile change of the district was accelerated with the market economy and industrialization of cultural production. From these developments, Beyoğlu got the lion's share.

In 1960s, newly emerging entertainment sectors, like cinema industry, started to concentrate in Beyoğlu. Those sectors were viewed as the dirty means of making easy and rapid money and also causing immorality by allowing existence of ordinarily unacceptable lifestyles and identities. In Orhan Kemal's "Yalancı Dünya" (1989/1966) attraction of film industry typically lead young girls coming from Anatolia into ending up in brothels. The transformation of Beyoğlu into a district of cheap entertainment and night life, and meanwhile embodying the cultural manifestations of the changing city population, especially in 1980s a new Beyoğlu

nostalgia flourished. Taner (1984) mourned for the loss of the old Beyoğlu where gentle women and men were walking according to etiquette of the time. Some writers rejected this nostalgia; Atilla İlhan (1987), following another thread of reasoning, mentioned that all the neighborhoods surrounding Beyoğlu in its entirety was the remnants of the non-Muslim lifestyle which belonged to the late Ottoman period. Therefore he argued that it deserved to be demolished as the architecture of imperialism.

The 20th century literary representations of Beyoğlu, rest upon different sets of discourses echoing disgust towards the hybridization of Ottoman or non-Turkish past with Turkishness, the Western with the Turkish, urban with non-urban culture; and all these images call for immediate attempts of cleansing and purification. Above all, with the non-Muslim western values it embodied, the district symbolized an assault towards the authentic character of Istanbul and Turkishness.

2.2. Identity Crisis in late 20th Century Beyoğlu

As shown in the second chapter, due to its history full of ruptures, it is hard to assign Beyoğlu a unifying and all-encompassing identity. Until the final quarter of 19th century, the district grew rather spontaneously with interruptions, was burnt and rebuilt several times, and was inhabited by a diversity of ever-changing population profile. For the greater part of the 20th century Beyoğlu was seen as a space to be negated; it embodied what the Turkish Republic was not. But with the 1980s, in a period when capitalism and liberalism were on the rise, the district was rediscovered.

And the attempts of re-vitalization necessitated reinvention of the space identity. Of course, assigning a single identity to Beyoğlu was not an easy task; academicians, intellectuals, and literary figures went into a deep soul-searching. Berk (1990) describes Beyoğlu as an “Other-side”, a “fierce geography” that resists any attempts of taming and domesticating.

It seems that Beyoğlu’s identity crisis is somehow inherent in its physical limits as well. When talking about the limits of Beyoğlu, Kaptan (1993) mentions three sorts of limits which do not overlap due to their fluidity throughout the history: physical limits, administrative limits and cultural limits. It is not easy to tell the physical limits of Beyoğlu, because there is no consensus over where it starts and where it ends. Whereas some of the researchers tend to include a rather widespread territory that covers an area from Galata to Şişli, others argue that Beyoğlu merely consists of İstiklal Avenue and its close vicinity. According to Dökmeci and Çıracı (1990), the principal reason for this, may be that Beyoğlu has never been bordered by city walls or steep hillsides. Therefore, Beyoğlu it is more accurate to refer to the current municipal limits¹³ (Figure 2.7.).

¹³ According to the municipality, Beyoğlu district includes the following neighborhoods: Arapcami, Asmalı Mescid, Bedrettin, Bereketzade, Bostan, Bülbül, Camiikebir, Cihangir, Çatma Mescit, Çukur, Emekyemez, Evliya Çelebi, Fetihtepe, Firuzağa, Gümüşsuyu, Hacı Ahmet, Hacımimi, Halicioğlu, Hüseyinağa, İstiklal, Kadimehmet, Kalyoncukulluk, Kamerhatun, Kaptanpaşa, KatipMus.Çelebi, Keçeçipiri, Kemankeş, Kılıçalipaşa, Kocatepe, Kulaksız, Kuloğlu, Küçük Piyale, Müeyyetzade, Ömeravni, Örnektepe, Pirimehmetpaşa, Piyalepaşa, Pürtelaş, Sururi, Sütluce, Şahkulu, Şehit Muhtar, Tomtom, Yahya Kahya, Yenışehir.

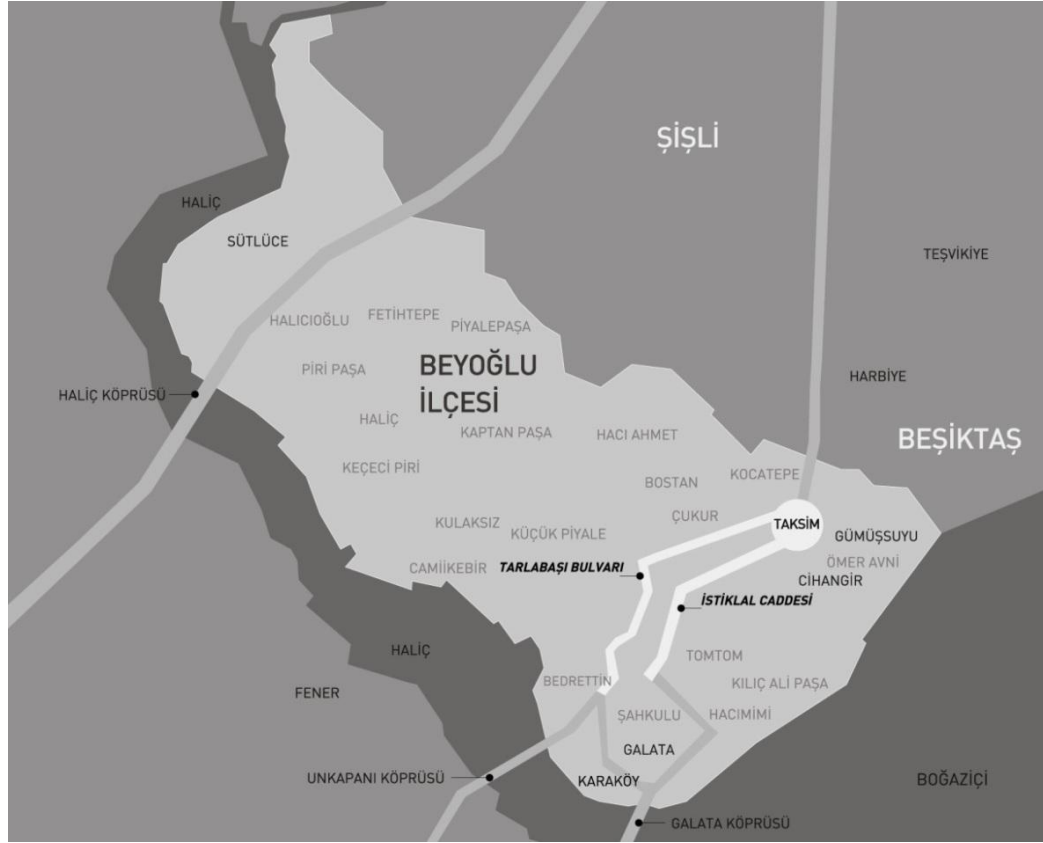


Figure 2. 7. The municipal limits of Beyoğlu and the locations which are cited in the study.

Dorsay (1991) mentions the difficulty of approaching Beyoğlu, in regard to its essence. For him, there are countless faces to it: a degraded representative of western civilization; an expandable bygone beauty under the invasion of barbarians; an open air museum that should be preserved, for it embraced some of the most important figures of Turkish literature; an inferior quality Soho for degenerate and cheap entertainment; a unique model for showing that a colorful mosaic of people coming from various ethnic, linguistic, religious, cultural origins can exist together in peace; a Sodom and Gomorra, a sin city where bodies and souls are exchanged into cash; a store window for the Turkish people to meet European lifestyles and values; a blood-sucker that exploited the money, honor, and appeal of Istanbul; a district without minarets and countless more.

These various faces indicate that Beyoğlu, not only today, but always has resisted a totalizing and pure identity. It is no surprise that it has been commonly associated with the Tower of Babel¹⁴, a literary figure that may be read as a didactic metaphor for the heterogeneity in a singularity. The discomfort with the identity of Beyoğlu was mostly about its complex and heterogeneous cultural, social, and architectural body. For the authors who complained about its degenerate identity, a space, where various religions, cultures, languages, architectural and clothing styles meet, obviously does not possess any value.

Another common concept which is widely associated with Beyoğlu is the labyrinth¹⁵. Berk (1990) advises his reader to fearlessly enter this labyrinth, this abyss, to walk in it without any destination, freed from the chains of the rationale which he calls as ‘monster’. Beyoğlu is a schizophrenic repertoire of stories, histories and events, which lead to construct infinite identities, yet at the same time carrying the risks of getting lost in it.

Despite the difficulty of spotting a kind of continuity, one can conclude to the fact that Beyoğlu has always been a heterogeneous district; ever since its very foundation, the district has come to accommodate a multi-cultural, multi-lingual, multi-social-class and multi-religious population. In addition to that, the district has witnessed numerous drastic urban alterations, population displacements, styles of architecture, and political transformations. Therefore Beyoğlu’s identity may only be approached with a reference to constant-change, plurality, and heterogeneity.

¹⁴ Ahmet Ümit, 2007:33 ; Ersin Kalkan, 2007:82 ; “a horizontal Tower of Babel” Yıldırım Türker, 2007:174 ; Dullaway; Melville ; İlhan Berk, 1990:91 ; Batur, 2001:10.

¹⁵ “A giant labyrinth without a gate“ Elif Şafak, 2007:76, “trap filled labyrinth, unable to find the entrance in its ever-changing facade” Yıldırım Türker, 2007:178.

2.2.1. Beyoğlu as a Burden in Relation to Nation Building

Social organization in the Ottoman Empire was based on the principle that Christians, Jews, and Muslims were allowed to be different without any pressure to be assimilated into any shared cultural norm (Figure 2.8.). In other words, Ottoman authorities did not attempt to compel the majority of Christians and Jews to become Muslims (Deringil, 1998). Excluding the period in the late 19th century when the ideology of Ottomanism emerged, there was no common culture or ideal that the empire's authorities expected its subjects to share. For the most part of its six centuries of existence, the Ottoman dynasty was more concerned in recognizing and maintaining differences among its subjects than producing sameness (Reynolds, 1995).



Figure 2. 8. Various flags standing side by side in the early 20th Century Beyoğlu (Üsdiken, 1999:66).

The dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and the declaration of the Turkish Republic led to a transition from an empire that granted group cultural rights and promoted multicultural autonomy, but denied universal civic, political, and social

rights of individuals, to a nation-state which theoretically granted universal individual rights, but denied group rights (Shafir and Peled, 2002:343-348). In the Ottoman Empire, Millet was the concept of division among people, usually defining their religion, but in the nation-state every citizen of the state had to belong to the Millet of the Turks by Constitution.

This change signifies Turkey's adaptation of the civic model, whether this is intended as praise by those promoting what they consider the liberating, enlightening secular aspects of the positivist, rational state, or as a critique of the state by those criticizing what they assert is a totalitarian regime. The latter recognizes how the civic model of citizenship may appear to be more inclusive than the ethno-national model, but that in practice it contains "inegalitarian and exclusionary elements". As Peter van der Veer argues, the rise of the nation-state makes new "forms of freedom and unfreedom, tolerance and intolerance possible" (2001:29).

The founders of the Turkish Republic jettisoned the organizing principles of the Ottoman society. By erasing the vestiges of a plural society, they expected a shared culture, national identity, and equal citizenship; instead of communities, individuals should become the pillars of the new society. End of the empire was also the end of tolerance towards differences; the founders of Turkish Republic took upon themselves the task of purifying the identities by disallowing mixed identities. The politicians of the Turkish republic intended to create a socially cohesive population and a unified economy. They desired a nation instilled with a new Turkish identity acquired through schooling in a Turkish language stripped of Ottoman hybridity and Turko-centric history lessons, serving in the national army, and socializing in a

culturally homogenized reality (Zürcher, 1995:198-199). Citizens were taught to distinguish difference, which was equated with foreignness, from sameness, which meant belonging to the nation. Non-Muslims in Turkey were to declare their allegiance to being Turkish and the Turkish state, assimilate into Turkish culture, speak Turkish, and adopt the national consciousness in place of their own communal consciousness (Mardin, 1993:367-371).

Beyoğlu's trouble in fitting to the new nation-state was principally deriving from its heterogeneous existence. The heterogeneity that was structured by the millet system was closer to cosmopolitanism, than nationalism. In the 19th century, life in Beyoğlu became more cosmopolitan and hybrid as the district was increasingly exposed to a diversity of people, ideas, and practices from many lands. Dwight says:

In Constantinople the average Levantine maybe studied any day in the coffee houses of the Petit Champs of Pera, which he frequents as the Venetian does the Piazza of St.Mark's [...]. He also has among his amusements the club, because English civilization demands it. There he gambles for high stakes, because Italian civilization demands the thrill of appeals to chance. He has also the theatre and the concert hall, because French civilization demands the society drama and the singing of girls as a set-off and accompaniment to light tippling. He has also the beer garden in all its forms because German civilization requires that the pleasures of life shall be mixed with beer. (cited in Yumul, 2009:60)

Peter Nyers (2003:1072) argues that, thinking of cosmopolitanism upsets much of the received knowledge one possesses over nationalism; cosmopolitanism disregards the particularistic logic of nationalism, with its imagined spatial communities and territorialized identities. That was why, for the new nation state, Beyoğlu simply constituted an analogy of the empire to be negated and fought with.

2.2.2. Nostalgia and Identity Construction

After 1980s the elites of Beyoğlu, who declared themselves as the genuine owners of the city, started to complain about the crowds that polluted the district (Bali, 2002: 121-122). In that period discourse on Beyoğlu turned into a series of complaints about how high-culture cuisine of the district has been replaced by fast-foods or by the kebab culture; or how the chaotic assemblage of signboards and billboards shadow its architectural character; or how the prostitutes, transvestites, folk song bars, stray dogs, street children, crooked pavements, disloyal restorations, drug dealer Africans, abandoned buildings, Islamic fundamentalist population, refugees, or loudly played pop songs were polluting Beyoğlu's glorious cultural heritage.

According to some popular media writers like, Mine Kırıkkanat (1997), Rauf Tamer (1992), Neşe Düzel (1992), and Serdar Turgut (1995) Beyoğlu and Istanbul was invaded by a vulgar rural culture; and they do not hesitate to insert harsh comments in their proposed solutions which were decorated with a tone of despise. For the nostalgic authors, the riff raff, degenerate, low down people, mostly coming from the province should be held responsible for the apparent decline of Beyoğlu.

For the eyes of an essentialist, each corner of Beyoğlu resides an element of surprise, an inconsistency, or a degenerative feature that spoils its identity; it has been polluted by elements alien to it. Recovering its authentic identity is only possible in reference to its essence, and in order to track down its bygone essence, the history of the district should be examined. Unfortunately this is not a very easy

quest, even considering the simple fact that Beyoğlu was not an autonomous entity at its very foundation; it was born as a parasite attached to the body of Galata.

During a time span that lasted from mid-1980s to the late-1990s, there was a mainstream tendency that associated Beyoğlu with nostalgia. Nostalgia in Beyoğlu was boosted with Dalan's¹⁶ project, which required a large portion of Tarlabası to be demolished for the sake of a wider avenue. The discussions between the Chamber of Architects and Dalan about the project were carried to the press, and evoked a discussion over Beyoğlu's "genuine" identity. People started talking about their personal recollections about the street, without any reference to historical facts. These recollections were mostly about how blissful, civilized, and elite Beyoğlu was, and about how the owners of these recollections themselves were once a part of this perfect picture. Apparent traces of nostalgia may also be observed in titles of some popular books written about the district: "Oh Beyoğlu, Poor Beyoğlu" (Birsell, 2002), "The Times when Beyoğlu used to be Pera" (Duhani 1984), or "When Beyoğlu was Beyoğlu" (Tutel, 1998).

Nostalgia either functions with a lack of historical knowledge, or with a deliberate distortion of historical facts. Due to this fact, many authors complained about this tendency that turned Beyoğlu's history into a fairy tale or a paradise lost, in which noble and elite people used to lead a *crème de la crème*, happy and uncorrupted lives (Türker, 2007; Scognamillo, 1990; Dorsay, 1991; Kozanoğlu, 1992). These stories were subjective, but never were the stories of unrepresented "others": they were pure, consistent, and reductive.

¹⁶ Mayor of Greater Istanbul between 1984-1989.

During the state of nostalgia, one assesses the present in reference to a purified construction of the past. The past, here, is a time/place when/where an identity overlapped with the thing or space. This overlapping is the motive of the past bliss and its lack, the motive of the present grief. Nostalgia is different from melancholia in that sense; whereas melancholia derives from an obscure object of lack, in the state of nostalgia one unambiguously and assuredly objectifies the lack. Nostalgia is a complex concept due to its double reference; not only because both past and present are embedded in it, but because it also presumes an unbridgeable difference in-between them.

Kaptan (1993) argues that the “old Beyoğlu nostalgia” rests upon a crisis of identity, a form of hysteria that mostly non-Istanbulite snobbish people make use of for constructing themselves a noble personal history and identity. For tailoring nostalgic identities for themselves, they do not hesitate to distort the history as they wish. Nostalgia in Beyoğlu should not be evaluated as a simple, naïve, and harmless mood. In the “old Beyoğlu nostalgia”, the difference between past and present always points to a corruption; the ideal state has been contaminated by some alien entity; and this alien entity is held responsible for breaking the unity between the pure identity and the thing becomes a target of hate, disgust and fear. Nostalgia in Beyoğlu always comes with a judgment against an alien element. Enis Batur’s observations support this statement:

There are those who if able would expunge Beyoğlu from the city map, who for more than a quarter of a century have proposed the sigh of ongoing as a criterion for judgment. Such nostalgia should have been banished, not because there are no sufferers from the malady, but because it diminishes and approaches reductively the avenue as well as the assessment of the different life style, which seeks to expand out from it into the rest of the city. (2001:6)

Beyoğlu is not what it used to be, because one cannot walk through its streets by avoiding the smell of food; or because every street is invaded by people migrated from the provincial Anatolia; or because there are drug dealer immigrants everywhere; or because prostitution is going on in the buildings, in which elite and cultivated people used to live.

