

THEATER IN NINETEENTH CENTURY ISTANBUL: CASES FOR THE
TRANSLATION OF AN ARCHITECTURAL TYPOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

THEATER IN NINETEENTH CENTURY ISTANBUL: CASES FOR THE TRANSLATION OF AN ARCHITECTURAL TYPE

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As far as the traditional Turkish theater does not refer to any architectural structure; the theater buildings that are built during the nineteenth century are identified with the ideals of modernity and treated as the literally translations of the Western typologies. This study aims to investigate the possibility of a genuine architectural language in the theaters of nineteenth century Istanbul. While doing this, rather than offering a pure formal analysis, the study concentrates on the cultural panorama of the nineteenth century Istanbul, political and ideological changes, international relations, economic downturn and their impact on theater that starts to appear as a popular leisure time activity of the capital of the Ottoman Empire.

Key Words: Ottoman Theater, Nineteenth Century, Leisure time in Istanbul, Ottoman daily life

ÖZ

ONDOKUZUNCU YÜZYIL İSTANBULUNDA TİYATRO YAPILARI: MİMARİ TİPOLOJİLERDE ÇEVİRİYE BİR ÖRNEK

Yazıcı, Ezgi

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Geleneksel Türk tiyatrosu hiçbir mimari yapı ile tanımlanmadığından ondokuzuncu yüzyıl boyunca inşa edilen tiyatro binaları modernizm fikirleriyle özdeşleştirilmiş ve Batı tarzı tiyatro tipolojisinin bir kopyası olarak görülmüşlerdir. Bu tezin amacı ondokuzuncu yüzyıl İstanbulundaki tiyatro yapılarının otantik bir mimari dile sahip olma ihtimalini ortaya çıkarmaktır. Bunu yaparken, formal bir analiz yerine, ondokuzuncu yüzyıl İstanbulunun kültürel panoramasına, politik ve ideolojik değişimlere, uluslararası ilişkilere, ekonomik darboğaza ve bunların Osmanlı başkentinde popüler bir eğlence haline gelen tiyatro ile olan ilişkilerine değinilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Osmanlı'da Tiyatro, Ondokuzuncu Yüzyıl, İstanbul'da kültürel yaşam, Osmanlı'da günlük yaşam

To My Parents

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

*"The world men perceive and deal with, the 'phenomenal world' is a human creation, a product of fundamental mechanisms inherent in the structure of human consciousness."*¹

Immanuel Kant

*"Man lives with his objects chiefly--in fact, since his feeling and acting depend on his perceptions, one may say exclusively--as language presents them to him... Each language draws a magic circle round the people to whom it belongs, a circle from which there is no escape."*²

Wilhelm Von Humboldt

It is not possible to think about a purely 'local' or purely 'global' built environment since the human being is able to transport and transfer him or herself accompanied with the ideas, financial sources, knowledge, style and technology. In the scope of architectural history, the reading of the built environment as the meeting of the local with the 'other' ³ is an interesting and tricky issue that may always serve more than expected. Due to the strong existence of the vague identities, identifications and borders that would be impossible to satisfy with any kind of definition after the post-colonial discourse, the debates of architectural history gain a new meaning.

¹ Peikoff, L. *The Ominous Parallels*. New York: Stein and Day, 1982, p. 59

² Chomsky, N. *Language and Mind*. NIT, 1968, p. 67

³ The concept as a part of the cultural history and philosophy is going to be examined more detailed in the following part of this chapter.

A study that depends on a typology that carries the traces of a foreign architect's meeting with the local or local people's meeting with the minorities, voyagers and other cultures requires a kind of flexibility and catholicity. A very important meeting point of those multi-layered structures is the nineteenth century Istanbul that serves a wide spectrum in the meeting of the local with the global. In the colorful setting of the Ottoman Empire's capital, newly raised building typologies becomes the conjuncture of the architects, users, viewers and the patrons who come from different backgrounds. Among those new building typologies, one is especially significant because of standing as a case for the conceptualization of modernization and changing parameters of daily life inside the Empire at the same time. Theater buildings those start to increase rapidly in terms of number during the nineteenth century, becomes an attraction point thanks to their multi-lingual and multi-cultural structures. They serve a multi-layered spectrum that depends on the movement of the ideas, financial sources and different typologies besides the culture. Therefore, the nineteenth century theater buildings of Istanbul need to be reconsidered with the recognition of the terms 'translation' and 'interpretation'.

1.1 Theaters of Istanbul in Nineteenth Century

For the case of translation, the theater structures of Istanbul in the nineteenth century offer an interesting case. The non-existence of a built theatrical space makes the issue of translation to be the main inspiration of the construction of a theatrical space. Like the other spatial outcomes of geographic, architectural

and cultural interactions, the formation of a built theatrical environment involves in the task of translation rather than 'transportation' or 'transformation'⁴. It is true that the main forms of the theater structure were transported from the Western style but due to the former existence of the concept of a theatrical space in the traditional Ottoman theater, they have also transformed. So together with the function the forms and architectural language of the structures were transformed while transported into a new geography and culture. Besides the forms, architectural language and function, the performances, artists, audiences and the theater culture had also translated. Therefore, this study does not focus only on to the translation of the architectural language but also concentrates on the translation of the theater with its all aspects including the translators, translated parameters and the types and degrees of translation. Hence, during the structuring of the thesis, rather than following a chronological order, the chapters are organized according to their conceptualization of the task of translation. In this context, the first part is going to cover the embassies and court theaters in order to understand how theater is evaluated, applied and conceptualized during its translation by state that stands as a role model during the foundation of theater as an institution inside the Ottoman Empire. The second part is going to focus on to the examples in Pera and Galata as an organic case that involves into a different type and degree of translation that was criticized as a 'direct' one. The third part is going to evaluate a local case in order to understand the most spontaneous and natural form of translation that depended itself onto the traditional spatial

4 Akcan, E. *Çeviride Modern Olan: şehir ve konutta Türk Alman ilişkileri*. İstanbul: YKY,2009. Pg 13.

organizations of the performance spaces inside the capital. Finally, the possibilities of the 'literal' and 'genuine' translations of the theater structures will be discussed. During this process, the cultural and geographical backgrounds of the palaces, Pera and the historical peninsula in going to taken into consideration in order to understand the degrees and conceptualization of translation in those spaces.

The idea of performance depends on the earlier centuries of the Ottoman Empire and theater as a part of this leisure time activities and artistic performances gained several meanings during the nineteenth century. Sometimes it is the strongest mean of communication with the European politicians, sometimes a gainful enterprise and sometimes a way to have some fun besides being an artistic expression. Those changing meanings of the theater are followed by the changing forms and spatial understanding of its performance spaces. Those varieties of meanings are not only identified with the colorful urban life but also



Fig.1. 1: Levni in Surname-i Vehbi. Kocaeks. 1720. Depiction of the kocaeks in Ahmet the III's circumcision ceremony. This miniature is an example of the entertainment culture inside the lace ceremonies⁵

⁵ See <[http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/aa/Kocaeks - Surname-i_Vehbi.jpg](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/aa/Kocaeks_-_Surname-i_Vehbi.jpg)> 13.08.2010

show how European concepts are interpreted and blended to the capital. Istanbul, still keeping the properties of the Islamic capital, during the nineteenth century stands as the intersection point of the modernization, new performance concepts and spaces. Metin And explains this intersection with the identification of the history of theater buildings with the history of modernization for the Ottomans.⁶ He takes attention to the importance of the year of 1839 and the rapid increase of the theater buildings with the introduction of the modernization ideals.⁷ This idea should not be identified with the non-existence of the theatrical spaces before the modernization period due to the earlier existence and continuity of the performance spaces inside the Empire.⁸ However, it is true that non-Muslim subjects leading role that brings the layman and theater together is undeniable. With the stronger opportunity to express themselves in the urban space The *Tanzimat* Era can be a starting point for the theater buildings that welcomes not only the elites but also to the layman. In this context, Palace's positive reaction on the theater appears as a starting point due to the legitimization of the theaters depending on its appreciation by the Sultans.⁹ Therefore, court theaters occupy a more complex place in the history of theater buildings inside the capital due to being spatial role models. The ontological interdependency between the theater

6 And, M. *Türk Tiyatro Tarihi: başlangıcından 1983'e*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1994. pg 67

7 Ibid. pg 18-20

8 Some of the examples are the temporary theaters like Çırağan Court Theater. Also, Robert Houdin tells about a timber construction that is built during the reign of III. Selim. (And, M. *Tanzimat ve İstibdat Döneminde Türk Tiyatrosu*, 21) besides it is known that Palais de Cristal in Beyoğlu exists before the fire of 1831, even the exact date is unknown. (And, M. *Türk Tiyatro Tarihi*, 91).[□] Besides, Refik Ahmet Sevengil claims the existence of the theater during the reign of Ahmed the Third and mentions the performances inside the Embassies (*Türkiyede ilk Tiyatro Ne zaman yapıldı?*, 139)

9 Büyükünâl, F. *Bir Zaman Tüneli: Beyoğlu*, İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2006. pg 164

buildings and political and social parameters find their most concrete reflections in the court theaters. Therefore it is possible to claim that the international relations, politics and economic conditions go hand in hand with the existence of the court theaters inside the Palace complexes. On the other hand, it is known that theater had already started to be popular outside the palace, thanks to the colorful aura of the Empire that was satisfied by the non-Muslim subjects. The spatial organizations that were designed for the circuses started to turn into theater structures that were organized for a large number of artists and audiences as it is in the case of Bosco's circus and Naum Theater is the most important case of this issue that shows the rising popularity of the theater and the former existence of the performance spaces. Together with the special entrepreneurs, the theater halls and buildings of the Embassies and schools that belong to minorities were also active before and during nineteenth century. Similar to Pera and Galata, the historical peninsula also becomes the setting of spatial transitions. The traditional coffee houses of the Ottoman culture that functions like a stage for the storytellers become the theater halls that are suitable for *varyetes*, *vodvils*, *operets*, comedies and dramas. Therefore, thanks to the earlier existence of the different styles, types and forms of performance spaces; issue of translation finds several forms and meanings in the scope of the nineteenth century Istanbul. They do not only stand for the translation of a typology from one geography to the other but represents a unique case for the translation of modernity and cultural parameters in the Ottoman context. This thesis focuses on the theaters of Istanbul as the spaces that appear with different degrees and types of translation thanks to the capital's having a wide spectrum with a large variety of the objects of translation

and translators. Therefore, in the scope of this study, performance spaces of Istanbul will be discussed with the reading of political, economic, cultural and social background of Empire in the frame of translation.¹⁰

