

## CITY AND SELF IN THREE ACCOUNTS OF İSTANBUL: LORICHS' PANORAMA (1559), LE CORBUSIER'S TRAVELOGUE (1911) AND PAMUK'S MEMOIR (2005)

Selen MORKOÇ

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*"Why did Constantinople get the works?  
That's nobody's business but the Turks."*  
Song Writer Jimmy Kennedy (1)

In this article, I will be comparing three İstanbul representations across centuries (2). They seem to be chosen arbitrarily from rich visual and literary works featuring the city. However, they have a point in common; they all challenge binary oppositions such as Orient-Occident and East-West in their own way. Most depictions of İstanbul by native and foreign writers and artists bear deep influences of an oversimplified version of Orientalism constructed on the opposition of the self-imposing subject and the repressed object (3). As previously put by Edward Said, however, the oppositions between East and West, self and other and object and subject have never been as neat as they may be assumed by an Orientalist discourse constructed on received ideas and approved authority (4).

Three representations undertaken in this paper, on the contrary, highlight rich idiosyncrasy of self and other, partly through affirmation and partly identification of the "other". Each case blurs and complicates the dichotomy of the object and the subject in its own way, which makes them significant to compare. They show that a humanism based on an interplay between subjectivity and objectivity has more potential in revealing cultural encounters through the eye of the individual. At this point, Said's critique of Orientalism coincides with the hermeneutical approach to human sciences put by Gadamer in his *Truth and Method* (1965). Said argues that Orientalism is more than a fantasy; it is a constructed system of theory and practice about the Orient: "It is rather a distribution of geopolitical awareness into aesthetic, scholarly, economic, sociological, historical and philological texts..." (1978, 6,12). For Said, the relationship between the Orientalist and the Orient is essentially hermeneutical; a struggle to deal with the sense of otherness in front of a culturally, temporally and geographically distant object. Common stereotypes exploited by the Orientalist literature such as mysticism of sexuality and the private

1. Quoted from the song *Istanbul not Constantinople*.

2. This paper developed from a postgraduate seminar presented at School of Architecture, Adelaide University on April 30, 2007. I am thankful to Dr Peter Scriver, Prof Antony Radford and Dr Dean Bruton for their encouraging remarks. I am indebted to Nigel Westbrook and Zeynep Kanra for providing me some of the images.

3. Edward Said in his seminal work *Orientalism* (1978) argues that from the end of the eighteenth century until recent times, Western reactions towards Islam have been framed by an oversimplified version of Orientalism constructed by the Occident who saw the rest of the world dispersed in an imaginative geography as different, inferior yet dangerous. He revisited this argument after 9/11/2000 in relation with recent controversies towards Islam. Said (1997, 4).

4. See preface dated 2003 in Edward Said's *Orientalism*. Said (1978, XXII).

5. "Gadamer uses the term [horizon] both in a temporal and spatial sense: an horizon is historically formed, and represents the perspective bequeathed us by our past." Snodgrass (1991, 37).

domain, therefore, shall be seen as ways to come to terms with the sense of otherness which fail to establish a proper understanding of the object (1978, 222).

Gadamer in a similar vein critiques Cartesian divide between object and subject in interpreting culturally and historically distant texts and artifacts. He argues that understanding is a hermeneutical endeavor by which distant meanings are brought closer through interpretation. Understanding is only possible through a genuine dialogue with the object of the inquiry in which both the otherness of the object and the prejudices and prejudices of the subject are confronted and contested. Such a dialogue with the object of the inquiry searches for the possibilities of a fusion of horizons between the subject and the object that eventually dissolves object-subject dichotomy (1965, 267-271, 340) (5). As I have discussed elsewhere, Gadamer's proposition is engaged by many disciplines within the human sciences, especially for reconceptualizing methodological issues, which has serious implications for the cultural studies of art, architecture and history (2003, 126).

Each with its own specificity, three accounts of İstanbul are evidence of the complexity of such a hermeneutical dialogue. In line with Said's and Gadamer's insights, instead of focusing on the problem with the opposition of İstanbul as East and its representations as Western and Eastern points of view, I would like to take representations as "self fulfillments" and İstanbul as the "other". Therefore, the three representations of İstanbul are not that of object and subject; they are three accounts between "self" and "other". The first account is Melchior Lorichs' *Panorama of Istanbul* (1559). The second one is Le Corbusier's travelogue *Journey to the East* (1911) and the third account is Orhan Pamuk's recent memoir *Istanbul: Memories of a City* (2005). Both the genre of the works and the origins and identities of their creators are different. While Lorichs and Le Corbusier are foreign travelers, Pamuk is a native of the city. Although with experiential motives, the former two accounts give priority to sensual perception with an emphasis on visuality. Pamuk, however, exhibits a more existential perspective to the city through an increased mode of self-identification. Subjects' varying positions *vis-à-vis* the city as the object are problematized in three sub-topics; In Lorichs' *Panorama*, object-subject dichotomy is not a matter of concern as the subject is already situated within the object. Le Corbusier's travelogue keeps object and subject as separate categories and searches for a genuine dialogue between the two. In his memoir, Pamuk struggles between being the subject of his explorations of the city and the object of the Western gaze.

### **SUBJECT WITHIN THE OBJECT: MELCHIOR LORICHS' PANORAMA**

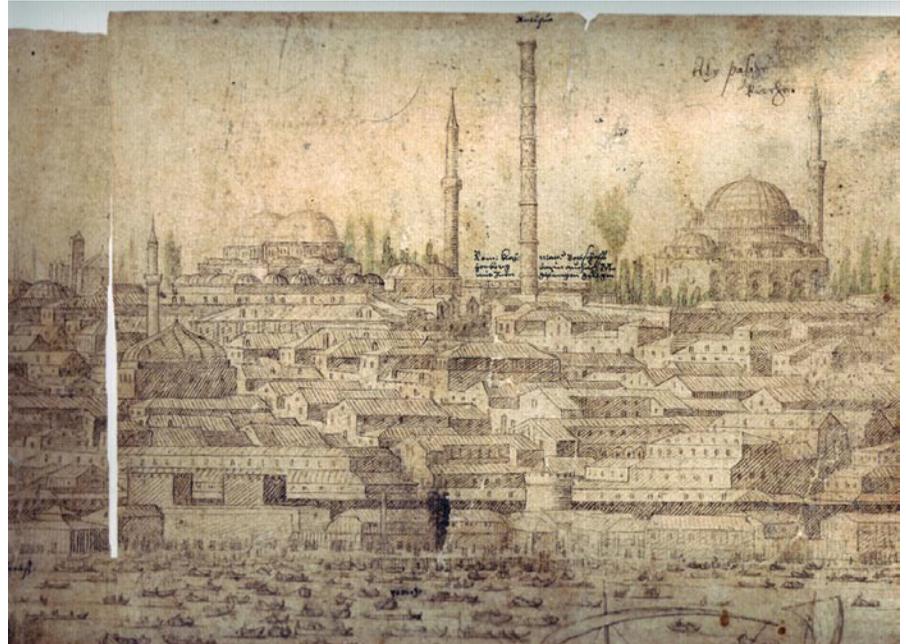
The first representation is a drawing from the sixteenth-century by Melchior Lorichs. Melchior Lorichs was born in 1526 of noble parentage in the Danish town of Flensburg. After his apprenticeship at a goldsmith, he established contact with the Holy Roman Empire and became a court artist. He was asked to join the entourage of Augier Ghiselin de Busbecq, the chief ambassador sent to the court of Ottoman Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent in 1554. The purpose of the visit was to settle a dispute over the control of Siebenbürgen. The reason why Lorichs joined Busbecq is unknown. Although Busbecq wrote his famous letters to the Holy Roman Emperor describing important moments of his encounters with the Ottomans, he does not mention a single word about Lorichs and his mission (Clair, 1969, 411).

