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The Politics of Istanbul's Ottoman Heritage in the Era of Globalism

Refractions through the Prism of a Theme Park

The current resurgence of interest in Istanbul's Ottoman past, and its transformation into a key site of political struggles, cannot be divorced from transnational trends. In the world of late capitalism that we experience today, large metropolises figure prominently as core settings for the display and promotion of 'cultural heritage' as a marketable commodity. The symbolic and economic comodification of 'history' for display and consumption can be theoretically located in what Sharon Zukin has called 'the new symbolic economy' of cities,[1] or what Allen Scott has referred to as the 'culture generating capabilities of cities' in transnational markets.[1]

Invoking continuities with a legendary past, however ambiguous, enhances a city's attractiveness in the new global game and gives it cultural cachet in the competition for foreign investments and tourist trade. In many parts of the world, ranging from Southeast Asia to Europe, transformations of metropolitan space and urban culture are currently driven by the deliberate creation of cultural-historical packages and marketable pastiches that offer 'entertainment value'. There is now an extensive literature on how this process both reinforces prevailing inclusions and exclusions in the social fabric of cities, and also produces new ones.

The segmentation of tourist enclaves in urban space is perhaps the most immediately recognisable and widespread imprint of mass tourism on a global scale. Susan Fainstein and Dennis Judd[3] use the term 'tourist spaces' to encompass both the historic/cultural attractions designed for

tourist consumption and also the related constellation of services (hotels, convention facilities, restaurants, etc) that accompany them. They argue that the functioning of such tourist spaces is usually designed to cosset travellers from their local contexts, to heighten the sense of theatrical reality they anticipate. But where income inequalities and cultural distance between affluent tourists and local inhabitants are very sharp, they also serve as 'fortified enclaves', designed to 'keep undesirable natives out'.[4] This is obviously the case in the large and densely settled cities of the global South. In many instances, the promise of tourism as the engine of miracle growth has spurred deliberate state intervention - literally, through bulldozers - to create secure and protected environments for tourist consumption.[5]

In the context of the Middle East, the recent histories of Cairo and Istanbul illustrate how the imprint of tourism is mediated through direct state intervention in the region. In the case of Cairo, Farha Ghannam has described how the ambitions of the Sadat regime, with its political discourse of *Infitah* (economic opening to the outside) were translated into visions of a 'modern' Cairo fit to be gazed upon by foreign visitors and upper-class Egyptians.[6] She describes how some of the oldest neighbourhoods of Cairo were demolished to make room for highways and 'tourist spaces' segregated from urban poverty and decay, a very similar process to that undergone by Istanbul in the political conjuncture of the 1980s, when the city was remade as the 'showcase' of Turkey's economic opening to global markets.

Thus, in both Cairo and Istanbul, 'history' has now been transformed into a prized collection of architectural fragments to be preserved in bits and pieces and protected from the sights, sounds and smells of local populations. City authorities constantly battle with the creeping tendency of the city's inhabitants to take over 'tourist sites'. The cleanliness and order of 'tourist spaces' - the glittering convention centres, hotels, restaurants, cafes, galleries - stand in stark contrast to the dirty streets, perpetually snarled traffic and crowded daily existence of most urban inhabitants. The cases of Cairo and Istanbul, as the two largest and most complex metropolises of the region, also highlight the difficulty of distinguishing the imprint of the transnational tourism industry from the series of interlocking changes we have come to describe as 'globalisation'.

Diane Singerman and Paul Amar's recent volume of collected essays on Cairo,[7] for instance, highlights how protected spaces of affluence ranging from shopping malls to gated communities are rapidly proliferating across the cityscape. The contrasts between the cosmopolitan lifestyles of the increasingly 'globalised' bourgeoisie and the 'localised' inhabitants of Cairo

and Istanbul are no less stark than the differences between 'foreign' tourists and 'native' populations. It is also worth noting that in both Cairo and Istanbul, downtown districts associated with 'foreigners' at the turn of the twentieth century are currently undergoing gentrification.[8]

Many of the contradictions and cleavages engendered by the conversion of Istanbul's '2,000 years of history' into commercial revenues remain familiar in their generalities. A series of urban restoration projects, supported by coalitions of government- and corporate-run interests, have obliterated from memory some of the most densely populated areas of the city, to selectively recreate them as historical sites for aesthetic preservation. No published statistics inform us how many poor households and small establishments were displaced during these massive clearance operations. Numerous old neighbourhoods have simply vanished, their streets and lanes erased from the map. Others have become progressively gentrified and taken over by restaurants, boutique hotels or souvenir shops selling Oriental kitsch, marginalising their old inhabitants and driving out the urban poor from the urban core.

All of this - amidst a building boom and real estate speculation on an unprecedented scale - has ushered in a dizzying proliferation of developer-led malls and multiplex clusters, five-star hotels, luxury apartment colonies and gated communities across the landscape of the city. Thus, within a decade, a new order of polarities and segregation has been mapped onto the physical and social topography of Istanbul. Throughout, spectacles and events celebrating Istanbul's unique historical heritage and cultural attractions have invaded the public spaces of the city, bringing along with them a profusion of commercialised images that defy segregation in physical and social space. So for the majority of the city's ten million inhabitants, nearly half of whom are recent immigrants, the glorification of Istanbul's ancient history along with its aesthetic preservation and display in segregated 'tourist spaces' has become the 'new' exclusionary rhetoric of the moment. It has served to highlight the diverse cultural pasts and multiplicity of ethno-religious heritages in the living present of Istanbul. In short, the mass marketing of Istanbul's history has proceeded in tandem with growing visibility and *politicisation* of cultural differences among the city's inhabitants.

The historical specificity of Istanbul's heritage struggles resides elsewhere, in how the city's multilayered past(s) have become the political site of unfolding conflicts in the *national* arena. Most immediately, the appropriation of the city's imperial past inevitably breached national historiography, to underscore its ruptures and silences. Many of the ancient

monuments and heritage sites that symbolise the unique attractions of Istanbul in transnational markets refer back to layers of contested memories, dislocations and serial destructions that have been a part of nation-making. The designation of particular sites in the material fabric of the city (and not others) as 'historical treasures' has been accompanied by intense political debate, calling forth competing interpretations of different epochs in the city's history. More broadly, the mobilisation of Istanbul's imperial legacy to articulate future aspirations for a 'global' future have challenged modernist imagination of the Republican past.

In the cosmology of Turkish nationalism, Istanbul's name had been debased as emblematic of Ottoman decadence, pollution, miscegenation, against which the purity of a new national culture - located in Ankara - could be imagined. The polarity between these two cities, both as a set of images and the power relations implied in them, has been one of the central axes of modern Turkish history. Their names have been continuously valorised in modern Turkish literature, music and cinema as well as architecture as a way of articulating such binary oppositions as East and West, progress and backwardness, modernity and Islam. Hence Istanbul's self-promotion as a City of Culture in transnational markets has undermined the very categories upon which the cosmology of Turkish nationalism and modernity has been based. It has opened the multiple layers of 'Ottoman past' to opposing political claims and projects, not only for the city, but also for the *nation.*

Pitched at a more abstract level, the complexity of Istanbul's heritage struggles must be situated in the theoretical terrain, which Andreas Huyssen has famously described as 'a world-wide turn to history as the site of memory struggles'.[9] In seeking answers to the current 'obsession with memory and the past' in Europe and the US, Huyssen traces the complexity of global processes that have ruptured and transformed older forms of historical consciousness. But he argues that 'the *political* site of memory practices is still the national, not post-national or global'.[10] The backdrop to Huyssen's work is, of course, the significance of Berlin in the political and cultural terrain of European history and German national identity. The layers of contested memories associated with Istanbul's name evoke parallels with such 'world-cities' as Shanghai" or St Petersburg,'[1] where historical trajectories have been dramatically reshaped by the dissolution of empires - classical or colonial - and the consolidation of modern nation-states in the twentieth century.