As it has mentioned traditional Ottoman theater does not identify itself with a built environment as it is in the examples of an amphitheater or an Italian style building. Therefore, the theater structures of nineteenth century Istanbul were evaluated as the copies of the Western examples without questioning the possibility of the literal translation of a visual object especially in a political and cultural aura that starts to lose the exact definitions borders and limitations. This study questions the identification of the spatial concept of the traditional Turkish theater as a *tabula rasa* in the context of the Ottoman Empire. As far as a pure formal analysis of some specific theater buildings is not going to be enough to satisfy the aim of the study, a cultural panorama of the nineteenth century's Istanbul is going to be in the scope of this thesis in order to understand the local parameters of the interpretation. In this context some of the paradigms of the nineteenth century such as the changing status of minorities, Westernization movements that has started inside the Palace and increasing number and importance of the community of intellectuals inside the Empire will be examined because of their deep impact on theater. However, as far as it is not possible and meaningful to cover all of the theater buildings in Istanbul in the scope of such study, the aim is not to list all of the structures and examine them one by one but to try to understand the idea of interpretation on some cosmopolitan examples.

10 And, M. *Ibid.* pg 63-65

As it has mentioned by Akcan, there is no any architectural translation that was translated and fully transformed or translated and had not transformed. The types and dose of translation is not stable.¹¹ At this juncture this thesis will take the translation as a task that has degrees, different meanings and ways. Any cultural study will take the idea of translation in a wider scale can lead the reader to a different level. In the scope of this study, the theories of translation will be examined as a concentration on the translation of cultures, building typologies, styles or forms with the help of the architects, users and the viewers of the structures. The theories of translation that were examined above were all concentrating on the 'text' or 'translator' or 'reader' but not offering a theory that covers all of them. Naturally this study will not come up with such a theory but try to put equal emphasis on the object of the translation, all of the translators like the patrons, architects or the designers of the performance spaces and the users besides the viewers of those spaces. Besides, it will be kept in mind the changing roles of those actors by being aware of their acting like a second-degree of translator (actors who do not translate consciously but change the degree of translation like the minorities, embassies and voyagers) viewers and the users of the theatrical spaces. Therefore changing relations with the minorities and their pivotal position in the history of Ottoman theater require extra interest for this thesis. Due to this change, this study also looks for the paths of the reasons of such translation and tries to understand the possibility of 'imposition' that may stem from the changing economic and political balances between the 'West' and 'East'.

¹¹ Ibid, pg 14.

As far as this thesis does not come up with an aim to cover all examples of the Ottoman theater architecture, the parts is going to contain the most concrete examples of the different cases and doses of translation issue. In the first part, I discuss the embassies and Ottoman Palace in order to understand their effect as role models and the agents of the translation. As the objects of translation an analysis of Dolmabahçe and Yıldız Court Theaters is going to take part. The conceptualization of the entertainment and leisure time activities inside the embassies and Palace is going to be in the scope of this chapter in order to understand the cultural translation in a more effective way. In the third chapter, I will focus on Pera and Galata which are identified with the 'literal translation' not only for the case of theater structures but also for cultural and spatial understanding. In this chapter, the concentration is going to be on the possibility of the 'literal translation' for the case of the architectural objects and question of the 'imposition' of the Western style. While examining the social and cultural structure of the district, The Levantine culture and their contact with theater is also going to be discussed. The last chapter is going to be about *Şehzadebaşı* which offers the most suitable setting for the evaluation of the spatial understanding of the traditional Turkish theater. This chapter is going to be important in order to be able to understand the degrees, types and background of the translation of the theater buildings of nineteenth and early twentieth century Istanbul. While concentrating on the evaluation of the theater buildings and the performance arts, the last chapter also tells about the contributions of Armenian community to the conceptualization of the theater and theatrical space in *Direklerarası*.

1.2 Urban Space and Daily Life

The nineteenth century of the Ottoman Empire can be identified with rise and falls, changing borders, economic downturn, rising importance of the international relations, new power balances and arrangements for the sake of the minorities. Naturally, several parameters can be added to the list and none of them will be enough to describe the exact situation of the Empire during the general mode of alteration that is dominant all around the world. However, one certain point which stands at the center of the whole picture can be determined as the decreasing power and authority that is followed by the necessity of change in every aspect of the management. This wind of change becomes not only an inspiration for a new education, military or economic system but forms its own social environment at the same time. Hence, the new bureaucracy is completed with a new life style that starts to require a new spatial understanding. While the new building types satisfy the needs of brand new experiences; this spatial understanding forms a unique architectural language that reflects the wide social spectrum of the Empire during the nineteenth century. While the architectural language gains new styles, wide borders inside the urban fabric starts to be less determinant.

The relationship between the space and daily life is a reciprocal and interacted one. While a part of this relationship is shaped according to the necessities of people, another part can be identified as the urban fabric's dominance on the shape of the daily life. As the capital of the Empire and as a large and colorful city, Istanbul gives countless spatial and style opportunities to

several group of people who do not share the same language, religion and life style. While it seems easier to differentiate those different groups and their daily tastes from each other thanks to the cultural heterogeneity and its reflections on the spatial organization; those definitions leave their places to looser identifications with the nineteenth century. The capital's natural urban structure gives a definite shape to the understanding of the entertainment. The urban structure of the classical period of the Empire is identified with districts which act like cells by forming the essential spaces of the daily life inside the capital. However, rather than focusing on economic or political conditions, the separation between the districts depends on the religious differences. Those smallest structures of the urban fabric separate the different substances of daily life by concentrating on different types of worship. Hence, when you walk through one district to the other you pass through one religious belief to the other at the first level. Then, depending on the different habits of the different beliefs; distinct social life, languages, architectural elements and spatial understanding come into the picture. So the difference between the districts is clearly visible for an observer due to the heterogeneous structure of the city. This heterogeneous character leaves its place to a warmer atmosphere between the different religions thanks to the new political arrangements. Hence, due to the multi-layered structure of the nineteenth century the concepts 'like purely Western Pera' or 'Muslim Uskudar' becomes loose. Even though the habits and cultural environments that were formed centuries ago are still dominant; the meetings of the members of the different districts open the way for a new society. Decreasing authority, rising fiscal problems, increasing dependency to the European

economic and military power is combined with the demographic reasons and give rise to a more chaotic, vivid and colorful urban life. Hence, the traces of harsh cultural differences start to appear less when compared with the classical period and the city gains a multi centered shape.¹² This multi- centered urban structure ends up not only with a colorful daily life but also creates a multi-lingual architectural language according to the new necessities. The hard borders of districts are started to be broken by the Muslims who get used to form a social life that is identified with a dead-end street. A new spatial experience starts with the discovery of the streets that gives more freedom and chances to meet with new people and spaces by leaving a determined space.



*Fig. 1.2: A scene from the house of Ottoman elite. The photograph shows the changing daily life activities with the contribution of the Western rituals.*¹³

¹² Işın, E. *İstanbul'da Gündelik Hayat: tarih, kültür ve mekan ilişkileri üzerine toplumsal tarih denemeleri*, İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1999. pg 538-541

¹³ Library of Congress: Abdülhamid II Collection
<<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/ahii/>>

1.3 Political and social background of the change

At the first level, the changing policy of the Empire appears as the reason for such a social turning point. The breaking points those allow such a meeting are the *Gülhane* Edict of 1839 that gives the first rights in the Westernized sense. In 1856, the *Islahat* Edict reinforced these rights. The first Ottoman constitution is the 1876 Constitution known as *Kanunu Esasi*, or fundamental law, adopted on December 23. Although it still reserved a vast array of rights to the Sultan who actually had no burden of accountability; it instituted a Parliament with Upper and Lower Chambers. Following the Tripoli and the Balkan wars, changes which increased the Sultan's power, including the right to dissolve the Assembly, were made in 1914.¹⁴ The sincerity of this relatively democratic atmosphere and its reflections on the Ottoman society remains as a questionable issue due to the dominance of the European countries on the political and economic life of the Empire. However, the changes inside the urban structure and social life that the democracy brings to the capital are undeniable. It is true that the rapid changes inside the Europe make the countries of the continent as the trend identifiers. Their modernist point of view and technology start to appear as a target that should be reached by the Empire. As far as European countries do not only set the innovations that the Empire must follow but also rule the economic and political situation, they develop a peculiar of policy for the case of the Ottoman Empire. The general aim appears as creating a kind of power balance in order to let none

14 Andıç, F., Koçak, M. "Governance and the Turkish Constitutions: Past and Future" *Social Science Research Network* 11. 03. 2010 <<http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?id=1112833>>

of the countries get stronger than the other. Hence, the Empire that stands as a focus point of the conquest, gains a strategic position that should be kept on an even keel. The political and economic progresses of the Empire stand in the hands of the European countries as something that should be analyzed managed and directed. So, the policy on the Ottomans depends on the satisfaction of the needs of balance by keeping the Empire always in trouble but alive. Examples like Serbian rebellion, Greek freedom War and Mehmed Ali Pasha's conquest attempt of Istanbul can be seen as the results of this strategy of Russia, England, Germany and France. ¹⁵This ontological dependency of the Empire to the Western countries gives rise not only to the economic or political renovations but also to bureaucratic and cultural changes. Military forces, education and all aspects of daily life go under radical alterations. Therefore the understanding of the bureaucratic system and culture of the Western Countries turn into an obligation that requires the knowledge of the Western languages. The rising interest for the Western languages inside the Empire turns into a necessity in order to find an occupation inside the State. ¹⁶ Therefore, every aspect of the Western culture, including the language and literature start to appear as an attraction point. The reflection of this approach is visible in the performed plays of the court theaters that focuses mainly on the Italian opera's or English tragedies.

