

**A SEMIOTICAL APPROACH: POSTMODERN SOCIAL READINGS IN
BEYOĞLU**

Göstergebilimsel bir Yaklaşım: Beyoğlu'nda Postmodern Sosyal Okumalar

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Abstract

Beyoğlu, particularly İstiklal Street, is one of the first districts that comes to mind when you think about Istanbul. Its architectural diversity aside, the fact that this vibrant, never sleeping district has always been home to Istanbul's different sub-cultures has kept it interesting. As an indicator for the reflections of the emerging life styles in the city on everyday life, Beyoğlu represents a physical space that is dominated by a dichotomy of cultures, arabesque life styles, strong economic flow and social events in equal measure. This study intends to provide a postmodern semiological reading of Beyoğlu, which is a result of the cultural and economic transformation the district went through post 80s.

Keywords: Beyoğlu, Dichotomy of Cultures, Arabesque, Consumer Society, Postmodern Semiology, Historical Environment

Özet

Beyoğlu, Özellikle de İstiklal Caddesi, İstanbul'u düşündüğünüzde ilk akla gelen bölgelerden biridir. Mimari çeşitliliği bir yana, İstanbul'un farklı alt-kültürlerine ev sahipliği yapması bu ilgiyi muhafaza etmiştir. Şehrin gündelik yaşamında yükselen yaşam tarzlarının yansımasının göstergesi olarak, Beyoğlu kültürlerin dikotomisi, arabesk yaşam biçimleri, yoğun ekonomik akış ve sosyal etkinliklerle eşit derecede domine edilmiş bir fiziksel mekanı temsil etmektedir. Bu çalışma, Beyoğlu'nun 80 sonrası geçirdiği kültürel ve ekonomik dönüşümün sonucu oluşan postmodern semiyolojik okumaları yapmayı amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Beyoğlu, Kültürlerin Dikotomisi, Arabesk, Tüketim Toplumu, Postmodern Semiyoloji, Tarihi Çevre

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An overview to Postmodern Formations in Post 1980's Istanbul

'Beauty has an objective quality but a thing appears beautiful only when someone apprehends it in such a way...'

Eco, 1976

City-dwellers' outlook of the city is strongly related to their day-to-day activities. What is set forth by the efforts of postmodernist ideology to revitalize meaning in urban structure, is an order that re-organizes society according to the new conditions of the capitalist regime. And although new structures do make circumferential references, they still carry the symbols of the past more than anything else. The same goes for Istanbul. A stage where the rebirth of bourgeois is visualised, Istanbul contains a richness that is too fantastic for even postmodernism. The city is *'permanently'* divided, according to Keyder. The global financial inflow is delivering the expected results in terms of class formation, consumption patterns and employment (Keyder, 1999). The effects of upsurges in crime, overpopulation due to internal migration, desire to become home owners, power struggles between those who are natives of Istanbul and not, extremism in entertainment, struggles for financial freedom, dreams of social climbing are all evident in the changing nature of social relations and therefore of places. The *'dream residences'* built one after the other, mega shopping centers, local identity lost under the sponsorship of foreign capital and the self-denying and overly material world constructed in the name of globalization has gradually become the reality of Istanbul and changed the city-dwellers' view of the city. Greimas argues that this approach of city-dwellers to urban spaces has developed in connection with the *'serenity/bustle'* distinction (Greimas, 1986).

The current state of Istanbul is undoubtedly a result of a process that began after 1980 when foreign capital was allowed to enter Turkey. It would of course be unwise to deny the economic contributions of the investments foreign investors made within the global basis of national development. This period which started with the construction of five-star hotels caused a boom, especially in fast-food and entertainment industries, which can also be viewed as a breaking point for Istanbul. This was pushed further by the cultural dynamism created by the flood of tourists to Istanbul which had achieved a global position in terms of art activities.