Huyssen's general point of argument is relevant, in the sense that growing uncertainties and ambivalences about Turkey's role in the global arena and its future in Europe have been accompanied by a paradigmatic shift towards

Ottoman history as the political site of reworkings of *national* memory. Istanbul, as the prominent symbol and bearer of Ottoman legacy, has become a major point of reference in the emergent power struggles.

To recapitulate, the intensity and complexity of Istanbul's heritage struggles can be located at the intersection of two analytically distinct processes, namely:

1. A new order of class polarisation that has sharpened the existing hiatus between the city's culturally dominant elite and its disenfranchised immigrant majorities;
2. A 'memory turn to Ottoman history as battleground of what 'national culture' might mean, and who owns it in the global era.

It goes without saying that these processes are part and parcel of the same world-historical conjuncture - blowing winds of neo-liberalism, explosive growth of commercial markets, declining cultural hegemony of the state, and so forth.

My aim in this article is not to rehearse these generalities, but to explore how competing visions of Istanbul's Ottoman past and political claims to its heterogeneous present are intertwined in ongoing 'heritage struggles'. The centrepiece of my discussion will be a brand new 'heritage park' in Istanbul, designed and executed by the city government as a flagship project in its millennial civic consciousness campaign called 'Our Istanbul'. To be able to contextualise the city government's millennial vision of 'bringing together Istanbul and the Istanbulites', however, I would like to introduce a brief caveat on competing political narratives of Istanbul's 'multicultural past'.

Competing Narratives of Istanbul's 'Multicultural' Heritage

The catchword 'multicultural' (*çok kültiirlü*) circulates in an endless variety of commodity forms across Istanbul's fragmented public spaces, along with such associated phrases as 'cradle of civilisations' (*uygarlıkların beşiği);* 'treasury of culture' *(kültür hazinesi);* 'cultural inheritance' *(kültür mirası);* 'cultural diversity' *(kültürel çeşitlilik);* 'city of culture' *(kültür kenti);* and 'world city' *(dunya kenti)*. Such phrases are obvious 'adaptations' from the global lexicon of city marketing that has swept across the world over the past two decades to become variously 'naturalised' in different languages. As they currently circulate in Istanbul's cultural markets - both high and low - they seem to make immediate common sense, and sound so familiar as to

be beyond questioning. They are often used interchangeably, to invoke the remembered past and lived present of Istanbul simultaneously, suggesting a seamless unity between them. They also convey a sense of belonging and connection with Istanbul, which is, as *we* all know, a world city'. In short, they mark the parameters of a new urban imaginary - devoid of ethno-racial conflicts, dilemmas of urban hierarchy or poverty - which connects *us* together as Istanbulites.

But the very familiarity of these catchwords also means they are picked up and strategically deployed by various political actors and power groups to narrate alternative political versions of the city's present/pasts. So their dizzying proliferation across various commodity, consumer and media markets is the product of a double dynamic, both politically informed and interactive. They are strategically mobilised, reframed and challenged by political actors (both dominant and subordinate) to articulate their own political visions and agendas. As such they constitute a 'popular idiom', or repertoire if you will, which allows for multiple, divergent interpretations of what 'multiculturalism' was/is all about - which is another way of saying that the term 'multiculturalism' acquires referential solidity in the context of competing political scripts or public narratives.

In Istanbul's cultural markets, there are currently two such competing narratives that ebb and flow in cross-reference to one another. These are public narratives in the sense that they inform and knit together an enormous range of ongoing 'cultural' events in the cityscape, to lend them coherence as part of alternative political scripts." They also 'suck the past into the orbit of the present' (to invoke Huyssen)[14] by furnishing ready-made scenarios for a series of performances, displays and exhibits as well as spatial practices and interventions.

The Multiculturalism of Istanbul's Nineteenth-Century Heritage

For Istanbul's corporate elite, affluent upper and upper middle classes as well as public intellectuals, it is the 'spirit' of Istanbul's *Belle Epoque* towards the end of the nineteenth century that captures something akin to its future promise in the global era. As it is currently framed and configured, turn-of-the-century Istanbul is not so much a historically specific conjuncture saturated with politically charged events, but a timeless moment bringing together a constellation of elements (a mixture of intellectual freedoms, political emancipation, economic vitality and cultural creativity) and tying them to the present through the idea of 'multiculturalism'. It also suggests that after decades of provincialism, decay and dreary nationalism mandated

by Ankara governments, Istanbul is now experiencing a rebirth of its identity as a world-class metropolis.

Of course, contemporary reinventions of *fin-de-siecle* Istanbul as a 'golden moment' are not necessarily counter-factual. As many historians have pointed out, the Ottoman capital was swept by unprecedented changes towards the latter half of the nineteenth century, as it became increasingly separated from the rest of the imperial realm by special fiscal and political privileges. The relentless efforts of Ottoman bureaucrats to modernise the city fabric through a series of ambitious physical and social engineering projects paved the way to a renaissance in 'blended' public architecture.[15] Rival European powers competed with one another in the grandeur of their embassy buildings, and the glittering lifestyle of the settler-bourgeoisie affiliated with them. The wealthy and educated Greek and Armenian bourgeoisie of the city began to actively carve out an urban public space of associations, confessional schools, clubs and publications. They were at the forefront of a municipal movement that introduced a new style of urban life - paved avenues, street cars, gas lighting, European-style hotels, department stores and cafes.[16]

These new spaces of urban anonymity, with their 'modern' forms of contact and interaction, allowed the upper crust of Ottoman elite to intermingle with the city's native and foreign bourgeoisie outside the nexus of commerce and trade. They also fostered a heightened sense of political engagement, and of imminent change towards an unknown future, which meant that Istanbul became the crossroads of diverse ideological currents ranging from advocates of constitutional Ottomanism or Pan-Islamism to Young Turks of all hues, along with Christian missionaries of every denomination and nationality dispensing education, alms and sermons.

'This was a time and place when cosmopolitanism could be born,' suggests Caglar Keyder,[17] one that offered 'the possibility of different material and cultural life-styles to co-exist' and held 'the promise of a liberal framework which could accommodate diverse political platforms'.[18]

But *fin-de-siecle* Istanbul also had a much more troubled and troubling visage marred by shameless racism, social schisms and religious conflicts. This is perhaps best illustrated by the following 'tourist accounts' from European guidebooks from the late nineteenth century, intended to prepare travellers for the unfamiliar topography of Istanbul as well as offering practical advice. Such guidebooks offer fragmentary glimpses of a city in motion, with a changing and fluid population of nearly a million souls:

> Constantinople is a city not of one nation but of many, and hardly more of one than of another ... There is no people who can be described as being *par excellence* the people of the city, with a common character or habits of language ... Among the 943.575 inhabitants there are representatives of nearly every nation of the globe.[19]

The plethora of human types described in these accounts - permeated by the racial stereotypes of the moment - conjure all the curiosities and dangers awaiting European travellers who would venture onto the busy streets of the city:

> Moslems are mostly poor people and lazy ... Greeks, Armenians and Bulgarians have little in common, for each cherishes its own form of faith, and they hate one another as they hate the Turks. Many of their members are wealthy, highly educated and admirable men ... There is a motley crowd of strangers from the rest of Europe. Eight or nine languages are constantly spoken in the streets ... These races have nothing to unite them; no relations, except those of trade, with one another; everybody lives in a perpetual vague dread of everybody else; there is no common civic feeling and no common patriotism.[20]

Interspersed with romantic descriptions of the city's natural beauties, these guides provide easily comprehensible maps of Istanbul's social schisms:

> Constantinople is made up of three cities. North of the Golden Horn lies the European city, with its two suburbs of Galata and Pera playing host to ambassadors, bankers, European merchants. It is the outpost of the West, its ideas, activities and culture. In the south, facing both as a go-between, Stamboul is slowly and sadly losing out to the continual penetration of European ideas and innovations ... The third city, Skoutari, on the Asian side, is the Turkish city *par excellence,* inhabited by old Muslims.[21]

It is not difficult to surmise that most European travellers saw the nineteenth-century changes in the Ottoman capital as little more than a thin 'veneer of the West', imposed upon spectacles of horror associated with the Orient, which they consumed so avidly. But the racial hatreds, ethnic divisions and religious tensions that seem so palpable in these accounts cannot be dismissed as a figment of the Orientalist imagination. They presage the

violence of events that were to seal the fate of Istanbul in the subsequent decades.

