

POLITIKI KOUZINA: AN AROMATIC AND SPATIAL PORTRAIT OF CINEMATIC ISTANBUL*

Yazar / Author: Asst. Prof. Dr. / Yard. Doç. Dr. Sertaç Timur Demir¹¹

Abstract

If it is claimed that, socially and architecturally, Istanbul has been getting uglier by the day, it should be noted that one of critical breakpoints of the deformation process was the deportation event between Turkey and Greece in the 1960s. That resulted in profound and essential changes in the urban, social and demographical form of Istanbul, and is dealt with in this paper through a film, *Politiki Kouzina (A Touch of Spice, 2003)*. This film that is about a Greek family who were deported from Istanbul and moved to Athens by virtue of some political disagreements during the first years of the 1960s, deals with this change by examining the deportation process which catalysed the large-scale demographic and cultural transformation which has ethnically made Istanbul more homogenous and monophonic. The deportation, which is a reflection of the nation-oriented State, 'disinfected' Constantinople of strangers and destroyed a multi-coloured notion of the city. As a result of the deportation, the ethnic Greek population of Istanbul was reduced from 135,000 to a mere 7,000. This situation can be accepted as being one of the most influential events to affect the urban culture of contemporary Istanbul.

Keywords: The city, deportation, nation-building, conflict, film.

BİR TUTAM BAHARAT: SİNEMATİK İSTANBUL'UN AROMATİK VE MEKANSAL PORTRESİ

Özet

Eğer İstanbul'un toplumsal ve mimari açıdan gittikçe bozulduğu iddia edilirse, bu çözümlü sürecinin en kritik kırılma noktalarından birinin Türkiye ve Yunanistan arasında 1960'larda gerçekleşen mübadele olduğu söylenebilir. İstanbul'un kentsel, sosyal ve demografik dokusunda derin ve esaslı değişimler yol açan bu süreç, bu çalışmada *Politiki Kouzina (A Touch of Spice)* filmi üzerinden ele alınmaktadır. 1960'ların başlarında belli başlı politik anlaşmazlıklara binaen İstanbul'dan Atina'ya göç etmek zorunda kalan bir Rum ailesi hakkında olan film, İstanbul'u etnik açıdan daha homojen ve tektip yapan geniş ölçekli demografik ve kültürel dönüşüme neden olan bu mübadeleyi sorgulayıcı şekilde işlemektedir. Ulus-merkezli devletin yansıması olan sözkonusu mübadele Konstantinople'un ötekilerini 'dezenfekte ederken', şehrin de çok-renkli dokusunu yok etmiştir. Bu mübadele sonucunda, İstanbul'daki Rum nüfusu 135.000'den yalnızca 7.000'e inmiştir. Bu durum, çağdaş İstanbul'un kent kültürünü değiştiren en etkili olaylardan biri olarak kabul edilebilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kent, mübadele, ulus-inşası, çatışma, film.

1. Introduction

The twentieth century refers to a dramatic period for Turks in Greece and Greeks in Turkey. First, in 1924, more than one million Greeks were deported from Anatolia to Greece, while approximately half a million Turks were deported from Greece to Turkey (Hacı, 2009). Istanbul was an exception that was exempted from the exchange, because Greek, Jewish and Armenian minorities were carrying the weight of trade in the city; but on the other hand, the young country (Republic of Turkey) was gradually aiming to get rid of the non-Turk and non-Muslim minorities by increasing nationalist tendencies. The Republican People's Party, which represents the official ideology based on nationalist Kemalism (İnel, 2001), prepared a minority report about the Greeks in Istanbul. According to the report (Akar, 1998), Istanbul must be cleansed of Greeks before celebrating the 500th anniversary of the conquest of the city. For this purpose, a capital tax, derived from Nazi's Germany model, was adopted by the Turkish government in 1942. This taxation, which forced the minorities to trade under hard conditions, aimed to realise the *Turkification* dream (Aktar, 2002).

The political and economical oppression took on a new dimension with the Events of September 6-

* This paper was written as a part of my awarded PhD thesis at Lancaster University and presented in Contemporary Greek Film Cultures Conference at Hellenic Centre, London.

¹¹ Gümüşhane University, Communication Faculty, Department of Radio, TV and Cinema, stdemir@gumushane.edu.tr

7. On 6 September 1955, the political ethnic cleansing turned into offensive aggression that was supported by people in the street. According to Güven (2005) these events, which were the result of a *homogenisation* project and politics, were a breakpoint between the multicultural imperial tradition and the Turkish Republic that internalised the nation-state ideology. Similar politic action was taken against Turk minorities in Greece. All these transformations show that establishing the State was synonymous with nation-building. The ethnic cleansing negatively changed the essential notion and multidimensional demography of the city. Namely, in 1964, approximately 30,000 Greeks were deported from Istanbul. This makes *Constantinople*¹² an unforgettable city for Greek memory (Baltsiotis, 2005, p. 403; Erdal, 2009, p. 80). The social catastrophe indicates that everybody may unexpectedly be kept away from their own home in this insecure world that is full of political problems and ideological conflicts. In other words, everybody can abruptly be labelled as a stranger in the city in which they live. Istanbul, as a historic nucleus, is the living memory of strangers who were deported from their homes in years gone by. This living memory may refer to the most untouched side of the city, which can be defined as a 'widowed city'.