Although congresses, festivals, restaurants with international cuisines and the rapidly growing telecommunications industry helped Istanbul sustain its rise at a dizzying speed, it was later realized that the possible downside of a sudden and irregular increase in population had been overlooked. The city has

had to meet the demands of almost 10 million tourists every year in addition to its own inhabitants of roughly the same number who are equally interested in entertainment and cultural activities. The impossibility of these efforts has inevitably resulted in a snowballing migration of people from the country who brought their own culture with them and quickly became the '*vast majority*'.

The intention of turning Istanbul into a global city was justified. However, the efforts to downsize manufacturing industry and expand the service industry, which are the two main features of any global city, have not met with success. A duality was created due to information technology and monetary flow being too dependent on outside financial sources. While flashy stores, luxury offices, large shopping malls, night clubs and restaurants considerably increased in number, the lives of those worked inside these constituted as much an indicator for Istanbul as the lives of those who went to these places for recreation. Closed systems formed by different groups according to their economic status have forced to disguised segregation. The work force in the service industry, who are mostly from the country, have created a world for themselves in Istanbul and social ostracization has gradually become evident in urban spaces.

According to Lash and Urry, '*impacted ghettos*' emerged where on the one hand groups of people enjoyed the prosperity afforded by globalization (Lash & Urry, 1994), on the other hand the increasing rural population endeavored to perpetuate their own culture. At this moment in history, it is possible to talk of polarization and segregation. Nevertheless, the city has not lost its soft texture. Postmodern urban construction is visible almost everywhere. All models customized for the consumer market have been executed as buildings all over the city. Among these are huge shopping malls, entertainment centers, fast-food chains and ready-made clothing stores. In this new phase, according to Gürses, the city witnessed fundamental changes in its economic composition, social structure and cultural configuration. The integration into transnational markets and networks produced new arrangements on urban geography, initiated new life styles and consumption habits among the emerging professional class and influenced the distribution of income causing economic and social polarization (Gürses, 2010).

According to Gottdiener, these new models embrace postmodernist expression by recycling symbols of the past; therefore recreating architectural indicator at both contextual and discursive levels whether it has been articulated as pastiche or pure eclecticism (Gottdiener, 1995).

Reflecting Istanbul's post-80s '*divided city*' image, Beyoğlu is without a doubt one of the areas that best evoke such an indicator with its social context.

An Overview to the Life in Beyoğlu: Past and Present

The history of Beyoğlu goes back a long way. It is known to have been a vibrant and dynamic area, particularly popular among Genoese and Venetian tradesmen. Armenian and Jewish minorities in the region formed the first bourgeois in the western sense with embassies, churches and synagogues, bringing with them all the characteristics of a European life style.



Beyoğlu... An overview to the street (Courtesy of Ayla Özeygen).

Dominated by wooden buildings until the Great Beyoğlu Fire in 1870, Beyoğlu has turned into a boulevard with stone and multi-storey buildings since the late 19th century. The facade, style, mass and decoration characteristics of European metropolises were applied to the stone structures of the district, which were turning into apartment buildings. Multi-storey apartment buildings, rows of houses, residence-like edifices, closed or built around an atrium have collectively developed the structural technology of the district which has lasted until today.

With the introduction of the wealth tax in 1942 and following World War II, foreign population in the region started to move away. The balance between minorities and the Muslim population was compromised when the Greeks also left the region after the September 1955 events. During the 1950s, Beyoğlu was still prominent as a cultural and commercial axis, despite everything. The region, frequented by artists and intellectuals, became a center for national celebrations with the arrangement of the Taksim Square.

The region began to lose its power in the 1960s. Entertainment venues and theatres started to shut their doors while bargain shops and workshops replaced luxury stores and restaurants. The population grew poorer and new settlements emerged that can only be described as dens with inferior and unhealthy living conditions. The inns, arcades residences in the region which dated back to the 19th century either changed hands and lost their looks or got replaced by new buildings that were discordant with the texture of the scenery and devoid of any architectural quality.