As Keyder summarises starkly: ' In 1913, one out of five persons in the geographical area that is now Turkey was Christian; by the end of 1923, the proportion had declined to one in forty.[22] During these ten devastating years, an estimated two-thirds of the Armenian population perished in massacres, or from deprivation and disease during forced marches, and those who escaped death left for other parts of the world. The majority of the Greek Orthodox population fled under the most adverse conditions, or became subject to forced population exchanges. Istanbul's population declined from an all-time high of an estimated 1.1 million just before the First World War to around 600,000 by 1922. Bereft of its native bourgeoisie, its foreign residents and its imperial household and bureaucracy, Istanbul 'died'.[23]

The Aesthetics and Spaces of 'Multiculturalism' in Contemporary Istanbul

In contemporary Istanbul, visions of the city's global future and the multiculturalism of its nineteenth-century history have become inextricably bound in public, popular and scholarly discourses. In the emergent power configurations of this new order, the celebration of Istanbul's unique 'historical heritage' and distinctive 'cultural legacy' has become an imaginative point of consensus among segments of the urban elite. The monumental objects of this history are the mosques and churches that 'naturally' grace the landscape of the city and comprise gratifying testimony to a harmonious multi-religious past. Infused with the spirit of globalism, Istanbul's 'multicultural' heritage becomes a general term to designate an imagined past of harmonious cultural coexistence, one that offers the potential of 'openness' to cultural flows from across the world without fear of contamination. It also creates a space, in Istanbul's contemporary corporate circles, to appropriate and display a distinctive 'high culture' that is different from its 'Western' counterparts. As Sakıp Sabancı, one of Turkey's most prominent corporate tycoons, explained in an impromptu press interview:

> Outside Turkey, when talking to my partners, I ask, 'How much is your capital? How many people do you employ?' The man talks about culture. I ask, 'How many subsidiaries?' They tell about their art collections. So it is not enough to have money in transnational markets, money is banal. Business life cannot be one-sided. It must be combined with culture, education and art.

> My Japanese partner invested what he earned [in] art, established
> museums. I saw them. I said I must also begin.[24]

The occasion that prompted these comments was the opening of an exhibit featuring Sabancı's collection of Ottoman headgear. In Istanbul's increasingly transnational corporate culture, sponsoring innumerable exhibits, concerts, performances by artists of 'world stature' is something more complex than promoting a corporate image. It is an implicit assertion of involvement and contribution to the (re)creation of a 'world-class' Istanbul - one that celebrates its Ottoman heritage of 'multiculturalism' as its distinctive mark of identity in transnational space.

In its more consumable and popular versions, as told in a multitude of photography books, novels and autobiographies, or performed by whirling dervishes and classical musicians, this is a narrative which condenses the entire chronological expanse of Ottoman history to highlight what is referred to as the 'multiculturalism of nineteenth-century Istanbul'. In the ethnographic present of Istanbul, multiple valences of the word 'multicultural' seem to encompass all that is 'blended' - from Sufi electronica (cutting-edge beats laced with Sufi Islamic mysticism) to trendy nightclubs where the young and beautiful rise spontaneously from their tables and perform a *horon* (a Black sea line dance).

Needless to say, the above rendering glosses over the complicated nuances of political standing and social distinction embedded in narratives of Ottoman multiculturalism, which circulate in contemporary Istanbul. What is of immediate import is the way this narrative transgresses the canons of official historiography without, however, threatening to expose its silences. The 'multiculturalism' of nineteenth-century Istanbul is no longer to be understood as cultural domination by the foreign, but a rich blending of cultures that lends credence to Utopian visions of 'globalism' for the city and for the nation. At the same time, of course, the traumas of massive population displacement, ethnic cleansing and forced deportations that separates the 'real' from the 'mythical' past are deleted from memory. Narratives of Istanbul's multiculturalism, as mobilised by different groups to underwrite claims to a 'global' present and future, remain tied to nationalism in its core.

In the Realm of Municipal Politics: From 'Conquest' to Narratives of Tolerance' in Islam

In 1994, when Istanbul's first metropolitan mayor with 'Islamic' credentials

came to power in the aftermath of an astounding electoral victory, a sense of radical change swept across nearly all strata of the city's population. Within the circles of the victorious Refah Party (RP), this was a prophetic event, referred to as the 'second conquest' of Istanbul, 500 years after victorious Ottoman armies entered Constantinople in the sixteenth century.[25] The Party had nominated a young and dynamic new candidate for the mayoralty of Istanbul, who pledged a 're-conquest of Istanbul, in the sense of bringing light to darkness', during the election campaign.[26] He was now catapulted into the national limelight as the new *fatih* (conqueror) of the city.

For the secular and leftist political forces, already in disarray, the local elections of 1994 spelled disaster. The RP had succeeded in capturing the majority vote in nearly all major urban centres in Turkey. The loss of Istanbul, however, where the left had been entrenched in the city administration for more than a decade, was especially significant. After years of corruption scandals and failed reforms, it had lost its grassroots support among the overwhelming majority of the urban poor and lower middle classes, and along with it its institutionalised power base in metropolitan government. It is not possible to over-exaggerate the political, economic and cultural resources at the disposal of Istanbul's metropolitan mayoralty. These resources have grown in tandem with the city's mounting significance as the growth pole of Turkey's neo-liberal economy, so that Istanbul has become increasingly autonomous from the central administration in Ankara. The mayor of Istanbul himself, with more popular votes behind him than any single politician, has been transformed into a key figure in national arena. In this sense, the 'conquest' or 'seizure' *(fetih etmek, ele geçirmek)* of Istanbul was both a symbolic quest and a very astute political strategy on the part of the RP.

For Istanbul's secular elite and middle classes, the militant and mobilising language of a 'second conquest' amounted to a nightmare scenario of an 'Islamic takeover'. Overwhelmed by a sense of fear and alarm, segments of the leftist intelligentsia, the bourgeois elite, a host of women's associations and the leading media institutions mobilised to fight against this 'Islamic takeover' in the cultural spaces of Istanbul.[27] Political analysts rushed in to analyse the political affinity between neo-liberal policies, growing poverty in Istanbul's peripheral neighbourhoods and the populist appeal of political Islam. The mainstream media turned its spotlights on the 'Islamic' practices of the new city administration, uncovering yet another example of Tslamisation' on a daily basis, from the headcoverings of female employees

to the banning of alcohol in public spaces owned and operated by the municipality.

In the intervening ten years, the governance of Istanbul by 'Islamic' mayors has become something taken for granted. In local elections, the suspense, if any, centres on individual candidates for mayor. The metaphor of 'conquest' has lost its relevance, in part because the Islamic movement itself has been transformed into a neo-liberal, religious-nationalist establishment. The 'religious' bourgeois are major investors in Istanbul's expanding world of malls, multiplexes, five-star hotels, gated neighbourhoods and luxury apartment colonies.

Also, in the dominant spaces of Istanbul's increasingly transnational corporate culture, 'Islam' has been opened to consumption, continuously performed and displayed as part of the city's 'multicultural' past and present. In the constant round of conferences, summits and visits by foreign dignitaries, events such as the recent 'Islamic Nations Culture Week' sponsored by the Metropolitan Municipality come and go without attracting attention. The 'alcohol-free' public facilities owned and operated by the city administration (parks, restaurants, wedding halls) have now been defined as offering relatively inexpensive consumer-cum-entertainment alternatives for lower-middle-class families.[18]

The issue is how Istanbul can be imagined and represented as a 'Muslim City' now that the religious spaces and landmarks that might be defined as intrinsically 'Islamic' are in continuous circulation as icons in the transnationalised spaces of the city. In the context of Istanbul's local politics, this has become an increasingly crucial issue, as the support base among the low-income populations of the city - fragmented along regional, ethnic and sectarian lines - is contingent on promoting 'unity and harmony in Islam'.