Another problem with the nostalgia in Beyoğlu is regarding the infamous past of the district, are we really ready to revive it? What exact time should one locate this lost paradise of nostalgia? Is it the Beyoğlu of the 1850s where wolves used to pay visits to the Taksim Square? Is it the times of plagues and fires? Who are the people who emptied or filled up the honeycomb anyway; are they the Genoese who left in 1700s, Muslims who mostly moved out in 1800s, White Russians¹⁷ who left in 1930s, Bulgarians, Jews, or Greeks? If this process is going to involve some kind of filtering according to our present values, isn't it going to be creating a "never existed district" of our dreams in the mask of conserving Beyoğlu? Kaptan (1993) says that he fears this discourse will make Beyoğlu arrive at a nightmarish future while trying to return to a past. Scognamillo (1990) also positions himself against any nostalgic craving; he says that even if a fantastic possibility of reincarnating the past would have existed, he would have opposed it; because this would break the past and future continuum of the district. He believes that any negative aspect has the potentiality of turning into something positive in time.

¹⁷ Three million White Russians, who had escaped from the Soviet Revolution, lived in Istanbul for years.

2.2.3. Nostalgic Identities versus Historic Facts

Scognamillo (1990) draws attention to the ambiguity of nostalgia; because it does not necessitate any reference to historical facts, the manifestation of nostalgia floats freely with the transformation of the idealized image depending on the ever-changing social values and expectations. Kuban says:

Ruined monuments and forms that are long lost make the urban historian feel nostalgia for the unrecoverable world of a bygone era. So much effort and so much waste seem, in retrospect, irrational. In order not to succumb to a feeling of despair in the face of such irrationality, historians, as well as urban historians, prefer to speak of lost paradises, great projects, vast visions, and the philanthropy of monarchs, while they tend to overlook devastating acts of destruction and the resulting desolation experienced by people... The history of Istanbul is one of those histories of lost cities, imaginatively reconstructed by historians. Such reconstructions are always single-dimensional (1996:1).

This single-dimensional reconstruction of a nostalgic history or identity derives from a belief that past times were simpler, purer, and stably determined by some pure political, religious, philosophical, or economic factor.

The pure history produced by the nostalgic point of view never matches with the historic facts. Yüksel Baştuñç (1993) notes that, none of these “tales” covers the minor history of the Christian girl who used to work in the bookstore just for food and bed; the prostitutes who were kept as slaves; the centuries where Beyoğlu lacked an overall planning codes; or plagues, fires, or any ruptures. It is not possible to refer to the physical origins of the district, because they do not exist anymore; the physical traces of its several hundred years history were simply eroded by fires and demolitions, and what the physical texture of today’s Beyoğlu has to offer barely dates back to the second half of the 19th century. Throughout its history, Beyoğlu has also been submitted to numerous population movements with or without self-intent;

as a group left another one arrived. One can track the variety of stylistic architectural influences that these populations left as traces.



Figure 2. 9. The eclectic architectural style and diverse crowd of Beyoğlu in the late 19th Century (Deleon, 2002:67).

The photographs from the early 20th century indicate that Beyoğlu was not a district where gentlemen would not go out without their ties and ladies without their hats on; these images contain milkmen, street vendors, stray dogs, rich and poor all at once (Figure 2.9.). Beyoğlu was never the center for arts as the people suffering from nostalgia claim; even thinking about dates not so distant, one cannot talk about countless numbers of bookstores or libraries in Beyoğlu. Baştunç (1993) informs that there was not a single art gallery until the French Embassy opened one within its chancellery in 1940s. The historic facts in Scognamillo's study about the history of prostitution in Beyoğlu (1994) constitute yet another set of evidence to the fact that Beyoğlu was never purely decent and elite. So, it is necessary to reevaluate claims of the nostalgic discourse on Beyoğlu as a part of another cause: purification of Beyoğlu through abjection.

3. BEYOĞLU AND ABJECTION

3.1. Concept of Abjection

In *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, Kristeva (1982) goes into broad analyses on an abysmal entity that she calls “abject”. Abject is an entity, which provokes an amalgam of negative emotions like horror, disgust, hate, revulsion, and loathing, because it is delivered as a threat towards the existence of the subject. The process of experiencing and defeating the threat is called abjection. However what causes abjection is not the lack of cleanliness or health but is something that disturbs identity, system, or order; something that does not respect borders, positions, or rules; something in-between, ambiguous, or composite; someone who is a traitor, a liar, a criminal with a good conscience, a shameless rapist, or a killer claiming that he is a savior (Kristeva, 1982:4). During abjection, the subject feels itself as being subsumed by what he/she cannot be able to subsume by rationale; the crisis becomes so unbearable that, as a reflexive act of self-defense, the subject tends to annihilate it. Menninghaus notes that disgust is not just an ability to say no, but even more a compulsion to say no, an inability not to say no (2003:2).

Abject has an apparent kinship with various concepts in contemporary philosophy, such as: Freud’s *uncanny* (2003), Lacan’s *jouissance* (1995), Deleuze’s *simulacrum* (1990), Žižek’s *symptom* (2001), or Derrida’s several terms like *parasite* (2001), *gap* (2001), *pharmakon* (1981), or *trace* (1997a). Even though these concepts derive from different conceptualizations, somehow they all correspond to rebellious

entities or states having the power to destruct a truth, meaning, or identity; but then again, at the expense of their temporary existence, they paradoxically retain the power to reconstruct. Among all these thought provoking concepts, Kristeva's accent on the inherent violence of abjection makes this concept more appropriate for understanding the violent exclusion mechanisms, which has been operating in Beyoğlu.

3.1.1. Abjection and Identity Construction

Abject is a negative concept; on the other hand it has an indispensable role in the primal identity construction. Kristeva conceptualizes abject as the precondition of the subject; and she defines primary abjection as a process that the infant necessarily goes through (1982:13). During the pre-subjective stage the infant feels itself as one with the mother; but inescapably there comes a time when the infant starts to discern things more clearly and it perceives the mother both as the other and as a part of itself simultaneously. In order to cope with such an insecure state, the infant abjects the mother, who has become an emblem for the undifferentiated existence, and declares itself as subject. In other words, by casting away this ambiguous element, infant declares itself an identity. Yet, after this archaic formation, abject does not cease to exist (Kristeva, 1982:14); for the rest of the subject's life, abject unfolds in various ways in incidents which remind the primal threat. When it returns, it haunts the subject as a traumatic reminder of the pre-subject world, where the ultimate differences between self and other or inside and outside dissolve. The primary abject is the agent that sets infant's economy of difference and constructs the world of the

subject and its objects. However, as soon as abject sets the economy of difference, it is left outside of it; it is always something in-between (Kristeva, 1982:1). For the rest of the subject's life, the abject either becomes unrecognizable or, when it surfaces, it appears as something to be eliminated; it cannot go on being an abject and therefore has to be altered or adapted.

It is crucial to acknowledge that the mother figure here is the very mother, but also a metaphor for "*chora*" (Kristeva, 1982:14). In ancient Greek, *Chora* corresponds to the concept of space. It was conceptualized by Plato in *Timeus* (1973) as a passive receptacle that takes forms only with a procreative touch of content assigner, in other words, with rationality. As soon as identity, truth, or meaning emerges out of it, chora is repressed. Elizabeth Grosz argues that the civilization and the symbolic order are "possible only at the cost of the silencing, the phallicization of the maternal chora" (1989:49).

However, the symbolic order is never fully stable; from time to time, echoes of this primal repression arise and the subject meets the residues of this archaic process. In such a state, the subject grasps its position as a point of no return. Whenever the residues appear, subject reacts against it by echoing the archaic "No". By way of this negation, the subject restores itself and its entire system of thought. Thus, identity is constructed not with a "yes", but with a never-ending series of "no"s. It is this unceasing act of negativity, a kind of self-defense that sustains an identity. As it was brilliantly exposed by Levi-Strauss (1968), Bataille (1990) and Douglas (1991), this "No!" is the power of exclusion that we also come across in an

act of sacrifice, a baptism, a circumcision ceremony, or an exorcism which constructs the symbolically approved “proper body”.

Proper body is the symbolic body, which is over-coded by a master narrative that bestows a sense of self. In other words, abjection process abjectifies the naked/mundane body and purifies it through dressing it with a self. By way of this performance of abjection, body and self may differentiate; and hereby body becomes the home of the soul. Even if body is domesticated by ceremonies, from time to time, it is haunted by what assumed to be left outside. As soon as the body is purified, the soul turns into a guardian who sustains its purity; and a sense of ordering is set in motion against filth, excess, body wastes, in short against anything which threatens the borders and purity of the self. Douglas analyzes the dirt and ordering system:

If we can abstract pathogenicity and hygiene from our notion of dirt, we are left with the old definition of dirt as matter out of place. This is a very suggestive approach. It implies two conditions: a set of ordered relations and a contravention of that order. Dirt then, is never a unique, isolated event. Where there is dirt there is system. Dirt is the by-product of a systematic ordering and classification of matter, in so far as ordering involves rejecting inappropriate elements. This idea of dirt takes us straight into the field of symbolism and promises a link-up with more obviously symbolic systems of purity. (1991:31-32)

For the sake of “clean” self, body fluids like urine, blood, sperm, or excrement which remind the archaic sense of body preceding baptism turn into abjects. Not only that, the structure also proliferates other abjects such as cadaver, wound, garbage, some food, filth, or objects and spaces that cause phobias.

Kristeva states that “the time of abjection is double: a time of oblivion and thunder of veiled infinity and the moment when revelation bursts forth” (1982:9). Therefore, at the instance that it emerges, abject is taken care of by expulsion,

annihilation, vomiting, exclusion, loathing, fear, horror, phobia, purification, exorcism, catharsis, or hatred. Abject momentarily appears to be dismissed, just to catalyze the identity, meaning, or truth.

Mary Douglas states that, “there is no such thing as absolute dirt: it exists in the eye of the beholder” (1991:2). Analogously, with a twist of context any ordinary thing may turn into an abject or vice versa. Hair of the lover may be utterly appealing for a lover, but there is always a possibility that it may become an abject, for instance when it starts swimming in a bowl of soup; or the other way round, a building in ruins may be labeled as haunted by the inhabitants of a quarter for decades, but the following day it may be declared as cultural heritage by the Ministry of Culture and be embraced by the same inhabitants. What causes abjection is always a sort of irrelevance, an incompatibility between identity and spatio-temporality. Therefore all bodies and spaces are always and already corrupted, inhabited by something alien. Nothing is eternally immune to being subjected to abjection, and no abject is bound to this status for eternity. There is no abject in itself; there are only circumstances. Everything is susceptible to the inescapable crises of the structure which calls for an abject.

Abject has a complex nature; as an inter-being, it possesses not one, but at least two. In other words, heterogeneity is undeniably inherent to abject. This is the reason why abjection is always directed to heterogeneity. Kristeva’s chora is actually more than the mother alone; it is an inter-state where mother and child are indiscernibly one. This is a space of the indiscernibility. Chora is the “potential” where all possibilities free from any signification exist: a space without any identity

yet embodying infinite identities. Beyoğlu is a space that brings chora to mind due to its heterogeneity and infamous resistance to be captured within a single identity; and of course due to its resourcefulness to produce infinite identities.

3.1.2. Abjection and Space

Kristeva explains abjection as a state, where the border becomes an object. She goes on using many other spatial terms while conceptualizing the abject: “an abyss without any possible conveyance between its two edges” (1982:47); an “interspace” (48); a “threshold before death” (55); or “the margin of a floating structure” (69). As an inter- being, abject is something neither inside nor outside; it is a “position-less” thing that emanates from “an exorbitant outside or inside- it escapes the scope of the possible, the tolerable, the thinkable” (1). It threatens the subject’s unequal equilibrium between inside and outside; but also, this unpositionable entity draws the limit between the interiority and exteriority. The interiority and the exteriority of an identity can equally be subsumed by the economy of identity; there are men and women (who are not men), but there are also “things” which are “neither men nor women” and “either men or women”; in other words there are “things” that rebels against the presumed categories.

Even though limits construct an identity, they cannot be subsumed by the rationale (Foucault, 1979). As abject emerges, it draws subject toward the limit where meaning collapses. “Outside” is the defining limit, or exteriority, of a given symbolic universe, one which were it brought within its realm, would destroy its

integrity and coherence. What is set outside from the symbolic universe is precisely what binds that universe together through its exclusion (Butler, 1997: 179). When faced with an abject, the subject feels itself as “an empty castle haunted by unappealing ghosts- ‘powerless’ outside, ‘impossible’ inside” (49).

The limit is not space, but spacing (Derrida, 2004). Abjection, when thought in terms of space, suppresses spacing in favor of an interiority, or in other words produces the effect of space by suppressing spacing. The abject organizes a space in which it can never simply be placed; yet sustaining the very topography it fractures. Therefore, as an agent for becoming, abject has a power to problematize essentialism, by reminding the inescapability of change and the effect of the context on identities. Derrida says:

Spacing is the impossibility for an identity to be closed on itself, on the inside of its proper interiority, or on its coincidence with itself. The irreducibility of spacing is the irreducibility of the other (2004:94).

Derrida’s reading of the Platonic chora as something which defies the logics of non-contradiction and binaries, implies the internal heterogeneity and instability of all structures (1997b:15): neither sensible nor intelligible, but a third genus which escapes conceptual capture.

Due to its contribution in identity construction, space is always the target of abjection. The correlation between the body and self can be translated into the one between the space and identity. The identity/sign dresses up the space/chora as a neutral receptacle so that it is bestowed an essence. Spatial identity is attained by a political decision on what the space should exclude rather than what it should

include. In other words, just like any other identity, space identity is constructed with a “No!”

In 1871 Carl Otto Westphal describes the schizophrenics’ spatial experience with insightful details (Vidler, 1992). Schizophrenia is what the modern man fears the most; because it is simply rebels against the Cartesian conceptual personae of modernity that founds itself on rationality. According to Westphal, for the schizophrenics, space seems to be a devouring force; he calls this space as the “dark space”. He continues:

Space pursues them, encircles them, digests them in a gigantic phagocytosis. It ends by replacing them. Then the body separates itself from thought, the individual breaks the boundary of his skin and occupies the other side of his senses. He tries to look at himself from any point whatever in space. He feels himself *becoming space, dark space* where things cannot be put. He is similar, not similar to something, but just *similar*. (Cited in Vidler, 1992)

It is rather obscure whether these are the characteristics of the schizophrenic or they are the reasons why we call a person schizophrenic. However, the citation reveals many insightful clues about the modern experience of space. Descriptions such as “becoming space”, “dark space”, “being occupied”, “things that resist being put”, “any point whatever”, “breaking the boundary”, “the body separated from thought”, “similarity without models” or “other side”, may well be regarded as a sum of the common properties attributed to the abnormal experience of space.

Vidler (1992) employs the citation in describing the dark space but it can also be read for analyzing the modern space perception; because, due to the fact that the self can only be attained through the prosthesis of the “non-self”, or in other words the “other”, we have to acknowledge that when we talk about “abnormal human beings”, we actually talk about normal human beings. Therefore, from Westphal’s

definitions, a normal conception of space may well be drawn by a simple reversal of the descriptions: “being space”, “illuminated space”, “being occupant”, “things which are put”, “single and defined viewpoint”, “obeying the boundary”, “the body in unity with thought”, or “inside”. Modern man is in perfect balance between the body and soul, in other words between the form and content; he occupies and controls the space actively; he knows (enlightened and enlightening) through his eye in his perfectly lit space; he perfectly matches to the modern man definition of Heidegger (1976), as the immobile master of his “world as picture”; he always tends towards being instead of becoming; he reads the space objectively rather than subjectively; he knows and obeys boundaries and property ownership; he mimics a preceding absolute model; he is always interested in interiority; and he occupies the inside of the common-sense and domestication with no reference to the outside. Then the descriptions of the dark space are the sources of spatial abjection for him: darkness, hybridity, lack of control and orientation, and submission.

3.1.3. Concealed Cooperation of Nostalgia in Abjection

It is possible to read abjection in cooperation with nostalgia within the context of late 20th century Beyoğlu. One may still witness minor acts of abjection if he/she pays attention to the chit chat among people in Istiklal Avenue; immigrants, smell of kebab, transvestites, signboards, pavements, a recent restoration, street vendors, provincial people in the crowd, rockers, punks, anarchists, protestors, a restored street, loud music, and countless more may become targets of abjection. The

alien entities, which were announced as scape goats by the nostalgic discourse on Beyoğlu correspond to abject figures (Figure 3.1.).



Figure 3. 1. Tan Oral's caricature discloses how abjection operates in the crisis of identity; the more foreign signboards, the more Turkish flags (İstanbul Dergisi, 1998:25).

In such incidents, which are triggered by an impression of irrelevance, inconsistency or disloyalty towards the identity of Beyoğlu, nostalgia is always at hand. The most common nostalgic image in Beyoğlu refers to an ideal district where men and women used to go out with their best outfits, wearing expensive fragrances, and enjoying the company of a homogeneously elite crowd. In this image people would go to a café, later to a theatre, then to a classical music concert and chat about their impressions on their way back home. Of course in comparison to such an

idealized image, everyday life in today's Beyoğlu looks degraded, corrupted, and vulgar. By this way Beyoğlu turns into a spring of abject figures. Kaptan labels the actors of such abjection as “the present-day followers of Ittihat ve Terakki” (1993:10), who strive for cleansing Beyoğlu from its heterogeneous elements by domesticating it as an elite spot for art venues, arcades and cafes.