Politiki Kouzina (A Touch of Spice) directed by Tassos Boulmetis in 2003 summarises how "nations are no longer secure in the shelter of the states' political sovereignty, which once was taken for a guarantee of perpetual life" (Bauman, 1999, p. 40). It tells the story of a Greek family who was deported from Istanbul to Athens. According to the plot of the film, Fanis, the main character, is a Greek child who lives in Constantinople in the 1950s and 60s. Then, some political problems relating to Greco-Turkish relations affect minorities in the city, and they are deported from Istanbul to Athens. For Fanis, a life without Vasilis who is his grandfather, Saime who is his first love and Constantinople starts in Athens. Fanis and his family have difficulty in integrating into the new lifestyle in the city, especially in terms of the new tastes. Whenever Fanis feels himself alone, he gravitates towards the kitchen, because foods remind him of happy days in Constantinople. Moreover the kitchen, as a place of belonging, creates a realm of freedom for him. Vasilis does not leave Constantinople because, formally, he is a Turkish citizen. After years, Fanis visits Istanbul to see Vasilis again, and Saime. But Istanbul, from which Fanis was deported years ago, is no longer his old city. It is now Istanbul that belongs merely to Turks and Muslims. Constantinople, along with its tastes, remains only as a dream that Fanis creates. In other words, for him, Constantinople is an unrealised hope; whereas, Istanbul is a real disappointment.

A Touch of Spice may be criticised as being subjective about the exoticisation of the city. It may also be claimed that the film oversimplifies a serious political issue. It deals with the deportation problem without joining in the controversial discussion. *Politiki Kouzina*, just like many Hollywood films that set in Istanbul, have an obvious orientalist tendency that tries to show the city as if it is still the capital of the Ottoman Empire. For instance, in the first description of Istanbul in the film, oriental sounds of azan are heard; synchronically, mosques, minarets and a bearded muezzin who recites the azan are seen. In addition to azan and minarets, the sky that resembles the hamam¹³ is misty and grey. At the same, in the background, shadowy birds fly by.

¹² Even the name of the city is a reason for conflict. Greeks use Constantinople, while Turks prefers Istanbul. "Few people consistently used one name for the city. Other names, epithets and abbreviations include: Stambul, Estambol, Kushta, Gosdantnubolis, Tsarigrad, Rumiyya al-kubra, New Jarusalem, the City of Pilgrimage, the City of Saints, the House of the Caliphate, the Throne of the Sultane, the House of the State, the Gate of Happiness, the Eye of the World, the Refuge of the Universe..." (Mansel, 2006, p. xi).

¹³ The Turkish bath.



Figure 1. Surreal and exotic presentation of Istanbul in the film.

As the camera dollies back to reveal more of the area, new stereotypic images are seen. These outside images are domes, rustic buildings and roofs. Then the camera, panning right, passes through a tulle curtain and reveals indoor images in company with oriental music. The scene indoors, designed with pastoral and rural elements such as prayers, daybeds, hand-made carpets and sheep remind us of a rural house. After that, the camera continues to pan right and captures the bazaar, replete with a horse-drawn carriage, street hawkers, coppersmiths and military police. Ironically, all these two-minute images are computer animated and not real. The artificial images and sounds are indeed clichés and stereotypes of the city.

The nostalgic and exotic images of Istanbul stereotyped in historical writings and travel guides portray it as either an exotic or a chaotic city. What tourists, researchers or voyagers look for in Istanbul is the city's past: They prefer to zoom in on the sultans, harems, palaces and mosques. Hence they skip the industrial zones, back streets, small people and simple lives. This oversight in Istanbul is, according to Pérouse (2011, p. 18), based on an idealisation of the past. However, it is obvious that the image of contemporary Istanbul is no longer similar to the stereotypes produced by orientalist voyagers in 18th and 19th centuries.

This may show that Istanbul itself has been a neglected and falsified academic and artistic field. In addition to that, Istanbul struggles against all kinds of exoticisation. Even those who criticise orientalist works that are only interested in the pink face of Istanbul produce a different kind of exoticism by showing street urchins, smugglers, beggars, minorities, prostitutes, etc. Although the city, both as Istanbul and as Constantinople, has still strong spatial and temporal aura, *Politika Kouzina* describe it by focusing on surfaces. This is the weakest point of the film.

Despite everything, the film attempts to underline unifying similarities rather than disruptive differences, highlighting common values such as foods, spices, cooking, love, boundaries, strangeness, authority, a sense of home, etc. The film portrays the city as a foodscape. Although *Politiki Kouzina* translates into English as '*A Touch of Spice*' and into Turkish as '*Bir Tutam Baharat*', it in fact means "the city's kitchen", and this city that is identified with its food culture and kitchen is Constantinople. Ironically, the film was not released in Istanbul. In addition, Turkish media and political groups showed no interest in the film; in contrast, the film was appreciated in Greece.

2. Tasting the City

The sense of tasting is like a regulator that organises the social relations in the film. More obviously, all dimensions of social life are dealt with around eating activity. Class-consciousness, economical hierarchy, citizenship and gender relations are also embodied through eating habits. "Eating

habits ... cannot of course be considered independently of the whole lifestyle, (because) taste ... is associated, through preparation and cooking, with a whole conception of the domestic economy and the division of labour between the sexes" (Bourdieu, 2002, p. 185). Fanis and Vasilis, in parallel with Bourdieu's thought, produce their social identity by means of taste. This means that taste is so active that it can underline the differences between minorities and the majority in the city. Each taste and presentation style works as a culture code and message. Bourdieu references food culture in order to distinguish between the bourgeoisie and the working class. According to him (Bourdieu, 2002, p. 90), "taste, a class culture turned into nature, that is, embodied, helps to shape the class body". However, this film shows, in contrast to what Bourdieu said, that taste has a remindful, resistive and affirmative function that provides an area to struggle against power by unifying differentiated groups.