Of Tulips and Magnificent Gardens

The following local news item was tucked away in the back pages of mainstream dailies, not meriting more than passing attention, if at all:

> The Tulip Era in Istanbul
> The campaign for 'three million Tulips for Istanbul' was launched today by Mayor Topbaş at a ceremony on Taksim Square ... The mayor explained that tulips, which were part of daily life in Istanbul, will be returning home again. What Westerners described as 'Ottomans raise a flower, which cannot be eaten', he reminded, has today become a major source of revenue for

> Holland. He indicated that efforts were underway to encourage the cultivation of tulips and flowers in villages within the boundaries of the greater Istanbul municipality. 'Tulips are very important in our lives. We name our children after them. They exist in our textiles, our ceramics, our literature, our poems, our life. The tulip is returning home', he said ...
>
> Of the three million bulbs, one million will be distributed to citizens to plant in their own gardens and homes. The mayor noted that when they flower in April, anyone who sends a photograph will be eligible to enter the competition for 'the best tulips grown in Istanbul'. The most beautiful 100 tulips will be selected and awarded a prize of 300 YTL [approximately US$200] ... After the ceremony, packages containing five bulbs, a flowerpot and planting instructions were distributed to citizens.[29]

The 'city pages' of major national newspapers in Istanbul are devoted to problems' of immediate concern to readers, such as traffic congestion, water shortages or intimations of corruption at city hall, which journalists so diligently try to expose. Favourable reporting of activities sponsored by the mayor's office is rare as they are simply non-news, unless they border on the humorous - as was the case with the 'tulips returning home'.

For the metropolitan mayoralty of Istanbul, however, the tulip campaign was part of a persistent institutional effort to objectify, in the territorialised space of ongoing events and landmarks in Istanbul, an alternative 'golden moment' in history when the ethos of Ottoman-Islamic civilisation was at its peak. The explicit use of tulips as a trope for Ottoman-Islamic high culture dates back to the early eighteenth century, evoking a moment referred to as the Tulip Era in history textbooks. Framed as part of Turkish national history, and committed to memory by successive generations of children to this day, the Tulip Era epitomises the glories - and excesses - of Ottoman rule, as revealed by the following textbook paragraph:

> The Tulip Era: In Turkish history, the name given to the years between 1718 and 1730 corresponding to the second half of the reign of Sultan Ahmet III (1703-1730). Since tulips became the rage among the state elite who began to cultivate them in their gardens, and tulip designs and motifs became widespread in embroidery, carpets, tiles and miniatures as well as poetry and literature, this period was subsequently named the Tulip Era by poets and historians. The prominent figure of this period was Grand Vizier Damat Ibrahim Paşa (1718-1730), who encouraged

poetry, scholarship and the arts. Beginning with Istanbul, many artworks were built throughout the land, including parks, gardens, fountains, educational endowments, mosques, libraries and palaces. A tile factory was established in Istanbul to decorate the newly built or repaired buildings. Among the scholarly achievements of this period was the establishment of the first Ottoman printing house by Ibrahim Müteferrika. The Tulip Era came to an end in 1730, when the pleasure-loving excesses of the state elite led to the rebellion of Patrona Halil, resulting in the dethroning of Ahmet III.[30]

Of course, it is never entirely clear what adults remember from textbooks, but the defining images of the Tulip Era offer such exciting visions of magnificent gardens and sumptuous palaces, saturated with pleasures of poetry and art, that the drama of its ending in a violent rebellion is transformed into a compelling episode that resonates with abiding themes of injustice and retribution. It also constitutes a core event in historical narratives of Ottoman decline, signalling the moment when the ruling dynasty began to degenerate. So through a mixture of popular mythology and historical narrative, the story of the Tulip Era has mutated into 'common knowledge', as a timeless moment when the poor people of Istanbul went hungry while the Ottoman rulers were engaged in 'pleasure-seeking activities'. This makes its ending immanently plausible and memorable, so that most adults can summon (or embellish or invent) a series of 'historical facts', such as the 'beheading' of the Grand Vizier and his associates (in front of the palace gates), the installation of a 'figurehead' Sultan (amidst palace rivalries and intrigues) and so forth, in a way that prefigures and explains the entire progression of events during the 'long' nineteenth century of Ottoman decline.

Not surprisingly then, trying to reinvent the Tulip Era as an imaginative point of reference when the Muslim populations of Istanbul occupied a privileged status and Islam was the locus of authority merging both religious and political power raises the troublesome issue of its ending. It is only by resuscitating its mythical location in territorial spaces along the shores of the Golden Horn that it becomes possible to highlight its significance as a moment of equilibrium, when the tolerance of Islam reigned supreme.

A Miniaturised Heritage Park on the Shores of the Golden Horn

The idea of building a heritage park displaying miniaturised models of architectural monuments was born during the Metropolitan Municipality's millennium campaign. In search of a 'global vision' for Istanbul in the new

millennium, Mayor Gürtuna (1998-2004) commissioned a large survey to measure 'civic consciousness' among the city's population. The findings of the survey were widely publicised in the media, and gave birth to the campaign theme *'Kentim Istanbul'* (My City Istanbul). As highlighted in a campaign pamphlet:

> Only 33 per cent of the city's inhabitants define themselves as Istanbulites *[Istanbullu]*. We must analyse this well. A person lives in Istanbul for years and thinks of others as Istanbulites, but not himself.
>
> 17 per cent say they do not like anything about Istanbul ... They do not love the history, culture and natural beauties of Istanbul. We cannot remain indifferent.
>
> 47 per cent say that when they go back to their region *[memleket]*, they do not miss Istanbul. They do not miss it because no identity relationship has been established. Istanbul does not deserve this.
>
> Of those who live in Istanbul, 17 per cent have never seen the Princess Islands; 11 per cent have never been to the Bosphorus; 28 per cent have never been to any of the historical and tourist sites of the city. Do you know that we have citizens *[hemşehri]* who have never gone across to the other side *[yaka]* from where they live ?
>
> In our beloved Istanbul, which aspires to be a World City of Culture, 64 per cent of inhabitants say that they have never participated in any cultural, artistic or informative *[bilimsel]* activity. This is not something Istanbul can accept.
>
> When we examine the findings as a whole, we observe a serious problem with identity and sense of ownership *[sahiplenme]*. Inhabitants of such cities as New York, Paris or London define themselves as New Yorkers, Parisians and Londoners. Those who live in Istanbul must also become Istanbulites.

To describe the numerous activities that were part of the millennium campaign would be tedious. Most were modelled after similar 'civic consciousness' projects elsewhere: drawing competitions in schools; conferences and panel discussions where academics discussed the findings above; posters of popular stars saying 'I am an Istanbulite'; and so forth. The idea that the immigrant poor, once they *see* the historical monuments and natural beauties of Istanbul, will develop a sense of belonging and identity

with the city, is very much in tune with 'middle-class' sensibilities. It is difficult to say what it meant for the immigrant populations it addressed.

But the miniaturised heritage park, which was initiated as part of this campaign (but not completed until 2003) proved to be huge success, with some 900,000 visitors during its first year. It also suggested that the millennium slogan itself, *'Kentim Istanbul * was embraced and implemented at the grassroots level by the mayors of Istanbul's thirty-two district municipalities, as an empowering theme, in the sense of 'our Istanbul' that connotes a *claim.* In the opening ceremonies of the park, Mayor Gürtuna expressed the significance of Miniaturk as follows:

> As the Metropolitan Municipality, our vision of Istanbul as a star shining among World Cities is synonymous with the cultural synthesis that emerges from its becoming a centre of many civilisations. We are proud and happy to hand over Istanbul's Golden Horn to the coming generations in its identity as a gleaming *[tertemiz]* centre of culture, art and tourism. Miniaturk shoulders a very important mission in this new identity of the Golden Horn. The interest it has generated not only in our own country but also abroad resides in bringing together the richness of all the civilisations that have passed through Anatolia and nourished this land for millennia ... This is the heritage of humanity.