The reason why nostalgia and abjection go hand in hand in Beyoğlu is that, nostalgia acts as a shield to cover and justify abjection; by hiding behind an invented pure history, the otherwise unthinkable can be thought and unspeakable can be spoken. When it comes to abjection there is no control over the volume of the voice, or the rigor of the reaction; just because abjection is considered as a self-defense. *Lahmacun* or rude people are not idiosyncratic to Beyoğlu; but they appear as irrelevant, disgusting, and unholy in Beyoğlu. Why does the smell of *lahmacun* not corrupt any other part of Turkey but Beyoğlu? Why are the Turkish people so sensitive about Beyoğlu's identity, when they do not care much about any other spatial identities? What is it with Beyoğlu that triggers abjection?

3.2. Abjection in the 20th century Beyoğlu

Moving from the historical data in the previous chapter, it can be concluded that the manifestation of abjection related with Beyoğlu is twofold. In the first category, Beyoğlu, in the works of 19th century foreign authors and early 20th century Turkish authors, was abjectified in its entirety for attaining identities. Whereas the foreign literary figures abjectified Beyoğlu for attaining a Western identity, Turkish

literary figures did for a purified national identity. The abjection incidents serving for a national identity was not limited to the early Turkish authors' body of work. Until 1960s, the entire district was a nation wise target of fear, hate, and disgust. Whereas Turkey's young capitol Ankara and its citizens devotedly served in the nation building as positive models, both spatially and bodily (Bozdoğan, 2001); Beyoğlu was translated into a metonymy for the Ottoman Empire's decadent capitol Istanbul and its debauched inhabitants, providing a counter-model to be negated. Beyoğlu appeared as a counter-model that corresponded to everything the new Republic's values, spaces, and citizens were not.

In fact, the case is more complicated than that; abjection was seldom directed to Levantines or tourists, but mostly towards the Greek-origin Turkish citizens. This is because, these citizens cannot be categorized in reference to the national identity; in other words they are inter-beings stuck in between the "us" and "them". Another interesting characteristic to abjection in Beyoğlu is that even if the abject is chosen due to its heterogeneity, it is always digested as something purely and homogeneously evil. For example, Beyoğlu's evil appeal mesmerizes naïve and pure Turkish girls and makes them go astray in a considerable amount of the early republican literary works.

The second manifestation of abjection related to Beyoğlu, derives from its complex spatial features that contrast with the desire of assigning it a pure identity. Beyoğlu's heterogeneous components become the targets of abjection for attaining a purified Beyoğlu/Istanbulite identity. Here, Beyoğlu is not seen something to be negated entirely, but as a passive entity which has been contaminated. Abjection

incidents that may be cited in this category are always directed towards the invasion of contaminating entities which threaten its authentic identity. It will not be wrong to say that these acts of abjection have started with the identity crisis in parallel to the re-vitalization attempts and in line with a growing urge of the Istanbulites to be identified with the once high-cultured district.

3.2.1. Abjection towards Entire Beyoğlu

In the second chapter, it was stated that there was a tendency to associate Modernization with Westernization during the late Ottoman and early republican periods. However, this tendency ceased shortly after the birth of the Republic, and resulted in a growing suspicion and a critical stance towards the status of Beyoğlu. It was not an easy task to validate Beyoğlu's heterogeneous components and cosmopolitan identity in reference to the paradigm of the modern, secular, national, republican state; particularly when the concept of Turkishness was so new and fragile¹⁸. Instead, the state policies and literary figures resorted to incorporate Beyoğlu in the republican identity building as an element of disavowal.

During the infantile period of the Republic, the discontent about Beyoğlu's non-Muslim and non-Turkish speaking inhabitants manifested itself as reflected to its physical characteristics. Here, Mithat Cemal Kuntay's poetic depiction of Beyoğlu seems to be highly fitting:

¹⁸ Actually the pursuit of Turkishness dated far back to the first quarter of the 19th century; until the foundation of the Turkish republic that based itself on this concept, there were many discussions and transformations on the concept of Turkishness. Main problem was that, such a concept would not be suitable for an Empire; that was why Abdulhamit II supported these discussions secretly. (Shaw, 2005:260-263)

Beyoğlu! These white buildings, reminding the eradication of a vein-free, blood-free soil! These streets, where mud wears a festival dress; where the stone is nouveau riche! These houses, which resemble carnival performances! ... This Christian prostitute smelling sour sweat and cheap fragrance! This civilization of consuls! The miserable flag that helplessly wandering around on the sacred Fridays like a drop of martyr blood in these heimatlos streets! Beyoğlu definitely is the Istanbul left unconquered. (cited in Kaptan, 1993. Translation by me)

According to Kuntay, in Beyoğlu there is nothing appropriate for noble Turkishness, and the corrupt essence of the district may well be read in its materiality. Beyoğlu is a threat for the national and traditional identities. The Turkishness, offered by Kuntay is the exact opposite of what Beyoğlu is, what Beyoğlu has, and what Beyoğlu fails to achieve. Everything here is nothing but fake; it is a cheap copy, a vain impostor, or a deceptive mask that hides the malignity. Beyoğlu seems to be accused of disobeying the required correspondence between the content and the form; it seems as if something it is not; it unforgivably harbors “two” rather than “one”; unlike the sacred blood, flag, or *heimat* it is not pure; in short, it is heterogeneous. But above all, it is the unconquered, the untamed, and the undigested since the conquest of Constantinople. Beyoğlu is a Trojan horse that assaults “us” and “what belongs to us”. This quote, which is highly loaded with hate, disgust, and despise, was representative to the commonsense of the early republic; but by referring to the conquest, it also possesses a reference that embraces the Ottoman identity while constructing Turkishness.

The warning tone of the early republic towards those who were “different” and who refused to change were harsh from the start. In a speech İnönü, one of the founders of the republic, said: “Our duty is to construct all people living within the homeland as Turks. We are going to get rid of the components, which oppose the Turks and Turkishness” (cited in Galanti, 1925). With the 1923 Lausanne Treaty the

non-Muslim population lost their rights which they attained by the Capitulations. That was a breaking point for the district; when the Capitulations were suspended, the non-Muslims –to be more precise, Armenians, Greeks and Jews- were declared as minorities¹⁹.

The minority rights guaranteed by European countries in Lausanne Treaty were seen as a burden for Turkey's constitutional objectives of autonomy and egalitarianism; and therefore Beyoğlu's population was also seen as a threat to the political foundations of the state (Bali, 2000: 62). An attempt to internalize the non-Muslim population within the system of equal citizenship was realized in 1924; minorities were asked to "voluntarily" relinquish the rights they attained with the Lausanne treaty in favor of being subjected to the same civil rights as the rest of the citizens of Turkey (Toktas, 2005:397). However they were never regarded as equal by the subsequent governments; almost immediately their citizen right to serve as soldiers and government employees was taken, and later a long list of various professions were added to this law (Levi, 1998: 37). The minorities were expelled first with the population exchange agreement with Greece; then with the "Citizen, Speak Turkish!" campaign that was launched in 1928 and was carried on for decades; afterwards with the unjust 1942 wealth tax law; later in 1955 with the lynching events directed towards their mere presence; and finally with deportations of the Greeks in 1964 (Keyder, 2002; Toktas, 2005; Hirschon, 2003). Eksen argues that Turkification project, which has been applied with an understanding shared by

¹⁹ According to the treaty, minorities acquired rights about the freedom to of living, religious beliefs and migration; and also rights about legal and political equality, using their mother language in the courts, opening schools of their own or institutions alike and celebrating their religious ceremonies. (Toktas, 2005:395)

all political parties in modern Turkey, has been quite successful according to the state policies (Eksen, 2002:39).

Of all the torments that the non-Muslims of Beyoğlu faced, two of them stand out. The first one is the 1942 wealth tax law that minorities were taxed disproportionate to the amount of property they owned; as a result non-Muslims had to sell their properties, which led to a considerable change of hands regarding the real estates in Beyoğlu (Aktar, 2000:154). Between 6.000 and 8.000 non-Muslim citizens, who were not able to pay, were sent to work camps in Erzurum (Akar, 1998:108). The second one is the Greek pogrom in 1955, also known as “September 6-7 Events”, which gravely shook the multi-faceted, multi-cultural, multi-religious, and multi-lingual fabric of Beyoğlu.



Figure 3. 2. Frenzy of the everyday people in Greek Pogroms, from Fahri Çoker Archive (2005:92-93).

Triggered by the information that there had been a bombing in the house which Mustafa Kemal was born in Salonika, crowds attacked the Greek minority. At the outset, events started as protests, but then they turned into riots that resulted in

widespread looting of goods and properties belonging to the citizens of Greek-origin, who lived in Istanbul and Izmir. Besides the organized crowd, the people living in Beyoğlu also actively participated in these brutal events (Figure 3.2.). Pamuk describes his terror and shock regarding the pogrom in Beyoğlu that he witnessed as a child:

[T]he next morning the shops of Beyoğlu stood in ruins, their windows smashed, their doors kicked in, their wares either plundered or gleefully destroyed. Strewn everywhere were clothes, carpets, bolts of cloth, overturned refrigerators, radios, and washing machines; the streets were piled high with broken porcelain sets, toys, kitchenware, and fragments of aquariums and chandeliers that were so fashionable at the time. Here and there, amid the bicycles, overturned and burned cars, hacked up pianos, and broken mannequins gazing up at the sky from the cloth-covered streets, were the tanks that had come too late to quell the riots. (2005:173-174) (Figure 3.3.)

According to the official reports, almost the entire Istiklal Avenue, 5538 shops and houses, 2 monasteries, 8 sanctuaries, cemeteries, 1 factory, and 71 churches were looted and subjected to varying degrees of damage (Eksen, 2002).



Figure 3. 3. After the Greek Pogroms, from Fahri Çoker Archive (2005:212).

As the events were terminated, there were over 300 injuries, 15 casualties, and over 60 incidents of rape (Eksen, 2002). The events were carried to a degree that,

a priest was brutally circumcised by the demonstrators and bled to death, as an act of forceful Muslimization (Vryonis, 2005:222). Solid evidences, which were documented during the trials, proved that from the Salonika bombing to the newspaper headlines, and from the gathering and transportation of the crowds to the maps showing the targeted buildings to be attacked, the entire event was planned by the Turkish Information Agency MIT with the consent of the government in order to warn Greece about its ongoing policies on Cyprus and with the same token to dispose of the remaining Greek population by deporting them to Greece (Eminoğlu, 2001). In an interview published in the book by Güllapoğlu (1991), Yirmibeşoğlu, a former general, admitted that the event was an effective Special War organization lead by the counter guerilla office; timing of the incidents coincided with the London Conference about Cyprus with England and Greece, blocking this process; and the weapons used were of the same origin, proving the organized nature of the attacks.



Figure 3. 4. The national symbols which were used as sacramentals during the “exorcism” (Çoker, 2005:86).

The non-Muslim citizens were shocked by the aggression they were subjected to from the people who they used to peacefully live together until that day; they had suddenly turned into the hair in the soap. The Greek Pogroms can be read as a brutal

act of abjection in the name of Turkification of Turkey. A statement on who were to claim the space was made through widespread hysteria; and as a result the inconsistency between the space –Turkish soil- and its inhabitants –non-Turkish people- was done away with. The most effective antidote to stop the attackers was declaration of a Turkish flag. Many sensitive citizens safeguarded their non-Muslim friends and neighbors from the attacks by the help of flags. In addition to flags, other national symbols like national anthem, Atatürk busts, and posters of Sultan Mehmed II were also commonly employed both by the attackers and the attacked who tried to save themselves from the attackers (Figure 3.4.). In contrast to the purely evil abjects, these objects were pure and sacred metonymies of the desired identity, functioning in ways similar to the sacramental objects', such as the holy water in a baptism ceremony or the Christian cross in an exorcism ritual. Exorcism means "a calling up or driving out of evil spirits," and derives from the Greek word *exorkismos*; *exorkismos* comes from the word *exorkizein* "bind by oath," from *ex* "out of" + *horkizein* "to put on oath"; *horkizein* comes from *horkos* "limit" or "oath." An act of exorcism sets the limits for the body and soul, for those who have disobeyed or disrespected the limits.

During the events, there were also objects which became the exact opposites of the sacramental objects; the commodities, which until the very day decorated the dreams of a majority of violators, came to be the targets of disgust. After the events, the streets were swarming with piles of commodities and personal belongings of the abjectified non-Muslims. Anything that belonged or contacted with the abject, somehow appeared to be infected or contaminated by it. Interiors were turned inside out; whatever stood in apartment flats, stores, and religious buildings were thrown

into streets. In this way the contaminated and contagious honey was forcefully emptied out of the honey comb. The violated order between the body and its soul was to be reinstated; or the order between the space and its deserving inhabitants. Mary Douglas, in her influential book *Purity and Danger*, shows that “rituals of purity and impurity create unity in experience” (2001:2); and then she goes on saying that only by exaggerating the difference between within and without, a semblance of order is created. In the im-purification of Beyoğlu streets, there was a ritual at play, a ritual that polarized differences between the subjects and the abjects; the profane and the sacred. Beyoğlu had to be rendered as something dirty so that it was declared as purified (Figure 3.5.).



Figure 3. 5. After the Pogroms, from Fahri Çoker Archive (2005:245).

During analyzing the events, it is also relevant to refer Beyoğlu as a reminder of chora. After the events, Beyoğlu streets were chaotic and horrifying; everything was standing side by side without any reference to order or categories, as a

schizophrenic repertoire of things which were randomly connected with “and”s. There was no meaning in the entangled piles, other than they denoted a point where rationality comes to halt. By means of the pogroms, Beyoğlu was turned into a passive receptacle just to be re-assigned as a space proper, as a space Turkish. First the space and inhabitants were made inconsistent and then the space was reproduced as a space of Turkishness.

Another case of abjection regarding Beyoğlu occurred between 1984 and 1986, about a controversial project of the Municipality of Greater Istanbul. According to the project a significant portion of Tarlabası²⁰ district was going to be demolished for a wider boulevard. Number of the buildings to be demolished was approximately 500 (See the Appendix A). The Chamber of Architects objected to the project, declaring that the urban and architectural texture of Tarlabası were worthy of conserving. Moreover, the project was also going to destroy the spatial continuum of Beyoğlu, by dividing it into two pieces. Unfortunately, realization of the project could not be prevented; Beyoğlu was divided into two, leaving Tarlabası as a decaying zone to this day.

During the discussions about the project, many intellectuals, politicians, and mayors of Beyoğlu and Istanbul felt liberated to express their desire for demolishing Beyoğlu entirely. Dalan, the mayor of Istanbul at that time, enthusiastically defended

²⁰ Tarlabası was a neighborhood mostly abandoned in the 1970s and in time has become home for the marginal and indigent people like; gypsies who moved to here in the 1970s and 1980s; Kurds who in the 1990s migrated from southeastern region of Turkey due to the security concerns; transvestites first from 1970s to 1980s and then after 1990s when they were banished from Ülker Street; and Afghan, African, and Iranian people who seek refuge to Europe; Romanians, Bulgarians, and Russians who work as a cheap work force (Özkan, 2008).

the disreputable decree on Tarlabası. As he was interviewed by *Erkekçe*²¹ Magazine (1987), he supported his stance with an assertion that Beyoğlu had become a district spreading nothing but crime, immorality, corruption, prostitution, and filth. Dalan argued that the only way to deal with this “disgusting” environment was to drive bulldozers over it and then build up a brand new district with wide avenues and modern buildings. The name of the magazine where the interview was published seems very compatible with the tone and content of the interview. Beyoğlu, as seen by Dalan, was not much different than the girls’ inviting nude photographs on the following pages of the magazine; in both cases a similar desire was at work. Beyoğlu could be declared as a chora, a passive receptacle, or a womb so easily, only from a mannish perspective, which was enthusiastic to inseminate it with the rationale that belonged to his power. Actually this is a state of mind not so peculiar to the rapists. Kaptan falsifies Dalan’s argument which primarily rests itself on the assumption that Beyoğlu had become a “center of crime”; according to the 1988 statistics regarding the reported crimes in Istanbul, the highest crime rates actually did not belong to Beyoğlu but to Kadıköy with %21.71, which was followed by Kartal %15.97, Fatih %12.73, Şişli %12.21. Beyoğlu’s crime rate was just %3.34 (1993).

Öztürkatalay, the mayor of Beyoğlu Municipality during the Tarlabası demolition, shared the same perspective with Dalan; in an interview he said that the only solution for dealing with the terrorizing corruption, distortion, filth, and invasion of Beyoğlu was to destroy the entire district (1987). He also declared that no matter what the Council of Architectural Heritage²² concluded about the objection of the Chamber of Architects, he would continue with the realization of the project. He

²¹ *Erkekçe* means “mannish” in Turkish.

²² Anıtlar Yüksek Kurulu.

said that he put his heart on this demolition; he would even consider serving time in jail for this project.

Of course the determined tone in the speeches of both mayors may be explained in reference to the assertive demands of capital owners and land speculators for the future Beyoğlu. However what cannot be explained is the lack of an effective opposition against this demolition. Dorsay draws attention to this very fact: “If compared to reactions of the society towards the news about a probable demolition of waterside mansions on the Bosphorus, the apathy towards the demolitions that will be held in Beyoğlu in order to widen the Tarlabası Avenue is inconceivable” (1991:141. My translation). This situation reveals that Beyoğlu has not been internalized by a majority of Istanbul’s population; the only people who cared about the demolitions enough to set their bodies as barriers to bulldozers were the indigent residents of the buildings that would be demolished (Figure 3.6.).



Figure 3. 6. Residents resisting the Tarlabası demolition (Photograph by Keribar, http://wowturkey.com/t.php?p=/tr364/Rifat_Behar_tarlabasi_expropriations_keribar.jpg).