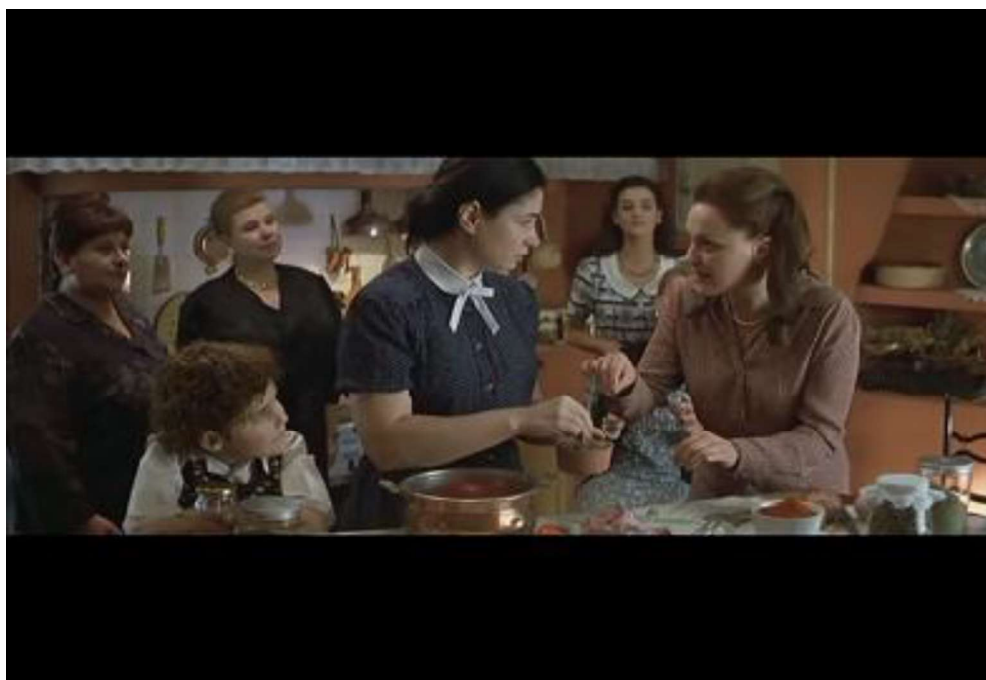


Figure 2. Fanis together with his relatives in the kitchen

Each taste –a food or a spice– indicates a different geography, experience, perception and memory, because not only spices, but also spaces, are aromatic and tasteful. For instance, according to Vasilis, Mycenae is associated with carnations, Delphi evokes roses, and Acropolis smells of oregano. As Fanis says, appetizers are similar to stories which tell of faraway journeys. Flavours and aromas seduce your senses and prepare you for an adventurous journey. The notion of spices underlines the temporality and spatiality of urban life as if it is an architectural instrument. That is why all cities – and their conflicts, hopes and loves – are described and remembered through the fragrances and flavours of the spices in food eaten in them. In other words, the urban fabric permeates through spices that stimulate sensory awareness and perception. As for instance Vasilis points out, "sometimes we have to use the wrong spice to get a point across. Cumin is a strong spice. It turns people inwards. Cinnamon makes people look each other in the eyes. If you want to say 'yes', then add cinnamon". This may indicate that each spice has its own language to clarify nebulous emotions and attitudes.

2.1. The Strangeness and the Authority in a Wooden Spice Store

Year 1959. While people try to wipe each other off the city map, Fanis is fervently interested in cosmology and the world of tastes, which are taught to him by Vasilis. He observes the political problems in the city from Vasilis' spice store in Constantinople. In the store, Fanis learns how to cook and to forge links between pepper and the sun, between salt and life, between cinnamon and women. Vasilis and Fanis study in the attic of the store, which is closed to the public. Fanis' dreams and fears are constructed here. Also, he lives in the world of spices and imagination in order to create a perfect moment with Saime. Fanis fictionalises a surreal world for her and himself bodily, in the middle of crowds, but mentally keeps

away from them in order to escape from repetitive and depressive relations. Fanis feels Constantinople by means of tastes in the spice store, which is a micro-cosmos for him.



Figure 3. Fanis and Vasilis talking about spices in the spice store

Places and structures are important, because they implicitly witness what is happening in the city. Indeed, they are not only witnesses, but also an intervening element. As Žižek (2010, p. 255) states, “what the official ideology cannot openly talk about may be revealed in the mute signs of a building”. For instance, the wooden spice store, as if it is a voiceless means of expression, aesthetically but vulnerably carries the major hopes and disappointments of despised people, like Fanis and Vasilis. Further importance of the wooden constructions lies in their nature. As wooden constructions are light and flexible, they are less dangerous than reinforced concrete buildings in case of earthquake. Meanwhile, it is necessary to state that Istanbul is well known for its earthquakes that have threatened the city for centuries. So, wooden constructions have vital importance in the city (Özyalçiner and Sezer, 2005, p. 28). Istanbul, which can partially be protected from the destructive effect of earthquakes with the help of wooden architecture, has faced fires as a result of the same architectural mentality.

Even if the Ottoman Empire had not fallen, the fires that ripped through the city during the early years of the twentieth century—destroying thousands of houses, entire neighbourhoods, vast stretches of the city, leaving tens of thousands of people homeless, helpless, and penniless—would have sapped its strength and left little to remind us of past glories (Pamuk, 2005, p. 190).

As a result of the nature of wooden architecture, fires attracted Western travel writers’ attention until the late nineteenth century (ibid.). Wooden architecture is a missing memory of Constantinople. Ironically, the decreasing of wooden *yalis*¹⁴, and the increase in reinforced concrete construction may, in a sense, reference the unqualified architectural style of contemporary Istanbul. When, after a long time, Fanis comes to Istanbul, he encounters a concrete jungle. The alterations in architectural mentality refer to a social and cultural transformation between tradition and modernity, between nostalgia and urban renewal, between the East and the West. Migration, unstoppable population growth, a housing shortage, the earthquake risk and urban transformation compel the city to become a concrete desert. On the other hand, wooden structures remain either as tourist places to visit, or are sabotaged by land mafia.