As far as the essence of the urban fabric is shaped according to belief, mosque carries an emphasized importance during the construction of the structure of a district. While the general characteristics of a district is determined with the

15 Quataert, D. *The Ottoman Empire: 1700-1922*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. pg 97-100

16 Ibid. pg 106

existence of a mosque, bazaar and residences that situates in a dead end street, the borders of social life is formed around this urban structure. The determinacy and collectivity that is dominant in every aspect of social life interdependently exists with a peculiar spatial understanding. The rules of being a Muslim stand in the middle of every part of life- including work, family or friendship- and also regulate the shape and borders of the leisure time activities as well. While entertainment in the modern sense depends highly on the individual tastes and personal activities; religion brings this individuality to a different level by framing the leisure time with rituals. Therefore, the collectivity that is supplied inside the mosque goes on in the social life and entertainment turns into an activity that depends on commonsense.¹⁷ However, as it has mentioned, the changing political aura decreases the centrality of the religion inside the social life and makes being a Muslim a part of the individuality rather than the essence of being for a group of people. Those parameters make the nineteenth century a breaking point for the daily life and the conceptualization of the entertainment inside the Empire. While Galata and Pera start to be more effective in the lives of court people and Ottoman elite who are supporting the westernization ideals, the shape of entertainment starts to change for the layman as well. So the daily life and leisure time is not possible to be identified only with the traditional coffee houses or *baloz* in Galata anymore. New spaces like cafes, modern night clubs and *café chantant* create their own urban and social structure. Ottoman elites who are attracted by the lives of Levantines and people who turn their faces to the streets start to appear in 'Tracadores' 'Byzantian Alcazar', 'Mandas' or 'Palais de Cristal'. New concepts like

17 Işın, E. Ibid. pg 544

women on the streets and stages, night life, pantomime, revue, theater and cinema halls and gardens find their authentic spatial meaning with the introduction of the Ottoman people to the picture. The raising place of the performance arts inside the entertainment give rise to new relations between the Muslim and non Muslim subjects.¹⁸ While the variety of the relations and their density increases a new and stronger realization of the individuality appears. When the new political arrangements for the minorities go into the picture of the daily life, a part of the theatrical experiences can be explained as their self- expression. The opportunity that supplies a possibility for a stronger expression of individuality finds its reflections on Muslims as well. In this case, theater gains another meaning for the individual who starts to develop different tastes. By satisfying this search of the individual that starts to shape the daily life in an effective way; theater offers more contemporary tastes when compared with the traditional ways of entertainment like games, fests or weddings that makes people to focus on one single idea. As a performance art which depends on authenticity and originality, it breaks the religious collective frame. As a result the condensed relations with the European countries and European culture's realization and appreciation inside the Palace, give a chance to change the habits of entertainment and performance concepts of the people. The strong interest with the examples of high-art artistic performances that start with Selim the third goes on with Mahmud the Second. A new age starts in 1827 with Giuseppe Donizetti's becoming the head of the *Müzika-i Hümayun*. While this situation leads to a more intensified artistic

18 "Eğlence Hayatı" *Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi* İstanbul: Türk Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 1994. pg 143

relationship with Italy and France; becomes also visible in the architecture of the nineteenth century theater buildings. ¹⁹It is for sure not only those relationships but also the Levantine and Armenian minorities play a major role in forming a theater culture and spatial understanding. Hence, new trends come up with new ideas and naturally create their own authentic spaces thanks to Istanbul's unique social spectrum.

1.4 The Task of Translation

In her book that questions the role of translation in architecture²⁰, Esra Akcan claims that any kind of transformation from a plan to a building, from a diagram to a project, from one discipline to the other or from one place to another one, requires a translation process. This process can not be identified only with transportation or transformation but refers to the task of translation which 'transforms while transporting'. For the case of the visual culture, the circulation of the visual object may not depend on translation but ends up with the hybridization. However, for any kind of translation no matter if it is a cultural, visual or textual one, there is the hegemony of the 'original'²¹. With the post-structuralism, this hegemony was started to be shaken and the authenticity of the 'original' started to be questioned. However, during the debates of the translation, the object of translation (the 'original' text) keeps its centrality. Therefore another

¹⁹ Kuban, D. *Osmanlı Mimarisi*, İstanbul: Yem Yayınları, 2007. pg 666

²⁰ Akcan, E. Pg, 12-14.

²¹ Akcan uses the word *özgün metin* which also confirms the originality of the translated text in a way. Therefore, I preferred to translate it as 'original'. (pg 13)

question- the positioning of the result of translation to the main text- appears and also shows differences according to the type of the translation.

While the translation of a written text tries to stand as close as possible to the original text, the translations of architecture give effort for the opposite. The architectural translation targets deviations and tries to situate far away from the translated architectural object. Therefore there is no possibility for the wrong translation and no need for the faithfulness. However, there is one fact – which appears as one of the main themes of this thesis also- should not be ignored: There is no any architectural translation that was translated and fully transformed or translated and had not transformed. The dose and types of translation show varieties for the different cases.²²

1.5 Meeting with the 'other'

While action and speed appear as the essences of the modern life; changing economic, political or cultural parameters and technology make the concepts like transaction, emigration, voyage and moving daily issues. Naturally, this transformation ends up with the necessity to understand and experience the 'other'.²³ It is obvious that having a kind of relationship with another individual,

22 Akcan E, *Ibid*, pg 12-14.

23 Actually, the term 'other' can be defined in many ways as it is seen during the history of philosophy. In the scope of this thesis the 'otherness' will appear in two ways. The first and more important one is the 'otherness' in a wider and cultural sense that emphasises the possible outcomes that occur as a result of the contact of two different cultures. In the second sense, that stands in the essence of the translation debates, I will follow a more Lacanian way. In his

no matter if it is a family member or a person from another continent, always come up with very hard but interesting results. In the first level of this contact language carries a crucial role. The Freudian psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan describes the subject as the *manque à être* (the want to be) and *parlêtre* (speaking being). They co-exist in human being starting from the birth. The strongest character of the *parlêtre*- language- becomes a hope for declaring the self but it cannot fulfill this desire. Child starts to suffer more because of the things which cannot be put into the words. Hence, language starts to develop a mortifying effect on the infant.²⁴ The German existentialist Martin Heidegger, who affected Lacan deeply, explains the similar phenomenon as 'being born to the vocabulary of the others'. As far as the subject has to define and declare him or herself by involving the language of the other, he or she starts to lose the authenticity and become alienated until the formation of a personal history.²⁵ When they are considered in the borders of the possibility of communication, both of the arguments lead us to the idea that every expression's being a translation of the thoughts and clearly declares the failure of the language in this sense. As a result it is not possible to claim that the subject comes to an understanding point with other people thanks to be able to speak his or her language. Therefore, the spoken

terms the subject always attempts to form a relation to *the Other* and the mode of this articulation is desire. This desire stems from the idea of 'lackness'. Subject and *the Other* testimony the 'lackness' of each other. This lack is irremediable and it makes the *subject* and *the Other* interdependent to each other whereas strengthen the alienation of the 'other'.

24 Lacan, J. *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979. pg 29.

25 Mulhall, S. "Introduction" in *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Heidegger and Being and Time*. London: Routledge, 1996. pg. 7-10

words of the 'other' remain as another possible world for the individual no matter if he or she is the speaker of the same language or not.

If it is clear that any expression is a kind of translation, human being's communication is perfectly dependent on translation as it has mentioned many translation theorists.²⁶ It is the only possible way that makes the subject to have some conduct with the 'other' besides giving opportunity to tell about the self.

1.6 Translate or not to translate

Due to the rising possibility to contact with the 'other', the importance of the 'other' changes rapidly and translation can be counted as the strongest mean and only option of a culture that enables it to understand the others and tell about itself in the international arena. However, the studies on translation - no matter if they are a part of linguistics or epistemology- question the possibility and reliability of the 'translation' theories again and again. Therefore, with the appearance of such a necessity to conduct with something that is out of the self and sometimes even with subject's own thoughts; the subject again faces with the problem of translation. Throughout the cultural and political history there are not enough evidences that can declare the success of translation as a meeting point. Similar to what Wittgenstein claims, our language is determined by our world and we are trying to bring another person's world closer to ours by translating his or

26 The detailed ideas of some of the supporters of this view like Jacques Derrida, Georger Steines, Wilhelm Von Orman Quine and Donald Davidson is going to be examined in the next part of the "Introduction" chapter.

her words.²⁷ Starting from this point translation stands as a two-way road that needed to be looked both ways. This interesting issue that fascinates many of the researchers of social sciences for decades identified with its two contradicting faces. Does translation stand as a helping hand for the people to contact with the other and tell something about the self; or is it a dangerous smoothie that detains the subject by leading him or her to a fake picture about the world of the other?