Leaving the apathy aside, Atilla İlhan (1987), a popular intellectual, even criticized the ones who were sensitive about the fact that a cultural heritage was slipping away by the demolitions, calling them as “bleeding heart intellectuals”. According to İlhan, what was at stake was exclusively the “non-Turkish Pera”, a degraded district built by Greek and Armenian architects; Beyoğlu was nothing other than an impostor reminding the unfortunate days of invasion and the traitor inhabitants of Pera who celebrated the invasion. İlhan defended the lynching of the district as an act of ethnic cleansing that would consequently help to attain a purified Turkish identity devoid of Trojan Horses. He concluded that he did not see anything wrong even in its complete demolition; the district was already corrupt in essence, and there was nothing to change that, other than extermination (Figure 3.7.).



Figure 3. 7. After demolition, before asphaltting (<http://www.arkaplanlar.com/resimler-il-il-turkiye-resimleri-79-eski-istanbul-630-tarlabasi-bulvari-acilirken-11936.html>).

In the 20th century, many “saviors” of Beyoğlu frequently talked about brave solutions to the grave problems; may it be in the name of easing Istanbul’s overall traffic problem, preventing prostitution, stopping the crimes, or “purging the

shameful traces of a vampire minority” (Ilhan, 1987), the “saddening yet compulsory” solutions were always justified with a presumption that “the district has never been a product of Turkishness anyway”. These major abjection acts towards the residents or physical components of Beyoğlu, served only for religious, sexist, nationalist, moralist and other hegemonic identities.

3.2.2. Abjection within Beyoğlu

After the non-Muslim citizens evacuated the district, Beyoğlu provided vacancy for many marginal groups. Turkish film industry²³, theatres showing porn movies, brothels, night clubs, and entertainment industry became the leading economic dynamos of the district throughout the 1960s and 1970s. It was apparent that the district was physically and economically indispensable for Istanbul. Yet, decadence somehow seemed to prevail even without the presence of non-Muslim citizens; it was as if Beyoğlu was haunted by the corrupt ghosts of its former inhabitants. In order to get rid of this haunt, a new identity was to be tailored for Beyoğlu; from that time on, acts of abjection were directed to targets other than non-Muslim citizens. In this section, various aspects of these acts of abjection will be discussed.

Modern frame of mind beholds a kinship with Platonism, in reference to its obsession with essence and order. Hence, the modern phenomenon of purification and homogenization should not be viewed merely peculiar to Beyoğlu.

²³ Yeşilçam.

Homogenization of space, or production of “abstract space” as Lefebvre (1991) calls it, is a central dimension of modernity (Heynen, 1999; Wegner, 2002); and it is a worldwide phenomenon which has been criticized since 1960s. Therefore, besides the nationalistic urges of abjection which were directed towards heterogeneity, the emergence of the modernist sense of space also played a major role in the purging of heterogeneous components of Beyoğlu. Beyoğlu used to be famous for its arcades and passages, which were built between the second half of the 19th century and the first quarter of the 20th century. They were often designed to embody heterogeneous functions (Güler, 2004). However, from the mid-20th century on, these passages were subjected to a series of homogenization acts led by revitalization projects, which turned them into thematic passages.

Cite de Pera, also known as Çiçek Pasajı²⁴, was a glorious arcade which was constructed on the site of the Naum Theater that was destroyed in the 1870 fire. The arcade was consisted of five stories with 24 shops and 18 apartments. Tutel (1998) informs that the original Çiçek Pasajı incorporated a variety of functions including barber shop, bakery, pubs, and mortician. The ground floor restaurant and the literature haunt upstairs were meeting points for well-known Turkish authors like Cahit Irgat, Orhan Kemal, and Aziz Nesin (Eminoğlu, 2001). Sadly, the long-time neglected arcade collapsed due to a fire-break in 1978. In 1988, it was reconstructed with a totally different theme, as a space functioning for gastronomical needs. Its extremely sterile looking galleria housed only pubs and restaurants. The heterogeneity of the arcade was reduced to a single function and a pure form. Degree of intervention in its restoration attracted many criticisms especially from architects,

²⁴ Çiçek Pasajı means “Flower Arcade” in Turkish. The name Çiçek Pasajı was coined in the 1930s when flower auctions were started to be held here.

historians, and authors. While some people compared the restored arcade to an overly dressed cake, others criticized the decision of limiting the space to a single function.



Figure 3. 8. A photograph of Çiçek Pasajı after the restoration (<http://www.tarihicicekpasaji.com/resim.html>).

Dorsay (1991) says that the restoration project was quite compatible with the mindset of the 1980 military coup d'état; “uniform, humdrum, and monotonous” (Figure 3.8.). Tutel (1998) argues that Çiçek Pasajı used to be the capitol of Beyoğlu, a microcosm of the boundless cosmos of Beyoğlu. Çiçek Pasajı was subjected to homogenization just like Beyoğlu. Nostalgia was in action for the reshaping of the arcade to be analogous with a fabricated bygone purity. And almost emblematic for the new arcade, two non-Muslim musicians played every night for elite customers, as a nostalgic garnish reminding the bygone cosmopolitan Beyoğlu, which was already devastated by acts of purification.

Homogenization of Beyoğlu according to an idealized vision or identity lays it bare. In his influential book *Homo sacer: sovereign power and bare life*, Agamben (1998) argues that Modernity constitutes a continuum of an ancient political power mechanism that exerts hegemony over life and identities. In Ancient Roman times, the punishment of homo sacer –sacred man- was the most severe of all punishments; having stripped off from all his identities and rights, including his right to live, the convict was dressed up with a homo-sacer identity and was set free to lead a “bare life”. For the rest of his life as bare, the convict would constantly be humiliated by his once fellow citizens; even if he was to be murdered, this action would not be counted as a crime; he might be killed, and yet not be sacrificed. Throughout his conceptualization of bare life and citizenship, Agamben actually interweaves a subtext about ontology and heterogeneity, opposing the modern reducibility of the subject to a single identity. The cruelest of all punishments, is to bind something to a single essence, to a single identity that may abruptly lose its validity to exist. Yet, Agamben asserts that life in its entirety has long been transformed into “bare life”.

If we are to talk about identities and ontology of space, the concept of “bare life” may well be translated into the concept of “bare space”. The bare space is a space stripped off from its identities and references, and reduced to a single identity that makes its existence exposed to a possible termination. In the restoration of Çiçek Pasajı, a side feature of the arcade, that is to serve as a gastronomic space for the elites, authors, and artist, was singled out from all the heterogeneous components that made up its former space and was centralized as the dominating feature regarding the arcade’s essence. The Çiçek Pasajı restoration can be read as an act of laying the space bare, homogeneous, and intact; yet the essentialization and reshaping of the

space according to this single essence, represses its all other traits and historic reference. Such a decision also weakens its chance of existence, by making it terminable by the hegemonic power.

New Park Hotel project is another case that may be read in reference to abjection. In 1980s new Park Hotel was started to be built on Gümüşsuyu Avenue as an inheritor of the historic Park Hotel which was closed down in 1979. As the construction rise, its bulky form disregarding its surrounding texture shocked the Istanbulites (Figure 3.9.). Architects, journalists, and city planners strongly opposed to the project, and questioned how the project was approved by the municipality in the first place. Whereas architect Behruz Çinici declared the incident as a crime against the entire city, academician Ahunbay called the building an open scar of Istanbul (cited in Gökdağ, 1992:22).



Figure 3. 9. The New Park Hotel construction before its excessive stories were slashed (Gökdağ, 1992).

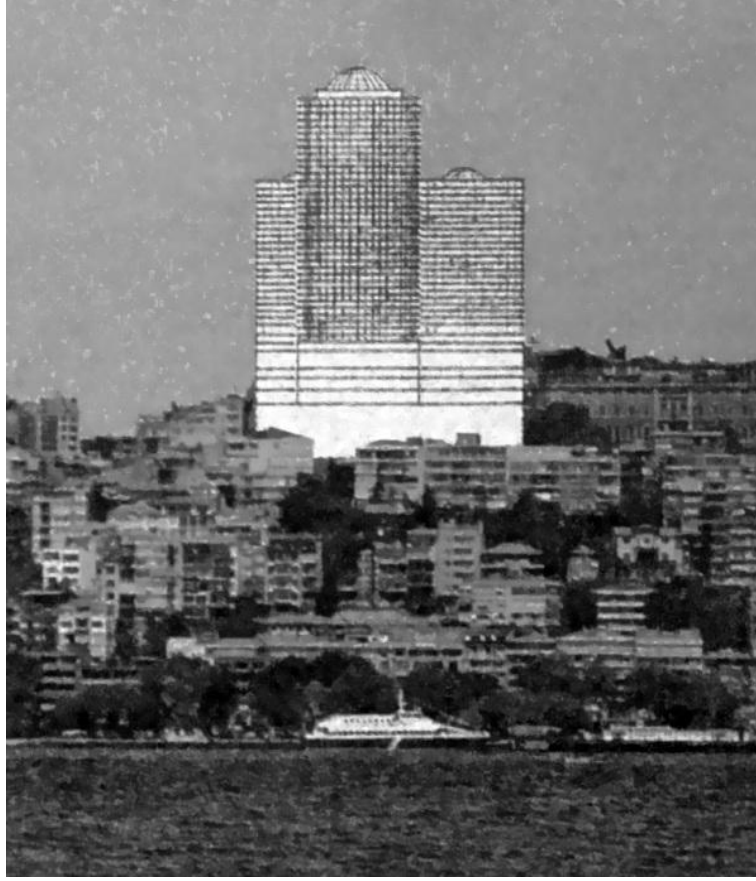


Figure 3. 10. The representation of the project approved by the municipality (Gökdağ, 1992).

Chamber of Architects decided to carry their objection to the Council of State, and the council arrived at a verdict to cease the construction. The hotel was designed to be 250.000 m² and 33 stories high (Figure 3.10.), fortunately the construction was stopped before it reached even half of the planned height. In order to by-pass the verdict, the construction was slashed, down to the height of the German Embassy next to it. Even if the building was leveled with the building next to it on the İnönü Avenue, due to the enormous and steep site it was built upon, the building still looks extremely bulky from the Bosphorus side (Figure 3.11.). Because of the expenditure of the adjustment and the fact that the adjusted building would not be financially efficient, the construction was stopped altogether and has never resumed until this day.



Figure 3. 11. A recent photograph of Park Hotel as seen from the Bosphorus (Photograph by Metehan Özcan).

New Park Hotel is related to the discussion of abjection, because it was labeled as a non-stoppable monster, a concrete giant eating up the city. The reason behind its abjection was not its huge mass, there were many other high rise buildings in Istanbul at that time; it was abjectified because of its hegemonic insistence and impertinence on sweeping all other minor identities and spatial qualities around it. Therefore new Park Hotel incident was different from all other cases of abjection in Beyoğlu; this time the abject was the hegemonic power, the unleashed wild capitalism that cared about nothing but profit, without any sensitivity towards others. The developers were so greedy that in order to obtain the gigantic site of the hotel, they acquired 50 buildings for prices below estimated values, and even appropriated a significant portion of Ağa Çırağı Street (See Appendix B), which by default belonged to the people of Istanbul, into their building (Gökdağ, 1992).

New Park Hotel incident is still considered as a model initiative for the urban and architectural conservation culture of Turkey. The abjectifying tone in the discussions was actually quite successful in raising consciousness and sensitivity

about Istanbul and Beyoğlu's identity. War against "the monster" helped to define how Istanbulites wanted Beyoğlu and their city to be for the approaching period of wild capitalism. However, the abjection regarding the building was not yet over; the discontinued construction of New Park Hotel, which could be seen from a wide portion of the Bosphorus, started to haunt the district; it still does even this day. An almost universal source of abjection came into play, by the abandonment of the construction: the cadaver. Kristeva describes the horror of the cadaver figure; "[t]he corpse (or cadaver), that which has irremediably come a cropper, is cesspool, and death; it upsets even more violently the one who confronts it as fragile and fallacious chance" (1982:3). The cadaver of New Park Hotel body remains exposed; with its grandiose mass, the building has turned into a perfect abject for Istanbul. Its monstrosity, darkness, and incompleteness have turned it into a counter-monument that inescapably forces one to think about Beyoğlu's cultural heritage and its greedy abusers who are merely after financial gain over this heritage, even at the expense of destroying it.

The story of Aksanat Building on the Istiklal Street is another remarkable case that can be read in reference to abjection. Aksanat building was opened in 1993, with a controversy; the discontent was about the provocative intervention to its façade, which was masking its original façade with a metallic prosthesis. Many intellectuals, architects, and journalists strongly opposed to this intervention that in fact referred to a fashionable international postmodern trend. Eldem described the renovated building with a humorous approach: "this is yet another drunkard letting out a yell in Beyoğlu"²⁵.

²⁵ <http://www.mimarlarodasi.org.tr/index.cfm?sayfa=Belge&Sub=detail&RecID=466>



Figure 3. 12. Aksanat Building with and without the mask (Üsdiken, 1999).

The abjection of Aksanat can be explained in reference to its disloyalty both towards the building and also towards Beyoğlu's architectural texture. Even though the building before the renovation was quite an average one without any distinct architectural characteristic, the intervention was still intolerable. But from an essentialist perspective the case meant something else; face of a thing was actually the key to its essence, and Aksanat, as a building in disguise, was hiding this essence (Figure 3.12.). The core of the essentialist discontent about Aksanat derives from the metaphysical conceptualization of face and representation; a face is the representation of body. If they do not match, there would be an inconsistency, a heterogeneity that conflicts with the presumed homogeneity of the essence. It is relevant to insert an analogy between face and façade, and between body and building. As thought in this way, a façade that rebels against the building may turn into a target of abjection. And therefore as "a sole participant of an announced masquerade ball", an impostor, or a transvestite, Aksanat was turned into an abject.



Figure 3. 13. A crowd posing for the camera in the last carnival in 1930 (Tutel, 1998:117).

Actually, in that sense the new building seems to be fitting well into Beyoğlu's historic heritage. Until the law that banned walking around in disguise in 1930s, an annual carnival was held in Beyoğlu. This traditional event, called as *apukurya* by Greeks, was arranged by the citizens of Greek origin at a time following the Christmas. During *apukurya*, people of Beyoğlu used to consume lots of alcohol and have fun in the streets wearing masks (Kaptan, 1993:87) (Figure 3.13.). It was of course not as glamorous as the carnival in Venice, but then again it was a remarkable event that affected the cultural life of Ottoman Istanbul. According to a newspaper article in 1872, even when Beyoğlu was suffering from the destruction of the 1870 fire, people were celebrating *apukurya* on the streets in pure joy (cited in Akin, 1998). During this Dionysian carnival people used to try on new faces and identities; it was an event where they could express themselves freely, escape from their binding identities, feel free from the societal constraints and do whatever they want to. Aksanat intervention should not necessarily be read from an essentialist point of view as a mask hiding its “genuine” building; but as an emergence of yet another

face of all the potential faces a body resides in the heterogeneity of the building (Şumnu and Özakın, 2008).

The other discontent about Aksanat was regarding its rebellious existence within its historically significant context. However, the old photographs of Beyoğlu show that building facades used to be extensively dressed with promotions of the venues, tents, and signboards. Such interventions towards the buildings were quite ordinary and were never criticized at that time, because Beyoğlu was a place for expression, a free zone for all sorts of representations.

Against all the criticisms, the building stood tall and in time people got accustomed to it. In 2002 the building was renovated by the architect Eren Talu. It was going to throw out its metal wrap and appear with a different face. The new façade was planned to animatedly change color at night, for different occasions and art events. With this new architectural idea, veiling of the façade would be carried to a new level, where the building would change its façade continuously. Yet, due to the Beyoğlu Municipality's objection, the idea was cancelled, and the building was recovered to its "sane" and "proper" original façade.

Istiklal Avenue Signboards Project is another fine example to the abjection cases in Beyoğlu. In 2001, Beyoğlu Municipality, in corporation with the Mimar Sinan University, put a new regulation for the signboards in Istiklal Avenue into effect. The regulation required that all signboards would be replaced according to a standardized format with brass fonts and figures on a dark colored wooden textured

background (Figure 3.14.). The aim behind the project was to reinstate the “historic” visual order and to prevent the visual inflation of signboards that veil the buildings.



Figure 3. 14. Signboards of some corporate identities, which were placed according to the municipality regulations (Photographs by Özakin).

The first oppositions to the new regulation came mostly from the corporate entities, whose corporate identities operated with standardized materials and colors. The nostalgic reference of the project to Beyoğlu’s history was not accurate; throughout its history, Beyoğlu had never been homogenous also in this account. Old photographs clearly show that Beyoğlu’s visual texture was never homogeneous; yet, without a necessity of standardization, there was an unspoken consensus, a common taste in the heterogeneity of the signboards (Figure 3.15.).

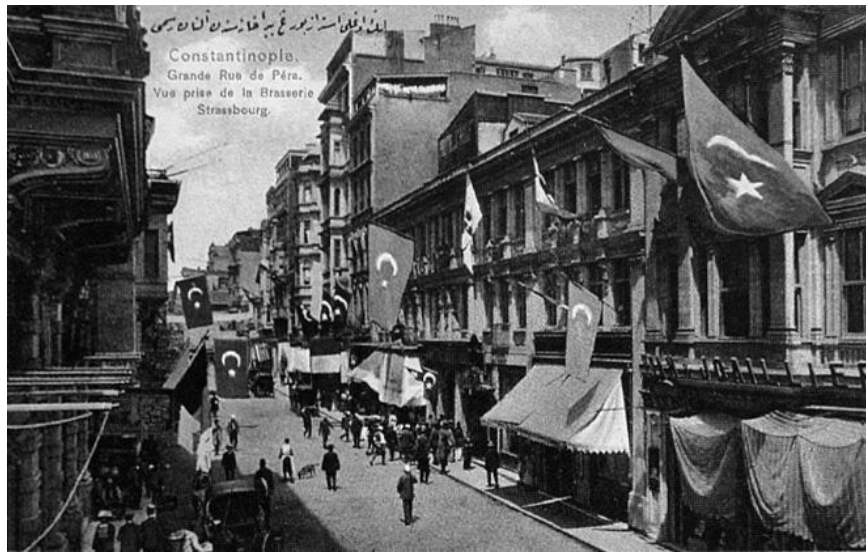


Figure 3. 15. Not so pure: Beyoğlu in the early 20th Century (Kaptan, 1993).