A decade of heated political disputes, the 1970s saw lifestyles change in Beyoğlu, and a part of the population moved to neighboring districts. Many neoclassic and art nouveau buildings were deserted by their owners and became shelters for immigrants from Anatolia. In other words, the 'sophisticated' and 'elite cosmopolitan' atmosphere of the region deteriorated due to economic and social degeneration.

In the 1980s, while the developing private sector tried to communicate through culture and the arts, Beyoğlu caught the investors' attention with its rich historical texture. While the restoration of many historical artefacts triggered culture and art activities, a cosmopolitan structure manifested itself with more people choosing to come here for social activities. The dynamism of the area escalated when the street was closed to traffic and a tram service was launched between Taksim and Tünel.

After The urban renewal initiative in 1990s, Tarlabası has become an area of depression, left to its own devices to deal with its own subculture revolving around illegal activity, continues to trouble Beyoğlu, its neighboring district (Yağcı, 2005).

The Social Semiotic Analysis of Beyoğlu: Reading Social Codes

The city becomes a book that tells of people as well as everything else that lives with them: buildings, signs, symbols and squares...

Thorns, 2004

Experiencing the first quarter of 21st century, a new order is established where individual freedoms and choices have diversified rapidly and great expectations are more likely to be fulfilled. The greatest thing that this century has afforded people is the opportunity to use their liberty of choice whenever and in whatever way they wish. Adding meaning to their lives, emphasizing their individuality and perpetuating their liberty of choice have become the ultimate objectives of human beings in this century. This objective is clearly visible in urban readings. With an aim to carry their cultural identity into the future, users

want to find what they have created in their minds, and usually prefer an aestheticized world of commodities as it will give them this pleasure.

Beyoğlu is a good choice in this context. It evokes a privileged sense of belonging to the elite and elegant masses of the past, yet also offering users a chance to live in a dream where they can choose and consume freely in the 'present'.

Beyoğlu contains many different histories. It is one of the urban indicators where postmodernism legitimizes itself by referring to the past. The hope that creative and rebellious users have one day to set forth their own identities in the heterogeneous structure of diversified tastes and cultures should not be hindered.

Considered a power domain for modernity, Beyoğlu today is not just a symbol of authority, openness and innocence but individuality, mystery and passion. This legitimization is inevitable and in a way rendering it possible to transcend reality. As Kahraman said, 'the street is no longer innocent, it has become the concepts built around visual ideologies at a production and consumption level' (Kahraman, 2002). This is the only way for experiences to co-exist on the same stage and for users to strip of their role of viewer and take to the stage.

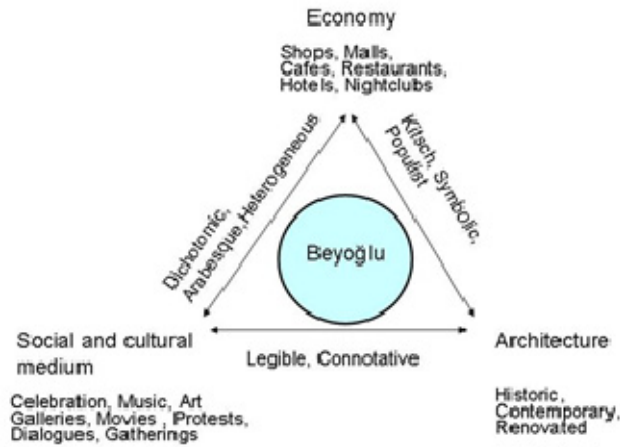
Beyoğlu, as a consumption area and a melting pot for cultural dichotomies, is a fairground where different activities are played out. The greatest success of the area is the fact that it has presented the longing for the past in various packages. Beyoğlu, where shopping takes the main stage during the day and entertainment at night, lives with the notion that it harbors different sub-cultures. Present is intertwined with the past.. What is striking at first is the parade of restaurants and malls with different brands. These malls are open till late and restaurants expand outside of their premises by placing tables outside. Different groups of clients enjoy an evening out within their own cultures and without communicating with others. It is possible to say that people favor this area because they are longing for a certain kind of urban environment. In connection with this, various schemes have been put into action to get the consumer to spend more money. Aspects of postmodernism that are aimed at the market and endless consumption are present here night and day. Despite the unstable picture the heterogeneous texture forms in combination with media and advertising activities, the area symbolizes a space where modernism is consumed and rebellious instincts are institutionalized. According to Barthes, the eroticism of a city cannot be separated from the concept of sociality. City is the space for encounters with others and centers provide a space for the