A delightful journey through the history of civilisations'; 'a fairyland where civilisations meet, not in war but in peace'; 'from Antiquity to Byzantium, from Seljuk to Ottoman and Republican Turkey, all the cultures that have left their imprints in this geography are brought together in a single park': these are the kinds of expressions that have been used to describe Miniaturk in a host of publications ranging from newspaper columns and journal articles to websites.[31] What such descriptive accounts attempt to capture, in words, is the experience of an entirely new order of historical time, within the enclosed boundaries of Miniaturk. In the tangible reality of the park itself, close to 100 'major works of architecture' from different historical epochs have been lifted out of time and place and reduced in scale with extraordinary detail, such that they can be experienced simultaneously. These miniaturised models not only 'represent' different civilisations, but also transform them into a new whole, by bringing them together in the enclosed spatial order of the park itself.

The miniaturised models of 'architectural monuments' displayed

together in Miniaturk 'bring together three millennia of history over an area of forty thousand square meters', as described in its brochure. These were selected from an original list of all possible works with the help of an advisory committee of historians, to ensure that they are representative of different historical epochs; but only those that could be miniaturised were included. The originals of more than half of these 'architectural works' are from Istanbul, and include buildings such as the Galata Tower, the Haghia Irini Church and the Blue Mosque (which are popularly recognised as having 'tourist value', as their photographs constantly circulate in postcards, on television screens, etc) as well as contemporary works *(eser)* such as the Istanbul Bridge and Atatiirk Airport (with miniature airplanes). Completing the list from Istanbul are models donated by sponsors such as the Profilo Shopping Mall and the Yapı Kredi Bank. These have all been reduced and miniaturised in exactly the same proportion to their original size, so that they are graspable in fascinating detail, and placed along the walking paths of the park. There is a card-operated machine next to each of these, which 'speaks' in several languages (Turkish, English, German) to provide brief, 'encyclopaedic' information.

The remaining 'architectural works' *(eserler)* are neatly classified as 'Anatolia' and 'Ottoman Heritage Abroad' in sections of the printed catalogue. Those from Anatolia (forty-five models) range from the 'Rock Houses of Mardin' and the 'Ruins of Mt Nemrud' to the 'Sumela Monastery', the 'Temple of Augustus', 'Atatürk's Mausoleum' and the 'Izmir Clock Tower'. In addition to representing different civilisations and historical epochs (as explained by the catalogue and the machines next to them) the geographical location of these 'works' has been taken into account so as to include all the regions of Anatolia.

There are only twelve models representing 'Ottoman Heritage Abroad'. Still, these are crucial in providing closure to the times and spaces invoked in the microcosmos of the park. Miniature models of the 'al-Aqsa Mosque' and 'Damascus Gate' (both in Jerusalem), the 'Mehmed Ali Paşa Mosque' (in Cairo), the 'Gül Ali Baba Tomb' (in Budapest) and the 'Mostar Bridge' (in Bosnia), continuing with Atatürk's House' (in Thessaloniki), mark the geographical boundaries of the Ottoman Empire at the peak of its glory, at the beginning of seventeenth century. They also frame the symbolic boundaries of an Ottoman/Islamic/Turkish civilisation whose achievements (and heritage) extend from Jerusalem to Bosnia.

The politics and semiotics of how 'three millennia of history' are represented and recast in the spatial and temporal order of Miniaturk merits

a much more detailed interpretative analysis than the cursory description I have offered above. What is flagrantly obvious is that the choice of individual historical monuments to claim particular epochs (as expressively articulated), as well as the conception of their imaginary totality (as articulated through their symbolic ordering in the park) have been orchestrated so as to convey a new 'golden age' for Istanbul. It is also evident that in the political choreography of the park, commonly recognised symbols of nationalist historiography have been selectively mobilised and realigned in ways that resonate with the religious symbolism of Islam.

A semiotic reading of how the symbolic communities of Islam and Turkish nationalism are simultaneously invoked and brought into dialogue with one another in the representational world of Miniaturk would exceed the boundaries of this paper. It would also fall short of conveying how the 'political design' embedded in the iconography of the park actually operates in the experiences of visitors to the park. So I will turn below to the 'lived' reality of the park itself, to talk about how it is (re)choreographed through the routines and practices of the visitors themselves.

On a Hot August Day in Miniaturk

In the sweltering August heat, trying to reach Miniaturk through the congested traffic of Istanbul takes close to two hours by public transportation. Upon approaching Miniaturk, one's first encounter is a huge parking lot, mostly empty apart from municipal buses lined on one side. The park is walled off from the street, with uniformed guards at the gate. Moving through the imposing gates, one steps onto a vast platform of gleaming granite, with a glass-walled ticket office on one side and a souvenir shop/bookstore on the other. The platform leads up to a panoramic view of the park below. Hanging over the parapet, shoving each other, are some thirty giggling young boys waiting for their teacher to buy tickets. I join them on the lookout, anticipating the childlike spell of an artificial city with miniaturised models of buildings.

Spread out before me, as though conjured by magic, is a magnificent carpet of lush green grass and manicured flowerbeds that seem to extend as far as the eye can see. So overwhelming is the contrast with the congested city streets and the harshness of grey concrete that one's gaze compulsively falls upon the profusion of colours, and the senses surrender to the chimera of a cool breeze drifting across the open air. Who could possibly imagine the existence such a wondrous park in the city centre of Istanbul, with greener-than-green lawns and rows upon rows of flowers in synchronised

colours ? The whole panorama seems to have leaped out of the pages of a glossy gardening magazine, especially in August when every scraggly patch of grass in Istanbul's public parks turns yellow and a layer of grey dust settles on all the shrubbery and tree leaves. My own first sensation is sheer pleasure, even as I recognise the hyperreality of such brilliant colours and register the existence of people milling about in the park, dwarfed by the distance.

The children lining up to follow their teacher into the park are students from a Qur'an Course *[Kuran Kursu)* in Esenler, one of Istanbul's peripheral municipalities. There are four such student groups in the park that day, all arriving by bus from Esenler. 'We try to keep them off the street, and teach them something without pressuring and boring them too much,' their teacher explains. Like all the other Quranic teachers, he is a young man dressed in a somewhat shabby suit and tie, looking very sombre amidst the excited crowd of boys in cheerful T-shirts and clean sports shoes. Trailing behind the group are two older municipal employees, who help keep track of the children and keep them in order.

At ground level, the park, which looked almost empty from afar, turns out to be full of boys who had arrived earlier. The teacher chooses one of the empty pathways and stops in front of the first 'miniaturised monument' he comes across. He inserts the magnetic card into the machine, as the children early crowd around him. But the metallic voice spouting from the machine cannot be heard, unless you stand right next to the teacher; so most of the children become restless and began to drift off from the group. By the time we reach the third 'monument' along the pathway, the teacher himself has become bored with the lengthy stream of information coming from the machines. He roams ahead, reading aloud the names of buildings from the placards, then gives up the effort altogether and simply gazes around. The rest of us scatter in different directions.

The children end up, inevitably, at the Istanbul Bridge (which one can walk across) and Atatiirk Airport. The municipal employees congregate in a corner to chat with one another. After some desultory conversation with the other Quranic teachers (who have all lost their charges and seemed to be equally bored with gazing at miniaturised buildings), I spot a lively group of women at the far end of the park and decide to join them.