According to Batur, the signboards on Istiklal Avenue have always constituted “a diversity that as a collectively served for defining the change”; he views the signboards and display windows as a part of a masquerade that reveals the spirit of the age (2001:10). Pamuk (2005) also writes about the signboards of Beyoğlu, and how as a preschool child he was fascinated by them; he says that this rich heterogeneous visual texture of Beyoğlu has made him become obsessed with meaning and identities. This childhood fixation with the obscure identity of Beyoğlu and the curiosity for attaining a meaning out of it, would predominantly guide the young Pamuk to become an author.



Figure 3. 16. Signboards in Beyoğlu, 1960s and 2000s (Üsdiken, 1999).

In the signboards project, once again, abjection as an act purification and homogenization was at work; the choice of the materials had no reference to Beyoğlu’s actual past other than serving for a cheap nostalgic image (Figure 3.16.). The project clearly attempted to flatten the modern Tower of Babylon in terms of its visual grammar. Even though these new signboards seemed to bring order by dressing the buildings properly and synchronizing them with each other, they actually laid Beyoğlu bare from its multi-lingual visual character. Fortunately, the

regulation was suspended and terminated shortly due to the resistance of the Istiklal Avenue retail store owners.

3.2.3. Beyoğlu as a Figure of Abjection in Contemporary Literature

Kristeva's argument clearly deposits that the structure of abjection is inescapable for constructing identities; yet this structure may materialize in different ways. The cases which were discussed above mostly stand for the vulgar and violent sides of abjection. But there are also other more sophisticated ways for dealing with the abject. Kristeva says:

The various means of purifying the abject –the various catharses- make up the history of religions, and end up with that catharsis par excellence called art, both on the far and near side of religion. Seen from that standpoint, the artistic experience, which is rooted in the abject it utters and by the same token purifies, appears as the essential component of religiosity. That is perhaps why it is destined to survive the collapse of the historical forms of religion. (1982:17)

After 1990s, Beyoğlu and its components have been represented as abject figures in various forms of art. This chapter concentrates on some literary expressions of Beyoğlu as an abject figure. In this context it is relevant to cite a quotation from Batur about Istiklal Avenue and Beyoğlu:

Beyoğlu's movement starts from two separate points and proceeds like two splits in the flesh: two dagger **wounds** that lengthen until they merge. These two lines meet, in a sense become one, at Galatasaray; revealing **blood-rich tissue, severed muscles, exposed nerve ends, plasma and pus**. For many Istanbul dwellers this has long been considered a part of the city that would best be done without. For years they have seen it as a **gangrened organ, a swamp** that should be drained, a piece of the memory which, because both its past and present are disturbing, should be **vomited up, wiped clean, wrenched out and thrown away**. But there is another totally opposite reading in the other pan of the scale: ... it is through this **festering wound** that the veins and arteries of the city (2001:6). (My emphasis)

Here Batur clearly sets an analogy between the space and human body; his portrayal of Beyoğlu resembles the dissection of a cadaver or the biopsy of a cancer tissue, metaphorically aiming at the analysis of Beyoğlu's complex identity and its common evaluation as an abject. According to Batur, through this open wound, which for many people is a rancid organ to be disfigured for the sake of saving the rest of the body, one can come to grasp the identity of Istanbul. Such a perspective values the ontological and epistemological promises of the abject, and therefore rather than attempting to veil, defeat, or annihilate the abject, it tends to embrace this figure.

Lahiji and Friedman reveal the paradigm that lies behind the modern mind; they say that “modernity emerges from the belief that man is fundamentally a clean body”; yet they also note that the clean body is primarily a plumbed body (1997:41). To put this in other words, inescapably a pure body is a constantly purified body owing to its excreting mechanisms. If one is to understand a body, he/she also needs to analyze what the wastes of this body are and how the mechanism of digestion operates. Şafak says that Istanbul is “unthinkable without its waste”; not only it cannot be comprehended without looking at its trash, the city owes its existence to it (2007:76). According to Şafak, “it’s not just because Istanbul lives that it throws out so much trash, actually it’s because it throws out so much trash that Istanbul is still able to keep living” (77).

Ümit describes Beyoğlu as “undoubtedly the most feminine part of Istanbul” (2007:25); for him, even if one learns names of its every street and every building, he/she would never really come to understand Beyoğlu. It is a “heterogeneous medley of white black and yellow, in other words everyone mixing quite

indiscriminately with everyone else” (27). Bilge Karasu (2004) calls Beyoğlu the “mother of sewers”; his book is filled with abundant references that describe Beyoğlu as a well of unconscious, with her inexhaustible fertility in constructing identities.

Just like Karasu, Pamuk (1993) is also engaged with the underground infrastructure beneath the surface of Beyoğlu. As an author, who centralizes the issue of complex identity stuck between the East and the West, he strives to unveil the repressed Beyoğlu, which contains infinite possibilities. Parallel to his literary investigation in the dark and scary ventilation shaft of his family’s apartment block for revealing the foundations that lie behind the identity of his family; or to his brainstorming over the schizophrenic landscape of the speculatively dried up Bosphorus as a “mystic writing pad” for unveiling Istanbul’s identity; he takes the reader to a long walk in the mysterious tunnels under Beyoğlu for revealing an “other” identity out of it. These tunnels turn into a network²⁶, an intensity²⁷ or a concept²⁸, which in turn reveal other faces to Beyoğlu; faces come out of the dark, humid, and cold labyrinths with images of abjection; the faces of mannequins of everyday Ottoman people resemble unburied dead, and they are quite different from the ones above ground who have lost their identity.

The underground labyrinth of this mystic infrastructure that travels the entire ancient city clearly is a metaphor for the unconscious that lies behind Istanbul’s identity. Pamuk’s depiction of a schizophrenic repertoire of the bygone people, events and places, is abundant with imageries of fear and disgust, destruction and

²⁶ Foucault, 1973.

²⁷ Deleuze, 1990.

²⁸ Ibid.

reconstruction, degeneration, and renewal. The fear and disgust is obviously associated with the problem of becoming oneself –becoming Turkish- within a state of amnesia and surrounded by alien elements. Here, there is also a powerful reference to nostalgia, yet the image contains a promise of a jubilant carnival, a state of catharsis due to the surfacing of the repressed.

One can discern the ontological power of abjection related with Beyoğlu in Pamuk's books. Different from the vulgarly abjectifying subjects of Beyoğlu, Pamuk prefers abjection in literature for deriving identities, meanings, and truths out of Beyoğlu's heterogeneity. For Pamuk (2005), this place, with its part dark, part appealing, filthy and malicious streets, has been a lover, a substitute, a second world to be escaped into, from the identity crisis of his very own self. He sees Beyoğlu and Istanbul as incomplete, deficient, and defective; and that is why he says he is in love with it. Istanbul's pure images of a golden age, a time between the late 18th century and early 19th century, still reside in his mind, yet are constantly disturbed by the loud voices from its streets. For him, the source of his creativity is right in this suspension between purity and its impossibility.

Ağaoğlu describes Istanbul as “an elegant exuberance produced by the interlacing of threads generally regarded as incompatible in color and quality” (2007:15). Berk (1990) describes Beyoğlu as a language without subjects, verbs or adjectives; as he poetically depicts the district he uses a series of ‘and’s and ‘then’s. This sort of unity, which is devoid of any syntax, has a strong resemblance to Kristeva's conceptualization of the semiotic chora (1982). It is not a mere coincidence that most of the books on Beyoğlu eventually tend to turn into some

kind of schizophrenic encyclopedias, in which bits and pieces of personal memories, unique figures of history, colors, odors, amazing events, buildings, animals, without any hierarchy or categorization are brought together. Beyoğlu is not something other than a repertoire of heterogeneous references; so what is more convenient for its representation than the medium of an encyclopedia?

All these representations and expressions of Beyoğlu are the products of a worldview that finds purifications and essentializations deficient for capturing an identity. Beyoğlu, represented heterogeneous as that, overlaps with Kristeva's chora; it is a well of identities which retains all possibilities, and by the same token it is inherently a target of abjection. Batur draws attention to this well as a destructive force; he likens Beyoğlu to fire which attracts the moths to itself and instantly burn them to a crisp (2001). According to him, that is the reason why, Beyoğlu is also something to be scared of for the moderate, orderly, and tamed Istanbulites. Therefore this fertility, which for the majority is a threatening feature, needs to be preserved; and this is possible only with another mode of abjection, like the literary abjection that embraces, values, and protects the abject figure. From this perspective, the identity turns into a dialogue between the pure and the impure.

4. 1996 ÜLKER STREET EVENTS

4.1. Transgendered Subjects and Beyoğlu

Until 1970s, the transgendered body, apart from a few famous singers, was rendered invisible in Turkey; transgendered subjects were banned from the public space, as an everyday practice; they could not find jobs other than prostitution; frequently molested both verbally and physically; excluded from organizations, and communities, even in the jail or custody they were isolated from the heterosexual men and women. According to my interview with an older transgendered subject, who lived through such unbearable torments, in 1970s a small group of transgendered friends decided to resist this isolated abject existence and came together for establishing a community of their own. The transgendered community attempted to construct itself, first by inventing devices of self-representation. They revitalized a dialect inherited from Ottoman times²⁹ that they called *Lubunca*³⁰, which mainly consisted of words and terms borrowed from Greek, Arabic, and the language of the Gypsies. Along with their own dialect, they also developed a sense of solidarity, and a visual style of their own. But most important of all, they had a stab at constituting a ghetto, a liberated area of their own.

²⁹ A dialect that dated back to 17th century, and which was commonly used by a homosexual crowd that consisted of tellaks in hamams, köçeks, and rent boys called “hiz oğlanı”.

³⁰ The word means the “language of the lubunya” in Turkish, and “lubunya” signifies the effeminate gay. The transgendered subjects say that lubunca goes on evolving according to their changing lives; for example when the pressure of the police increases, they produce new words to talk to each other secretly as they were held in custody.

The transgendered subjects³¹ state that ghetto was not a choice they made, but a pragmatic necessity for their survival³². Most of the transgendered subjects express that they were regularly subjected to violence³³; and because no one would be eager to involve in such an incident, they could only rely on each other. As it did for many other marginalized populations, Beyoğlu provided space for transgendered community. Where else could they be free to exist, other than a space that embraces all heterogeneity? However, the everyday violence of the heterosexist hegemony was forcing them to stay put and not to “leak out” of Beyoğlu. A transgendered subject told that, whenever they made visits to other districts, they were verbally and physically assaulted³⁴ and shouted at their back: “Well, now they are in here too! Go to Taksim, you freaks!” (Selek, 2001). They were left with no other choice; Beyoğlu, where they felt free to exist, was actually yet another manifestation of the concentration camp; Beyoğlu was a space spared for maintaining “order” within the rest of İstanbul.

In 1970s many transgendered subjects were living and working as prostitutes in Balo Street and Abanoz Street (Cingöz, 2007). Later in the same decade, the transgendered community concentrated around Dolapdere, in a neighborhood called *Çöplük*³⁵ –*Vırvır* as transgendered community used to call it (Selek, 2001). During the 1980 army coup d'état, *Çöplük* was evacuated with grave tortures and transgendered subjects were exiled out of the city center, to Yalova (Öz, 2009); the pressure over transgendered subjects was so oppressive that in 1980s it was banned

³¹ All of the interviewed subjects agreed with this view.

³² According to the research of Lambda İstanbul among the transgendered subjects, approximately 40% of the subjects declared that they considered suicide at least once; and 85% of this group declared that they committed suicide at least once (2010).

³³ According to the same research, 90% declared that they had been subjected to violence from the police, 80% from the people they did not know, and 73% from their customers.

³⁴ 90% of the subjects who have attended to Lambda İstanbul's research.

³⁵ *Çöplük* means “disposal area” in Turkish. The area used to be a disposal area in Byzantine times.

for men to wear women cloths. However, as soon as the state of emergency in Istanbul was ceased, the transgendered subjects returned to Beyoğlu and immediately started to search for an alternative district to settle down.

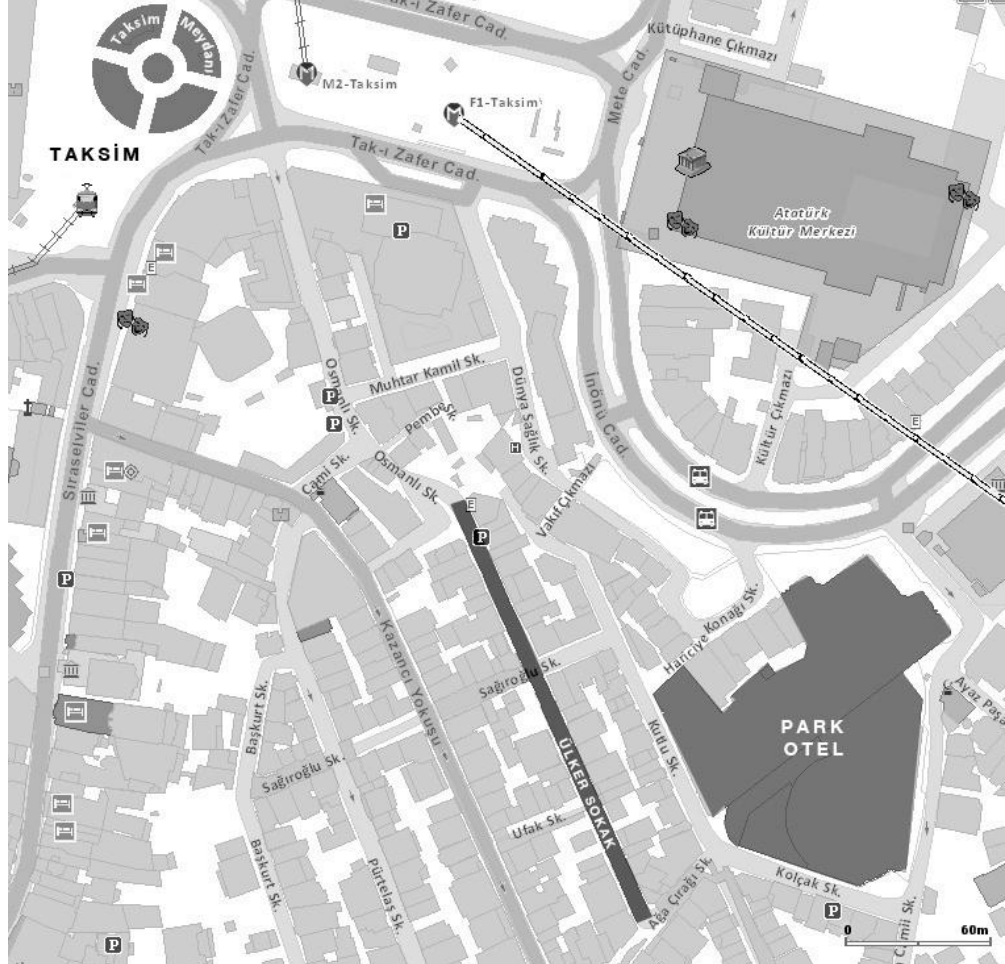


Figure 4. 1. Ülker Street on the map.

Despite its proximity to Taksim Square –the official city center- Cihangir has been a district which managed to keep itself hidden, out of sight (See Appendix B); and it has been housing a variety of unfamiliar and unfamiliar inhabitants such as prostitutes, artists, intellectuals, unemployed people, students, and refugees. For that matter, it was far from being a first choice for the people enjoying privileges of a traditional Turkish lifestyle. In my interviews, the transgendered subjects³⁶ stated

³⁶ All of the six transgendered subjects, whom this question was directed, agreed upon this view.

that Cihangir was ideal for them due to these two main reasons. In no time, they became incorporated without any serious resistance from the existing inhabitants. Yet, the police department forced the transgendered community to relocate twice: first from Abanoz Street to Pürtelaş Street, and then from Pürtelaş Street to Ülker Street (Selek, 2001). During these assaults and exiles, transgendered subjects had developed a sort of immunity; therefore harassments of the police³⁷ this time did not succeed in evacuating them out of this third destination (Figure 4.2.).



Figure 4. 2. Views from the both directions of Ülker Street (Photographs by Özakin).

Transgendered subjects say that they felt at home³⁸ in this un-homely street. They developed a sense of belonging and solidarity within the precincts of this relatively liberated area, where they could live as a big family. In Ülker Street there were approximately 70 transgendered subjects, living in 24 flats (Selek, 2001). Nearly all of them were sex workers, some working in night clubs, some on the streets, and few at home. In Ay's TV program (1996), a transgendered subject

³⁷ According to LambdaIstanbul's research 90% of the transgendered subjects declared that they were arrested at least once; 60% of the subjects were tortured by the police in custody; 80% said that they had to bribe the police for not to be pressured.

³⁸ All of the interviewed transgendered subjects feel similarly about Ülker street.

expressed that due to their fresh networking, a few of them were lucky enough to find jobs other than prostitution in this neighborhood.

4.2. Ülker Street before the Events

Ülker Street is located approximately two hundred meters from the Taksim Square, behind the luxurious Hotel Marmara. With 46 building lots, it is a small street closing with a dead end for motorized vehicles; the end of the street crosses with a stepping street called Ağa Çırağı Street³⁹ that leads to the New Park Hotel's unfinished construction site. Most of the apartment blocks on the street are 3-4 stories high and carry no historic significance with regard to their architectural qualities. According to my interviews with the residents, transgendered subjects, and mukhtar of the district, just like any other street in Beyoğlu, Ülker Street was far from a typical, homogenous, and “decent” Turkish neighborhood. A great deal of its population was consisted of single subjects coming from various socio-cultural backgrounds; most of them were students, artists, unemployed people, and retired or working prostitutes. According to the present day mukhtar of the Gümüşsuyu district, in 1996 approximately 50% of the street's inhabitants consisted of families –mostly either with grownup children or without any- and it could not be labeled as a traditional Turkish street. Most of these families were living in Ülker Street temporarily.