Octavio Paz mentions that the feelings and impressions are universal. Therefore they can be translated in any language without any loss in the meaning. This humanist view focuses on a universal reality that is shared by all languages and claims the possibility of their literal translated into any language. On the other hand, according to Derrida there is no way for literal translation. As far as there are different languages there is need for the translation. However, translation is an impossible task that is identified with incompleteness and dissatisfaction. He claims that there is no way to fasten the meaning and no way for the literal translation. While there is a contradiction going on between the humanist and post-structuralist approach, Walter Benjamin declares translation as the essence of an authentic production. When a text gives possibility for the translation without losing anything from its essence, this issue stands for its authenticity. He claims the existence of a *reine sprache* that stands in the center of every single language. When a text has the possibility to be translated, this shows its closeness to the *reine sprache*. Here, the task of the translator cannot be defined with faithfulness or freedom but making the both languages as a part of *reine sprache* while translating. The main fault of the translator was treating the foreign languages as

27 Wittgenstein, L. *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. London & New York: Routledge. pg. 5.6

German and tries to make them German. However, during the translation German should turn into those languages in order to get deepen, improve and get rid of the limitations and borders.

While Paz and Derrida focus on the possibility of translation, Benjamin celebrates translation as a part of the authenticity. On the other hand, Goethe comes up with the idea of the 'phases of translation' which concentrates on the translator rather than language and puts him or her to the center of the task. According to Goethe, there exist three phases of translation. During the first phase, the translator understands the text with his or her own words. In the second phase, he or she gets closer to the idea in the text but represents it that has already existed in his or her own culture. At the last stage the translator was identified with the text, leaves the foreign language and native language to a side and creates a third language.²⁸

Depending on my own background as a philosophy graduate, I can mention that another translation theory gets popular in the frame of analytic philosophy which brings translation to the edges of scientific approach. In 1960, Orman Quine came up with the idea of 'radical translation' where he questions the possibility and limits of translation.²⁹ Quine describes the language as the complex of present dispositions to verbal behavior, in which the speakers of the same language have perforce come to resemble one another without touching to the process of acquisition.

28 Akcan, E. *Ibid.* pg 15-19.

29 Quine, W.O. *Word and Object*. USA: The Massashusetts Institute of Technology, 1960. pg-26

For the case of the translation of kindred languages that shares the similar geographies and cultures -even the equality of the meaning is not going to be the exactly the same- there is still possibility of the communication. However, he claims that translation engages not a partial communication between the closer languages and cultures. It has some universal ambitions in delivering the expressions of distinct geographies by satisfying a perfect equality in meaning. Depending on this idea, Quine adds the term 'radical translation' to the terminology of the translation theories. In this harshest degree of translation, the translation of the language of a hitherto untouched people whom does not any means during the process is aimed. He makes us to think about our possible way of communication with a people of 'archipelago'. Hence, he invites us to a 'radical' thought experiment about the situation of the translation of a completely distinctive world and language. The first reaction of the people who are facing with this completely unknown language and the culture is trying to depend the communication on the common points of body language. Naturally the translator forces him or herself to rely solely on the observed behavior of its speaker in relation to their environment and at the end it appears a radical translation that can end up with several manuals that we may set up in divergent ways. As it has been mentioned, manuals can be compatible with the totality of the speech dispositions but they do not necessarily compatible with one another.³⁰ Therefore he concludes with two ideas: there is no way for 'radical translation'. For the case of the cultural studies, the chance of translation decreases when the geographies and culture gets

30 Quine, Ibid, pg. 30-32

far away from each other. Hence he claims that there is no way for the communication of two distinct societies that does not share similar cultures.³¹

However, by introducing the idea of 'interpretation' rather than 'translation' Donald Davidson widens the borders of Quine's epistemological attempts.³² He cares about the same questions more or less and focuses on how we come to an understanding point and realize the meanings as an entity of a sentence. During his examination of the acquisition of meaning of another language he asks two basic questions: what plays the essential role in interpretation and how come we have the knowledge that enables us to interpret. Rather than speaking on the possibility of a translation theory, Davidson accepts the insufficiency of a translation theory alone to ensure the understanding of the language it translates. So even though he is aware of the strong kindred between

31 Quine tells a story in order to make this picture clearer. A radical translator meets with a tribe which is completely unknown and unfamiliar both in terms of culture and language to him. In this case the only way of communication is to understand the gestures and utterances of the members of the tribe and form a manual as a result of his implication. A member of this tribe sees a rabbit and says 'Gavagai'. As the first reaction the translator notes down the word 'Gavagai' as 'Rabbit' without thinking the other possible meanings of the word like 'Animal' or 'White'. Therefore it becomes impossible to rely on the utterance because of the indeterminacy of the meaning. However, if the translator is stubborn and analytic enough, he or she can go on to work on to reduce the possible meanings of the word 'Gavagai' and reach to the exact solution. He or she starts to query the combinations of native's verbal expressions and stimulus situations. Hence, he starts to narrow down his guesses by trying different word-stimulus combinations. However, if we turn back to the problem of the translation of the non-verbal expressions, we can see that the translator's experiment is not so easy because of the different expressions of assent and dissent. In his example, Quine thinks about Turks as the members of the society that shows completely the reverse of Americans gestures of assent and dissent. Therefore, it becomes impossible to take the gestures as the certain values for the translator. So, all he or she can do is combining the verbal and non-verbal expressions with the gestures of assent or dissent and after a long observation period see how well his guesses work. So the translator asks 'Gavagai?' and the reply can be 'Evet' or 'Yok' and if the people who speaks Turkish pretty regularly elicits 'Evet' rather than 'Yok' then the translator can be sure 'Evet' is 'Yes' and the combination of pointing a rabbit, saying 'Gavagai' and assenting as 'Evet' is 'Rabbit' in the translator's language. However, naturally he or she should do some changes if something breaks down his generated working hypothesis. As a result the linguist may settled on what to treat as native signs of assent and dissent and gets ready to get inductive evidence and accumulate them to translate 'Gavagai' as 'Rabbit'. (33-35)

32 Davidson D. "Radical Interpretation" *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001. pg 125-141

translation and interpretation, he insists on the inadequacy of the term 'translation' and replaced it by 'interpretation'.³³ In 'radical interpretation' there exist a way for the communication thanks to the theory of translation's accompanied with the theory of belief that depends on the evaluations of the translator about the competence of the verbal and non-verbal expressions.³⁴

With the rising importance of the evaluation of the social sciences with scientific methods, Naom Chomsky's linguistic theory started to draw a frame for the translation task; even he does not aim such an intersection. The idea that language is created inside one's mind independently of outside experience eliminates the possibility that the external world is the common source of all languages. But a common source of all languages underlies any attempt to explain the possibility of translation. Chomsky suggests that the common basis of all languages is universal phonetics and semantics, with the result that "certain

33 Davidson, D. Ibid. pg 125-131

34 In the meeting of translation theory with a belief theory, Davidson starts with the assumption of a case that the attributions of belief and assignments of meaning is consistent with one another and with the speaker's overall behavior besides being consistent with the evidence afforded by our knowledge of the speaker's environment. In other words, we come to an agreement point in the speakers beliefs and our beliefs and also know that our beliefs are true in the simplest case. Thus, we have a kind of manuals of our own beliefs that will guide us to the beliefs of the speaker. Therefore, the interconnection between the belief and meaning will lead us to the understanding of the speaker's utterances. For instance, when we apply Davidson's interpretation theory on the word "Gavagai" the translation example the story shows some explicit changes. When the member of the tribe uses a certain sequence of sounds repeatedly in the presence of the rabbit, we can interpret those sounds as utterances about rabbits or a rabbit, as a hypothesis. Once we have arrived at a preliminary assignment of meanings for a significant body of utterances, we can test our assignments against further linguistic behavior on the part of the speaker, modifying those assignments in accordance with the results. Using our developing theory of meaning we are able to test the initial attributions of belief that were generated through the application of charity, and, where necessary, modify those attributions also. This enables us, in turn, to further adjust our assignments of meaning, which enables further adjustment in the attribution of beliefs. The development of a more finely tuned theory of belief thus allows us to better adjust our theory of meaning, while the adjustment of our theory of meaning in turn enables us to better tune our theory of belief. Through balancing attributions of belief against assignments of meaning, we are able to move towards an overall theory of behavior for a speaker or speakers that combine both a theory of meaning and of belief within a single theory of interpretation. (139-143)

objects of human thoughts and mentality are essentially invariable across languages".³⁵ However, starting from the 1970's the theory which supplied a scientific frame to translation was criticized due to its being too deterministic. One of the critics belongs to James Holmes who is concentrated on the experience of translation itself and suggests different type of translation theories for different types of texts. Therefore, the theorization of the translation starts after the experience of translation.³⁶

1.7 Cultural Translations

According to the translation theories examined above, when the degree of otherness rises, the importance and the failure possibility of the translation rises too. In this sense, the harder issue appears as the translation of the words of people who are coming from completely different backgrounds; whom the subjects are sharing less common points in their personal world. Hence, the need to translate not only the spoken words and inner world but also the whole culture of the 'other' appears.