exchange of social activities, or erotic activities (Barthes, 1993). A kind of playground, these areas are where everybody assumes a role in looking for that 'other'. The stage is constantly changing, the search and pursuit never end.

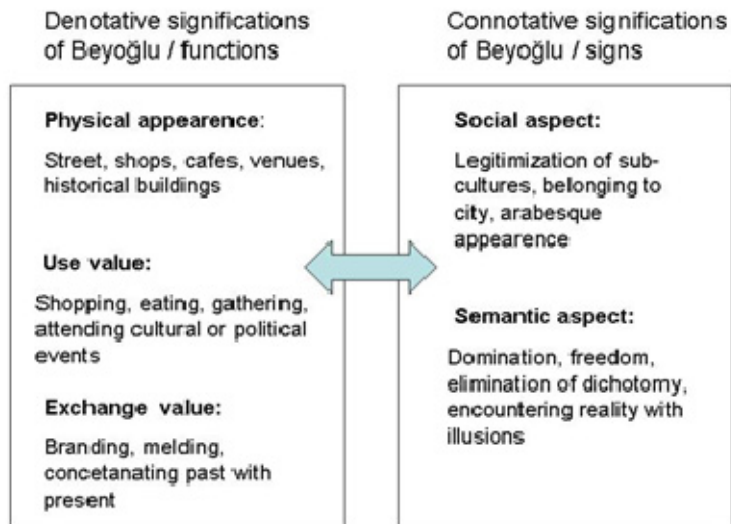
Therefore, Beyoğlu should be viewed not only as a place for eating and strolling, but also an urban space where deep indicators of different urban images can be read. To extricate any architectural indicators, it might be necessary to take a look at the shops, cultural points, and fast-food restaurants along the street, directing the crowds. This directing process is the prerequisite to turn production into consumption. Along the street, 3 kilometers from Taksim to Tünel, various codes can be read.

Gottdiener's syntactic analysis offers a starting point in deciphering these codes, which are considerably open-ended. Gottdiener argues that symbolic experiences cannot be singled out. In his study of Disneyland, the system is a multi-layered and ideological representation, describing the sub-stratification of a mythical design (Gottdiener, 1995). Codes based on Gottdiener's analysis are diverse and will always allow for new additions in terms of syntactic analysis. In his studies, when he details the production and exchange of meanings, he refers to Eco (Gottdiener, 1985) with 5 main concepts how any object can be considered; physically, mechanically, economically, socially, and semantically, (Eco, 1976) where the last 2 items specify the usual domain of semiotic analysis as levels of connotation.

In this study, The daily activities and the life flowing through Beyoğlu will be examined within 3 systems of meaning: 'social and cultural medium', 'economy', and 'architecture'. As seen below, these three components are in a direct relationship. Although the social and semantical attributes create the semiological signs, mechanical and economical aspects can also be converted into semiotic objects as Krampen calls a social transfunctionalism (Krampen, 1979; Gottdiener, 1985).



The relationship with a triangulation of the activities in Beyoğlu



The significations of Beyoğlu in terms of denotations and signs

Social and Cultural Medium

To involvement of the individual to a certain context, is intended to show one's identity. It also provide medium for distracting oneself from 'other'. Every space includes a certain meaning, gains a ground in our perceptual map with experiences and memories...