³⁹ The street that was disfigured by the construction of the New Park Hotel.

Selek's (2001) interviews display that transgendered subjects believed they had a reciprocal understanding and tolerance with their neighbors before the events started. My interviews with the transgendered subjects also support this claim; the interviewed transgendered subjects say that they had always been precautionary to sustain good relations with their neighbors, and in cases of a possible disturbance, they were attentive enough to warn their friends before the neighbors did. They also declare that most of the disturbances were caused by drunken homophobic or transphobic people for the purpose of creating a scene, who turned into frequenters after the street was "outed" by the national press.

The present day mukhtar of the neighborhood declares that as the incident took place she was living in Ülker Street as a single mother of two infants. She expresses that she was never, not even a single time, disturbed by transgendered subjects; quite the reverse, she tells that she frequently advised her single female friends to prefer Ülker Street for accessing their homes safely late at night, because transgendered people used to stay until very late and intervene in case of harassment. Most of the inhabitants that I personally interviewed also agree with that; however two of them state that, not the transgendered subjects, but their drunken and corrupt customers were the causes of security problem.

4.3. Ülker Street Events

In 1996, the daily life in Ülker Street was ruptured with the incoming news that UN's Habitat II Summit was going to be held in Istanbul. The summit was going

to be the largest organization that the city had ever hosted, and it was a perfect opportunity for promoting Istanbul and Turkey. That was the reason why the entire country, suffering from a form of massive hysteria, entered a debate atmosphere about how Istanbul and Turkey should be represented; and an identity crisis, fueled by the ontological suspension between “who we really are” and “who we should be”, once again struck Beyoğlu.

In order to represent Istanbul as a civilized and idealized metropolitan “world-city”, the entire city was subjected to a superficial make up before the summit started; but particularly Beyoğlu district, which was very close to the summit valley. The ramshackle buildings were re-painted, pavements were restored, and tulips were planted on traffic islands. Not only physical flaws, but also other “flaws” of the city, like street children, homeless people, and stray dogs took their share from this frenzy; street children and homeless people were bashed and forced to leave the district, some of them were exiled to other cities, even some to the forests; hundreds of street animals were exterminated (Selek, 2001).

Ülker Street was also affected by the purging process; according to both my and Selek’s interviews (2001), the transgendered community started to receive threats from the police, including those on life, to “voluntarily” evacuate Ülker Street. When the transgendered subjects stood up and resisted to leave, their resistance was responded with a violent abjection operation lead by an alliance of different groups. When the abjection operation started, it was already well planned; the alliance against the transgendered community was composed of many actors, which acted in cooperation and synchronization all through the events. The actors of

abjection in Ülker Street were Beyoğlu Police Department⁴⁰, supporters of the Nationalist Party⁴¹, printed and tele-visual media, and a group of neighbors, who called themselves as the sensitive and decent residents of the street⁴² (Selek, 2001).

According to transgendered subjects, only a few days later after the threats, the events started and Ülker Street was turned into a battleground; windows and doors were shattered, transgendered subjects were beaten up and tortured both in the street and in the Beyoğlu police station, Molotov cocktails were thrown into the houses, markets were forced to impose an embargo towards transgendered community. Street was blockaded by some nationalist party supporters, and no one except the inhabitants was allowed in or out. The actors of abjection took the street under siege and just like a body tied to bed for an exorcism session, transgendered people were blockaded within the precincts. As a result of this grave violence, most of the transgendered subjects left the street; only two of them could resist the pressure.

4.3.1. Actors of Abjection

According to the transgendered subjects, Beyoğlu Police Department actively participated in the events, but not in a soothing manner; the major contribution of the police in the events was being simply absent while violence was taking place. They simply turned a blind eye on the overtaking of their power by other civilians, or the fires, which were started in the houses of the transgendered community; the police

⁴⁰ Beyoğlu Ekipler Amirliği.

⁴¹ Ülkücü Gençler ve Ülkü Ocakları Üyeleri.

⁴² Mahallenin Namuslu ve Duyarlı Sakinleri.

even claimed that transgendered subjects were actually the ones who set their houses on fire. Police's passiveness invited violent actions against the basic citizen rights. In my interviews, all the transgendered subjects expressed that they went to various authorities for the police's deficiencies in handing down their duty to the nationalists and their refusal to protect them against physical abuses; but their official complaints remained unresolved. Even months after the events ended, the police still kept on patrolling the street, asking everyone for ID's and the reason why they were there (Ay, 1996).

Selek (2001) also interviewed the chief of Beyoğlu Police Department who was known as "Hortum Süleyman"⁴³ among the transgendered community. In Selek's interview (2001) he proudly made his transphobic position clear; he said that the first thing he had done as he was appointed to this district was to go and visit Ülker Street of which he had sworn to clean from the transgendered community. The transgendered subjects in my interviews talk about how he tortured them starting from the first day he was appointed to this neighborhood. Ulusoy admits that he frequently resorted to violence against transgendered subjects when he was in Beyoğlu; but he says that the Ülker Street "cleaning" operation was not aimed at killing, but at isolation, evacuation, and rehabilitation (Aydın, 2005).

Supporters of the Nationalist Party, who were encouraged and condoned by the police, took the most active role in the events. They placed tables covered with Turkish flags to blockade the entrance of the street and behaved as if they were the security force, asking people their ID's. Throughout the operations they patrolled in

⁴³ All through the period he served in Beyoğlu, Hortum (Hose) Süleyman arrested a large portion of the transgendered community for no reason, cut their hair, and made them choose the color of the hose that they were to be beaten with.

the precincts all day and all night and interrogated “suspicious” people about the reasons of their presence in there. During Selek’s interviews (2001), they made their definitive solution clear; a visa should be demanded from those who want to visit or immigrate to Istanbul. And in order to get this visa, one should, not only have Turkish ethnic origins, but also be “decent” enough; people who do not meet such noble traits actually should not even be allowed to carry the Turkish flag due to its sacredness.

The residents of the street were incorporated to the events in order to render the operation sympathetic to the society (Selek, 2001). Although the majority of the street population did not approve what was going on, they remained silent just to be secured from the irrational ways of abjection that might also turn against them. The campaign was carried out not only by men but also by women. The doorkeepers cooperated against the transgendered community with the police, nationalist group, and other street dwellers; they refused to supply transgendered subjects’ daily needs. And the market owners banned the transgendered subjects to shop from their stores.



Figure 4. 3. A transgendered subject confronting the leader of the neighbors front at Ay's first program about the events (1996).

The female leader of the neighbors, who owned 11 flats in the street, campaigned actively on the media; in Ay's TV program (1996), the transgendered subjects argued that she actually did not care about the transgendered subjects, but only about renting the flats, which she recently acquired, with better rates. In Selek's interviews (2001) the transgendered subjects claim that she first attempted to rent her flats to them for higher prices; but after being turned down, she started threatening them; and finally she declared war against their presence in the street, which constituted an obstacle for her to rent the flats for better rates (Figure 4.3.).

The "decent" neighbors' tenacious struggle for creating a public opinion for their cause, both inside and outside the district precincts, left little room for empathy towards the transgendered community, by cornering the public opinion to decide which side to take; for the neighbors front "taking sides" was compulsory (Selek, 2001). In order to achieve this, they fabricated a purified history about Ülker Street before the transgendered community arrived; with a tone of nostalgia, they claimed that the street, once upon a time, was inhabited by decent families with their children peacefully playing in the street. According to the transgendered subjects, most of these residents actually had moved in very recently (Selek, 2001). Nonetheless, these decent neighbors argued that it was not the transgendered community, but in fact they –the "decent Turks"- were the ones who were subjected to abjection. Selek's research (2001) shows that in contrast to the residents' claims, most of them were far from leading an average Turkish family life.

The media was divided about the portrayal of events, as "for" and "against" this act of abjection. Whereas popular right-wing newspapers with higher

circulations, like *Takvim* (October 17, 1996), *Ekip* (October 16, September 3, 1996), and *Akşam* (September 3, 1996) saw no reason for concealing their transphobic attitude and openly supported the crusade against the transgendered community; newspapers with a left-wing point of view, like *Radikal* (October 10, 1996), *Evrensel* (May 26, 1996), and *Yeni Yüzyıl* (June 11, 1996) were mostly critical about the cruelty of the events. Many voices from the right-wing newspapers and popular TV channels reported the aftermath as the victory of an exemplary democratic and active neighborhood incentive. Whatever side they may be on, none of the reports gave sufficient and comprehensive information about what was really going on in Ülker Street. Most of the reports were very brief. Transgendered community argued that none of the reports was able to expose the “real face” of the transgendered community (Selek, 2001). At his TV program *Savaş Ay* (1996) attempted to make the both sides and people coming from various socio-economic backgrounds discuss the events; even if the discussion arena looked democratic, Ay’s tone inertly submitted to the “decent” neighbors’ claims and tied the hands of the transgendered subjects. On a second program, which was run a few months later, having been evacuated from the street, the transgendered subjects were only trying to win the heart of the audience by telling their naive attempts to fight their destiny to work as sex workers.

4.3.2. Targets of Abjection

Despite the violence they have been exerted upon, transgendered subjects cannot be counted as angelic victims. In my interviews, most of the former

transgendered residents of Ülker Street remember the space as a paradise lost; aside from the abjection events, they never talk about bad memories, but always the good ones. When they are asked to define the life in Ülker Street, they use words like peace, a big alternative family, solidarity, bliss, etc. This grave tone of nostalgia turns into something scary as two of the interviewed subjects started talking about the street as their own ghetto. Even though they never applied physical violence towards the residents of the street, they seem to have a part in the purification of the street due to the fantasy of a ghetto entirely of their own. The residents of the street were disturbed by the growing number of the transgendered subjects; one of the residents said in Selek's interviews (2001): "they are not the ones who are excluded, but actually we are." Some of the transgendered subjects were attentive towards their neighbors, yet the rest were just carefree; and a majority of them were dreaming about a larger, more crowded, more liberating, and inclusive ghetto, in other words a better "concentration camp", like the ones which they had witnessed in Western cosmopolitan cities. This is a very difficult situation to decide upon, because the transgendered subjects had been suffering deeply from solitude, societal pressure, and fear of being murdered for many years; therefore they had the right to ask for a space where they could live in better conditions. Even though in my interviews they also seem to purify their past and dreamed about an idealized space, such an act of identity construction cannot be equated with the hegemonic identity construction that required physical purification of space.

A similar argument may be applied with their sexual identity and the reconstruction of their own body according to it. One may quickly fail to draw an analogy between the hegemonic identity that attempts to purify the space according

to its self-image by the help of abjection, and the transgendered identity that attempts to adjust the body according to the desired sex; nevertheless the two cases are quite different, because the prior reflects a hegemonic desire to purify the space so that no other alternative identities may subsist in it.

4.3.3. Transgendered Body as a Perfected Abject

The transgendered body is a body made to fit into a sexual identity other than the given genitalia. Due to its ambiguity and rebelliousness that does not respect the boundaries of the “naturalized body”; transgendered body commonly causes fear, anxiety, and disgust within the normative matrix. According to Douglas, “danger lies in transitional states, simply because transition is neither one state nor the next, it is indefinable” (1991:97). As an inter-being which is heterogeneous in its complex nature, the transgendered body is frequently subjected to abjection. Apparently, transgendered body is not the single body which frequently is subjected to abjection; disabled body (Hughes, 2009), cyborg body (Harraway, 1991), interracial body (Sollors, 1997), hermaphrodite body, and many others also become targets of abjection owing to their inherent heterogeneity.

The male-to-female transgendered body is more of a rebel, because it is seen as a failure to properly cut the strings with the mother, but also for many other reasons; it has a feminine self-rendering within a male body; it refuses to be on the privileged side of the male-female duality; it functions as a receptacle yet not productive as a healthy female body; it has the capability to both fertilize and get

fertilized; it is simply a misuse, a hypocrite, an impostor; because of its ambiguous relation with borders and genders, it transcends subject's conventional economy of difference.

During the Ottoman era transgendered subjects⁴⁴ were incorporated in the society to a certain extent; they had a certain visibility; poems and songs were written for their love; a transgendered mistress was a symbol of status (Andrews and Kalpaklı, 2005). The perception of body and sexuality altered radically with modernization, where a new proper body was defined (Ze'evi, 2006; Andrews and Kalpaklı, 2005). Modern medicine and psychoanalysis redefined health in reference to modern body. Modern body was a means to an end; it was dressed with function; it was received as a reproducible resource serving both for the economy and the population. For the subject of psychoanalysis, the image of the transgendered body can merely be viewed as a threat to the totality of the symbolically constructed heterosexual self. Accompanied by a belief that medicine and psychology was capable of fixing all abnormalities, the marginal existences were considered as choices which resist being cured. The only way a transgendered person might be accepted in the normative matrix was through a certain scarification, in other words, a sex-change operation.

According to the public opinion, a rebellion against the normative values deserved being punished and casted away. One of the nationalists who took part in Ülker Street events summarized for the majority: "we know the purpose of our sacred existence in the world. One has to marry and make a family for that. Health

⁴⁴ Like köçek, zenne, and oğlan.

should be attained for healthy generations to come” (cited in Selek, 2001). Beyoğlu can also be read as a transgendered space; its imperial non-Muslim space was attempted to be translated into a space of pure Turkishness. It carries both of these traits; but is not purely one. Similar to the transgendered subjects, it lacked the sacred capacity to bear a healthy child, in other words, Turkishness.

4.3.4. Analysis of the Abjection Mechanisms

Tension at a space where multiple claimants exist is comprehensible, but that does not justify a war against each other. The abjecting coalition seems to be motivated by a sudden threat that they were being subsumed by transgendered subjects and their invasion of the street. Even though they had been living side by side with the transgendered subjects, suddenly all identities became polarized. For Isin, according to the logic of abjection the abjectifying and the abject are conceived as irreconcilable; the abject is perceived in purely negative terms, having no property of its own, but merely expressing the absence of the properties of the other (2002:3). Selek (2001), states that the police chief’s judgments about the transgendered subjects were already settled before he had visited the street or even he had met any transgendered person; and they were not open to interrogation, reevaluation, suspicion, or hesitation whatsoever. She states that such a prejudicious attitude was largely shared by the actors of the abjection front. During the Ülker Street abjection, all properties appeared as essential; all properties of the transgendered subjects, including their spaces, seemed strange, hidden, frightful, and menacing for the abjectifying parties. In Selek’s interviews (2001) with the subjects from the

abjectifying coalition, it seems that they constructed their identities as a negative image of the abjects' properties. Their identities and abjects' identities became equally pure and irreconcilable. The abject figures were purely what the abjecting coalition was not; and everything that the abject figures got in touch with automatically turned into abjects as well.

According to the abjecting coalition, what transgendered subjects did to the street was a reflection of what they did to their bodies; they claimed that the transgendered subjects were distorting and misusing the space they inhabited (Selek, 2001). The police chief expressed that transgendered people's houses were also radically different from our own; they had two entrances/exits (Selek, 2001). Among the interviewed crowd, there was a common opinion that these despicable creatures too, deserved a space to live, but not Ülker Street: an island, a concentration camp, a rehabilitation facility, a fortified town perhaps, but not their street. This opinion may be explained in reference to the essentialist ordering of space, where each and every identity should have its own space separate from the others, so that any probable hybridization or contamination between them is avoided.

Just like the way they were entrapped into an abject identity, the transgendered community was entrapped within the street limits, where any possible interaction with the outside was disallowed. Ülker Street was turned into a concentration camp; and most of the transgendered subjects wanted nothing but to get out of this camp alive. The ones, who resisted leaving, shut their windows and doors, and waited for the people to calm down. But their windows were broken, doors were smashed and Molotov cocktails were thrown inside the houses so that

they would come out. By way of breaking and entering, the nationalists went in to the flats and threw every object that belonged to the transgendered subjects out. Just like in the Greek Pogroms, the purity was attained once again by making a physical mess.

The similarity between the two acts of abjection is not limited to only that; during both events which resembled an exorcism ceremony, objects like Turkish flag and headscarf were also extensively used as metonymic extensions of the desired identities. The sacramental used in Ülker Street abjection were not exactly same with the ones applied in Greek Pogroms; that is an indicator that desired identities have been in motion since that time. In reference to headscarf, it can be argued that Muslim identity seemed to be more actively incorporated in Ülker Street. In Selek's interviews (2001), the young nationalists argued that, because of the way they are, these freaks could neither be a Turk –“grandsons of Fatih”- nor a Muslim. They dressed up the street with nationalist and religious symbols, and laid the abjects bare from these identities; so that they became unworthy of defending in the eyes of a nationalist or religious person. No empathy would be felt for their suffering, because there was nothing common between them and the majority of the society. In Ay's program (1996), the transgendered subjects attempted to prove that they also belonged into the society and shared all its moral values, by using religious words, and by telling how hard they worked to find professions for themselves other than prostitution.

4.4. Ülker Street after the Events

Against the excluders' dreams and expectations, Ülker Street has not turned into a homogeneously decent and traditional space to this day. The events were not written on the materiality of the street, but to the memories of the transgendered subjects and neighbors who used to live in the street at that time. And also to the identity of the street, which is mostly remembered only with these events. Even the street was declared as a "safe zone" after the abjection, the apartments stayed un-rented for a long time. They were painted again and again to get rid of the traces of their former residents and the violence exerted upon them. With much lesser amounts of money than the abjection front had hoped for, they were rented by some other marginal people. The Satanists, who became the next target in the eyes of the police and the media, were "arrested" on the same street. Walls of the flats, this time decorated with graffiti and murals of Satan, were once again painted.