Vasilis’ wooden spice store turns into a ruin at the end of the film. The store has two storeys and each floor has a different function. The first floor or, more precisely, the attic is open only to Vasilis, Fanis

¹⁴ Splendid waterside mansions.

and Saime, while the ground floor is open for trade and communication to everybody. Fanis spends all his time in the attic in order to study astronomy and gastronomy. Also, he observes people and political developments from the attic. Fanis, as a stranger to the city, never goes beyond this situation, which verifies Simmel. According to him (1971, p. 148), “the stranger is near and far at the same time”. A peculiar tension between nearness and distance makes Fanis unhappy but free. This kind of freedom, according to him (1971, p. 145-146), is not an absolute freedom. Instead, it is associated with the objectivity of a stranger.

Even if Fanis has a certain religious belief and ethnic belonging, by contrast with Mustafa who is a Turkish military doctor, he never maintains an attitude with national or religious feelings. Besides, the nearness and distance paradox or the paradox of being ‘an element whose membership in the group involves both being outside it and confronting it’ (1971, p. 144) fictionalises strangers as *gavur*¹⁵ or ‘inner enemies’. The film describes Fanis as a pleasant and happy character, in line with Simmel’s thought that sees strangeness as a ‘completely positive relation’ (1971, p. 143). However, Fanis is a loser in the city. The stranger is a trader, but not a landowner (Simmel, 1971, p. 143) He has a store, but he lives as if he is hiding from someone. He looks merely at the sky from the attic, while Mustafa is on the streets and reveals himself freely. Accordingly, the ground floor of the store, which refers to the real and objective world shaped by political power, belongs to Mustafa. Vasilis distracts Mustafa whenever he attempts to discover the attic.



Figure 4. Mustafa and his father, Mr. Osman, in Vasilis’ store

The spice store, as mentioned before is, socially, a micro-cosmos of the city. On the ground floor, the wealth that is necessary to survive is produced, whereas the attic, which is used by Fanis to observe and to study, undertakes a mission to create a symbolic area for resistance or struggle against the power that is represented by Mr. Osman, who is Mustafa’s father. He sometimes enters the store as a customer, and sometimes watches it from a distance, as if he is the eye of power; on the other hand, he never applies physical pressure. As Mr. Osman emerges as a customer, it can be difficult to define power as an institution. This view reflects Bourdieu’s term, ‘domination’: “Domination is not the direct and simple action exercised by a set of agents (“the dominant class”) invested with powers of coercion. Rather it is the indirect effect of a complex set of actions engendered within the network of intersecting constraints which each of the dominants, thus dominated by the structure of the field though which domination is exerted, endures on behalf of all the others” (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 34). Sennett (1992, p. 36) asserts the indirect power of authority. According to him, authority, beyond domination and oppression, establishes values and meanings by formulating conscience.

¹⁵ Infidel

As a result of power that is based on such an indirect mutuality principle, the freedom represented by Vasilis is dependent on Mr. Osman. Accordingly, the power relations in the city are based not only on mutuality and dependence. There are only two options for minorities: leave the city or be in power. These two options depend on two external parameters: to be a citizen or a Muslim. Vasilis is a citizen of the Turkish Republic, so he is able to stay in Istanbul; however, Fanis is neither a citizen nor a Muslim. In the end, he and his family are deported to Athens, while a similar tragedy is experienced on the other side of the Aegean Sea.

3. From Ummah to Nation-Building

Fanis' father has to be Muslim to stay in Istanbul. This condition, laid down by the State, may imply that the superordinate identity of the State is religion (Islam) rather than nationality (Turkishness). There is no doubt that the Ottoman Empire was based, first of all, on Islam and Islamic ummah¹⁶. This may prove that the neo-nationalist and secular *Kemalist* ideology of the new Republic does not ignore the active role of religion in the nation-building process. Religion, in other words, turns into a propaganda weapon that is controlled and functionalised by the State. On the other hand, the State makes religion subordinate whenever it wishes. Briefly, the nation-building process changes the cultural notion of Istanbul and causes many urban problems that become a political issue (Castells, 1978, p. 93). As a result of the Turkification tendencies, the demographic variety of Istanbul began to be standardised and uniform, particularly after the deportation.

Since Istanbul has an essential religious tradition, Turks used religious as well as nationalist slogans about Greek minorities in the process of deportation. For instance, the word '*gavur*' references not only nationality but also religion. Accordingly, the other is both non-Turk and non-Muslim. For this reason, *watan*¹⁷ is a symbol that is metaphorised through flag and azan. For this reason, *watan* is a symbol that is metaphorised through flag and azan. The simple and explicit images have critical importance for authority, because "the work of authority has a goal: to convert power into images of strength" (Sennett, 1980, p. 165). So, political-based division emerges in the form of the division of space and place. Each ethnic group creates a belonging space in which to breathe. Then, conflict turns into spatial conflict, because, as Castells (1997a, p. 7) indicates, *dominant institutions* directly or indirectly shape identities through living spaces. Each form of spatial emphasis implicitly reproduces its opposite spatiality: the Turkish flag stimulates the Greek flag, while mosques stimulate churches as places of belonging. That is why, when Fanis visits a church, he nourishes his existential rather than spiritual requirements. Similarly, a mosque in Greece is a place for catharsis instead of spiritual relaxation.