In this respect, Beyoğlu presents a very rich social medium. It is not only about bringing sub-cultures together, or providing an intensive economic flow, or the richness of architectural heritage, or a non sleeping district.. It's about finding images and symbols of a world, where individuals can feel themselves inherited. The 5 core concepts, groups, cognition, identity, performance ve emotion as Fine defines, (Fine, 2008) are very visible in Beyoğlu. Non of them is separated but melted in each other.

In his article 'Metropolis and Mental Life', Simmel argues that the metropolitan type of man reacts with his mind to protect himself against the threatening discrepancies of his external environment. Compared to small town mentality which rests more upon deeply felt and emotional relationships, metropolitan people have developed an intellectuality that is characterized by rationality and that is believed to preserve subjective life against onrushing impressions (Simmel, 2005). This way, the consumer builds a world for himself, internalizes and protects it with mental imagery; yet he still yearns for an external structure he believes to be emotional. This is a fairly feasible reality. Man continuously longs for parts of another whole, wanting to experience it independent of his life and without any responsibility. He wishes to take advantage of all the supposedly life-easing technologies and information advances the postmodern society imposes on him, yet he still looks for a way out of responsibility with help of the 'other' he has created.. Post the institution of the Republic in 1923 Pera, a social space hosting a highly specific way of life, was given a new semantic meaning, ideologised and politicised, and created an 'outside' in the name of an 'inside', that is, a space 'belonging to us', separating the inside and the outside with solid lines and positing impervious borders between them (Yumul, 2009). But today, Beyoğlu is a public area with all the glorious opportunities to welcome all sub cultures for political activism, entertainment, and shopping... Beyoğlu is hosting many social events. The side streets right alongside the main boulevard, and especially the Galatasaray square are not only for pedestrian use, they also witness many social, and political events, activities, protests, and gatherings. Side streets are full of entertainment venues which also appeal to those high culture groups who wish to dabble in different kinds of entertainment.

In this context, as the most widest and longest sub-streets of Beyoğlu, French Street is a commercial one, allegedly reclaiming a truly French history in Beyoğlu, and deliberately designed to “catch Europe’s interest” (Mills, 2005).



Entrance of French Street reminding people the assumed “European” look, and history
(Photo: courtesy of Ayla Ozaygen)

The French Street (in Origin Algerian Street) was actually created to articulate a French look, although the district has never been a French neighborhood. The aim of the gentrification was to recall of a collective memories of minorities from past times. Shaping the district as a “cultural” arena was not quite successful, where only cafes, and small restaurants are trying to keep the street alive, with very little support of cultural activities.. As quoted in Mill’s work from *İdemen ve Düzkan*, the street become a very loud and noisy place for drinking and eating late into the night and that little “cultural” activity actually took place (*İdemen, Düzkan*, 2005).

Not only the French Street, the little piazza in front of Galatasaray High School is also important for social activities. As Secor indicates in her interview with immigrant women, some of this areas represent places of entertainment and consumerism as exclusionary spaces, areas that they would avoid due to their own class habitus and to the gender norms of their communities (Secor, 2004).



The heart of the district with the entrance of famous French Galatasaray High School and Yapı Kredi Publications (Photo: courtesy of Ayla Ozaygen)

The Beyoğlu axle is also defined as an intensive music and entertainment venue. The dichotomy of subcultures and dominant culture shows itself in the form of different places, and musics. Music in this area is indispensable. It is possible to hear the music played at CD stores along the street at entertainment venues too. The aim here is to get away from everyday life and get involved, if only for a while, in a completely different world one aspires to but does not belong in. This is where the distinction between high culture and mass culture disappears. After 1980, Istanbul in general witnessed a serious growth in the manner of social gaps, where a polarized system occurred. The crisis of elitist culture resulted in a dichotomy, which was indicated in new settings of meanings. Especially in Beyoğlu this resulted in a shift of paradigm, where the legitimization of arabesque is approved. According to Yazar, it presents a symbol of spontaneous reaction by the popular masses to officialdom and to forced modernization (Yazar, 2008)

This is exactly what Jameson means by depthless culture (Jameson, 1984). There is an abundance of indicators and messages in the air. People from different income and culture levels, who live in completely different worlds during the day, come to Beyoğlu at night to meet at the same entertainment venues. Music from folk bars gets mixed up in the Latin music from dance salons and users continuously relocate.