Lorichs came to İstanbul when it was in its golden age as the capital of the Ottoman Empire. Unlike the ambassador Busbecq he accompanies, Lorichs emphatically intensifies his experiences of İstanbul during his stay of five years. He is deeply impressed by the city and its culture. After he left İstanbul, he developed an enduring interest in Turks and their relationship with Europe. Upon his return to Vienna, he wrote a poem that featured the perpetuating conflicts between the East and the West, which according to him was unavoidable. Later on, he prepared a monograph on Süleyman the Magnificent and wrote about the sultan and military and political descriptions of the Ottoman Empire. In addition to these, he brought back a series of curious drawings from İstanbul. Although military weapons and costume was his primary interest, he also depicted modes of transportation, marriage and burial rituals, tradesmen, and architecture of this distant culture. Most of Lorichs' depictions are documentary; however, from time to time he features the peculiarities of the East. Among his drawings, it is possible to find fantastic creatures such as a legendary *harpi* associated with Islamic symbolism. He depicted sultanas which are quite unlikely to be real as the faces of court women and their spaces were carefully concealed from strangers. In preparation of these drawings for publication, Lorichs was convinced that accurate knowledge of the Ottomans was essential in Europe. Despite difficulties in finding finance for this, he insisted on his goal for many years. His final woodcut album of the Turks was an influential manual for artists such as Rembrandt in depicting eastern scenes and characters in their paintings (Clair, 1969, 411- 15).

It is important to ground Lorichs' work in its socio-cultural context. Although what is known as discourse of Orientalism today mostly covers European representations of the East in the nineteenth-century, as exemplified by Lorichs' panorama, interest in the East had existed long time ago. Having reached the gates of Vienna by 1529, Ottoman Empire was not only an object of curiosity for Western and Northern Europe in the sixteenth-century but it was also a military, economic and religious threat. It was an interesting coincidence that the rise of print technology was synchronic with the fall of Constantinople in the fifteenth-century. It is further curious to note that the very first pamphlet printed in Europe was a piece of anti-Turkish propaganda produced nineteen months later than the conquest. Amanda Wunder purports that traveling European elite built on and complicated the fearful image of the Turk among Europeans; their first hand experience documented through texts and sketches were widely reproduced and distributed to Western audience (6).

Wunder further argues that antiquarianism was a common culture shared by educated European visitors of Constantinople on commercial, diplomatic and scholarly enterprises in the sixteenth-century. All documents and artifacts created by these visitors belong to traditional Renaissance genres such as urban encomium, chorography, the *historia* painting and the costume book. Therefore, while embodying idiosyncratic details, they conform to a shared tradition. To illustrate, it is hard to undertake Busbecq's description of the city in his famous letters as mere empirical observations, for he used formal rhetorical models based on classical encomium (2003, 89- 96). As Wunder shows, European antiquarians accuse Ottomans of being disinterested and hostile towards remains of antiquity. They continuously see a stark contrast between the remains of the past and the present existence of the Turks in the city. European antiquarians lament disintegration of past structures and their incorporation into new Ottoman buildings. They could not see that what

6. Wunder suggests that European travelers' empirical observations and notes influenced many other works that had proliferated from them without having any first hand experience. This literature perpetuated the image of the frightening Turk. Wunder (2003, 93).



**Figure 1.** Çemberlitaş Region. Green and pink ink on paper. Detail from *Byzantium sive Constantineopolis* (Lorichs, 1559). (Universiteitsbibliotheek, Leiden, BPL.,1758).

Ottomans were doing was following the pattern established by the Romans and the Byzantines. They could not face the fact that Ottomans did not share the “Renaissance sense of the past” and they had different priorities. Wunder sees these exaggerated expressions as an outcome of clashes of class and education rather than the exaggerated chasm between the East and the West (2003, 100-102).

Although not totally safe from cultural prejudices, the visual material created by European travelers displayed the multi-layered urban history of Constantinople better than the rhetoric of urban description. Like other travelers of the time, Lorichs’ main interest was to study and document the remains of antiquity and his works on Turks came as a secondary outcome of his observations (104). Lorichs’s interest in the Ottomans is not one of its kind in history. However, what makes his case unique is that during his stay in İstanbul he prepared an unprecedented panorama of the city; *Byzantium sive Constantineopolis* (**Figure 1**). Lorichs’ prospect combined the Byzantine past with the Ottoman present in equal emphasis. Even though the panorama was not printed, being exhibited at the university library of Leiden, it was quite popular among educated elite of early modern Europe. In attention to detail and realism, the 12 m long and 45 cm high drawing transcends earlier depictions of the famous city. It features the city along its northern shore fronting the Golden Horn showing Ottoman and Byzantine monuments in detail. Unlike the earlier Boundelmonti or Vavassore maps of İstanbul, the drawing does not seem to have stereotypical biases in exaggerating Christian monuments (Westbrook, 2005, 374).

7. Although Wunder is optimistic about Coecke’s empathy, she also mentions that his panorama looks like an ethnographic documentation of Ottoman Empire. Wunder (2003, 110-114).

8. The original version of Boundelmonti’s map dating early fifteenth century is lost. However, it was reproduced several times with dramatic variations over the course of 250 years. Most versions are silent about the Ottoman existence in the city whereas only Düsseldorf manuscript shows Christian past and Ottoman present without any religious and cultural bias. Iggers (1997, 77-97).

Dated 1533, Pieter Coecke van Aelst’s panoramic view of Ottoman territories entitled *Ces Moeurs et Fachons de Faire des Turcz* is a predecessor of Lorichs’ panorama. Coecke’s main mission was to make cartoons for a tapestry company when he visited İstanbul in 1533. His curious panorama merges genres of *historia* and city view (chorography) in seven different panels joined by anthropomorphic columns. Apart from the city views in the background, each panel shows several aspects of Ottoman daily life ranging from funeral and circumcision ceremonies to the procession of



**Figure 2.** Turks performing the functions of nature. Woodcut. Detail from *Ces Moeurs et Fachons de Faire des Turcz* (Coecke van Aelst, 1553). (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1928, 28.85.3).

the Sultan in the Hippodrome. Wunder asserts that Coecke learnt Turkish during his stay. In the first panel of his drawing, he depicted himself in Turkish costumes (7). While she sees these as signs of cultural empathy, Coecke's drawings look like crowded ethnographic scenes in deep contrast with the prospect of their background. There is calmness and austerity to the prospect while human figures are depicted almost in a grotesque fashion in each panel (**Figure 2**).

For Denis Cosgrove, "all mapping involves set of choices, omissions, uncertainties and intentions" (1999, 7). This subjective feature of mapping is evident in different representations of Istanbul from the fifteenth and sixteenth-centuries. Ian R. Manners traces representations of the city in different versions of Christopher Buondelmonti's *Liber Insularum Archipelagi*. He maintains that rather than topographic reality, Constantinople in these series of maps are depicted as historical phenomena; in most versions (excluding Düsseldorf manuscript) Ottoman conquest of the city is visually ignored and Christian heritage is overemphasized (**Figure 3**). Iggers holds that despite its transformation by the Ottomans, the city was still a contested space in the minds of the map makers and their patrons. Therefore, behind the guise of visual naturalness and truthfulness, map makers perpetuated political and religious ideals in the fifteenth and sixteenth-century European representations of Istanbul (8).



**Figure 3.** Constantinople map *Liber Insularum Archipelagi*, (Buondelmonti, ca. 1470?). (Florence Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana. Ms. Plut. 29,25.)