Nation-building is "both the formation and establishment of the new state itself as a political entity and the processes of creating viable degrees of unity, adaptation, achievement, and a sense of national identity among people" (Bell and Freeman 1974, p. 11). However, in modern Istanbul, as far as the film shows, each unification attempt that the national identity imposes creates a duality and conflict. Similarly, each adaptation causes alienation; also, each polarisation gives rise to marginalisation.

Flag and azan or church bell unify and divide at the same time. Then, why are they used by the State? In Istanbul, flag and azan, just like a magnet, gather people around a common goal and collective consciousness. In other words, power in the city does not appear on a battlefield but in secondary or indirect relationships and symbols, like azan and flag. Hence, whenever a political crisis arises, people shout the slogan "*Ezan dinmez, bayrak inmez, vatan bolunmez*", which means "the azan does not get silenced, the flag does not come down, and the fatherland does not get divided", instead of saying 'we do not want Greeks in our country'. Similarly, people in uniform, even if they do not use their guns, imply symbolically a discriminating message that separates relatives. Fanis says: "I am afraid of people in uniform: police, military, transport police, fire-fighters ... but most of all, immigration officials. The day they left Constantinople, those people in uniform 'wounded' all their meagre possessions with chalk marks ... As the Turks sent us away as 'Greeks' while the Greeks received us as 'Turks'."

¹⁶ The Ummah refers to a community that is fictionalised around Islamic norms and values.

¹⁷ Fatherland

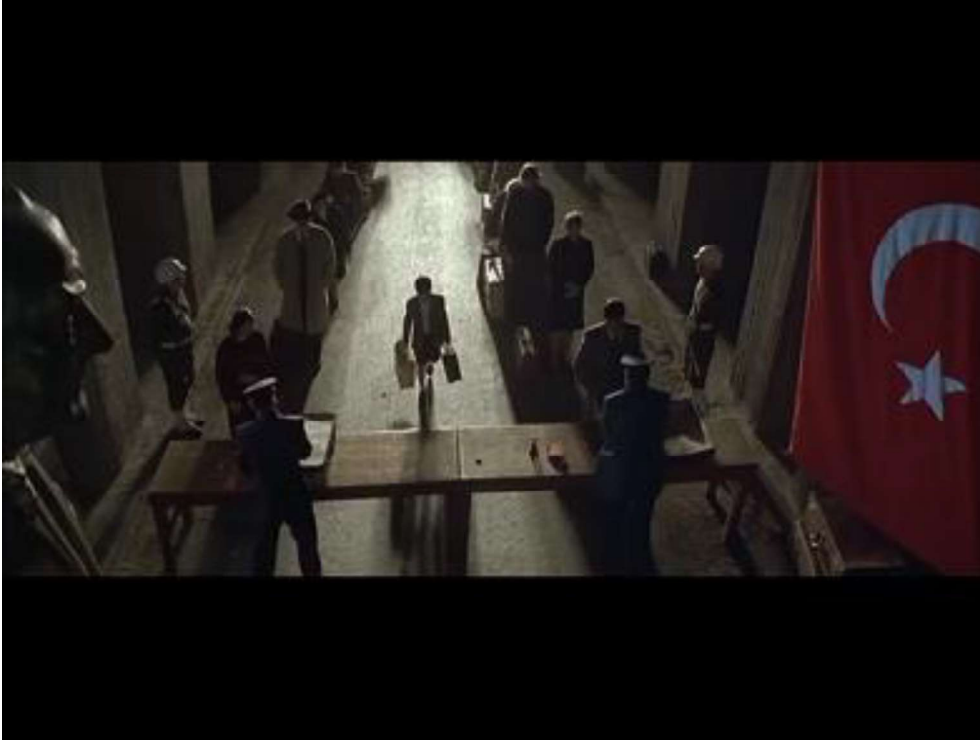


Figure 5. Fanis leaving from Constantinople in the shade of official symbols such as Atatürk bust, Turkish flag, soldiers and customs officers.

People in uniform who are seen in films represent the controlling power of the State and show how Istanbul is *Ankaralised*¹⁸ in due course. This may imply that the State does not trust its own public; in the widest sense, “modern society does not believe it can be secure without consciously and deliberately taking measures to safeguard its security. These measures mean, first and foremost, the guiding and monitoring of human conduct: they mean social control” (Bauman, 1988, p. 10). In addition to Bauman’s words, uniforms remind people of the entity of the State. This verifies Simmel’s thought; because, according to him (1971, p. 91), people are discriminating beings (*unterschiedswesen*). For this reason, it is necessary to deal with people in uniform as a social indicator that embodies the discriminatory and inhibiting nature of human beings in urban life.

The most visible and common symbols of the city imply the notion that “some wills are freer than others” (Bauman, 1988, p. 6). Representative messages, like uniform, azan, flag and Atatürk bust, formulise social distance among inhabitants in Istanbul. For instance, mosques or churches, on the one hand, invite people to gather and pray together; on the other hand, they reveal those people who do not pray. Similarly, ceremonies which are organised on national holidays gather people around common values; at the same time, they distinctively highlight other people who are outside the circle. Whenever symbols are implemented, “life holds the boundary fast, stands on this side of it – and in the same act stands on the other side of it; the boundary is viewed simultaneously from within and from without” (Simmel, 1971, pp. 355-356).

Although boundaries are drawn by the State, they are protected and maintained through public support. Similarly, in the deportation event, the State provoked the public against the Greek minorities in order to legitimate and strengthen itself under the cover of social, economical, political and cultural cleansing. As a result of the propaganda, patriotism produced hostility and negative motivation toward the minorities. According to Simmel (1971, p. 72), the dilemma or dialectic contrast in the city is inherent and natural. Because, more obviously, “just as the universe needs ‘love and hate’, that is, attractive and repulsive forces, in order to have any form at all, so society, too, in order to attain a determinate shape, needs some quantitative ratio of harmony and disharmony, of association and competition, of favourable and unfavourable tendencies” (Simmel, 1971, p. 72). The boundaries of the world, that consist mainly of social, economic and political contrasts, turn into boundaries of the individual in the course of time.