In 1975 George Steiner offers the revival of hermeneutics in translation. According to him, the meaning of a text or art work depends on the culture that those were produced in. Therefore, none of them can be translated to the other mechanically. He mentions that language has strong ties with its spoken time, culture and geography and translation is possible only in the condition of the

³⁵ Chomsky, Noam. *Language and Mind*. MIT, 1968, p. 66

³⁶ Akcan E., *Ibid*, pg 21

translation of all of those parameters. Similar to the philosophers like Quine and Davidson he also declares that any speech between two people is a kind of translation and understanding to each other requires a translation process. While the translation stands at the center of any communication, its main aims are determined as penetration and appropriation despite to the possibility of defeat. Hence, the main task of the translator focuses on forming a culture theory during the process of translation because translation does not only happen in language but also in the objects of culture and art. Therefore, if societies have a common cultural zone - a topology- translation brings them together. However, this idea makes him to involve in a conservative and Western-oriented approach. With this idea, the history of the West appears as an eternal translation process that happens on the same topology. The rest, non-Westerns, stand as a defeat that situates extremely away from the West and has no possibility for the translation. So the only function and the value of the translation was its supplying the continuity inside the same topologic zone.³⁷

As it is understood, rather than concentrating on the alienation of the translation, Steiner prefers the resemblance theories. However, the application area of his theory just covers a limited zone and becomes useful only between the societies that 'resemble' each other in terms of culture and geography. On the other hand, alienated translation theories accept the possible differences between the societies from the beginning and concentrates on the translation despite to those differences. Supporters like Lawrence Venuti claims that translation cannot be done literally because the translator reduces the differences between two

37 Akcan E. *Ibid*, pg 22-23

cultures while bargaining for the conceptualization of the cultural and linguistic differences in another language and puts a local difference instead. Therefore, the task of the translator appears as reminding the differences of two languages to the reader, consciously.³⁸

1.8 Architectural translations

Writer, translator, reader and the user of the original language, translated language or a third meta-language that were used during 'translation' stand as the agents that makes people to think about the possibility of translation. In his work *The Republic* Plato imagines a group of people who have lived chained in a cave. All of those people's lives go on by facing a blank wall. The people watch shadows projected on the wall by things passing in front of a fire behind them, and begin to ascribe forms to these shadows. According to Plato, the shadows are as close as the prisoners get to seeing reality. He then explains how the philosopher is like a prisoner who is freed from the cave and comes to understand that the shadows on the wall are not constitutive of reality at all, as he can perceive the true form of reality rather than the mere shadows seen by the prisoners.³⁹ If the problem of translation is tried to be explained in the eyes of the architect in Platonic sense, the translated visual object may stand for the shadows that he or she see on the walls of the cave. Therefore the architect starts to face with several questions. Is the translation of the visual objects banishing people

38 Ibid, pg. 24

39 Plato, *The Republic*. Trans. By Jowett B. NewYork: Modern Library, 1941. 514a-520a

from the reality? Does the architect decrease the value of the translated visual object just by translating it? In other words, does he or she create just a fake copy of the copy or is it possible to think about adding new concepts, ideas and values to it while translating it? All of those questions stand in front of the architect during his process of translation.

Naturally, the architectural translations do not carry the hesitations of 'being creative' or 'original' only. As it has mentioned by Akcan they also stand in a 'tension zone' due to their close relationship with political relations while being the objects of cultural translations. Therefore during the architectural translations as a part of cultural translations, one of the basic problems appears as the conceptualization of the 'other' and the possible reactions to it.⁴⁰ Translation may appear in other forms like 'imposition' or 'compulsion' according to the political and geographic relations of the two societies that architectural translation takes place. For the case of the architecture the cultural and political translation of the architectural object may depend on the patron, user or the viewer of the object of translation. However, while those appear as the main determinants, the whole issue finds an end with the architect's evaluations and preferences. A translated architectural object carries the hesitations of being a cheap copy or a cold foreigner. Architect has to give a decision about to remain closer to the local or to the original. While giving a decision he or she considers the fact that if the structure remains closer to the local it faces up with the questions like eclecticism, being a fake or a copy that is away from the authenticity and creativity. On the

40 *Ibid.* pg. 27

other hand, if it stands closer to the original roots it has to face with the inappropriateness or alienation.⁴¹

As far as it is not possible to think about a structure that does not involve in the historic, political and cultural stories of the local, its translation to the other geographies always come up with multi-layered and complex questions. So, similar to all cultural objects, including the works of literature, history and art, architectural objects also have deep problems with the idea of translation that is impossible to ignore in the scope of architectural history. Similar to the architect, patron, viewer or the user, architectural historian also involves into the translation task. Therefore this study evaluates the architectural meaning and structure of the theater buildings and culture of the nineteenth century Istanbul as a case that involves in the task of translation.

41 Ibid, pg. 11

CHAPTER II

COURT THEATERS

In his 'A History of Building Types'; Nicolous Pevsner mentions that the birth of theater as a building type depends on the Italian Renaissance. The building itself brings the actor who acts on the streets on the several stages to the single stage and changes the wandering spectator into the audience with the fixed auditorium. He reformulates this statement on the theater structures as the change of location from the market place and the streets to the palace.⁴² It is possible to claim that the political efficiency of the court followed by the cultural efficiency all over the world and the court theaters become pioneers for the other theater structures. However, the court theater always comes up with different parameters such as being a show arena for the display of the power, becoming a kind of special enterprise of the sovereign that makes him the patron of the building or standing as a display window of the culture and authority for the foreign visitors. When a theater building is inside a Palace; its concern maybe thought as spreading and intensification of the political ambitions of the State via the structure of the theater and performances. However, the court theater is a multilayer structure in terms of meaning, similar to the imperial lodges. It cannot be only identified with the political aims but also stand for the setting of highly sophisticated and refined form of performance art. When the parameters of 'high art' and 'authority' is combined with the Ottoman background, the architectural

42 Pevsner, N. *A History of Building Types*, Princeton, N.J. : Princeton University Press, 1976. pg 63.

outcome of the court theaters stand as a cultural and structural translation. The Sultans' interest to the Western style performances like operas and dramas is also fed by their attention to the traditional arts as it is in the reign of Abdülaziz. Therefore, it is not possible to define 'high art' inside the Palace as the Western style art but as a synthesis that give rise to different types and doses of the task of translation. Therefore, this chapter does not only concentrate on the architectural translation of inside the court theaters but also concerns the cultural translations. Besides, the chapter will focus on the debates that will form a base for the following chapters besides the debates on the changing meanings of visibility and invisibility of the imperial lodges, monumentality and modernity.

2.1 Dolmabahçe Court Theater



*Fig 2.1: The monumental and neoclassical facade of Dolmabahçe Court Theater.*⁴³

Dolmabahçe Palace does not only coincide with the ideals of the

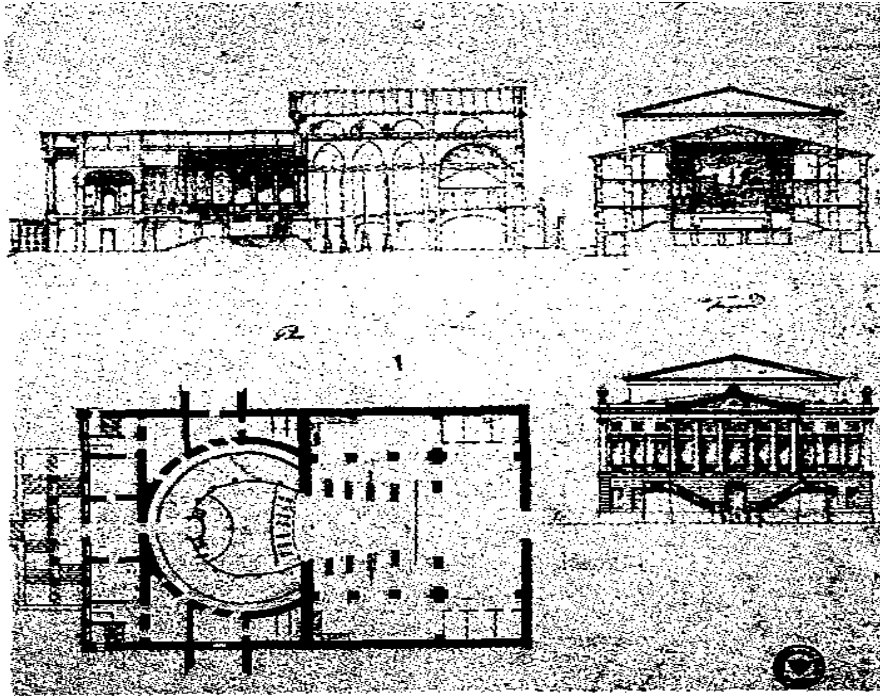
43 Gülersoy, Ç. *Dolmabahçe*. İstanbul: Türkiye Turing ve Otomobil İşletmeleri Yayınları: 1984.

Westernization with the rising use of iron or glass but also with its hospitality for the foreigners with the *Muayede* Saloon and *Süferra* despite to the obliqueness and closeness of Topkapı. Another departure inside this new complex is the first realization of the Sultan's interest for the theater. The monumental and detached theater building stands as a three dimensional conceptualization of Abdülmecid's passion for theater. The theater that locates in front of the Dolmabahçe Mosque, on the corner of the road that leads to Bayıldım Hill, is built between the years of 1857 and 1859. 44 Several sources offer several architects for the theater. Nikogos Balyan, Barborini and two French architects Dieter and Hammant are some of those names.⁴⁵ Among those names the Levantine architect Barborini who is known as the designer of important theater structures inside the capital, appear as another name that is claimed as the architect of the Dolmabahçe Palace theater. In 1875 he planned the Varyete Theater (Eldorado, Verdi, and Odeon) and in 1872 with the permission of Abdülaziz, Guatelli Paşa offers him to plan a theater inside the Tepebaşı Cemetery area. He prepared a large scale theater project but it is never realized. 46 The other possibility concentrates on the Italian architect who becomes popular inside the Palace. Gaspare Fossati who gains great popularity has a plan that seems to be designed for the Dolmabahçe Court Theater.