Lorichs' representation of Istanbul is not a "panorama" in the technical meaning of the word. It is possible to relate it first with the notion of mapping and then with chorography genre emerged in the Renaissance Europe. The difference of definition between geography and chorography is adopted from Ptolemy's ancient text. Unlike geography which aims at a total vision of the globe, chorography in the Renaissance intends to convey a limited portion of the earth from a point of observation. While geography relies on mathematical abstractions, chorography uses visual perception. Despite these differences, chorography also searches for a total vision of the represented phenomena such as the views of the cities. Lucia Nuti notes



**Figure 4.** Melchior Lorichs and the Ottoman man. Green and pink ink on paper. Detail from *Byzantium sive Constantineopolis* (Lorichs, 1559). (Universiteitsbibliotheek, Leiden, BPL, 1758).

two different chorography techniques used in the Renaissance. In fifteenth-century Italy, elevated Birdseye views (perspective plan) of the cities were widely produced. Dutch draftsmen, on the other hand, took what Nuti calls a profile approach in depicting cities. Nuti maintains that the profile representation is peculiar to the sea-based cultures of North Europe. Both coming from Dutch origin, Coecke's earlier work and Lorichs' panorama can be classified as profile approaches in which a low viewpoint is set at a distance with a wide and open horizon and a large space devoted for the sky. Nuti interprets Coecke's and Lorichs' works as film-style iconographies that connect different scenes from daily life. Lorichs' film style drawing was cut into 21 pieces in 1861 (Nuti, 1999, 90-102).

Recently, Lorichs' panorama has been edited in a limited number. Description of each monument represented in the panorama by expert historians accompanies the twelve complete panels in the recent edition (Yerasimos and Mango, 1999). The monuments and the landscape depicted by Lorichs are not far from a sense of realism in representing what actually had existed. The way he labels each building he draws is further proof of his empirical interest in İstanbul. Among the prominent buildings, it is possible to note Sultan Süleyman's imperial mosque, Hagia Sophia, Church of St Irene and Sultan's new palace at Topkapı. However, it is hard to approach the panorama as a mere documentary source on the sixteenth-century İstanbul. The reason is that it is hard to tell why Lorichs fills in some spaces of his panorama with fantastic structures that could not have existed in İstanbul such as Egyptian pyramids or Mesopotamian ziggurats. Not so much different from representing legendary and symbolic figures side by side with military costumes in his European album, he does not

mind mixing the actual cultural landscape with fantasy (Westbrook, 2005, 374-5).

Apart from the buildings and the landscape, the panorama depicts vessels and boats in an exotic aura. Among these, it is possible to note Sultan Süleyman's own ceremonial barge, the barge of Lorichs's patron Roman ambassador Busbecq and the vessel of Persian ambassador Ismail. Lorichs even shows small boats sailing across the Golden Horn. These details give an experiential sense to the drawing that extraordinarily catches the life-moment in such a premodern artifact. The experiential attitude of the drawing is further accentuated by another much more curious trick. On panel eleven, the continuous scene of the city is cut by two figures in the foreground. A middle-aged turbaned Ottoman man holds an ink jar with a keen gesture while an elegantly dressed young European artist draws the actual panorama in front of our eyes (**Figure 4**). By combining profile representation of the city with *historia* genre, Lorichs puts himself and his Ottoman servant in the panorama and thus claims authentic observation from life (Nutti, 1999, 110).

Despite his intention of representing what had existed, it is hard to categorize Lorichs' drawing as an objectified mode of seeing. The subject is drawn within the object or it is possible to argue that object-subject dichotomy was not a concern for Lorichs at all. Westbrook argues that Lorichs' panorama -with its attention to detail- lies at the visual threshold of perception between medieval mentality and modernity (Westbrook, 2005, 376). I further argue that it does not fit into either. According to Jonathan Crary "the myth of modernist rupture [of visualization] depends fundamentally on the binary model of realism vs. experimentation." Crary shows how this rupture happened in the nineteenth-century by creating a detached subject from the object; the "observer" (9). Panorama as a drawing technique was invented in the nineteenth-century. It is important to remember that Lorichs' is not the same with the panorama of a nineteenth-century colonial traveler in which:

"The vantage point is a single elevated one and has to be chosen in the plan. The vision unrolls in a time-lapse at a constant eye level, as in the profile, but a significant change occurs in the way the object is focused. The observer becomes integral to the object and inspection is made from inside, rather than from a distance" (Nutti, 1999, 103).

By putting himself in front of the observation point (in the drawing), Lorichs ceases to be the observer. Perhaps, because of his technical disadvantages and mentality as two inseparable factors, Lorichs does not control his scene from a pre-determined distant perspective; he is rather taken by the scene himself. He was the guest of the sultan with his ambassador. He was in control of the Ottoman court in every stroll within the city and was not allowed to join the social life freely. Westbrook calls Lorich's status as being a "virtual prisoner" (Westbrook, 2005, 376). Lorichs does not seem disturbed by this as his enduring interest in the Ottomans shows he was happy from his stay. Unlike his ambassador Busbecq who in his letters calls Holy Roman armies "to fight the Turks and drive them out of Constantinople", Lorichs does not seem to have such ideological concerns (10).

In expressing exoticism of the Ottoman world, literature of sixteenth-century European travelers paved the way to Orientalism in which study of the East became a mere preoccupation starting from the eighteenth-century. Within this literature, Lorichs' panorama threatens the neat boundaries between the object and the subject. It is idiosyncratic rather

9. Referring to the nineteenth-century context, Crary says: "The notion of a modernist visual revolution depends on the presence of a subject with a detached viewpoint, from which modernism -whether as a style, as cultural resistance, or ideological practice- can be isolated against the background of a normative vision." Crary (1990, 4-5).

10. Busbecq in his letters calls Constantinople as the "mistress of the world" by relying on a frequently used *topos* in Renaissance encomium. Busbecq (1881, 123).

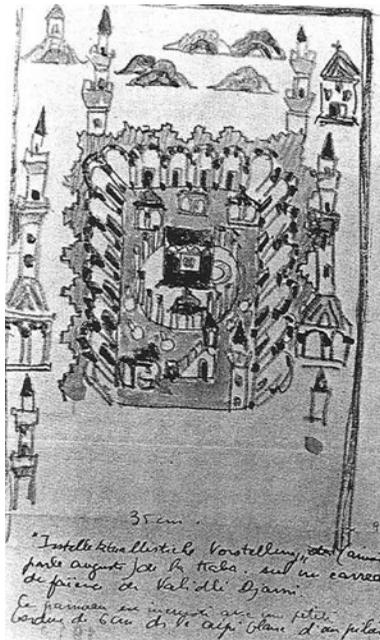


Figure 5. Decorative Tile in the Valide Mosque. (Le Corbusier (Charles-Edouard Jeanneret), 1965; 109) (courtesy FLC).

than representative. It has autobiographical tones. By putting himself with his different costume and ruling gestures next to his Ottoman servant in front of the prospect of the city, he accentuates that he is an outsider to the city and the culture. Lorichs' panorama is a premodern interpretive attempt to juxtapose one's self and a culturally alien city.

### SUBJECT/OBJECT DIALOGUE: LE CORBUSIER'S TRAVELOGUE

The second example I would like to dwell on is Le Corbusier's travelogue, *Journey to the East*. I would like to problematise Le Corbusier's representation of the city as a creative dialogue between the subject and the object, the self and the city. *Journey to the East (Le Voyage d'Orient)* is the first book written by Charles-Edouard Jeanneret (future Le Corbusier), and ironically, it is the last that he was able to submit for publication only a few weeks before his death in 1965. In fact, parts of the journey were published at a newspaper *La Feuille d'Avis* as a series during 1911 while Le Corbusier was still traveling. Further two attempts in 1912 and 1914 were unsuccessful to have his journal get published in book format. While the journal embodies little normative information regarding architectural aspirations of future Le Corbusier, it is interesting to know that despite the span of years between authorship and the actual publication date, he did not attempt to write a preface to the belated print. Although the travelogue includes subsections related with other places, Le Corbusier's impressions on İstanbul forms the substantial part of the travelogue. Le Corbusier embarked on this journey with his fellow Auguste Klipstein who wrote his own impressions in a separate travelogue. Furthermore, visiting İstanbul is mentioned as the major driving motive of both Le Corbusier's and Klipstein's journeys (11).