This heterogeneous environment is also an indicator of an arabesque culture, which has been defined in very different ways since 1970 in Turkey. Arabesk is seen as a demolition of societal values and the environmental space. But agreed with Özbek, arabesk should not be seen as an anomaly but is instead a historical formation of popular culture, constructed and lived through the process of spatial and symbolic migration in the Turkish path through

modernity. This culture of hybridity was first made popular by the masses of rural migrants, giving voice to experiences shaped by the rapid modernization of Turkish society since the 1950s (Özbek, 1997).

Beyoğlu in this case is actually more than a formation of popular culture; it shows specific indicators, that both cultures keep as prerequisite, like venue choices, preferences of occasions, and taste.

Beyoğlu paints a portrait where different subcultures live in harmony. The region serves as a melting pot at day for political and social gatherings and night when entertainment reaches its zenith; although it retains its heterogeneous structure. While the buildings corporations restore as an expression of their power for culture and art activities attract large groups of people from outside of Beyoğlu, these buildings where symbolism is intensified are mostly self-contained.

Postmodern depthless culture bares itself completely here as cultures of pleasure only use the region when they see a potentially satisfying consumption opportunity. Therefore, a small-scale turnover is evident except for certain cultural structures of prestige. At the heart of the district stand the famous French Galatasaray High School and Yapı Kredi Publications, bookstores like Homer and Robinson, and academic and cultural institutions established by various European nations which perpetuate the region' cultural significance.

According to Jencks, we all carry around with us in our mind an imaginary museum of information from our experiences in different places (mostly touristic), cinema, television, exhibitions and popular magazines. These are all present at the same time and this is what is exciting (Jencks, 1984). The collage created by diversified tastes and changing cultures is easily perceptible in Beyoğlu. Representational sceneries, designed spaces, eclectic sights all reveal a certain amount of depthlessness.

Semiology signifies all human phenomena, which shows the changing social realities, and "everyday life" gains importance. In Beyoğlu communication channels and signs are reflected in a pure dualism, which is in fact dichotomic, vibrant, joyful, but also sadly, and almost fatal with its arabesque appearance. It is not just the place, where the individuals realize their fantasies, also places to legitimize their social status, as Harvey describes, as arenas where hedonistic desires are expressed (Harvey, 1989).

Economy

In many ways, Beyoğlu seems like a land of wealth. High consumption rates lead to a high-speed cash flow however, the budget is in fact limited. There is hardly any production; but instead consumption is so cleverly marketed that it seems to have obliterated class distinctions. Everywhere is bright, crowded, chaotic and exciting; just like a strip in Las Vegas. This is why Istanbulites who live in other districts come here to play tourist. The illusion that distinctions have been erased continues to accelerate consumption along the street. There is no destination here. People strive to transcend that which is necessary and consume without questioning. It can be said that this is a region where consumption is legitimized.

Every segment lives in its own reality with its own sense of entertainment. The entertainment industry, run by large businesses, adopt strict rules to attract users. Every summer, concerts by world-famous stars, parties at hip nightclubs, attended by a certain group of people take place in areas where rules are dictated by a specific culture. Everything is pre-programmed, consumption soars and entertainment is entirely different summer and winter. There is nothing that emerges spontaneously in the flow of everyday life. Only those places of excessive consumption where economic indicators are exposed stand out.

Located at almost within a foot of each other are small stands, where simple, exclusively Turkish foods such as *simit* (Turkish bagel), stuffed mussels and *kokoreç* (grilled sheep's intestines) are sold; ice-cream sellers; and cheap fast-food restaurants which became commonplace in Istanbul with the transition into the global order after 1980. Side streets only add to these with small local restaurants, some only open in the evenings, where it is possible to drink wine and gorge on Turkish appetizers; only at a higher price.