44 And, Ibid. pg 96.

45 While Selim Nüzhet Gerçek (Dolmabahçe Tiyatrosu, 178), Deniz Esemeli mentions Dieter and Hammant (218) Kuban mentions the name of Nikogos Balyan (620). On the other hand Cengiz Can declares Barborini as the architect of the structure

46 Şehsuvaroğlu, H. "Dolmabahçe Sarayı Tiyatrosu" *İstanbul Ansiklopedisi*. İstanbul: Koçu Yayınları, 1968. pg 54



**39 Costantinopoli, Teatro Imperiale, 1846:
Sezione longitudinale, trasversale, pianta e
prospetto**

Fig. 2.2: A plan that was designed by Fossati in 1846 maybe as a suggestion for the Court Theater.⁴⁷

However, when compared with the photos, this plan does not coincide with the general appearance of the structure. The design refers to a smaller and private family theater which reminds the 18th century French theaters. On the other hand, Dolmabahçe Court Theater aim to be a less isolated more dominant public structure thanks to its free standing style, monumentality, scale and central place. The aim of Abdülmecid is found its reflections on the style and scale of his theater

⁴⁷ Züst, G. *Gaspare Fossati*. Lugano: Feda sa Fidìa edizioni d'arte, Pinacoteca Cantanole, 1992.

besides the large number of guests. As it is understood from the sources, not only the members of the Palace but also the non- Muslim nobles, ambassadors, their wives and high-level members of the military forces besides the foreign guests are invited to the performances.⁴⁸ Therefore, Fossati's plan may not reflect Abdülmecid's ambition for a larger scale theater audience that will be the pioneers for the society. While Abdülmecid stands against to the criticisms on his theater passion and forms a role model as the audience, his detached structure satisfies the needs and ambitions of its patron with its visibility and monumentality. On the other hand, there exists an interesting tension between the inner representations and the photos of the facade of the Dolmabahçe Court Theater. While the inner depictions of the theater creates the impression of a larger opera hall, based on a large circular area, the photos of the outer structure stand for a rectangular prolongation that based on three floors.

By creating a larger scale theater in the new city center, the isolated space turns into an attainable performance space that announces the importance and legitimacy of the theater for a group of people. The theater is seen as a fabulous stone structure of its time by most of the people who get used to smaller, less monumental and wooden theater building examples. The theater has three tiers of balconies with more than thirty boxes and designed for three hundred people. The parterre and the boxes are covered with glittered velvet whereas the Sultan's box is covered with golden cage and glittered curtains.⁴⁹ This monumental structure has two neoclassical pediments on the facade. Similar to the Palace itself, the

⁴⁸ Gerçek, N.S. "Dolmabahçe Tiyatrosu" *İstanbul'dan Ben de Geçtim*, İstanbul: Kitabevi Yayın, 1997 pg 178

⁴⁹ Celal, M. *Eski İstanbul Yaşayışı*, İstanbul: İletişim, 1992. pg 70

inner decoration of the theater is designed by the decorator of Paris Opera Hall, Séchan. The foyer which is leading to the stage is covered with a wooden dome. It has glittered decoration and lightened with a magnificent luster. The upper floor has an ante- room which has a gate to the Sultan's box that situates in the middle and appears as the strongest architectural element thanks to its glorious cage and scale. Behind his box there are two rooms and one of them has the stairs that lead to Harem. The theater hall has the entrance with parterre that is decorated with red seats and the best machines of the time. The floor that is reserved for the members of harem is a single theater box that is covered with a golden cage and red velvet covered seats. The first two floors of the theater boxes have curtains and ornamented decoration.⁵⁰ A large dining room for the diplomatic dinners is designed for completing the function of creating a diplomatic and leisure time spatial organization. The monumental aura of the structure has reflections on the decoration of the dining room similar to the theater hall. The walls of the room were covered with decorated wooden panels for two and a half meters while the rest of the walls with glittering grain leather. The room has two large entrances and twelve windows. The doors are decorated with bronze and one of them has a hidden space for the Sultan in order to watch the meetings by being invisible where as the other door have a space for the invisibility of the orchestra.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Esemeli, D. *Osmanlı Sarayı ve Dolmabahçe*, İstanbul: Homer, 2002. pg 218

⁵¹ "Dolmabahçe Tiyatrosu" *Tanzimattan Cumhuriyete İstanbul Ansiklopedisi*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1985. pg 3967



Fig 2.3: The back door of the theater and its close relationship with the street.⁵²

While the Western culture and people start to find a stronger chance to contact and affect the Ottoman culture, the spatial reflections of the Westernization movements inside the Empire get condensed. Not only the new spaces for the newly established foundations, like post offices or railway stations but also the traditional spaces like the Palace is effected by this new understanding. When the house of the Sultans, Topkapı Palace, is started to be identified with the tragedies and become outdated when compared with the structures of the Industrial Revolution; a new space that carries the traces of the Westernization ideals besides keeping the main elements of the traditional

⁵² Tuğlacı, P. *The role of the Balian family in Ottoman Architecture*. Istanbul: Yeni Çığır Kitabevi, 1990.



*Fig. 2.4: The photograph of Bayıldım Hill nad Dolmabahçe Mosque at the end of the nineteenth century.*⁵³

organization of the Ottoman Palace is decided to be built.⁵⁴ In this case, not only the technical and architectural changes but also the location of the Palace complex carries a major role. One breaking point can be evaluated as the Palace's getting closer to Pera- Galata district. However, Divanyolu still carries its spatial power

⁵³ Gülersoy, Ç. Ibid

⁵⁴ Küçükerman, Ö. *Sanayi ve Tasarım Yarışında Bir İmparatorluk İki Saray: Topkapı ve Dolmabahçe*, İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2010. pg 159

and becomes more popular during the nineteenth century as a leisure time space. For the case of Dolmabahçe Palace, the real breaking point is the close spatial relationship between the mosque, theater and the clock tower may reflect the new approaches to the ties between modernity and religion. While the mosque, tower and theater represents a strong architectural existence, their coming together bravely stands as an opposition to the literal translation of the theater typology from the Western examples.

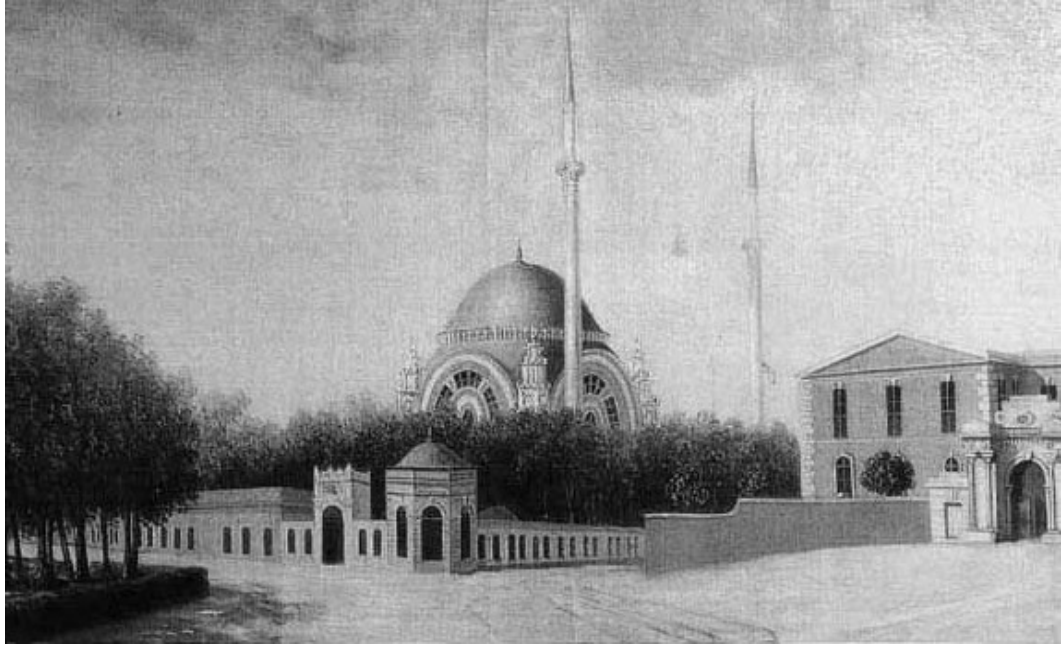


Fig 2.5: The representation of the Dolmabahçe Mosque with the Court Theater as a case for the local application of the translation of the theater typology.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Gülersoy, Ç. Ibid.

2.2 Dolmabahçe Palace Complex

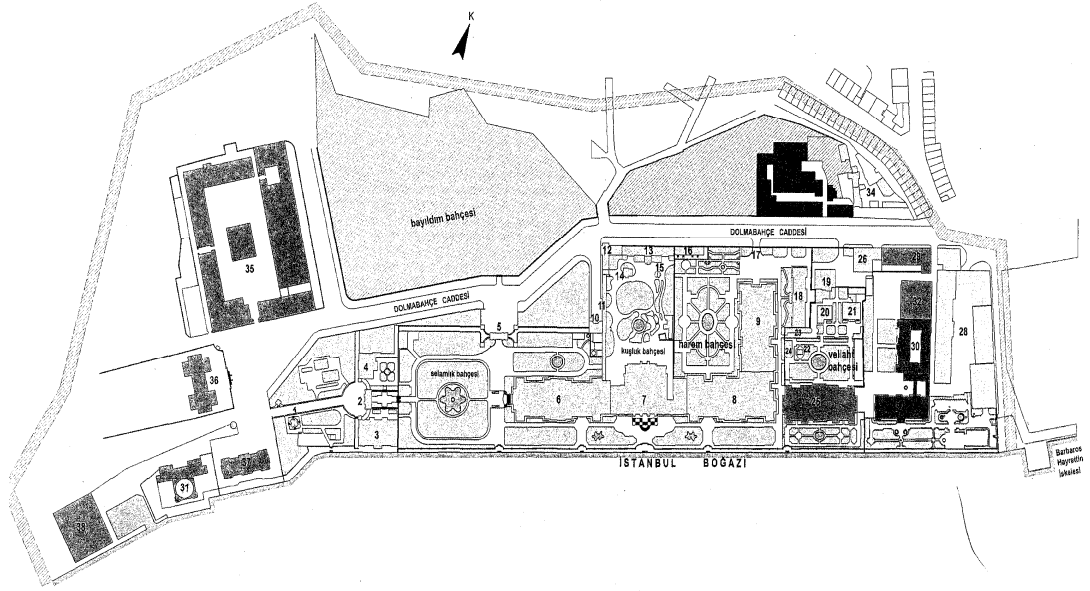


Fig 2.6: The plan of the Dolmabahçe Palace complex. ⁵⁶

The first Ottoman court theater was constructed as a part of Dolmabahçe Complex. The alternation that has started with Mahmud the Second goes on during the reign of Abdülmecid and a new spatial organization is created in the place of '*Beşiktaş Sahil Sarayı*'. The construction starts in 1842 (or 1844) and finishes in 1855 but due to the negative effects of the Russian War, the opening ceremony cannot be realized until the end of the war. The chief architect of the palace is Garabet Balyan and Paris Ambassador Ahmed Fethi Pasha plays an active role both in the construction of the Palace and theater. Thanks to his strong

⁵⁶ Esemeli, D. Ibid

relationship with Paris, the decorator of the Paris Opera Hall- Séchan comes to Istanbul. When the aim of building a new monumental space coincides with the fiscal problems, the same economic story continues. During the decoration of the Palace the irony of borrowing money from the European countries and spending the money for accessorizes that are bought from the European countries appear again and again. While the architectural language of the structure carries the traces of French Baroque, German Rococo, English Neoclassicism and Italian Renaissance, the inner decoration consists of Sévres vases, Lyon silks, Baccarat crystals, English chandeliers, Venice stained glasses and German, Czechoslovak bohemian luminaries. ⁵⁷ In this way, the Palace speaks a multi-lingual language in a monumental scale in its every single detail including the location, the smallest element of decoration and householders.