Vogt and Donnell see Le Corbusier's and his friend Klipstein's journey as a reversed "grand tour." As part of bourgeois elitist system of education by English, Scandinavian and German travelers, the grand tour tradition practiced since the seventeenth-century covered journeys to upper and central Italy and a detailed study of Rome with its most significant monuments. However, interest in anthropology and ethnology in the beginning of the twentieth century intensified debates regarding high and folk art. Le Corbusier's journey falls into the second category and deserves to be labeled as a "reversed" grand tour in search of new inspirations by not following the mainstream trend. For Vogt and Donnell, this new trend was a common search between Le Corbusier and Klipstein; abstraction in art. From Vogt and Donnell's reading of the two journals, İstanbul unfolds as a place where young travelers could find what they looked for both in high and folk art. In addition to vernacular buildings, Ottoman monuments of İstanbul as examples of high Islamic art inspire new avenues of abstraction in artistic creation. Among these, absence of perspective and imitation in Islamic art are specifically noted (Figure 5). Le Corbusier's sketches in which he eliminates all details and keeps only basic formal features he chose are further noted as a sign of his extraordinary interest towards abstraction. These arguments are then related to Le Corbusier's later approach to art and architecture manifested in his building technique and representation forms (Donnell and Vogt, 1987, 40, 47-50).

Sibel Bozdoğan, in a similar way, sees Le Corbusier's journey not as an "objective and scientific expedition." It is hard to find any signs of taxonomic concerns in the travelogue. Her interpretation mainly relies on Le Corbusier's drawings more than his words, as it is quite natural to focus on the former knowing his architectural significance. Unlike other voyages

11. See Zaknic's preface to English edition of Le Corbusier's travelogue. Le Corbusier (1965, XII).

12. While Bozdoğan mainly focuses on the drawings in her interpretation, Çelik refers to the text and argues that Le Corbusier's interest in art, architecture and social life was not analytical in prioritizing form over meaning. Bozdoğan (1988, 44), Çelik (1992, 63-64).

of many European travelers such as nineteenth-century French Orientalists, she holds, Le Corbusier's main preoccupation is not with the "Orient". She notes that the acute sense of distinction that marks Le Corbusier's non-objectifying way of looking at the Orient is the absence of distance between the knowing subject and the naïve object (Bozdoğan, 1988, 38). Despite lack of distance as such, however, Le Corbusier maintains the difference between the object and the subject; his is a search for a genuine dialogue, which gives voice to the "other" as well as his impressions.

Zeynep Çelik in a more recent study purports that Le Corbusier's attitude towards East is not totally distinct from nineteenth-century French discourses on the Orient. It is not merely a sign of Parisian avant-garde's preoccupation with folk art and primitivism mostly sought in artifacts of non-Western cultures, either. Çelik convincingly argues that before visiting Constantinople, Le Corbusier already got rich imagery in his mind which was fed by previous literature, travel accounts and paintings (Çelik, 1992, 60-61). While Bozdoğan finds Le Corbusier's elaborate notes on Islam and Ottoman culture as critical explorations, Çelik sees them as young architect's disposition of superiority towards other cultures (12). Both are partially true in revealing the complexity of parameters in cultural encounters which cannot be easily reduced to either.

Vogt and Donnell's, Bozdoğan's and Çelik's readings highly prioritize Le Corbusier's journey as a contribution to his future career. They use the travelogue as a form of representation impregnated with clues regarding his future approach to architecture and the city. Thus they privilege themes related with the discourse of modernism in architecture such as vernacular style, purism and urban design. Except for Çelik's comparative approach to Le Corbusier's perception of İstanbul and Algiers, much emphasis is given to the drawings while the text is partially undertaken in order to support claims regarding the prominent architect's evaluation of the built environment.

Apart from evaluating Le Corbusier's text for larger purposes regarding his future intentions, it is possible to read it for the sake of itself. The text relates an intimate life moment that transgresses all instrumental approaches and may be both what they suggest and go beyond these in giving further details about urban environment, architecture and the individual as they come together in the life world. From such a point of view, Le Corbusier's travelogue would be significant regardless of Le Corbusier's own significance as a prominent figure in architectural history. What follows is an attempt of such reading.

Le Corbusier's notes focus more on the historical side of the city in the south of the Golden Horn; "Stamboul". The English editor of the travelogue Zaknic prefers to call the whole city "Constantinople" as this was the name commonly used until the twentieth-century (Le Corbusier, 1965, 83). However, it is important to mention that Le Corbusier does not have any interest in the Byzantine past of the city. He is more preoccupied with it as the capital of a historically and culturally distant civilization at its twilight. Unfortunately, the first encounter with İstanbul brings Le Corbusier disappointment. İstanbul is not as white-washed as he had imagined. It is not the object of his fanciful imagination gathered from French Orientalist sources anymore. As they encountered, now it is real; real with its all uncontrollable and unpredictable characteristics. He enters into the city via sea from the Golden Horn and settles in Pera, the Venetian quarter of the city on the European side (1965, 83-92).



**Figure 6.** A Flotilla of Sailing Boats on the Sea of Marmora. (Le Corbusier (Charles-Edouard Jeanneret), 1965; 145) (courtesy FLC).

13. The fire is noted both in Le Corbusier's and Klipstein's journals. Moreover, there is a night photo shoot available in the Le Corbusier archives which shows the main fire and the glowing arc from the conflagration. Donnell and Vogt (1987, 46).

As he gets used to the city, he starts having pleasure from its daily scenes such as the passing by boats and the cypress trees then identified with the Ottoman İstanbul (**Figure 6**). Le Corbusier especially adores his visual experience of the city from the sea. The monumental mosques continuously make statements in the overall impression of the city; their endurance gain meaning together with playful spontaneity of ephemeral lights and shadows. He can not keep himself from asking; how many faces could a static monumental building have? How many faces could a city have? He sees that the city is alive; continuously in flux. He is proud to find out that it is possible to watch all the faces at once only from the sea. As he passes by the boat, the city is like a series of stage-sets at which a different scene is acted unique for each different viewpoint (**13**).

Although Le Corbusier stays in Pera, he finds it hardly attractive with its emerging *alafranga* apartments (**Figure 7**). His main interest lies in the Muslim quarter with its characteristic monuments and vernacular buildings. Le Corbusier singles out wooden Ottoman houses, imperial mosques, tombs and gravestones, the market place and the narrow streets



**Figure 7.** The Stone Houses of Pera Climbing the Hillside. (Le Corbusier (Charles-Edouard Jeanneret), 1965; 92) (courtesy FLC).