Live music provides the perfect accompaniment to wine and the finest examples of Turkish cuisine at cozy restaurants, almost one after the other. Here, everybody picks their restaurants and meals according to their social statuses; however, healthy eating or eating as part of a daily routine is difficult.



Different kind of eating places in Beyoğlu, one from a traditional Turkish cuisine “manti house”, the other a restaurant with an international cuisine...
(Photo: courtesy of Ayla Özaygen)



Little vernacular food shops, and neighborhood open bazaars
(Photo: courtesy of Ayla Özaygen)

Corner shops, little vernacular food shops, and open bazaars along the streets which are scattered all over the city are widely existent and can be seen at every step in this area. Everything is ready to be consumed on the spot, with various alternatives lined up.

Beyoğlu is a district where cheap and low quality clothing is in free circulation and readily available. There is a high level of freedom at all times, day and night. There is no dress code at entertainment or cultural venues. Cultural differences seem non-existent at first glance and class hegemonies undetectable. However, footprints of globalization are visible here too.



Little shops together with the stores of well-known brands
(Photo: courtesy of Ayla Özaygen)

There are brand stores along the street regardless of whether their target group is here or not. Considering Beyoğlu the expression of culture and elegance, these brands restore historical buildings to move into so they can prove they are unrivalled in their industries. The fact that well-known brands such as Nike, Diesel and Benetton have opened stores here not only accelerates the consumption of postmodern culture, but also show that the divide between different cultures is not erased but positioned under a specific superior culture. These clean and new stores stand out among doomed buildings and legitimize class distinction.

As Beyoğlu establishing a free market, the important point here is that the markets for different targets, can exist at the same time and place, and one can serve the other. Although it's mainly a single option and not vice versa, the little shops, local snack food and beverage cafes, and examples of Turkish cuisine serve both cultures. The famous Ara Café (owned by the famous Photographer Ara Güler) is mostly preferred by the natives of Istanbul; but they also try the little food stations serving "kokoreç, and midye tava"... Calling this as a symbiosis might be an overstatement, but at least describing it can as a sign of fracturing the cultural dichotomy.

As Levin describes, "some kinds of markets are thus understood to be embedded in cultural arrangements, this does not mean that markets are constituted by culture but, rather they are inflected by culture – that they have a culture (Levin, 2008).

Architecture

It is impossible to speak of a constructed environment in Beyoğlu, where at every step one can witness another stage where different styles of various cultures struggle to survive. The architectural structure in Beyoğlu can

be divided into 3 sub – groups. The basic buildings are the historical ones, but most of them are demolished due to the mis-use. The other group is again historical buildings with unconsciously added parts. These unqualified parts seem to be penetrated to the buildings, with their poor architectural quality, insufficient material, and inaccurate colour choices. The last group is again historical buildings treated with heavy restoration techniques, and intervention methods. These are mostly owned by corporate companies. But in spite of every goodwill, most of the renovations are standing at the borderline of being kitsch.

Agreed with the definition of Tedman, “kitsch is material manifestation of class struggle, the best way seeing this happen, will be the additions to the historical buildings in a way, that their historical value, and reality are disregarded (Tedman, 2010).

The real problem stems from the failure to preserve the architectural texture of the district due to the different interpretations of sociologists and historians as to the reality of the district. Considered by the Turkish bourgeoisie as being ‘Europeanized’, the region became the target of different readings post 1980. Of the dilemma, Bartu says: ‘...Narratives on the Beyoğlu debate provide different interpretations as to what Beyoğlu represents. Beyoğlu is both a symbol of ‘civilization’ and ‘elegance’ and a dive. It is a ‘foreign’ cultural heritage. Natives of Istanbul, who see themselves as the owner of the city, Beyoğlu represents the ‘ruralization of the city...’ (Bartu, 1999).