2.3 Yıldız Court Theater

As it has mentioned by Sermet Muhtar Alus, the performances started after the *yatsı* prayer. The absolute silence and the stability even during the funniest plays were must. After the performances, the sultan gave presents to the visitors. The theater was the meeting place of the most important operas like *La Traviata*, *İl Travatore*, *Sevil Berberi* and *La Maskot* that were directed by Stravolo, besides the Abdülrezzak's *tuluat* and comedies. ⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Batur, A. "Dolmabahçe Sarayı" *Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi*. İstanbul: Türk Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 1994. pg 91-96

⁵⁸ Alus, S.M. "İkinci Abdülhamid'in Muayedeleri" *Resimli Tarih Mecmuası*. September 1951: 966-971.



Fig 2.7: Facade of the theater that emphasis its detached structure to the other buildings and close relationship with the palace complex. 59

Yıldız Court Theater, the second court theater that is situated inside the Palace complex, is completed in 1889. Rather than the outer facade, the inner decoration of the theater with its coquette style takes the attention. The ceiling of the structure is blue and ornamented with glitters and star motifs. It has a small dome in the ceiling and scenic printings on the apron. Balcony sets on wooden posts and Sultan's box situates above the entrance.⁶⁰

59 Bilgin, B. *Geçmişte Yıldız Sarayı*, İstanbul: Yıldız Sarayı Vakfı Yayınları, 1988.

⁶⁰ Ibid. pg 17



Fig 2.8: A detail from the ceiling.⁶¹

The saloon is reserved for men and the members of the harem follows the plays from the two tiers of boxes that are covered with glittered cages. The guests are invited only during the fests with their wives. While sultans and *kadinefendi*'s have their own boxes, female guests follow the performances with the members of harem. While the women who come with their most shining dresses and jewels become the focus point; the men who sit in the salon are not allowed to look above and warned by the officers if they act inappropriate. The plays are generally performed by French and Italian actors. However, thanks to the fast development of the students of the imperial orchestra and their attempt to create an authentic theatrical attitude in their own language make them more dominant in the performances in Yıldız Court Theater. ⁶²Similar to Dolmabahçe Court Theater, several names are offered by the researchers for Abdulhamid's theater in Yıldız

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Şakir, Z. "Yıldız Tiyatrosu" *Resimli Tarih Mecmuası*, March 1954: 2972-2974.

Palace. While Kuban⁶³ mentions the name of the Italian architect Raimondo D'Aronco; Metin And claims that the architect of the structure is Yanko, the son of Vasilaki Kalfa.⁶⁴ However, the architect of the structure is mentioned as Vallaury- who has worked with Raimondo D'aronco during the construction of the structures inside the Yıldız Palace Complex- by Ziya Şakir.⁶⁵ The capacity of the theater is for one hundred and fifty people and it is reserved only for men.

2.4 Yıldız Palace Complex



*Fig. 2.9: Yıldız Palace and Hamidiye Mosque. An example for Yıldız Palace's inorganic and separate planning.*⁶⁶

⁶³ Kuban, D. *Osmanlı Mimarisi* pg 666

⁶⁴ And, *Türk tiyatrosu Tarihi* pg 69

⁶⁵ In his article, Ziya Şakir mentions several plans that are brought from Paris and Vienna. Abdulhamid examines all of the plans one by one and chooses the most suitable one according to him. Şakir claims that the architect of the plan is not known but the applier is the court architect Vallaury. (*Yıldız Tiyatrosu*, 2973)

⁶⁶ Library of Congress: Abdülhamid II Collection
<<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/ahii/>>

While Dolmabahçe Palace offers a strong relationship with its environment and visualize the paradigms of the nineteenth century by offering close ties between Dolmabahçe Mosque and Court Theater both in terms of space and architectural language, Yıldız Palace act more like a 'complex' with its detached structures rather than offering a unity. While the structures have an individual and separated understanding of existence that situates on a large area, the theater could not find a detached identity among those individual structures. Yıldız Court Theater's situation and relation with other structures completely contrast with Dolmabahçe Court Theater. Despite to Dolmabahçe Theater's strong identity that situates freely in front of the Dolmabahçe Mosque, Yıldız Court Theater represents a less strong architectural existence. Naturally the spatial conditions and the strength of existence go hand in hand with the Sultans' interest to the theater as the patrons of the complexes. While the individual structures of Yıldız Palace were distributed to a large they do not offer any visual contact with the city. The visibility of the structures merged itself to the landscape and the monumentality was only represented by the high walls of the entrance.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ Çelik, Z. *The Remarking of Istanbul: Portrait of an Ottoman City in the Nineteenth Century*. The University of California Press. London: 1993. pg 132-133



Fig. 2. 10: Interior of the conservatory of the imperial ceremonial palace Yıldız⁶⁸

2.5 The duality of being visible and invisible

This idea of invisibility finds its reflections stronger in the second Court Theater of the Ottoman Empire. Despite to the free, monumental, authentic, clear and open entity of the Dolmabahçe Court Theater, Yıldız offers a more private, oblique, limited and hidden structure. According to the plan of the second court theater, the two third of the theater is occupied by the parterre and stage.⁶⁹ So, when the scale of the theater and boxes are thought together with the restrictions for the audiences; the aim of an isolated family theater becomes more visible.

⁶⁸ Library of Congress: Abdülhamid II Collection
<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/ahii/>

⁶⁹ And, *Türk Tiyatro Tarihi* pg 96

Abdlmecid's ambition for idealizing a role model as a theater audience by inviting the foreign guests, non-Muslim subjects and high-level members of the army with their wives to every performance leaves its place to a theater that satisfies the taste of the members of Palace. Hence, the Court Theater starts to be more isolated and less inviting for the foreign visitors except the fests. In this context rather than the Italian architect D'Aronco who gets closer to the European style in Yıldız Palace complex, a Levantine architect who is known as the most authentic interpreter of the Ottoman and Western styles Vallaury seems closer to the general aim of the theater that starts to gain a more traditional meaning and appearance. On the other hand, Batur sees a kind of continuity through the architectural languages of Chalet's additional building that is designed for Wilhelm the second and theater.⁷⁰ However, this kind of continuity is not visible when the Yıldız Court Theater is thought with the former existence of a court theater like Dolmabahe which sends stronger references to the European Opera Halls. On the other hand, Dolmabahe Theater Hall does not only appear more European in terms of appearance but also shows a much more innovative perspective. The short life of the first Palace Theater brought many new things to the life of Istanbul. Even an exhibition is made here. The first Turkish drama *air Evlenmesi* by inasi is written in order to be performed in this theater. In 1863, the theater had a fire and its interior is partly burned and never recovered. Then it

⁷⁰ Batur, A. "Art Nouveau". *Dnden Bugne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi*. İstanbul: Trk Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 1993. pg 330

is used as tobacco depot and destroyed during the arrangement of Ayaspaşa, Dolmabahçe road.⁷¹

2.6 Imperial Boxes

Similar to the sultan box of Dolmabahçe Court Theater, the situation of the box in Yıldız also emphasizes the existence of the Sultan inside the space but try to protect his privacy at the same time. For the case of the Sultan who stands in the middle of the whole picture for the State, the issue of visibility and invisibility carries a dual and controversial meaning. The introduction of the boxes instead of the galleries is a great change in the architectural language of the theater buildings in the seventeenth century. However, it cannot be named as an innovation due to the earlier existence of the theater boxes in during the sixteenth century. Not the structure but the meaning of the compartments, separated by wooden panels, starts to change in the seventeenth century. They start to serve for the clerics, noblemen and council members. In other words, compartments start to be the property of the ones who can afford to pay more for them. Therefore during the late seventeenth century tiers of boxes started to be known as the better class seating and become the property of those who had paid.⁷² The continuity of the boxes inside the court theaters represents an interesting case. Actually for the case of the court theaters the totality of the structure acts like a private box. This

⁷¹ Umur, S. “Dolmabahçe Saray Tiyatrosu” *Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi*. İstanbul: Türk Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 1993. pg 96-97

⁷² Pevsner, Ibid. pg 71-72

insistence on the privacy is not an extra-ordinary issue for the case of harem. However, for the Sultan's box, it is not possible to think about the disturbance of his security or privacy by the limited number of guests and artists invited by the Sultan himself. Hence, it is not possible to claim the dominant existence of the Sultan's box purely stem from the need for the security and privacy. On the other hand, the difference in the scale and the appearance of the boxes can be depended on the essential conceptual differences between the two court theaters inside the Empire.