The women's group - they are of all ages, including children - are on a daily tour, having arrived by bus from the outskirts of Istanbul early in the morning. They are affiliated with one of the numerous immigrant associations *(Biga, (Çanakkaleliler Derneği)* within the boundaries of the Kartal municipality, which sponsors such daily bus tours on a regular basis

throughout the summer months. The young man who accompanies them turns out to be a former tourist guide, currently employed by the Kartal municipality. He purposefully leads the group to particular monuments, to talk about them enthusiastically, holding the interest of everyone, including myself. So I spend the next two hours with them, enjoying the leisurely pace and free-floating chatter of the women. Their tour of the park ends in front of the largest model (Cappadocia) to allow for a last photo opportunity for the entire group.

At around i PM, all the municipal tours end, and the buses begin to leave one after another. As the sun becomes unbearably hot, the army of park employees (who had been picking invisible weeds from the flowerbeds all morning and warning visitors to stay off the grass) also disappear from the scene. Thus the park becomes deserted, apart from a small group of foreign tourists with backpacks and a couple of families with children. By this time I am too exhausted myself to continue further, and decide to come back on another day, in the late afternoon. On my subsequent visits to the park, I discover that the late-afternoon visitors are overwhelmingly composed of middle- or lower-middle-class families, arriving by car.

I have told the story of my first morning in Miniaturk to emphasise a particular paradox, a puzzle if you will, which kept repeating itself in each of my later visits. Of course, all of my visits led to different kinds of encounters and conversations. They also opened the door to a host of questions and avenues of inquiry that extended beyond the microcosm of the park itself, such as the world of Quranic schooling in Istanbul or the complexity of differences among district municipalities on the periphery of the city.

So on every visit, the 'blindness' of my own earlier observations became apparent; but they also brought me back to the same question, namely: if visitors (regardless of age, gender, education, etc.) become so rapidly bored with 'miniaturised monuments', then what is the 'wonder' of experiencing Miniaturk all about? This question came up because all my encounters and conversations in the park on different visits revealed that visitors had in one way or another learned about the park as 'absolutely worth seeing' (*'mutlaka görülmesi gerek')*. Afterwards, they raved about it as a 'wondrous' *('büyülü, 'sihirli')* and 'wonderful' *('şahane')* experience. But what was so 'wondrous' and 'wonderful' about this experience, if not the miniatures?

A Detour by Way of Nineteenth-Century Panoramas and Miniaturised Cities

In her discussion on the newly emergent world of public spaces and pleasure

grounds in European capitals of the nineteenth century, Susan Buck-Morss dwells on the popularity of 'panoramas' as favourite attractions.[32] In the arcades of mid-nineteenth century Paris for instance, they were among the pleasures on offer, vying with the spectacle of goods on display behind the glass windows of shops. People who paid to look at 'panoramas' (through viewing holes) were enthralled by sweeping views of cities, battling armies, historic events that seemed to unfold before their eyes, as lighting dissolved from one scene to another in rapid succession to create the illusion of seamless movement. Buck-Morss emphasises how this 'magical' experience of movement across time and space, at an accelerated pace, corresponded to that of moving along the passages of the arcades. Strolling along the galleries replicated a panoramic 'tour' of an entirely new world of urban spectacle - including crowds. So wondrous was the combination of commodity displays and pleasures they offered (from gastronomic perfections and intoxicating drinks to gambling halls, vaudevilles and sexual delights) that they seemed 'like fairy grottoes'.

The principle of panoramic representation - the creation of environments that transport people from one time or place to another - was replicated in many of the new public spaces of European capitals throughout the 1800s. Public parks, ornamental gardens, railroad stations, sports palaces, exhibition halls, wax museums were all designed to transform the material world into a new reality. There is little doubt, however, that it was the world expositions, each more spectacular than the rest, which surpassed the imagination in creating 'incomparably fairylike' environments." As dramas of visibility for imperial power, the fantastical quality of such environments demonstrated the ability to fashion 'objective' reality, appropriating and transforming the whole world into a dazzling exhibit.

For visitors, they offered the experience of being transported to fully realised 'unreal' worlds, so extraordinary (i.e. monumental, exotic, miniaturised) and at the same time realistic (made concrete through realistic representations and real objects), that how they were accomplished seemed incomprehensible. The 'amazing' quality of this experience is perhaps best conveyed in Tim Mitchell's seminal account of the members of an Egyptian delegation that travelled all the way to the Paris Exposition in 1889, and found themselves walking on a Cairo street so realistically recreated, with the facades of the buildings made to look dirty, and with donkeys from Cairo; even the Egyptian pastries on sale claimed to taste like the real thing.'[4]

What 'shocked' the Egyptians, as Mitchell describes it, was not only extraordinary scale and realism of the representation itself, but the mystery

of how it was made possible. It is this element of mystery, or inexplicability, that makes visual spectacles a distinctive mode of displaying power. On one hand there is the wonder of the simulated-yet-real experience itself. On the other, there is wonder at the incomprehensible (hidden, inexplicable) machinery of power that makes it happen.[35] In this sense, visual spectacles do more than represent or symbolise power, they inspire belief in its amazing (fantastical or magical) abilities to control and shape the world.

More often than not, visual spectacles are calculated to astound by their sheer extravagance or excessiveness. They are 'spectacular' in the everyday sense of the word, remarkable for their larger-than-life qualities. Worlds in miniature, by contrast, are designed to astound visitors by the exactitude with which they duplicate reality, both in detail and solidity. They are 'spectacular' in the sense of demonstrating the power to make *anything* happen - such as duplicating entire cities in mimetic accuracy and detail, so that they can be comfortably inhabited and pleasurably explored in representational space - as if by *magic.*

Indeed, some of the most elaborately detailed miniaturised worlds created for world expositions of the nineteenth century were models or panoramas of the imperial capital in which they were held. These were often mounted and illuminated in such a way that visitors felt as through they were standing in the middle of the city, which lay outside the grounds of the exhibition itself. In his classic account, Mitchell emphasises how the 'astonishing realism' of such models or panoramas served to mark 'the common centre shared by the exhibition, the city and the world'.[6] As visitors were drawn into and encircled by the exhibits, they found themselves positioned at the centre of the imperial capital (in object form), surrounded by national' pavilions whose majesty was commensurate with their colonies-on-display. The mythic imaginary of historical progress implied in this spatial configuration, conflating colonial domination with capitalism's achievements, needs little elaboration. It was a common theme of successive world expositions organised throughout the nineteenth century, along with the Utopian promise of technology to revolutionise the future of humankind. Cities hosting successive international exhibitions were expected to celebrate technology's unlimited possibilities, each by staging more spectacular exhibits than ever attempted before, to affirm its continuous advancement.

Whatever the spectacles on offer in previous expositions, the 1888 Paris Exposition eclipsed them all with the Eiffel Tower, a triumph of engineering and a spectacular city panorama wrapped in one. By all accounts, the tower was intended to demonstrate the unlimited possibilities of iron by making

its strength resemble the 'lightness of lace'. Its vertical aspirations were abhorred and deplored by critics of its time, who described it as a 'monstrous erection' and a 'barbarous mass' at the very heart of the city, 'humiliating' and 'diminishing' all the cultural monuments and architectural works of Paris. It was also a huge popular success, recouping its entire cost in less than a year from the sale of tickets.[7] The crowds that thronged to climb its height could explore the whole city of Paris laid out below them, with its avenues, parks, railroads, etc 'miniaturised' and made accessible to the gaze, in its totality. In 1889, visitors standing on top of the Eiffel Tower must have 'felt as though they were standing at the centre of the exhibition, the city, and the world''[38] - an illusion so 'real' that it can only be described in the language of 'magic'.

In contemporary metropolitan life, panoramas of cities, viewed from high on top, remain a compelling experience. This is so despite, or perhaps because, our imagination of the city as a totality is increasingly constituted through a profusion of visual representations that remain outside the realm of mundane existence. Rolling cameras and beaming satellites sweep across entire cities and whole continents, linking them together across space and time to remind us that there is more to experiencing the city than what meets the 'eye'. But since such images are *a priori* merged with what the 'eye' absorbs, they can no longer be separated from the 'reality' we engage with. Everyday experiences are registered through dominant representations of space/vision, which precede and overlay them in complex ways.