A view from historical buildings of Beyoğlu, abandoned or mistreated with inappropriate interventions (Photo: courtesy of Ayla Özaygen)

From this perspective, it can be said that the monumental and aesthetic Art Nouveau architecture of the Levantine era has been abandoned to its fate. The residences, business centers and shopping malls built in a straightforward fashion to reflect social status do no longer exist here. An architectural structure

that can only be attained with a high level of income in other region can be found to have been left to its own fate or to have become an entertainment venue for subcultures.

In Beyoğlu, which was added to the urban renewal projects after 1980, the heritage associated with the Levantine culture was not preserved as a direct result of naked patriotism. It is still not clear what the region symbolizes but the renewal and restoration efforts corporations to express their own cultures and images were helpful in saving some of the buildings in the area. However, the texture has changed, and the area, devoid of any sense of belonging, has become one of temporary cultures.

According to Mounin, semiology is more than a poetics of city, attempting to discover how the city inspires and affects the imaginary life of those who experience it (Mounin, 1980). But, can be approached by accepting the reality that people and the buildings in the urban environment have a common past. Then it will be more visible to connect the rich architectural fabric with the social and cultural life.



Examples of restorations in Beyoğlu street (Photo: courtesy of Ayla Özaygen)

Almost every single historical building in Beyoğlu is out of its original use. The past live is already over; but the fact that the area has an reclaimed European illusion is open to discussion. Except The arrival of global brands, increase in the cultural activities, and attempts to start a revival for European period under the “French Street” reproduction, the only reality is that these buildings are living, as Akın says a kind of ‘belle époque’ (Akın, 1998).



The life keeps going even the historical monumental building suffers from severe demolition (Photo: courtesy of Ayla Özaygen)

Summary

One's motive to preserve history is part of his motive to preserve his identity (Hewison, 1987).

It is certain that he will get more than a whole as the parts are put together and as Derrida points out, the primary form of postmodern expression will materialize when this collage has been composed. In this structure, lapse of willpower will be a prerequisite for continued consumption. Aware of the artificiality of his position, man must become the 'other' that he has created so that he can break his fall. Baudrillard simply calls this concept 'object'. External, aversive to belonging and a strange attractor (Baudrillard, 1993). This object positions itself in postmodern culture and holds a space as a commodity that does not wish to be grasped; that in fact faces rejection but also manifests in dreams from time to time. These spaces are where man is estranged from himself and draws nearer to the 'other'.

Jameson's 'induced depthlessness' combined with Jencks' 'compression in time and space', it is clear that many urban spaces, with their cosmetic shine, have become demonstrative shows or eclectic melting pots. While Charles Moore's Piazza d'Italia in New Orleans pushes the boundaries of postmodern theatricality, it also questions what kind of an architectural communication style makes a reference to urban discourse. These places, which satisfy the public's desire to break away from everyday life through entertainment, also represent tradition to a certain extent. Labeled by Featherstone as the '*limited threshold consciousness of orderly vagabonds*', these spaces refer to the exhaustion of modernity while rendering the redefining of urban symbols necessary (Featherstone, 1991). Describing urban postmodernism, Harvey claims that this type of postmodernist architecture and urban designing compel individuals to seek for an illusionary 'drunkenness', 'a fantasy world' which will carry them beyond the existing reality (Harvey, 1989). This fantasy world, despite its design, segmentation, chaos, theatricality, eclecticism and extravagance, constitutes a point of exit for the resolution of social indicators. Life is only possible in a time and space that allow individuals to live it as they wish. People are open to all kinds of experiences to live this reality. The reason why people acquiesce to the chaos in today's segmented, consumed and melted postmodern world stems from their need to achieve this sense of trust. Individual narratives multiply, and as The core concepts, indicated at the beginning of the study are all interpenetrating, and are inextricable. They are influencing each other, but also they are also singularly topics of researchs.

The production of meaning with its ad hoc nature can be open to many debates; but as Beyoğlu case showed, understanding and criticizing a city part with all its attributes will lead to a much precise and defined semiosis.

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