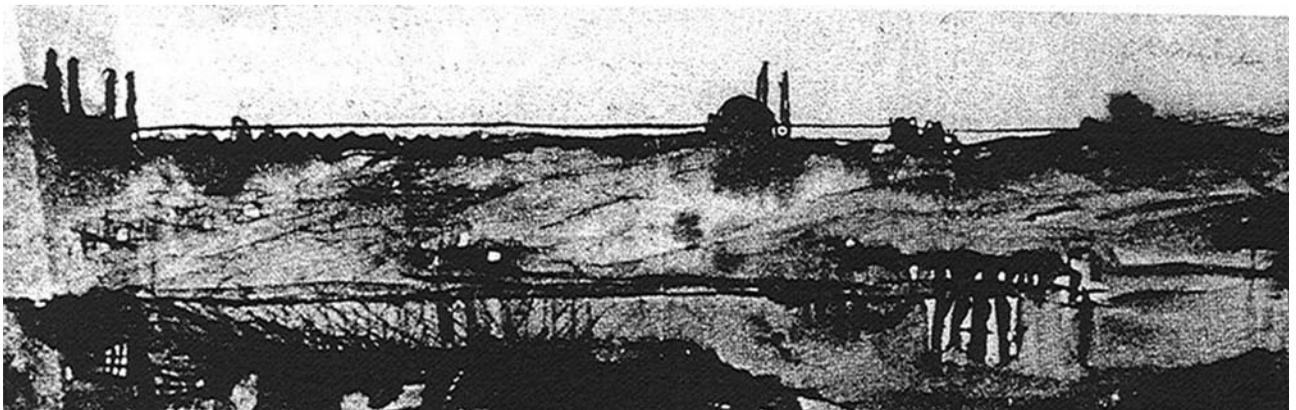
**Figure 8.** A Stamboul Street Scene. (Le Corbusier (Charles-Edouard Jeanneret), 1965; 155) (courtesy FLC).

as notable. In addition to his impressions about the physical environment, he notes his encounters with several people at these places. The travelogue is full of intimacies from daily life. Among these, the theme of “Fire in İstanbul” occupies an important amount of space. During his stay, he experiences one of Ottoman İstanbul’s notorious fires. “Tragic, it is tragic” continuously repeats Le Corbusier while watching a few suburbs in flames on the other side of the shore (Le Corbusier, 1965, 167). However his expressions are full of awe mixed with extreme joy. People are dying in front of his eyes, yet he is ambivalent about choosing to mourn or to enjoy. The destruction of life as the wondrous scene he has been watching for days amazes Le Corbusier. He is deeply sad about the irrational obliteration of a past worldview and lifestyle in front of his eyes. As a modern man, he is bewildered by the harshness of conditions and social life’s inability to overcome them. However, he senses that as the beast of reason has already awoken, this past lifestyle with its frequent catastrophes and blind fate would soon dissolve. Thus he could see that İstanbul shores would never look the same in near future. Many of what intrigues his conscious artistic vision would soon disappear. Like the Pera with its emerging high-rise apartments, people would soon realize that they do not have to sustain this vernacular style in which the frailness of wood became the inescapable fate of their ephemeral life (**Figure 8**) (153- 158).

Le Corbusier is inspired by the eventfulness of the urban fire. While wooden vernacular houses feed the fire and disappear one after the other, the monumental stone mosques become monstrous hollows that defy the fire by enduring it. The scene is as ferocious as the history itself in which the vernacular leaves without a trace and the monumental falsifies future memories about the power of past civilizations. Only this life moment renders both the vernacular and the monumental alive to the eyes of the future architect. Therefore, the fire scene is tragically real, giving him a strong feeling of catharsis. Le Corbusier foresees that “Stamboul will die. The reason is that she is always burning and rebuilt.” Throughout the travelogue, he is not positive about urban changes towards modernization (153- 158).

Another intimate theme of daily life in Le Corbusier’s travelogue is his thoughts on the imperial mosques of İstanbul and their prominent role in the visual image of the urbanscape (**Figure 9**). Though filled with several historical and spelling mistakes, his careful notes on the names and origins of the mosques show his endeavor to search for their background (100-119). The subsection of the travelogue entitled “mosques” has been published separately in *Oppositions* before the last English edition of the

**Figure 9.** The Skyline of Stamboul with its Black Row of Great Mosques. (Le Corbusier (Charles-Edouard Jeanneret), 1965; 111) (courtesy FLC).





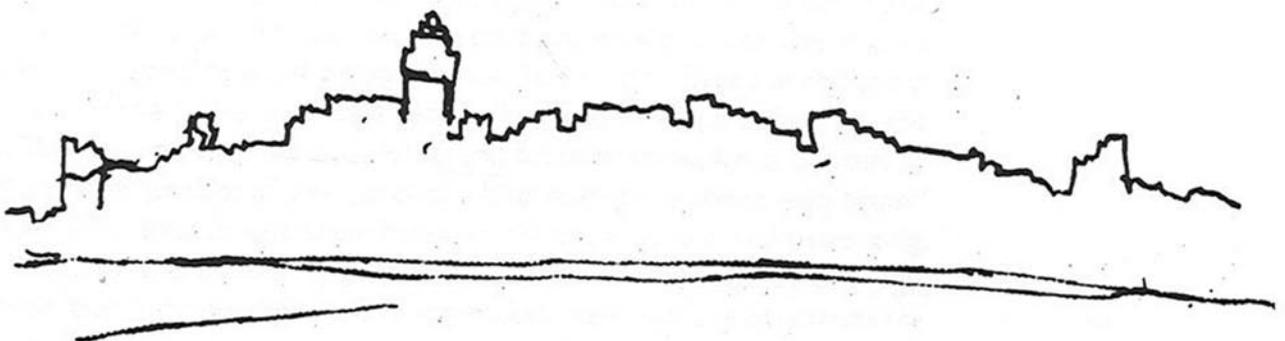
**Figure 10.** Interior of a Mosque. (Le Corbusier (Charles-Edouard Jeanneret), 1965, 102) (courtesy FLC).

14. See Ivan Zaknic, "Le Corbusier's Eastern Journey," *Oppositions* 18 (1980) 87-91.

travelogue by the same editor; Zaknic (14). This subsection has a lonely and detached world of its own in recent studies left with Le Corbusier's account without further interpretation. It is quite significant, however, in revealing Le Corbusier's appreciation of sacred monumental architecture alongside vernacular buildings he encounters in İstanbul. Apart from its relevance in defying the exaggerated dichotomy between the monumental and the vernacular, this section reveals that in undertaking mosques Le Corbusier is not only after formalism. As his notes on the interior space of a mosque he visits shows; the belief and value judgments behind these buildings preoccupy his mind as much as their architectural features.

Everyone he converses with in the Pera quarter warns him not to go to the mosques. They are the spaces where the otherness of the "other" is the most manifest. They shall therefore be the most exclusive in the introverted lives of the Ottoman Muslims. Nevertheless, these warnings only trigger more curiosity in young Le Corbusier. He is determined to visit one of them right after the sunset. His experience tells the opposite; it is intimate and friendly. Mosque space is sublimely melancholic, a pattern of religious ritual which is quite humble from his point of view. He is surprised that the enormous interior space is only occupied by a few men. The chandelier

**Figure 11.** The Pera Skyline with its Formidable Genoese Tower. (Le Corbusier (Charles-Edouard Jeanneret), 1965, 91) (courtesy FLC).



of concentric circles above the ritual space and the way it enhances the interiority of the mosque defying its physical form is one of the most poetical architectural creations known to the (then naïve) future architect (**Figure 10**). After the ceremony, an Ottoman man approaches him in the courtyard of the mosque. He writes this moment of intimacy as such:

“There were still a few of them in the darkness when I went out. One of them approached me and shook my hand; he laughed at himself because of our inability to communicate with each other and because I looked so perplexed. The others came over, and some of them also shook my hand. I left them and walked away towards the bridge. I knew I would have to walk two hours to reach home, but I was happy in a silence filled with these things.” (Le Corbusier, 1965, 104, 110, 113)

These notes from daily life show that Le Corbusier’s travelogue derives from experiential and anecdotal motives rather than discourse oriented and artificial ones. Reading the text together with his visual images further reveals that Le Corbusier was interpretive in both media. In his case, object-subject dichotomy is obvious. However, his is a search for a genuine dialogue between self and “other”. While he deduces unique abstractions of the “other” in his drawings, by showing the degree of his deep engagement with the Ottoman İstanbul in its final years, his text tells us how this visual refinement is possible.