¹⁸ Constantinople was the capital of Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman empires; whereas, Ankara is the capital of Republic of Turkey. Ankara represents official ideology that is based on nation-state.

Simmel is right: “By virtue of the fact that we have boundaries everywhere and always, so accordingly we are boundaries” (1971, p. 353).

The city, as the place of density that “reinforces internal differentiation” (Castells, 1997b, p. 78), refers to the spatiality that draws invisible boundaries. According to Simmel, the argument ‘*we are boundaries*’ indicates two different but dialectic paradigms (attractive and repulsive forces), whereas Bauman (1988, p. 6) thinks that boundaries are drawn by two parallel forces which come from outside and inside. “Human actions are regularized by supra-individual forces which come overtly from outside (as constraints), or ostensibly from inside (as life-project or conscience)” (ibid.). The dialectic and parallel forces, as a whole, make Fanis fair and conscious of the social life he lives. But, at the same time, they cause emotional trauma. He faces this trauma in train stations that appear as betweenness. Fanis explains this betweenness in these words: “the Turks sent us away as ‘Greeks’ while the Greeks received us as ‘Turks’”. Paradoxically, they (and the Turks in Greece) are deported as aliens; after that, they are welcomed as foreigners, and finally they remain as strangers.

The train stations in the film are not non-places; rather they are absolute places that are able to make other places meaningless at the hands of power. The station images, indeed, are highly pessimistic and melancholic places in comparison with what orientalist travellers wrote about and what many directors have captured. Stations are described as places of hope and expectation under same circumstances. In any case, a train station is a place where pursuit begins and ends. “It poses itself as a new limit” (Colomina, 2000, p. 47). For this reason, the station is one of the most crucial spatial points in the eyes of power that record statistical data about the population. Accordingly, the immigration office at the station has significant importance in the nation-building process. Deportation is a sort of mass cleansing by the State. It is, more obviously, “the compulsory removal of ‘aliens’ from the physical, juridical, and social space of the state” (Genova and Peutz, 2000). Power that does not like to be seen gives itself away in the process of deportation. Deportation is “a legalized form of expulsion” (Walters, 2010, p. 82), this is affirmed by the words: “if the world were a happy and just place, those who enjoy respect would give back in equal measure the regard which has been accorded them” (Sennett, 1998, p. 17).



Figure 6. In *Hamam*, Fanis and Mustafa discussing on Saime, Istanbul and the deportation events.

Mustafa: It is shame that you left.

Fanis: We did not leave ... We were deported.

This short dialogue between Fanis and Mustafa shows how deportation turns into an unforgettable trauma for Fanis. It ironically implies the reality of who the owner of the city is. Moreover, it underlines minorities by separating them from the majority in terms of race, religion, language and culture. In other words, deportation is both the reason and the result of racialisation and ethnicisation in social relations

(Castles and Davidson, 2000, p. 63). Deportation therefore is interested in politics rather than culture, in standardisation rather than multiplicity, in institutions rather than community, in citizenship rather than belonging, and in domination rather than consensus.

3.1. Tasting Istanbul without Constantinople

Fanis and his family are obliged to live Istanbul without Constantinople after they are deported from the city. They understand that “the right to heap immoderate lyrical praise on Istanbul’s beauties belongs only to those who no longer live there” (Pamuk, 2005, p. 50). Although they are not bodily in Istanbul, they never drift away from the city where they were born and grew up. As Istanbul is a city that is shaped by the virtue of various successive civilisations that contrast and conflict with each other, the demographic features of the city have ineradicably changed throughout its urban history. Paradoxically, the desirability and attraction of Istanbul stem from its spiritual or religious qualifications rather than from its geopolitics. Istanbul is deemed a quasi-sacramental city of Christians and Muslims. “As a major religious center for both the Greek Orthodox Church and the Islamic faith, Istanbul is the custodian of one of the world’s most important cultural heritages and home to some of the world’s most opulent displays of art and wealth, most of which were built in the name of faith” (Sacred-Destinations, 2012). The sanctity that is attributed to the city has inevitably and continuously forced Istanbul to change its national and religious character. Even concepts which are used by different believers to define the city show alterations, e.g. the year 1453 implies *the conquest* and peak of the Ottoman Empire in the eyes of Muslim society, while it means the ‘fall’ of Constantinople and the end of the Byzantine Empire.

Nevertheless, demographically, population exchanges affect Istanbul so deeply that, probably, in none of the historical periods, has this city experienced such great change in such a short time. The urban culture, architecture, trade and politics of Istanbul reach the point of no return in consequence of the population exchange. As Pamuk (2005, p. 157) states, “both the Turkish and the Greek states have been guilty of treating their respective minorities as hostages to geopolitics, and that is why more Greeks have left Istanbul over the past fifty years than in the fifty years following 1453”. These population exchanges, completed in approximately fifty years, are seen by some conservative nationalist groups as part of the ongoing ‘conquest’ of Istanbul. This may show that the ‘year 1453’ and the ‘population exchange issue’ are a contemporary debate, particularly between the Turkish and Greek communities.