In actual life, with its predictable routines, the possibility of rethinking such dominant representations is often foreclosed before it even occurs. The majority of the time we occupy the physical city by 'habit', navigating streets, billboards and traffic signs as the eye skips over the familiar and fills in the missing links. Only as a stranger, a lost newcomer, do we pay attention to our surroundings. So our memories of the city do not show dramatic confrontations but rather scenes from its habitual topography, which co-exist in the mind together with a host of dominant representations of the cityscape as a totality - without necessarily contradicting each other.

When viewed from high, on top, the city reveals itself as a totality as though to a stranger on first encounter. As the 'naked' eye touches and absorbs that which it observes, images in the mind overlay physical space, creating an entirely novel experience. This is neither the city of representational images, nor the city we navigate in habitual existence. The panorama transforms the 'remembered' city of images and habituation into an experience of 'wholeness'. Looking below, we seem to comprehend the

entire city in its totality, and experience the *self* as part of that totality - the ultimate inclusion. In contemporary metropolitan life, the panoramic experience encapsulates a *feeling* we can never retrospectively imagine, a sense of wholeness with the city.

The Privilege of Panoramas and Labyrinths of Impoverishment in Contemporary Istanbul

The notion of panoramic perspectives is more than a metaphor in contemporary Istanbul. The physical topography of the city, famously described as being situated on seven hills and surrounded by sea on all three sides, offers panoramas of breathtaking beauty that have historically been the crucial marker of its acclaimed glory. Views of the city's 'natural beauty' have always been closely interlinked with residential hierarchies of wealth and privilege. In present-day Istanbul, the boom in property and land markets is increasingly driven by the proliferation of gated communities and shopping malls outside the built-up core areas of the city. But for the upper crust of the city's wealthy elite, a panorama of the sea' remains the *sine qua non* of urban residence - secured by hidden cameras and high-tech surveillance. Perhaps the easiest way of conveying the sense of privilege associated with panoramas of the sea in Istanbul is to borrow a quote from an interview with the Nobel Prize-winning Turkish novelist Orhan Pamuk, whose work has been closely associated with the city:

> Nobody until now has seen the entirety of Istanbul as I have, horizontally and perpendicularly, that is in depth, in a manner which penetrates its history and its soul, and which comprehends its positioning, the way it settles on the seas, the way it extends. The view from my office has such a privilege that it suits a novelist. Sometimes I think I deserve everything that I see from here.[39]

Pamuk's image of himself looking out from his office window and taking in all of Istanbul, locating himself at 'the heart of the city', conveys the sense of privilege and inclusion associated with city panoramas in Istanbul in more ways than one. In many of his novels, Pamuk mobilises panoramic perspectives of Istanbul to intimate how the past and present of the city are fused, constantly investing the sights of the city with meaning. For him, the inhabitants of Istanbul have always remained 'strangers' to the city, unable to comprehend its repository of secrets - the Ottoman elite because they came from different countries, and 90 per cent of its population because they

migrated to the city over the last fifty years. How Pamuk sets up the city as a mystery that conceals its secrets from its inhabitants, and defines himself as a 'novelist of Istanbul' by appropriating its signs as a text to be illuminated, remains beyond the scope of this paper.[40] My purpose in borrowing a quote from this interview is to emphasise how 'possessing' a panoramic overview of the Bosphorus constitutes a 'privilege' in contemporary Istanbul, making the owner an insider within the city's hierarchies of wealth and power, symbolically and literally.

The inhabitants of Istanbul whom Pamuk refers to as 'strangers' to the city (or as people who have arrived from Anatolia) are subsumed in a diversity of groups in terms of their history and experiences in the physical/social topography of the city, which makes generalisations meaningless. Below I want to offer some excerpts from a set of interviews with workers who clean the windows of skyscrapers in Istanbul, i.e. men who 'see' the city from on high on a daily basis. Hasan, in his late twenties, was born in the Eastern Anatolian town of Maraş, worked in cotton fields and vegetable gardens and ended up cleaning the windows of a corporate tower in Istanbul. He narrates his arrival in Istanbul as follows:

> I came to Istanbul by bus. First I came to Göztepe, to my uncle. I came to Istanbul to earn money and go back. I found a job in a furniture workshop at Goztepe industrial zone. I used to go with my uncle's son. I worked for a week. Then the employer told me to bring six cups of tea. I went out, but see, I did not know my way to anywhere. I found a teashop near the corner... two or three streets, they all look alike. I went in and out of streets, but could not find my way back. So what I knew was going up to the Goztepe Bridge and taking the minibus back home ... and so I did.[41]

When questioned about what the city looks like from above, Hasan did not have much to say, explaining that he had been cleaning windows for a long time. Metin, his co-worker (born in the village of Amasra on the Black Sea), was more forthcoming:

> It is different, above is better, and down below makes you feel like suffocating. But when you go up it is like you are free. Istanbul is underneath. Now when you are walking down there, everything is concrete, you suffocate, as if you were jammed in it.[42]

Celil used to work in a teashop in the bazaar of Erzurum in northeastern

Anatolia. Migration to Istanbul was tough for him, and he worked in various jobs before he began to clean windows. He tells the story of how he accidentally got the wrong minibus and ended up in one of Istanbul's affluent neighbourhoods:

> I got on the wrong minibus. I got off in Etiler, everything changes there, because it is full of women in furs and men with ties. Even within the district, things differ. I have been in Istanbul for twenty-eight years, and I could not once take my aunt to the place I like most, Beşiktaş. If I take my wife there, we have to sit down, drink something. No way. How is it possible, on 420 *lira?*[43]

Although Hasan, Metin and Celil were co-workers (hired by a subcontracting firm), they arrived in Istanbul from different provinces and resided in different neighbourhoods in its sprawling periphery, among their own kin and relatives. But their stories follow a similar pattern; their topography of Istanbul was mapped by a series of low-paying, often temporary jobs they have held. They give the names of districts where their work was located, but the district itself rarely appears in their stories. The city of Istanbul they inhabit evokes a labyrinth, with identical streets, minibus routes, different yet equally low-paying jobs - a suffocating drudgery that seems to offer no exits. Although they work on skyscrapers, they do not register or absorb Istanbul's panorama.

Ending with Miniaturk

Anatolia is described as the 'cradle' of civilisations in the promotional literature of Miniaturk and represented as such by the choice of models on exhibit. The idea of ancient Anatolia as the 'cradle' of modern civilisation dates back to the latter half of the 1930s in Turkey, when a new generation of cultural theorists sought to revise official historiography. This was an attempt to replace earlier theories of the origins of 'Turkish race' with a 'humanist culture', by establishing continuities between ancient and modern inhabitants of Anatolia. In art as well as literature, a new wave of Turkish humanism emerged, elaborating the similarities between the culture narrated in the Homeric legends and a highly selective, often anecdotal account of Turkish folklore. Thus Hellenism was embraced as a 'universal' ideal and conflated with Anatolia's 'native' identity, as the 'cradle' of civilisation.[44] Since then, the rhetoric of Anatolia as the 'cradle' of civilisations has been transformed into common knowledge - something

taken for granted, without questioning. In the context of Miniaturk, the forty-five monuments representing Anatolia as the 'cradle' of civilisations have been very carefully chosen by the committee of historians to locate the origins of Hellenic civilisation in the present territory of Anatolia, along with its native 'treasures'. But the majority of visitors to Miniaturk already *know* that Anatolia is the cradle of civilisations', and do not reflect on the choice of monuments on display. When asked to do so (by me), they search their memory for omissions and try to come up with suggestions on what else might have been included.