As previously interpreted by Bozdoğan, Le Corbusier’s sketches are not objectified modes of representation. Unlike a God’s eye positioning, he sees object from his own horizon. However, the drawings are not experiential, either; between experience and representation; there stands Le Corbusier’s distinct tendency of abstraction shaped by his own subjectivity. Bozdoğan perceives this as Le Corbusier’s manifestation of the impossibility of representing experience (Bozdoğan, 1988, 41). It is also possible to argue that Le Corbusier draws for himself; unlike his text, the sketches do not show any concern for communicating experience (**Figure 11**).

By maintaining his difference from the object, Le Corbusier proclaims his interpretative honesty; he *is* an outsider. However, historical and cultural otherness does not bind Le Corbusier too much in prioritizing his own subjectivity in his travelogue (15). To sum up, although Le Corbusier has exotic curiosity towards İstanbul, he challenges and questions it through an ongoing dialogue in his travelogue. *Journey to the East* overcomes many stereotypes that characterize the canon of nineteenth-century French travelogues but it is not totally antithetical to them. As Linda Nochlin argues, sexuality charged with mysticism is part of the more general mystery of the East itself, a standard *topos* of Orientalist ideology (Nochlin, 1983, 119). Le Corbusier’s weak Orientalist bias lurks in the introverted domestic life and veiled women as two inaccessible realms. Unlike his more mature Algiers years in which he exploits assorted intimacies with Algerian women; his attitude towards Ottoman women is filled with mysticism and poetic distance. The houses of Stamboul remind him of “prison of odalisques” he met in Orientalist paintings and give him a sense of sad and melancholic poeticism (Le Corbusier, 1965, 125, 128-130; Çelik, 1992, 72).

15. Gadamer conceptualizes unconditional openness to the “other” as “effective historical relation.” According to him; it is an ideal condition of effective historical consciousness and allows understanding by dissolving object-subject dichotomy. Gadamer (1965, 267). Le Corbusier’s subjectivity is an obstacle on the way to understand the “other”.

## OBJECTHOOD AND FREEDOM: ORHAN PAMUK’S MEMOIR

The final representation of İstanbul is Turkish author Orhan Pamuk’s recent memoir. Orhan Pamuk grounds his recent book *İstanbul: Memories of a City* (2005) on the rich Orientalist literature by featuring European

authors and artists such as Melling, Nerval, Gautier and Flaubert. He builds on how it felt to construct the past image of the city from the perspective of the European traveler for the emerging authors of the Turkish Republic. In the memoir, Pamuk gives accounts of different Western and Turkish authors in a symmetrical order. The concept of melancholy is the common denominator that helps Pamuk interrelate works of distinct authors with each other and his own memories. Unlike many world-prominent writers, Pamuk says, his imagination is not fed by rootlessness. His is enriched by the same house, the same street and the same city in which he was born: "İstanbul's fate is my fate: I am attached to this city because it made me who I am" (Pamuk, 2005, 6). This statement about his essential connectedness to a place becomes problematic when Pamuk's fame transcends boundaries of Turkey.

David West argues that the struggle of resistance to a particular power or discourse is futile in defining itself in terms outside that order. When an identity is fixed or compromised, its politics is suspicious. However, he also adds that this is not to promote inaction as avoiding active political engagement ends up in the acceptance of the *status quo* (West, 1996, 215- 216). By confronting and measuring up Western values with his own tradition and a certain forgotten past with his life experience, Pamuk ingeniously succeeds avoiding both political predicaments in his creative work. This is evident in the diversity of his audience as well as his opponents. From being a hard-to-read author of his *Black Book* (1997) to the more populist *New Life* (2001), he became a best-selling author in Turkey. This raised both interest and doubts about the quality of his writings. His novels have been translated into more than forty languages; six of them appeared in English. Finally in late 2006, he won the Nobel Prize for literature. Although mainstream nationalists think that this success was due to his declarations about the alleged Ottoman massacre of the Armenians in 1915 at a Swiss newspaper, he is officially patented as a world-celebrated writer. Because of his talk about the Armenians and the Kurds, he was prosecuted for "insulting Turkishness" in 2005. The charges have since been dropped. However, Turkey never truly celebrated Pamuk's success. Leaving his native İstanbul at last, he now lives in the United States (16).

Pamuk was presented to the Nobel ceremony as "who in the quest for the melancholic soul of his native city has discovered new symbols for the clash and interlacing of cultures". In qualifying his place in the world Pamuk said: "The metaphor of the bridge is so old-fashioned. My job is to find new metaphors. My culture is made of two worlds. I explore the two. That's my history" (17). In his memoir on İstanbul, he employs a number of these new metaphors.

End-of-Empire melancholy towards the once glamorous now distant past, according to Pamuk, rules current İstanbul's and his own memory. It was the melancholy of a dying culture. As the bitter memories of the fallen empire was erased on the way of modernisation, nothing Western or local succeeded to fill in the left-out void. Pamuk's childhood İstanbul was full of melancholy in every scale from his own apartment to the streets he strolled with his mum. He was born in an elite suburb which went through marginal physical transformation in his childhood. Most remaining mansions of previous pashas were demolished and five-storey apartments of reinforced concrete were built upon them. Pamuk spent his life in one of these apartments with his extended family occupying each of the storeys. He describes his childhood İstanbul as uncanny and empty, being stripped

16. See "Orhan Pamuk Wins Nobel Prize for Literature," *Columbia News*, 12/10/2006 [cited 23/05/2007]; available from <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/news/06/10/pamuk061012.html>.

17. See *The Nobel Prize in Literature* (The Official Web-site of the Nobel Foundation, 2006 [cited 19/04/2007]); available from [http://nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/literature/laureates/2006/](http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/2006/).



Figure 12. Half past Three. (Kanra, 2007).

off its previous population. Once the capital of a powerful empire, it then felt not even like a large city for him; living in İstanbul felt like living in a province (Pamuk, 2005, 32- 38).

He remembers the boats sailing before the arrival of ferry transportation, the few automobiles on the empty streets, the silhouette of an Ottoman mosque not evoking a sense of the sublime anymore but a sense of simplicity and sadness (Figure 12). He remembers two people returning from their work at a factory to their poor home at a slum, and he remembers that they shared the same sad feeling stuck on their face expression (31- 32).

However, İstanbul is not entirely boredom and sadness for Pamuk. He explores the remains of past pleasures and happiness in the Bosphorus of his childhood. The *yalis* (waterside mansions) built by rich Ottoman families during the eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries looked like the shadows of a ruined culture. It never became a part of the city proper where Western influenced Ottoman bureaucracy could take refuge in at a time of uncertainty and turmoil. There were no paved roads or public transport to the area which was also prohibited for the penetration of the Western travelers. Bosphorus was the place where Pamuk and his mother would go for recreation. In his childhood imagination, he would believe that Bosphorus was the infinite source of goodwill that sustained the city. Despite his curiosity to the past represented by Bosphorus he could only find two sources that had documented it. One is a Turkish writer called Abdülhak Şinasi Hisar who wrote on the prominence of moon-lit Bosphorus nights. The second source is French artist Melling's engravings who worked in courtesy of the Ottoman princess Hatice Sultan (42- 55). The reason he singles out these unrelated references is their capability of representing now-lost daily life in its intimacy.