One day in Athens, Fanis’ father remembers Vasilis and Istanbul. He says, crying, “Vasilis would never leave Constantinople. None of us would, for anything in the world. Constantinople is called ‘the City’ because it is the most beautiful city in the world.” Remembering Istanbul without Istanbul causes pain to Fanis and those who cannot forget it. The sense of nostalgia that the pain stimulates creates a desire to turn back the clock to Istanbul. Indeed, this assumption, based on what Fanis has lived, could be valid for all vacated cities. As Simmel (1971, p. 68) states, “the meaning that an object has for an individual always rests solely in its desirability”. Fanis, just like other minorities deported from their home(land), desires the past rather than the future, because he knows that “our relation to the future parallels our relation to the past” (Simmel, 1971, p. 360). On the other hand, his relation to the past is full of vague and shadowy dreams. This ambiguity could be peculiar to Istanbul. In the documentary film *Hasretim Istanbul* (İşbilen, 2010), sponsored by the European Capital of Culture Project, a Greek refugee confesses the vague features of Istanbul: “If I had realised what I missed in Istanbul, I would have looked for it in another city too. I am missing Istanbul because I do not know why I am missing it”.

4. Conclusion: Return Home or Taste Tastelessness

Patch Adams, a film directed by Tom Shadyac in 1998, starts with these words: “All of life is a coming home. Salesmen, secretaries, coal miners, beekeepers, sword swallowers, all of us. All the restless hearts of the world all trying to find a way home.” Undoubtedly, home is not only a literal place that is lived in, it is also a spiritual or virtual place that can be kept away from. According to Castles and Davidson (2000, pp. 130-132), home implies a sense of protection and security. However, home is not only a real place which can be defined with such concrete values. It is an imaginary world that is formed by sense memories (Morse, 1999, p. 63). Furthermore, “home is anyplace; it is temporary and it is moveable; it can be built, rebuilt, and carried in memory and by acts of imagination” (Naficy, 1999, p. 6). This fallacy derives from the conceptual confusion between house and home. In contrast with house, home is not surrounded by touchable walls. Fanis loses his house, but not his home in Istanbul. In other words, Istanbul can be tasted from Athens as well. The home figures in and on Istanbul, or the imagination that Istanbul stimulates is, however, associated with melancholy rather than happiness, hesitation rather than

confidence, distance rather than familiarity in Fanis' dreamworld.



Figure 7. Fanis talking about the analogy between astronomy and gastronomy.

According to Peters (1999, p. 31), “to be away from the homeland is always to be homeless”. However, the opposite of homeland may not be homelessness. There is either feeling at home or not feeling at home. Home may involve its own opposite within itself. Homeland and homelessness are issues that can be explained by means of emotions and senses, especially in the context of Istanbul. For instance, although Fanis was born in Istanbul, he does not feel himself to be in Istanbul, which is his homeland; on the contrary, he realises and feels Istanbul after he is deported to Athens. This may show that homeland is a possible homelessness. The meaning and form of home may be affected by external factors, such as politics and economy. “Millions of people around the world no longer feel ‘at home’ in their homelands” (Lipsitz, 1999, p. 193). Fanis and Vasilis prove that Istanbul is full of people who do not feel themselves at home(land). Moreover, the social, economic and political conditions of the city have possibilities that are able to make its own inhabitants rich or poor, outstanding or miserable, happy or melancholic in a short space of time. In other words, to be at the top of the hierarchy and to be out of the circle is only a matter of time in the city. The antithesis of Istanbul is again Istanbul.

Fanis, for this reason, inevitably returns to Istanbul after some years. This return is ostensibly because Vasilis falls ill, but indeed it is because it is time to face the past. Illness, as a vital factor, is merely a device that forms the basis for confrontation. As all uncompleted experience desires to be completed, deportation or “exile is inexorably tied to homeland and to the possibility of return” (Naficy, 1999, p. 3). Fanis returns to Istanbul, because he cannot complete anything in Athens after the deportation in 1964. Istanbul can therefore be defined as a city of incomplete desires that hope to be completed.

Stories that begin in Istanbul end in Istanbul. Fanis returns, because the essential roots of his existence are in this city. The Roman poet Vergil said “Each tree has its own homeland” (Dalby, 2000, p. 11). In Istanbul, Fanis attempts to excavate his memory, because the incomplete components of his existence have been lost in the city for years. Not only Fanis but also many people are in search of what they have lost in the city. Almost all domestic Turkish fiction films are based on reality. In addition to reality, this searching ends mostly in disappointment, in both films and in real life.

Fanis, who was deported by a political power years before, is not exposed to violence and oppression in this instance, because factors that activate nationalist power have evaporated into legal amendments. Furthermore, the nation-state has already achieved its one-dimensional cultural dream in Istanbul. Accordingly, the Rum population prominently decreased, and minorities were assimilated in Istanbul.

Vasilis, who never leaves the city, dies. Along with death, as Foucault (2003, p. 248) claims, power

stops monitoring and oppressing the body. “Death becomes, insofar as it is the end of life, the term, the limit, or the end of power too. Death is outside the power relationship. Death is beyond the reach of power, and power has a grip on it only in general, overall, or statistical terms” Foucault, 2003, p. 248). Interestingly, Fanis meets Saime at Vasilis’ funeral ceremony. Thus love, just like death, emerges as the dialectic of power.



Figure 8. Saime (Istanbul) between Fanis (Constantinople) and Mustafa (Ankara)

This is an impossible love, because Saime married Mustafa. In the last scene of the film, Saime prefers Mustafa and goes to Ankara with him by train. Some places may sometimes refer to a time frame. For instance, the train station, although it is a place, indicates time separation. Fanis deepens the relationship between train station and separation. He says: “Don’t look back, Saime. At the platform we looked back, the image remains as a promise”. Istanbul is thus described as a city of separation through the platform metaphor.