The *people* who have migrated from Anatolia, however, are a 'problem' in Istanbul; or, perhaps more accurately, the Anatolian origins of people who live in the city's sprawling low-income peripheral neighbourhoods (the *gecekondu)* are part of the problem they constitute. In the listing of Istanbul's major problems, which demand urgent solutions, what is referred to as *gecekondu sorunu* ('the problem of *gecekondu')* heads the list, next to none other than the traffic problem and the crime problem, with the corruption problem following close behind. Given the spatial connotations of the term *gecekondu,* many of the urgent problems identified on the pages of daily newspapers, or on the evening television news, become mapped onto city space as a part *of the gecekondu* problem - i.e. associated with the inhabitants of Istanbul's low-income neighbourhoods (with the exception of the traffic problem).

The 'causes' of *the gecekondu* problem as well as the 'solutions', as identified and elaborated by planners, journalists, politicians and intellectuals, have shifted over time. In the early 1950s and 1960s, for instance, *the gecekondu* problem was predominantly defined as a temporary matter that would be resolved as the peasants coming from Anatolia became 'integrated' into the city. In the latter half of the 1970s, when the political left in Turkey became prominent on the national scene, the *gecekondu* problem was formulated as one of unemployment and exploitation. But now, in the 'global' Istanbul of Turkey's future ambitions, the *'gecekondu* problem' has assumed greater urgency than ever before, as it is 'polluting' the city aesthetically and culturally. So the clearance of *gecekondu* neighbourhoods, by relocating property owners to municipally financed apartment blocks (and letting renters take care of themselves), has become the official policy of the metropolitan city government as well as the district municipalities. The metropolitan government's millennium project of promoting urban citizenship and identification with the city is fraught with contradictions.

For visitors of Miniaturk, however, the Anatolia on display is fused

with the ancient past and global future not only of Istanbul but the whole nation. Roaming its paths offers the experience of a totality, with the *self at* its very centre - the ultimate inclusion. It is this sense of inclusion I want to suggest, which makes Miniaturk a 'magical' experience, difficult to recapture retrospectively but 'absolutely worth visiting'.

In Lieu of a Conclusion

Over the past two decades, the idea of a 'global' Istanbul has become the site and symbol of Turkey's aspirations in the twenty-first century. Future visions of the city and of the nation have become inextricably bound up in public, popular and scholarly discourses. Claims to a global future for Istanbul have breached the canons of official historiography, calling forth new interpretations of its Ottoman legacy. In the process, Istanbul's multiple and multilayered pasts have come under intense debate as the negotiating ground for alternative political projects, not only for the city but for the nation as well.

In the Istanbul of the 1990s, 'history' is produced, reconfigured and disseminated in a host of commercialised forms, from tourist brochures and auction houses to news broadcasts and political summits. This is obviously very different from 'history' as written and disseminated by the Turkish state. Hence my emphasis is on a number of competing public narratives that circulate in commodity forms to mediate between the past and the ethnographic present of the city. These are 'political' narratives in the sense that they mobilise alternative versions of the past, from different socio-cultural locations, and address different constituencies. What they have in common is the way they accentuate forms of belonging, or yearning to belong, to a wider cultural configuration than the territorially bounded nation state. At the same time, of course, they reveal how yearnings for collective identities beyond the nation-state are shot through with the kinds of essentialisms we tend to associate with nationalist rhetoric.

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Notes

1. Zukin, *The Cultures of Cities.*
2. Scott, *The Cultural Economy of Cities.*
3. Fainstein and Judd, 'Global Forces, Local Strategies, and Urban Tourism'.
4. Ibid., pp. 26-7.
5. Oncii and Weyland, 'Introduction', *Space, Culture and Power.*
6. Ghannam, *Remaking the Modern.*
7. Singerman and Amar, *Cairo Cosmopolitan.*
8. El Kadi and ElKerdany, 'Belle-Epoque Cairo'.
9. Huyssen, 'Present Pasts: Media, Politics, Amnesia' and *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory in the Present.*
10. Huyssen, 'Present Pasts: Media, Politics, Amnesia', p. 26.
11. Lee, 'Shanghai Modern'; Shadid and Weiping, 'Pathways to a World-City'.
12. Boym, *The Future of 'Nostalgia.*
13. Somers, ''The Narrative Construction of Identity'.
14. Huyssen, 'Present Pasts: Media, Politics, Amnesia', p. 33.
15. (Çelik, *The Remaking of Istanbul;* Bozdoğan, *Modernism and Nation Building.*
16. Rosenthal, 'Foreigners and Municipal Reform in Istanbul: 1855-1865'.
17. Keyder, *Istanbul: Between the Local and the Global,* p. 35.
18. Ibid.
19. Quoted from an 1892 guide from Baedeker of Leipzig, a publisher of guidebooks for German travellers, in Hastaoglou-Martinidis, 'Visions of Constantinople/Istanbul from Nineteenth Century Guidebooks'.
20. Quoted from a 1900 guide from John Murray of London, a chief publishing house for guidebooks, in ibid., p. 10.
21. Quoted from a 1912 *Guide Joanne,* published by Hachette, in ibid., p.ıo.
22. Keyder, 'The Consequences of the Exchange of Populations for Turkey'.
23. Mansel, *Constantinople.*
24. *Hurriyet,* 30 March 1999.
25. Bora, 'Istanbul of the Conqueror' ;Çınar, 'National History as a Contested Site'.
26. *Hürriyet,* 26 December 1993.
27. Bartu, 'Who Owns the Old Quarters?'
28. Houston, 'Brewing of Islamist Modernity'; Saktanber, 'Outdoor/Indoor?'
29. *Hürriyet,* 3 December 2005, (abridged).
30. This paragraph is from one of numerous 'preparatory' history books available on the market, designed for high school students taking the national university examinations. Since university entrance examinations are centrally administered, and highly competitive, there is a lucrative market for such 'preparatory' books, with new ones appearing each year. They all replicate the same high school curriculum, but with a different set of sample test questions based on the previous year's examination, and at different prices depending on quality of print and paper
31. A cultural management firm, Istanbul Kiiltiir A.Ş., which was initially established to run the millennium campaign, has since become the main operational arm of

Istanbul's metropolitan administration in cultural affairs'. In addition to organising and publicising a host of 'cultural activities' financed by the metro administration, Kültür A.Ş. publishes a glossy bi-annual magazine titled *Gezinti,* devoted to 'enhancing knowledge of Istanbul's cultural heritage'. The first issue, published in the summer of 2003, was almost entirely devoted to Miniaturk, with extensive excerpts from Mayor Gurtuna's inaugural speech (including the paragraph translated here), as well as an in-depth interview with him on the regeneration of the Golden Horn. The broad publicity campaign that coincided with the opening ceremonies generated a burst of journalistic commentary in the daily press and news reports on television. For the sake of brevity, I have picked out a few of the most frequently used phrases used in numerous superlative accounts of the park.

32. Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing,* pp. 82-3.
33. Daily life in Istanbul of the 1990s was marked by a dizzying proliferation of commodities and images. This experience of mundane life through a new object-world - through the circulation of new forms of media, mobile phones, music CDs, large-scale spectacles - evoked nineteenth-century European cities, when daily life suddenly took on new meaning. Thus I have heavily borrowed from Susan Buck-Morrs, whose book captures the 'phantasmagoric' quality of this urban experience so well. The vast literature on the 'hyperreality' of contemporary theme parks does not seem particularly relevant or illuminating in the context of Miniaturk.
34. Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt,* p. 10.
35. Slater, 'Photography and Modern Vision', pp. 219[-27.]
36. Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt,* p. 9.
37. Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing,* p. 399.
38. Ibid.
39. Interview published in *Istanbul,* 1999; see Irzik, 'How to be a Novelist of Istanbul'.
40. Irzik, 'How to be a Novelist of Istanbul'.
41. Interview, December 2005, courtesy of Eda Çakmakçı.
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid.
44. For an extended discussion of the construction of Anatolia in the works of several novelists during this period, see Bilsel, 'Our Anatolia'.