Pamuk identifies İstanbul of his adulthood with black and white colors under several visual references ranging from old Turkish movies he had watched to photographs and Le Corbusier's pen and ink drawings. He likes the city mostly at night when poverty and suffering of its slums are hidden in darkness (Figure 13). Snow, too, makes the city beautiful in his perception as what Pamuk hides even from himself is buried under the



Figure 13. Beyoğlu Tram. (Kanra, 2007).



Figure 14. Shopping. (Kanra, 2007).

temporary white blanket of winter. Marginalized wooden houses remained from old times are always in a blackish-brown patina that Pamuk believed was their original character. Reading eighteenth and nineteenth-century Western travelers, he gets surprised to learn that they were once brightly painted in an abundant beauty (34).

What endures from his childhood experience to his adulthood is the melancholy evident in the İstanbul landscape. He claims that this melancholy was sensible by every resident of the city (Figure 14). It was inherent in the landscape itself as noted by several foreign and native authors before him. Pamuk then gives a historical account of the word “melancholy” starting from Aristo followed by Western and Islamic mystics and physicists; however, he skips Freud’s influential analysis (18). Pamuk is aware of the fact that İstanbul is not the only city identified with melancholy in world literature. Amsterdam, Paris and Dublin were also qualified with melancholy in different literary works. He explains the specific meaning of the Turkish word for melancholy “*hüzün*”. He connects *hüzün* with early Sufi literature in which it was identified with the impossibility of attaining God by the Sufi mystic. He claims that such a distinct sense of melancholy ruled the İstanbul landscape giving it its Eastern connections (81- 97).

Pamuk innovatively doubles his conception of melancholy by further writing that apart from the landscape itself, melancholy was a shared-collective spiritual state by the residents of İstanbul. Nothing could make them ultimately happy, as it was impossible to erase the traces of defeat from their individual memories (Pamuk, 2005, 96). For Pamuk, this was the void of separating a nation from its past without filling in the enormous gap with a new ideal. The proposed but unfulfilled ideal was modernization or as synonymously called in Turkish “westernization”(19).

Freud in his comparison of mourning with melancholia maintains that contrary to the former, in the state of melancholia, the subject cannot face the withdrawal from the loss, be it a loved one, an object of love or even an object of ambivalence. What is unbearable for the melancholic person is loss of her attachment more than the loss of real object/ subject. The state of melancholia results in a traumatic relation of the self to the world (Freud, 1917, 248- 254). Esra Akcan previously analyzed the concept of melancholy both in Freud and Pamuk’s memoir on İstanbul. Building on Freud, she argues that for the collective Turkish psyche, melancholy meant both the loss of a glorious past as written by Pamuk and also the loss of an ideal

18. Despite his reference to early Islamic physicians for which the disciplinary boundary between science and metaphysics was not demarcated clearly, the reason for omitting Freud may be Pamuk’s conviction in that melancholy is an existential condition rather than a psychological malady.

19. The Turkish word for westernisation is “Batılılaşma”. Their synonymous use became problematic in time as the condition of being modern was not seen as a Western privilege anymore.

or exclusion from an ideal. Turks proposed modernization as a universal human condition; the ideal norm for humanity long before they realized their feeling of being peripheral. Therefore, stuck in between universal ideals and the realities of the periphery, the modernizing Turkish subject oscillated between a dignified pride and an inferiority complex (Akcan, 2006, 40- 42). Melancholies of İstanbul were the outcomes of this pathetic situation.

Who can capture the melancholies of İstanbul best? Pamuk's answers to this question are the artists and the writers. From an optimistic perspective, one can claim that cultural and ideological exclusions are mutually obliterated in these two creative domains. John Ruskin associates the beauty of the picturesque in art and architecture with its accidental nature. He writes that nature works on architecture through rents, stains, fractures and vegetation. Thus for Ruskin, the ruins are the best representatives of the sublimity of the picturesque in architecture (Ruskin, 1880, 188, 193). Pamuk summarizes Ruskin's notion of the pictureques in his own way: "a new building only becomes picturesque after history has endowed it with accidental beauty" (Pamuk, 2005, 229). Building on the notion of the picturesque, Pamuk conceptualizes the İstanbul of writers and artists as "a city of ruins". However this definition of ruins is distinct from that of the fragment of romanticism. Republican Turkish author Ahmed Hamdi Tanpınar in *Mahur Beste* wrote that the Orient died with the collapsing and burning houses of İstanbul (1975; Akcan, 2006, 41). In İstanbul, ruins of the past are never without the interference of a contemporary life condition. Clothes hung over between old wooden houses and the stone monuments alike, horse carriages, skinny children, street dogs and introverted women reside in the ruins of İstanbul (**Figure 15**). Ruins of the past form the shelter of the poor in contemporary İstanbul. These ruins with their crumbled walls, uncontrolled patina, growing weeds and grass have always attracted the admiration of Western and early republican authors; the inhabitants garnished the scene of the picturesque (**Figure 16**).

For Pamuk, the picturesque ruins of İstanbul manifest its poverty and deprivation in which their sublimity triggers melancholy. People are so poor that they do not mind re-using an ancient marble column in their make-shift dwellings as long as it holds the ceiling. Unfortunately, neither early republican Turkish writers nor prominent European visitors such as Flaubert and Gautier saw the poverty associated with the ruins as problematic. Only outsiders could take pleasure in the accidental beauty of the ruins by dissociating them from their contemporary life condition; the poverty. Ironically, all the native and foreign artists and writers who talked about the beauty of the ruins lived in the emerging Pera quarter of the city (Pamuk, 2005, 233). While they were getting glimpses of the old İstanbul from poor neighborhoods of ruins, they could never live far from the comforts of the modern life style (**Figure 17**). Pamuk himself is no exception except for his much more sensitive empathy.

With the privilege of being its native, throughout his book, Pamuk identifies himself with many faces of İstanbul. At one point, his sense of pessimistic melancholy becomes so intense that he calls the relevant subsection as "to be Unhappy is to hate oneself and one's city" (286- 293).

The multifaceted concept of melancholy Pamuk employs in his memoir ingeniously draws on the complexities and contradictions of being in the periphery while aspiring for the universal. Pamuk's marginal place stuck in between East and West, Turkey and the rest of the world seems to be a



Figure 15. At Geçmezi Sokağı. (Kanra, 2006).

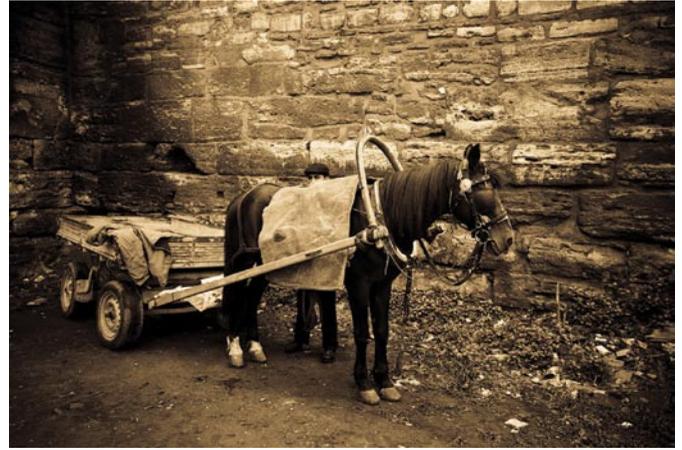


Figure 16. Yedikule. (Kanra, 2007).