Saime is symbolically Istanbul itself. This may be seen as the incarnation of the city within the body of a beautiful woman. Although Istanbul is Saime, it belongs to Ankara, which is represented by Mustafa. Mustafa, just like Ankara, is uniforms, rules, formality, bureaucracy, nationalism and official ideology. As Saime has a daughter, she must prefer Ankara. Her daughter implicitly subjects Saime to the undesired result that takes her away from Istanbul, which is a city of passion and love. This can be seen as the victory of Mustafa over Fanis as well as the victory of Ankara, which is the new capital city of the new *nation-state*, over Istanbul that has a deep-rooted *city-state* tradition.

References

- Akar, Rıdvan (1998). Bir Resmi Metinden Planlı Türkleştirme Dönemi. *Birikim*, 110, 68-75.
- Aktar, Ayhan (2002). *Varlık Vergisi ve Türkleştirme Politikaları*. İstanbul: İletişim.
- Baltsiotis, Lambros (2005). Yunanistan ve Türkiye’de Muhacirlik ve Nüfus Mübadeleleri. In M. Pekin (Ed.) *Yeniden Kurulan Yaşamlar 1923 Türk-Yunan Zorunlu Nüfus Mübadelesi*. İstanbul: Bilgi University Press.
- Bauman, Zygmunt (1988). *Freedom*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
- Bauman, Zygmunt (1999). *In Search of Politics*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Bell, Wendell and Freeman, Walter (1974). *Ethnicity and National Building*. Beverly Hills & London: Sage.
- Bourdieu, Pierre (1998). *Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Bourdieu, Pierre (2002). *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*. London: Routledge.
- Castells, Manuel (1978). *City, Class and Power*. London & Basingstoke: Macmillan Press.
- Castells, Manuel (1997a). *The Power of Identity (Volume II)*. Malden & Oxford: Blackwell.
- Castells, Manuel (1997b). *The Urban Question: A Marxist Approach*. London: Edward Arnold (Publishers) Ltd.
- Castles, Stephen and Davidson, Alastair (2000). *Citizenship and Migration: Globalisation and the Politics of Belonging*. London: Macmillan Press.
- Colomina, Beatriz (2000). *Privacy and Publicity: Modern Architecture as Mass Media*. Massachusetts: MIT Press.
- Dalby, Andrew (2000). *Dangerous Tastes: The Story of Spices*. California: University of California Press.
- Erdal, İbrahim (2009). Identity and Homeland Sense of Anatolian and Rumelian Refugees. *Milli Folklor Dergisi*, 20 (81): 78-82.
- Foucault, Michel (2003). *Society must be Defended: Lectures at the College de France 1975-1976*. New York: Picador.
- Genova, Nicholas and Peutz, Nathalie (2000). *The Deportation Regime: Sovereignty, Space, and the Freedom of Movement*. Durham & London: Duke University Press.
- Güven, Dilek (2005, September 6). 6-7 Eylül Olayları. *Radikal*. Available at <http://www.radikal.com.tr/haber.php?haberno=163380>.
- Hacir, Gürkan. (2009, June 1). İstanbul’da Rum, Atina’da Türk olmak. *Akşam*. Available at http://aksam.medyator.com/2009/05/31/yazar/12976/gurkan_hacir/istanbul_da_rum_atina_da_turk_olmak.html.
- İnsel, Ahmet (2001). *Kemalizm*. İstanbul: İletişim.
- Lipsitz, George (1999). Home is where the hatred is: Work, Music, and the Transnational Economy. In H. Naficy (Ed.) *Home, Exile, Homeland*, New York & London: Routledge.
- Mansel, Philip (2006). *Constantinople: City of the World’s Desire: 1453-1924*, London: John Murray Publishers.
- Morse, Margaret (1999). Home: Smell, Taste, Posture, Gleam. In H. Naficy (Ed.) *Home, Exile, Homeland*, New York & London: Routledge.
- Naficy, Hamid (1999). Framing Exile. In H. Naficy (Ed.) *Home, Exile, Homeland*. New York & London: Routledge.
- Özyalçın, Adnan and Sezer, Sennur (2005). *Bir Zamanların İstanbulu*. İstanbul: İnkılap.
- Pamuk, Orhan (2005). *İstanbul: Memories and the City* London: Faber and Faber.
- Pérouse, Jean-François (2011). *İstanbulla Yüzleşme Denemeleri: Çeperler, Hareketlilik ve Kentsel Bellek*. İstanbul: İletişim.
- Peters, John (1999). Exile, Nomadism, and Diaspora: The Stakes of Mobility in the Western Canon. In H. Naficy (Ed.) *Home, Exile, Homeland*, New York & London: Routledge.
- Sacred Destinations (2012, May 26). İstanbul. *Sacred Destinations* [Online]. Available at <http://www.sacred-destinations.com/turkey/istanbul>.
- Sennett, Richard (1980). *Authority*. New York: Alfred A Knopf.
- Sennett, Richard (1992). *The Conscience of the Eye: The Design and Social Life of Cities*. New York & London: W. W. Norton & Company Inc.
- Sennett, Richard (1998). *The Corrosion of Character*. New York & London: W. W. Norton & Company
- Simmel, Georg (1971). *On Individuality and Social Forms*. Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Simmel, Georg (1997). *Simmel on Culture: Selected Writings*. D. P. Frisby and M. Featherstone (Eds.), London, Thousand Oaks & New Delhi: Sage Publication.
- Walters, William. (2010). Deportation, Expulsion, and the International Police of Aliens. In N. Genova and N. Peutz (Eds.) *The Deportation Regime: Sovereignty, Space, and the Freedom of Movement*. Durham & London: Duke University Press.
- Žižek, Slavoj (2010). *Living in the End Times*. London & New York: Verso.