With a twist of fate, in 2005 a newspaper report informed that, over for three years, the residents of Ülker Street had been forced to pay protection fee by the same nationalist group which were invited to banish the transgendered community (Kalkan, 2005). However, despite the two resolved court cases held against them, the nationalist group would not stop disturbing the Ülker Street residents; they kept threatening every newcomer and prevented the real estate owners, who refused to pay, to rent their apartments; they even took-over some of the flats with sheer force. According to the reporter's interview, the members of the mob declared that they

were harvesting the payback for their earlier service of clearing the street from the “disgusting” transgendered community.

During my interview with the mukhtar, she started with expressing her gratitude for this study about the unjust and violent events that terrorized the entire district. She told that she would never be able to forget the violence she witnessed and the way the transgendered subjects were left in solitude by the society. She also said that she was never able to understand why transgendered subjects were selected as targets at the first place; according to her heroin addicts and dealers living in the street constituted a more serious security threat. She believed that the events were merely a setup for acquiring estates from the terrorized neighbors for lesser amounts of money; which she added just worked fine. As the events were over, she and the other neighbors felt relieved not because transgendered subjects were evacuated, but because the furious and ravenous “jackals” stopped terrorizing the street. She stated that the percentage of the families living in the street had dropped ever since the events took place; according to the data, approximately 30% of the street inhabitants live as families. On the other hand, percentage of the single working men and women had increased, and now there are more residents, who may be labeled as marginal, than before.

To this day, transgendered subjects still have not succeeded in finding an alternative secured space for their community and they go on living scattered in the vicinity at the time being. Transgendered subjects argue that, ever since the rupture in their intimate interaction, the solidarity among them has been weakened. According to the data acquired from the LGBTT rights organization LambdaIstanbul,

only in the following year 13 transgendered subjects were murdered in different parts of Istanbul. After the events in Ülker Street, transgendered subjects were also subjected to similar events, in other cities as well; in Ankara, Bursa, and İzmir transgendered subjects were pressured by some groups in the districts where they concentrated (Öz, 2009;). Ülker Street incidents which were realized for the sake of a purified space identity did not only fail to stop the “cancer”, but silenced a social ingredient that served for the construction of Beyoğlu’s complex identity, and at the same time weakened the prospects for a peaceful community.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1. Failure of Essentialism with Beyoğlu's Identity

All through the study, various acts of abjection in Beyoğlu were discussed. By way of these acts, many identities were attained; foreign authors' abjection of the hybridity provided them with purified identities of the East and the West; early republican Turkish writers' abjection of Beyoğlu helped them to attain a modern Turkish identity in reference to traditional moral values, and a national identity that cut off the strings with Western low morals; in Greek Pogroms and Ülker Street events, abjection of Beyoğlu produced nostalgic, traditional, religious, and nationalist identities by negating the "alien inside", and then this identity was attempted to be equalized or made consistent with these identities; in other acts of abjection, like the cases of Aksanat, İstiklal Street signboards, and Çiçek Pasajı, heterogeneity of Beyoğlu were targeted for attaining spaces, which are homogenized and equalized with the essences derived from a nostalgic past. Unquestionably abjection is a mechanism for producing identities; but the problem with the acts of abjection in Beyoğlu lies in a desire to annihilate abject, or in other words to suppress the chora, for the sake of securing hegemonic identities.

The utopia of a sterile and ordered world, which is cleaned off from its abjects, is bound to fail, because there is no "abject in itself"; every being embodies a potentiality that may turn it to an abject, at a "right" time and space. Essentialism denies this fact; for Plato (1973), the meaning of life is to endlessly discover and

recover the bygone essence of each subject and object, and afterwards to endeavor to conserve it by the help of a strict order⁴⁵. According to an essentialist, the world necessarily needs a perfect order to avoid unwelcomed encounters; everything has to be placed separately where they are supposed to be. Instead of questioning the reasons behind the hair in the soup, essentialism advises to pay attention to keeping the hair away from the soup.

Accompanied by such a strict order, essentialism intends to make body and soul, or space and identity, one and the same thing by eliminating the source of contamination that prevents it from happening. Beyoğlu, as a figure contaminating Turkishness, was a source as such until 1980s; however after it was domesticated and purified to a certain degree, this time heterogeneous components of Beyoğlu turned into the elements of contamination. The desire to eliminate the contaminating source for eternity produces an endless cycle of violence, just because the contaminant always tends to shift in time and space, along with the appointed identity.

The desire of purification inevitably raises some indispensable questions; what is the pure identity of Beyoğlu and who decides it? To what extent does this process of purification should be carried and when does it come to an end? Is it until pure Platonic forms are attained? Where do the residues or wastes of this process go? If the space is purified, will this bare space, which is stripped off of its multiple

⁴⁵ Plato's (1973) *Idea* still keeps on influencing the commonsense, with a conception of the world as divided into two, consisting of the world of ideas and the world of appearances. Whereas the world of ideas houses all the ideal *Forms* (with a capital f) with their totality, purity and autonomy, the world of appearances is barred from the pure ideas, leaving people with nothing but *forms* (with a small f) as representations of the transcendental Forms. By such a key differentiation, Plato sets the parameters of ontology around an inconsistency between transcendental idea (the soul) and form (the body). For Plato, a worthy life is nothing but a never-ending quest for the ideas, which promises the seeker a universal truth freed from the distorted worldly appearances.

references and identities, still be able to possess the qualities that differentiate it from the others? Or in other words, after an ultimate hypothetical process of purification, will Beyoğlu still be able to sustain a discernible identity?

As the study shows, the essentialist desire approaches Beyoğlu for unveiling an essence that has been governing the growth of its cells from the beginning; so that, Beyoğlu's streets, buildings, inhabitants, shortly all of its components will, in the final analysis, come to return and point to this essence. Unfortunately, even if there is such an essence to Beyoğlu, it is definitely not a pure one. As the historic data show, Beyoğlu was not an autonomous district in its birth; it was an unintended parasite for the fortified body of Galata. This fact points that if there is an essence to Beyoğlu, it cannot be explained without a reference to another being, Galata. Of course the heterogeneity and hybridity of its components and lack of a stable spatial organization were other factors that complicate Beyoğlu's identity. According to such facts, it is impossible to attain Beyoğlu a pure identity. Actually there is another agenda behind the essentialist insistence on Beyoğlu; to exterminate Beyoğlu's heterogeneity, which proliferates and disseminates alternate identities.

Despite all the violence the hegemonic identities exerted upon Beyoğlu, the district still keeps its ability to mix things, space, and people up, and thus produce hybrid or complex identities. It seems that the chauvinist, nationalist, religious, and moralist identities have caused nothing but vulgar violence towards Beyoğlu and its components. In order to preclude further acts of purification, rather than a "bleeding heart" position, a new stance that merges ethics and ontology is needed. And that

requires a criticism towards the metaphysical thinking that necessarily separates the body and soul, and the space and identity.

5.2. Purified Identity versus Complex Concept

As mentioned earlier, transgendered subjects were shocked by the sudden turn of events. They were living there for many years, but never had witnessed such harsh abjection from their neighbors or nationalists; it was the Habitat summit that triggered the events. The cases show that acts of abjection only occur where there is an identity crisis. This statement also corresponds to the inconsistency between the nostalgic identities and historic facts; the nostalgic identities do not derive from historical facts but always from a vanished sense of home; not from something positive but always from something negative, from a momentary lack of unity.

Here it will be illuminating to insert an analogy between purity and home. Whereas home is the purity, house is the space. One talks about home with positive references like peace, security, tranquility, harmony or freedom. On the other hand, house is a place that also embodies negative references like entrapment, loneliness, boredom, possibility of a forced entry, or an insect invasion; in other words the references which need to be kept outside. A house is made home by a signification that purifies it; in other words, a house is made home by cleansing it from all those negative references. House, both literally and metaphorically, needs sanitary systems to be declared as a home, because these negative references keep coming up. The home needs constant maintenance, in other words, purification; home paradoxically

necessitates these negative references in order to sustain itself. The negative references crop up only because of the concept of home; in other words, the negative references are the symptoms of the desire for a home.

Purity is not lost; actually it has never existed; it is only momentarily produced, as a byproduct of an act of purification motivated by the spatio-temporarily altering social values. If there is no essential purity, but only an act of purification, there is no pure identity in itself. All identities are always and already contaminated; that is why they persistently constitute matters of crisis. The hair-soup case is a fine representative for this case; it shows that not a single identity is freed from the effect of the context; it is always the contexts which make the essences. For a Platonic frame of mind, due to its degenerative effect, the context should be tamed, domesticated, and made to fit in an order. Beyoğlu is not made up of the generic dissemination of an essence which homogenously makes up a whole; it is a bunch of heterogeneous components which are not parts of a grand whole, but which will be constructed as a whole with a sense of ordering. That is to oppose the presumption of a pure Beyoğlu which was corrupted in time; Beyoğlu has never been pure, but has been “produced as pure” numerous times throughout its history.

In the case of identities, the negative references correspond to objects. However, Platonic ontology never accepts the existence of the object in the identity construction as necessary and inevitable; because, for an essentialist, objects are always destructive and degenerative. This structure leads to a chronic obsession with sterility, which may in return cause a widespread allergy. Because in attempting to lay all the identities bare and isolated from each other, it does not only fight any

hybrid identities to develop, but actually fights the identity's ability to renew itself with constant change. Such an organism cannot be considered as alive.

Ever since the second half of the 19th Century, Structuralist and Psychoanalytical theories, and following their track, the Post-structuralist theory, have been focusing on how truth, meaning, and identity are constructed. Post-structuralist theory also attempts to unveil and problematize the structure that makes the production of meaning, truth, and identity possible. The common problem about the concept of identity is no more “what the identities are”, but “how they are constructed” and “how they alter in time and space”.

Even if the essentialist ontology still dominates the commonsense, its metaphysical foundations have been gravely shaken by theory; post-structuralist philosophy overthrows the conceptualization of identity that rests upon constant, stable, and eternal metaphysical essences, and in return inserts an unstable, temporary and fragile understanding of identity that can only endure in repeating itself within the ever-changing context. Saying that identities are not stable, eternal and constant, is to say that the references that make up an identity are always in motion; depending on the spatio-temporal contexts, while some references are internalized, the others are externalized. But the structure is not as simple as that. Contemporary philosophers have been fascinated with some complex elements which cannot be simply located inside or outside; even if met with different terms and conceptualizations by each theoretician, these inter-beings are always accepted as both constructive and destructive for the identity. They are the key concepts to explain why and how identities are always in flux.

Contemporary philosophy denies the sovereignty of metaphysical essences. There is no single essence to Beyoğlu. Beyoğlu is a set which includes multiple positive and negative references. Identity of Beyoğlu can only be thought in reference to heterogeneity. It is no coincidence that most of the books on Beyoğlu tend to turn into some sort of encyclopedias, indexes which contain dispersed fragments about history, buildings, events, and personal recollections. Beyoğlu is a whole composed of dissimilar fragments. Yet the problem with most of the books on Beyoğlu is that they generally tend to include only the positive references; negative references like cases of abjection also need to be incorporated to the concept of Beyoğlu. Of course it is not possible and meaningful to cite all the elements which are left outside the set; yet, one needs to acknowledge the presence of the inter-beings stuck between the interiority and exteriority of the discourse on Beyoğlu, for an accurate analysis of its identity.

Deleuze and Guattari attempt to purge philosophy from its metaphysical foundations. In *What is Philosophy* (1995), they contemplate on the concept of “concept”. In contrast to the transcendental term *idea*, concept belongs to the world of immanence. World of immanence is not a world of essences but pure materiality; there is no transcendence to it. Concepts are nothing but momentary intensities; they are fragmentary wholes having irregular contours defined by the sum of their components. Radically different from visualization of a set, what happens within the contour is a linearity traversing of its finite number of heterogeneous components - having zones of neighborhood/indiscernibility between each- with a “survey” at “infinite speed”. Since whatever exists within the plane of immanence is in constant movement, a concept “does not have spatiotemporal coordinates, only intensive

ordinates” (21). When a concept is cited, it surveys a multiplicity of positive and negative material references. Such a conceptualization makes it possible to insert the concept of context into the discussion of identity; and certainly has the capability to explain the disturbance from the hair in the soup without turning it into a traumatic experience.

Whereas Idea is simply one, concept is a multiplicity; whereas “Ideas can only be associated as images and can only be ordered as abstractions” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1995:207), concepts necessitate going beyond these and arriving at mental objects determinable as real beings; whereas Platonic Forms have pure, determinable, and strict contours, concepts have irregular and indeterminable contours that do not connect with each other in order to make up a totalized whole as if they were the pieces of a puzzle; whereas Ideas are “for” a world of fixed and static “beings” conserved from any becoming that may spoil their purity, concepts are already “at” the world of “becomings”. Conception of concepts as such involves that they are no longer considered images of things, but as things, which transmit intensities, and provide means of interaction/resonance with other events.

In summary, the concept is merely an instant survey connecting multiple material references and other concepts as well, giving way to impermanent spatio-temporal intensities. From this perspective, when we talk about Beyoğlu; we do not talk about a single pure essence, but a singularity made up of multiple heterogeneous references. There is no hierarchy among the various dimensions of space; the space is flat. Inhabitants, visitors, events, novels, buildings, jokes, colors, architectural styles, other concepts, and countless more references are on a single plane of

immanence for numerous intensities. Therefore, each dissimilar citation of a concept is relevant and valuable: the more variety of references surveyed, the more valuable becomes the concept of the particular space. Platonic ontology serves for the moments of crisis; when a crisis of identity occurs, it advises to return to the ideal, and purify the contaminated. On the other hand, Deleuzian perspective does not see crisis but an opportunity in such unexpected encounters. These incidents are accepted as instances where the potentiality surfaces on behalf of re-producing identities. Identity is nothing but a set of references which are both included and excluded in the bounds of the economy of difference.

Deleuze and Guattari's conceptualization of the concept that embodies positive and negative references all together in its complex interiority is quite capable to resolve the problem of Beyoğlu's identity. An identity paradoxically internalizes what it externalizes in order to sustain itself in changing contexts, though "not as same" but "different each time". Because there are no absolute context and references, the negative element of an intensity has the potentiality to serve also as a positive reference for another intensity. There are only temporal contextual conceptualizations. Any act of inclusion and exclusion depends upon a paradoxical logic of "inclusion of the excluded". Then objects should not be annihilated, but paradoxically both excluded and incorporated, in other words recycled.

Object is not simply the outside, but the key to set the interiority and exteriority by its very unpositionable existence. Even though it cannot be positioned within the economy of interiority, it can never be thought separate from it. The object organizes the space in which it can never simply be placed, sustaining the very

topography it fractures. Yet isn't the interior, in the end, but an effect of this violation? Abjection, thought in terms of space, is to suppress the non-spatializable in favor of an interiority, or in other words to produce the effect of space by suppressing the non-space. We have to admit the inevitable violence with the concept of interiority. Enis Batur (2001) approaches the problem of Beyoğlu as a problem of the stranger. He says that this place is above all a stranger, an island where the ones with their single foot outside gathered; and even if they would leave, new strangers will be there to replace them. Batur argues that Istanbul has and will always be exposed to otherness through this opening.

The question about the stranger is a question of hospitality. This problem was extensively discussed at a workshop held in Istanbul with well-known intellectual participants including Derrida. The workshop was called "Pera, Peras, Poros" (Batur, 1999; Dikeç, 2002) and primarily focused on the concepts such as host, hospitality, hostility and the place of the "other". The existence of a guest, who is metaphorically at the threshold, is the *raison d'être* of home. The alien, the stranger, the other is not necessarily the one to threaten the home, the identity, but actually is the element that repeatedly constructs it, during the act of hospitality. Therefore, the question comes to the hostility within hospitality. Actually the paradox belongs to the essentialist conception that first divides the space and identity, and then attempts to purify the space in line with a purified identity. There is no pure identity; all identities are inherently contaminated.

It does not appear as a coincidence that some architectural projects in close vicinity to Beyoğlu attempt to deal with this problem. Esma Sultan Yalısı, an 18th

century mansion, which was burnt down in 1975 and was renovated in 1991 with an interesting idea. Instead of a conventional restoration yearning for its prior body, architect Avcioglu preferred to preserve the remains of the building which merely consisted of its facades. The addition was produced out of steel and glass within these facades. The new interior barely touches the existing shell, yet it is in a dialogue with it. The architect departs not from an idea of a pure space but a complex space which embody the references of the sterile and the filthy, the old and the new, the traditional and the modern, all at once.

Santral Istanbul, a culture center that was built in the ruins of the Silahtarağa power station, is yet another fine example for complex space. Designed by Arolat, Sayın and Tümertekin, the main building was covered with a light steel shell that holds a transparent effect to see the old building façade. The interior resembles Avcioglu's project, due to the dialogue between heterogeneous references, the dirty and the clean, the industrial and the post-industrial, the new and the old intertwine and somehow make up a whole. As one walks in a well-lit and sterile space, he/she meets an untouched dark corridor full of rusted machinery. These two projects both dare to incorporate the disgusting, the fearsome and the filthy within the space, and still manage to attain a space identity at the same time. They fit well within the context of Beyoğlu and Istanbul. Afife Batur describes the complexity of Istanbul:

Everything is both intertwined and separate. Reality and myth, beauty and ugliness, richness and dearth, power and helplessness, the sacred and the banal, continuity and rupture and a range of paradoxical situations go hand in hand in this city... An intricate array of phenomena forms and events coexist there. Overlapping layers of history, which conceal facts and certainties buried beneath them increase its complexity... It is difficult to imagine Istanbul. Narrating Istanbul is like weaving a tangled web (1996:xxi).