Figure 17. Pera. (Kanra, 2007).

result of his unique play on the notion of the “other” in his writings. This is mostly evident in his memoir *İstanbul: Memories of a City*. His standpoint is closer to the French existentialists; Sartre in particular. Sartre argues that while the look of the “other” transforms one’s situation in the world dramatically; it also unfolds a spatiality which is not hers anymore. The other’s gaze makes one feel herself as an object; an object for the other’s freedom. She lives her being as represented by the other. While the other is the subject, she herself becomes nature. Entrapped within an ultimately futile mutual recognition, the relationship of self and other as such is characterized by conflict between freedom and thinghood from Sartre’s existentialist perspective (West, 1996, 147). Pamuk’s perception of his self and İstanbul oscillates between idealist freedom and being the object of the Western gaze. By doing this, he shows the inner complexity of a culture undertaken as “nature” by the previous writers and artists. This conflict maps out the structure of his memoir as well as the spatiality of İstanbul as represented in it. It is also the source of the major theme of the memoir; the Turkish melancholy. Pamuk and the whole İstanbul are buried in remediless melancholy as they both know freedom is only possible when they pretend that Western gaze is escapable.

## CONCLUSION

Three accounts of İstanbul from three different periods show the impressiveness of the city in creative imagination; by tantalizing interpretation, İstanbul is the obscure object of desire and sadness (Figure

18). It is the “other” that challenges “self fulfillment” in each account. In Lorichs’ case İstanbul was an exotic capital of an Islamic empire at the peak of its power; a world of curiosity and marvel mixed with fear; which the artist aspired to explore through his panorama. His depiction of İstanbul is part of Renaissance mapping which is preoccupied with image and metaphor rather than empirical search for accuracy; depending on the desires and prejudices of the mapmaker, things could be arranged on and off the map. Le Corbusier kept object-subject dichotomy with the consciousness of a creative dialogue. He witnessed the decentralization of the empire and significant transformations within the city. While he was content with seeing the lifestyle of Ottoman culture as alien and perhaps outmoded, he was deeply moved by its physical environment impregnated with clues of a past mentality rational for its time. Although influenced from Orientalist representations before his journey, Le Corbusier’s visual and textual notes captured subjective fragments of İstanbul with no conscious claims of authority and comprehensiveness that perpetuated previous Orientalist stereotypes. Orhan Pamuk showed how İstanbul suffered the same burden he bore in his creative affairs oscillating between objecthood and freedom. Unlike the preceding two accounts, Pamuk expressed how difficult it was for him to relate himself with the empire long after its collapse. He layered his memoirs over several layers of other native and foreign impressions influenced from Orientalist bias. He used the metaphor of melancholy as an expression of subjective resistance to this bias through which he identified himself with the city.

The comparative interpretation of the three accounts of İstanbul show sophisticated encounters between self and other that is hard to reduce to binary oppositions such as object/subject and Orient/Occident. Lorichs’ depiction of İstanbul predates Orientalism but can roughly be grounded in the literature of exoticism that inspired later Orientalist motives. Le Corbusier’s representation is a conscious rupture from Orientalism, yet in detail, it shows how hard it is for a foreigner to escape Orientalist bias in thinking if not in creativity. Pamuk’s retrospective account comes to terms with both foreign and native representations of İstanbul influenced from Orientalist literature. Yet, he does not separate his memoir totally



Figure 18. City of the Sultan. (Kanra, 2007).

from these previous representations, as he believes their burden in his thinking and creativity is inescapable. All three accounts of the city depart from being stereotypical Orientalist representations of unbridgeable gap between cultures as they all engage in a hermeneutical dialogue between self and city in which various forms of otherness are contested in social, cultural and individual levels.

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**Anahtar sözcükler:** Şarkiyatçılık; hermeneutik; kent; doğu-batı; kendi-öteki; karşılaştırmalı yorum.

### ÜÇ İSTANBUL HESAPLAŞMASINDA KENT VE KİŞİ: LORICHS'İN PANORAMASI (1559), LE CORBUSIER'NİN YOLCULUK NOTLARI (1911), PAMUK'UN ANILARI (2005)

Bu makale farklı yüzyıllarda kaleme alınmış üç İstanbul temsilini karşılaştırmaktadır. Her ne kadar ilk bakışta tamamen keyfi olarak seçilmiş görünseler de üçünün de ortak bir yönü var; doğu-batı, nesne-özne gibi otoriter Şarkiyatçılık söylemlerinde yaygın kullanılan ikili zıtlıklara meydan okuyorlar. Lorichs'in panoraması modern öncesi dönemde kişi ve kent karşılaşmasında nesne-özne ayrımının önemsenmediği bir örnek teşkil ediyor. Le Corbusier'nin yolculuk notları erken yirminci yüzyılda nesne-özne ayrımını korusa da ikisi arasında içten bir diyalog beklentisiyle kaleme alınmış. Pamuk'un yakın zamanda yayımlanan anıları ise yazarın bir yandan kenti yorumlamaya çabalayan özne konumuna karşılık bir yandan da o güne kadar üretilmiş İstanbul yorumlarının bir nesnesi oluşunun ikilemini anlatıyor.

Makalenin teorik zeminini Edward Said'in Şarkiyatçılık eleştirisi ile Hans-Georg Gadamer'in Hermeneutiği insan bilimlerinin evrensel (metodsuz) metodolojisi olarak önermesi oluşturuyor. Said ve Gadamer aynı terimleri kullanmasalar da kültürlerarası karşılaşmaların temelinde kişinin kendi ile öteki arasında yaşanan yabancılığı aşma veya ehlileştirme kaygılarının yattığını savunuyorlar. Said jeopolitik ve etnik farklılıklara dayanarak bunu tartışırken, Gadamer tarihsel farklılıkların geçmişin metinlerini yorumlarken ortaya çıkardığı yabancılık üzerine yoğunlaşıyor. Bunların ışığında makale üç İstanbul hesaplaşmasını bütün karmaşıklıklarıyla birer hermeneutik diyalog olarak ele alıyor. Her hesaplaşma bir "kendini gerçekleştirme" olarak yorumlanırken, İstanbul anlaşılmaya çaba sarfedilen "öteki" olarak kavramlaştırılıyor. Lorichs ve Le Corbusier'nin kentin yabancıları oluşları, Pamuk'un neredeyse tüm yaşamını İstanbul'da geçirmesiyle tezat teşkil ediyor. Üç yaklaşım da kenti anlamaya çalışan deneyimsel kaygılardan doğsa bile, Lorichs ve Le Corbusier'nin yabancı oluşları duyumsal ,en çok da görsel deneyimlerini ön plana çıkarmalarını gündeme getiriyor. Pamuk ise kentin yerlisi oluşundan kaynaklanan bir özellikle kent ile tamamen varoluşsal bir hesaplaşma içine giriyor.

Üç farklı dönemin hesaplaşmalarında İstanbul yaratıcı imgelemde arzunun ve hüznün tuhaf nesnesi olarak ortaya çıkıyor. Lorichs "kentten düşüşü" söyleminin yaygın olduğu Rönesans Avrupa'sında Bizans geçmişini öne çıkaran örneklerin tersine, Osmanlı ve Bizans fiziksel çevresini olduğu gibi yansıtmaya çaba sarfediyor; bunu yaparken kendini de manzaranın içinde ve gözlem noktasının önünde resmediyor. Le Corbusier yolculuk notlarıyla bir yüzyıl öncesinin Şarkiyatçı temsillerinin aksine kenti otoriterlikten uzak öznel fragmanlarla şemalaştırırken, aldığı biyografik notlarla çizimlerdeki rafineliliğin nasıl bir içselleştirmenin sonucu olduğunu belgeliyor. Pamuk kendi anılarını Şarkiyatçı söylemden etkilenmiş önceki yerli ve yabancı yazarların anı katmanlarının üzerine koyarak Şarkiyatçılığın yaratıcılığı üzerindeki kaçınılmaz etkisini vurguluyor. Hem kendisi hem de İstanbul nesnelik ve özgürlük sarkacında dengeyi hüznün metaforunun öznel direnişinde buluyorlar.