There is an apparent correspondence between Istanbul and Deleuze and Guattari's concept of concept. Beyoğlu is difficult, yet vastly fertile due to its heterogeneity reminding the semiotic chora. It is a space where identities are constructed and deconstructed at an enormous speed. Enis Batur talks about the immunity of Beyoğlu towards the acts of purification:

But the boulevard was accustomed to alteration, licentiousness was its chief characteristic, as deep down as genes, and it changed the protagonists and antagonists as one would change lovers or freshen make-up, finding new colors for itself, new sonorities and odors, what's more combining, mating them with the old ones, so that once more a new amalgam had appeared... Beyoğlu of today preserves its uncanny and seductive spirit. A treasure store of buried dreams, the backyard of the most sprawling mega-mega-polis on earth. (Now) the Indians, Pakistanis, and Russians from the east and north, the Croats and Austrians from the West have swarmed into the city, many of them building a new life in Beyoğlu... For the thousand time I have recourse to Rilke: They come here meaning to live, whereas this is a place to die. (2001:12-15)

Beyoğlu will keep on being the arena for the discussion of identity. It is no use to attempt to turn it into a lifeless open air museum, or carry on the discourse about the imperilment of its identity. Only when it is regarded as a concept, Beyoğlu may be embraced with all its heterogeneous and cosmopolitan references.

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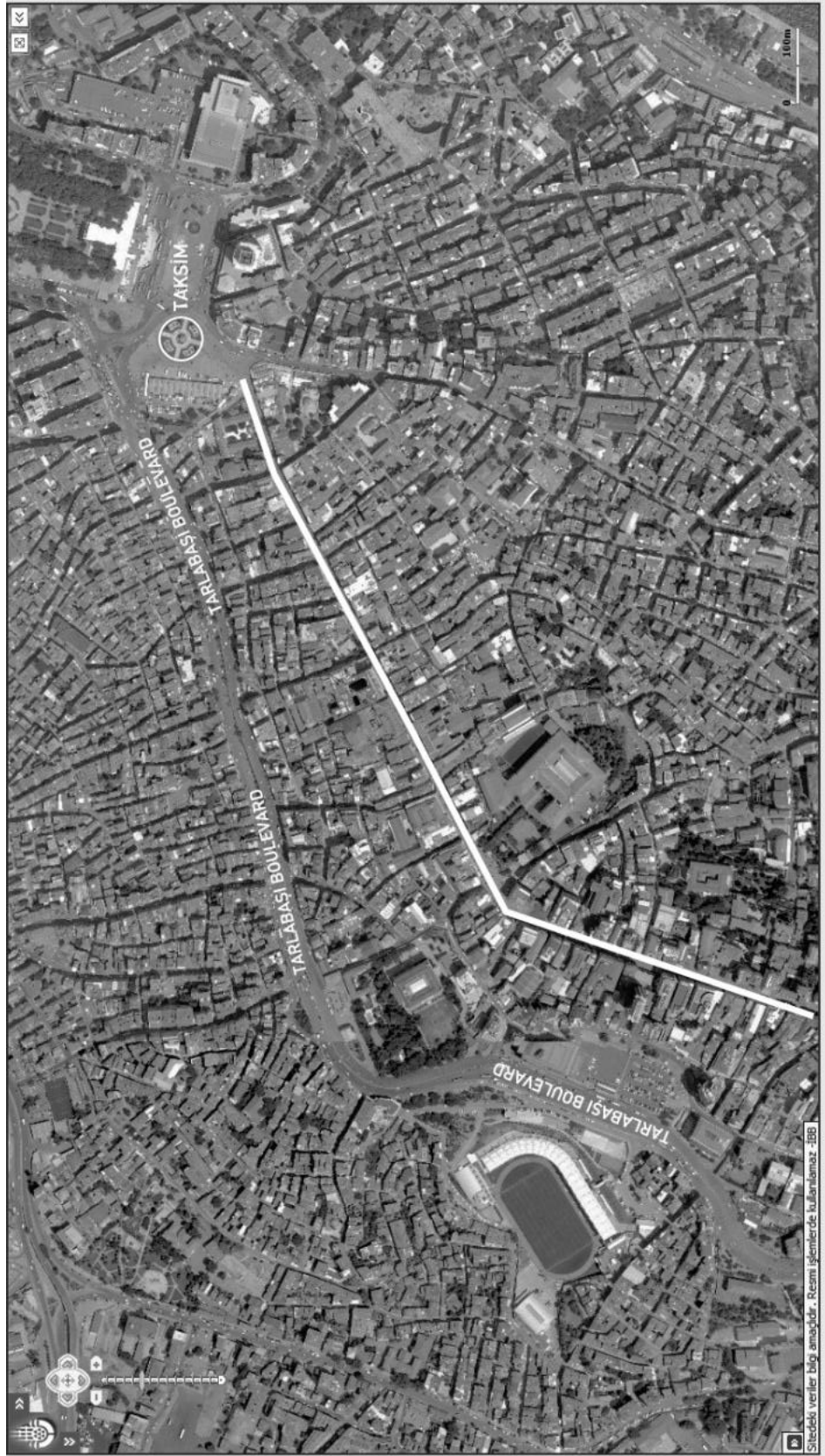
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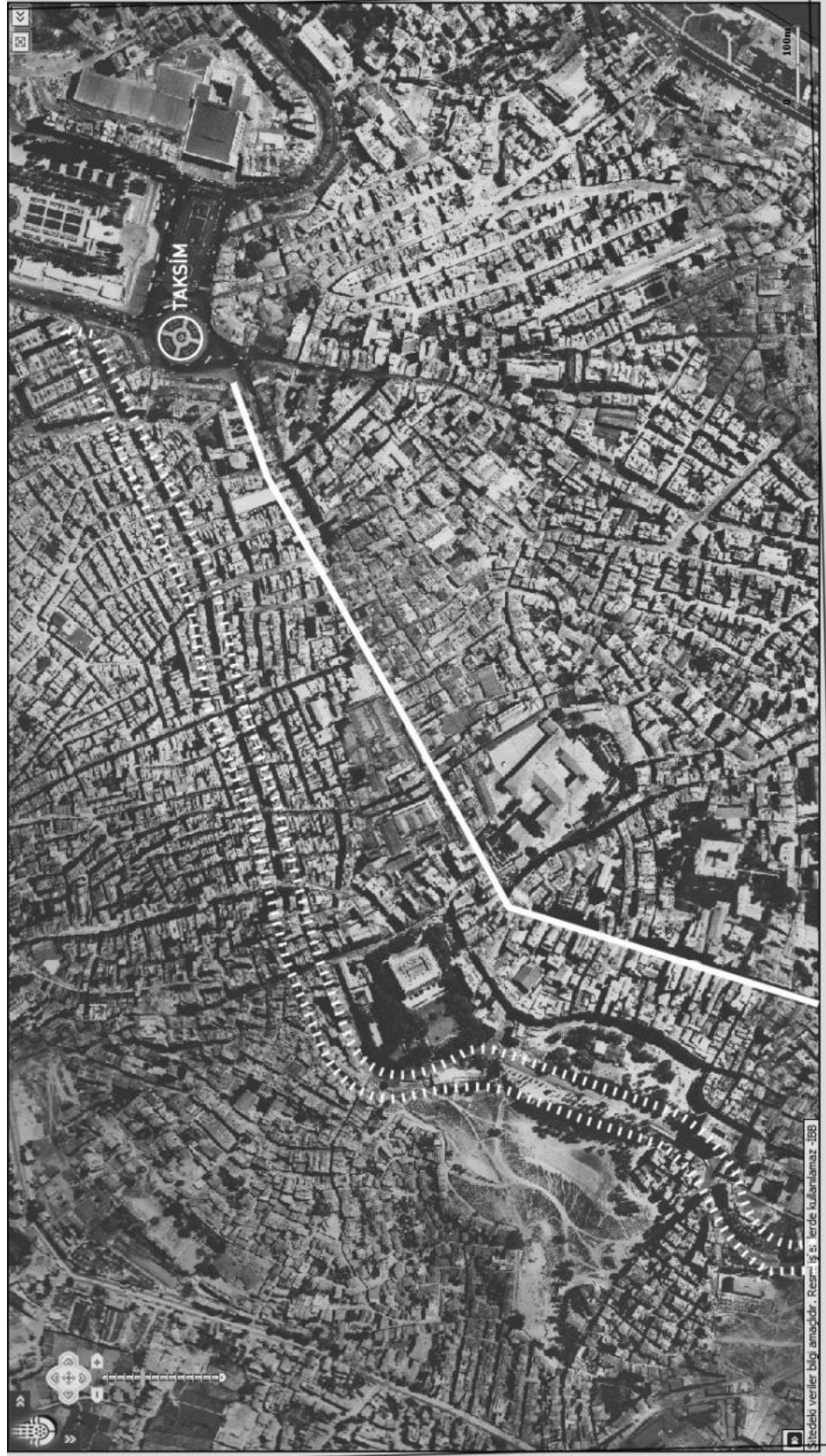
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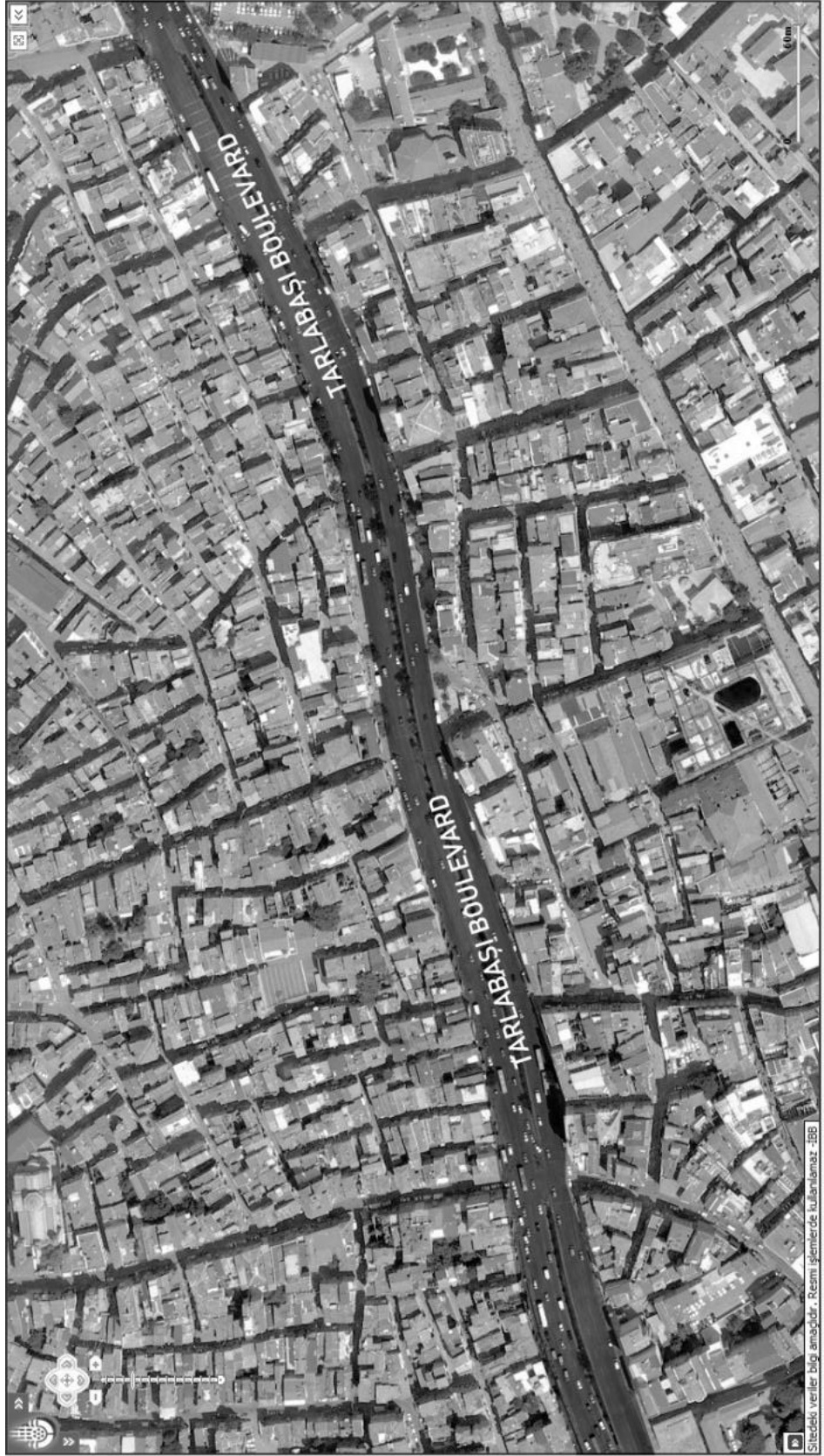
APPENDIX A: TARLABAŞI DEMOLITION



A photograph showing the entire Tarlabası Boulevard in 2010 (Taken from City Guide of İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi; <http://sehirrehberi.ibb.gov.tr/map.aspx>).



A photograph showing Tarlabası area in 1966, the dotted line marks the borders of the future demolition (Taken from City Guide of İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi; <http://sehirrehberi.ibb.gov.tr/map.aspx>).

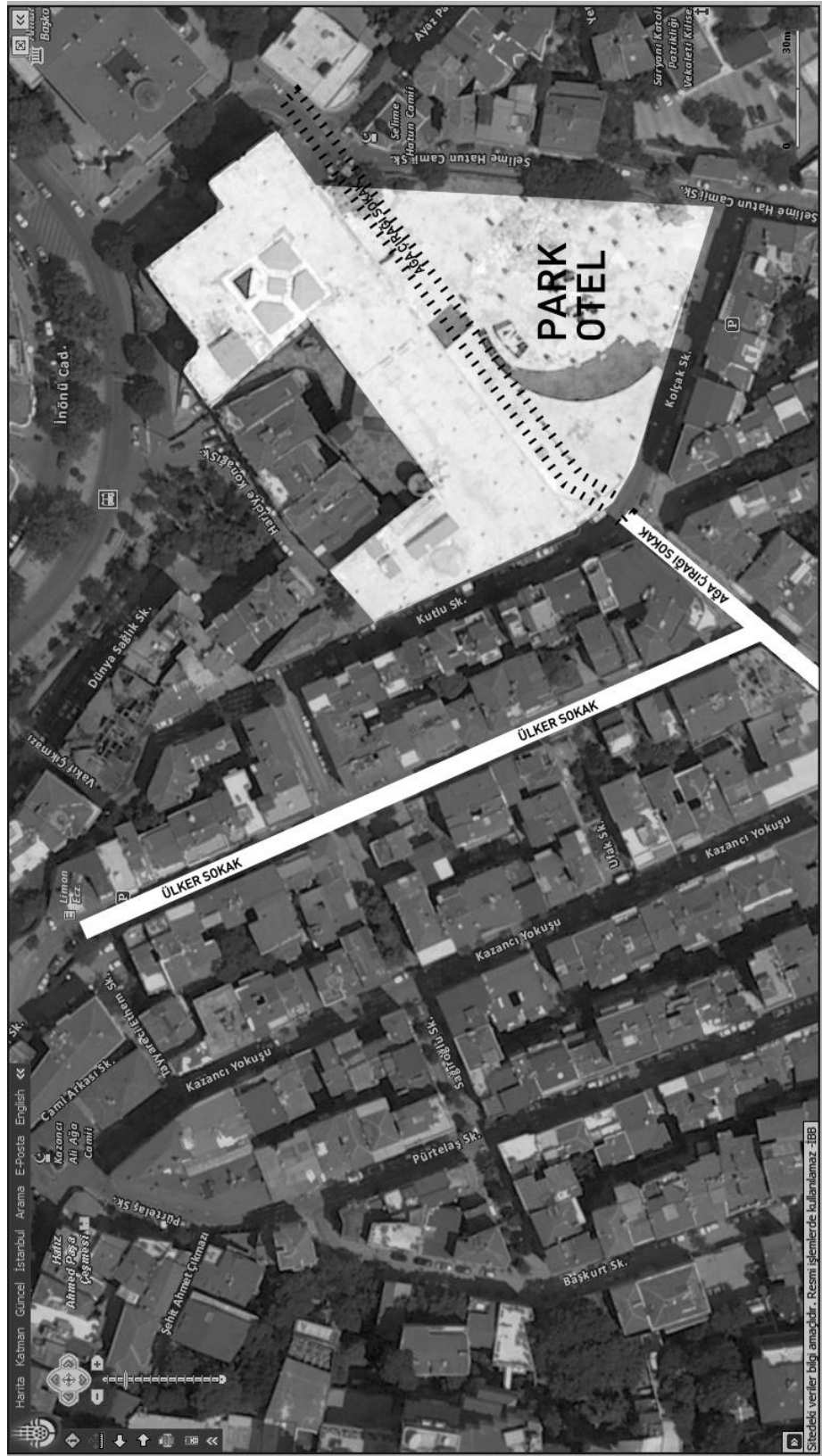


A close-up photograph showing part of Tarlabası Boulevard in 2010 (Taken from City Guide of İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi; <http://sehirrehberi.ibb.gov.tr/map.aspx>).



A close-up photograph showing a part of Tarlabası area in 1966, the dotted line marks the borders of the future demolition (Taken from City Guide of İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi; <http://sehirrehberi.ibb.gov.tr/map.aspx>).

APPENDIX B: ÜLKER STREET AND PARK HOTEL



A photograph showing Ülker Street and Park Hotel in 2010. The dotted line marks the borders of the Park Hotel and the swallowed Ağa Çırağı Street. (Taken from City Guide of İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi; <http://sehirrehberi.ibb.gov.tr/map.aspx>)



A photograph showing Ülkör Street and Park Hotel in 1966. The dotted line marks the borders of the future Park Hotel (Taken from City Guide of İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi; <http://sehirrehberi.ibb.gov.tr/map.aspx>).