Rather than standing for the level of royalty or richness, the difference between two Sultan boxes may refer to the level of the openness and publicity of the theaters and touch to the issue of security and privacy partly. While Yıldız Theater as a whole, acts more like a box; the sultan's box inside the theater remains more representational rather than functional when the function is defined as the protection. The main attention remains on the parterre and stage due to their dominant scale. On the other hand, Dolmabahçe Court Theater's Sultan box offers a larger area and ante-room for the Sultan. The monumentality of the outer space goes on inside the Sultan box and this situation supports the idea behind the establishment of the theater. It is clear that while Abdülhamid thinks about a family theater which suits well to the general structure of the court theaters, Abdülmecid aims to act as a role model and organizes a detached theater in the new center of the capital.



*Fig 2.11: The photograph of the façade of Dolmabahçe Court Theater at the end of nineteenth century.*⁷³



*Fig 2. 12. The Sultan box and theater boxes of Yıldız Court Theater.*⁷⁴

⁷³ Library of Congress: Abdülhamid II Collection
<<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/ahii/>>

⁷⁴ Bilgin, B. Ibid. 72.

Piermarini's design in Milan can be evaluated as the climax for the boxes. The Theater *Scala*, the largest theater ever, stands as a kind of turning point for the Italian theatrical architecture. This theater which is designed by Piermarini and built during the years of 1776 and 1768 is financed by the box- holders. This issue leads the opportunity to decorate and furnish the boxes and ante-room according to the owners' tastes. ⁷⁵While the general style of the theaters starts to appear in Baroque with the rise of the opera, conflicts against the functionality of the Baroque designs appears. Francesco Milizia who starts a war against Baroque, criticizes boxes and their function inside the theater. He finds boxes bad for seeing and hearing and claims that they make serious listening and high-art examples impossible. ⁷⁶In this case the question of visibility reappears in another way for the court theaters. In practice, a box that is paid by the owner and decorated according to his taste should be comfortable and suitable enough to evaluate the high art examples of theater. However, when a part of the construction aim of the box becomes turning the box into a stage that should be followed and watched by other audiences rather than the stage itself; the baroque boxes seem ideal with their refulgent appearances. For the case of the Sultan, his box that situates in front of the stage show some parallels with the functional meaning of stage. Sultan as the patron of the theater, the most prestigious audience, owner of the Palace, ruler of the State and as the caliph becomes limelight when compared with the artists on the stage. His mimics, reactions, dislikes and appreciations are the center of the whole issue and more important than any play, actor or decor for all

⁷⁵ Pevsner, Ibid. Pg 74.

⁷⁶ Ibid. Pg. 80

of the audiences. Therefore it seems like for the case of the Sultan box, the main concern of the architect is not being able to create a suitable space for following the high art products in an effective way but represents the stage-like allurements and dominance of the box inside the court theaters.

2.7 Morality and Boxes

Besides the functional deficiencies, the theater boxes refer to the ideas of hiding the personality and activities inside the boxes. For Milizia, besides its being bad for seeing and hearing, they are also immoral.⁷⁷ Actually the morality of the theater is a popular debate starting from the later middle ages. In all European Countries, drama actually started in the Church and moved into public. However, in 1574 the theater is forbidden essentially for the moral danger arising out of unchaste, uncomely, and barefaced speeches and doings. Therefore, theater started to be seen as the activity that leads to the corruption of the youth, and other enormities. In a preacher in England in 1578, the theater called as 'a show place of all beastly and filthy matters'.⁷⁸ Four centuries later, similar reactions are visible from the religious people and layman inside the Ottoman Empire. As it has mentioned, those criticisms are not only for the ones who deal with theater or the ordinary audiences but for the Sultan himself as well⁷⁹. While the whole

⁷⁷ Pevsner, Ibid. pg 80

⁷⁸ Ibid. Pg 69.

⁷⁹ Eventhough the name of the newspaper and date is not mentioned, both Sevensil and Gerçek mention about a declaration. In the declaration a group of people claim that 'Padişahın böyle levh ü lûb mahallerine devamının nazar-ı millete hoş görülmediğini ve zat-ı hareketin de münasip

management mechanisms of the Empire starts to gain a more rational aspect, Mufti's opinion still has its strongest effect on the social life. The abundance of the rules which focuses on 'forbidding' rather than regulating takes the attention.⁸⁰ Similar to the rules that tells how to sleep, eat or clean; the rules on theater also focus on restrictions. However, Sultans strongly believe in the necessity of Westernization. Therefore theater means something more than performance or leisure activity for them. Hence, their belief in theater provides a kind of security for the people who are dealing with theater in any way and prevents the possible reactions that may come from tyrannical ideas.⁸¹

Sultans who believe in the necessity of Westernization become passionate audiences and patrons of the theater structures. However, as it has mentioned, the source of this interest stand as a questionable debate. It is not possible to determine that the reason of the interest to the theater is a result of personal tastes of the Sultans or their conceptualization of theater as a necessary part of the protocols of the modernization era. No matter what the reason of their interest is, it certainly works for the legitimization of theater inside the Empire. Their being the patrons and the audiences of the theater at the same time prevents the possible tyrannical activities. However, as it has mentioned this process was not an easy

ve vekâr-ı şâhâne ile kabil-i telif olamaz'. (Türkiyede İlk Tiyatro Ne Zaman yapıldı?, 139) (Dolmabahçe Tiyatrosu, 178)

⁸⁰ Kayra, C. *Osmanlı'da Fetvalar ve Günlük Yaşam*, İstanbul: Boyut Yayınları, 2008. pg 131.

⁸¹ Sultans believe in the necessity of the theater but also aware of its political power on the people. Hence, they want to use this political power for the sake of the Empire and try to prevent the spread of opposite ideas. Therefore sometimes theaters are seen as the means of the realization of political aims and closed and destroyed. For instance Şark Theater not only closed but the structure is destroyed because of the celebrations for Nalbatyan. On the other hand Asya Kumpanyası that is also celebrating the same event is not closed and just ignored. They were performing politically tricky plays like Machbeth of Miserables in Naum but the Palace was just ignoring rather than closing. (Osmanlı Tiyatrosu, 45)

one and the decision of building a theater in front of a mosque stand as a highly radical attempt that also stand as a role model for the Şehzadebaşı area as it will be discussed in the following chapters. Despite to the strong wind of changes inside the Empire there were negative reactions for the modernization ideals and the new habits that started to give a new shape to the daily life. Even the sultan's attempts to form a role model as a theater audience seem useless for the legitimization of the theater as quick as they hope. As a result court theaters offer a softer transition by creating a more isolated space inside the palace complex.⁸² On the other hand, it is not possible to think about the Empire that is sublimated from the repressive rules that is defined by the Sultan as the caliph. As it is seen, one interesting point in this sense is the rules' getting stronger than the Sultan's own initiative and taste in some situations.

The leisure time activities are an indispensable part of the Palace. Even though the history of the performance arts depends on the earlier centuries of the Empire, they get stronger and take their place in the social life of the layman with the modernity. As it has mentioned, it is not possible to eliminate the power relations, authority, religious background, changing statues of the minorities, Sultan's personal interests, economic problems, role of Westernization ideals and the multi-layered structure of the Ottoman culture and society while evaluating the court theaters. Even though those variables are valid for all court theaters as it is in the Western prototypes, the applications of those variables inside the Empire give the possibility of translation that saves itself from creating a copy of the

82 Nüzhet refers to the reactions against Abdülmecid's interest and financial support for Naum Theater. Abdülmecid visits the theater every week. A red carpet and special lightening are used during his visits. He has a large and splendid box inside Naum Theater. (İstanbul'dan Ben de Geçtim, 178)

western typology. All of those concepts come together and form a complex architectural meaning that cannot be limited with the construction period, patron or the architect as it is in the meeting of Dolmabahçe Court Theater with the Mosque or Yıldız Theater's fabulous Sultan box that refers to the invisibility of the Sultan. Hence, Ottoman court theaters come up with a unique meaning that cannot be identified with a literal translation of a Western prototype and supplies the authenticity to their architectural language thanks to the unique case of the Istanbul that is still keeping the traditional understanding of the performance arts and start to interpret the social requirements of modernity.

It is not possible to identify all aspects of performance arts with the modernization but on the other hand it is impossible to ignore the importance of it during the establishment of the theater as a 'high art' institution inside the Ottoman Empire. When the emphasis is on the relation between the theater and modernization the major role belongs to the embassies. Besides bringing a new understanding to the leisure time activities of Istanbul; their being the protector of the minorities supply them a larger area for the freedom of expression both in terms of art and architecture. Therefore, while offering important theater activities to the capital, they also encourage the artistic expressions of the minorities. Besides their theaters the communities of the minorities like *Societa Goldoni*, *Unione Dramatica di Constantinopoli* that was established for performing Turkish plays, *Societa Operaia Italiano Armonia*, *Unione Shermistica* are the important communities that were supported by the Embassies.⁸³

83 And, M. *Tanzimat ve İstibdat Döneminde Türk Tiyatrosu*. Ankara: İş Bankası Yayınları. 1972. pg 43-44

2.8 Embassies

The first Embassy was established in 1454 in the capital by the Venetians. In 1475 Poland, 1477 Russia, 1478 Naples, 1525 France, 1528 Austria, 1538 Florence, 1581 England, 1602 Spain, 1737 Sweden, in 1739 Prussia, in 1756 Denmark and in 1740 Sicilians were established embassies inside the borders of the Empire. However, the active participation of the embassies to the social life starts with capitulations. While Pera and Galata start to be the host of the embassies, the population of those districts started to be dense. The growing emphasis and function of the embassies were not only in front of the eyes of the minorities. Throughout the nineteenth century their efficiency in Bab-ı Ali and prestige of the French and English ambassadors were growing day by day for Mahmud the Second and Abdülmecid.⁸⁴

As it has mentioned, Embassies do not only refer to the political ties between the European countries and Istanbul but also stand for the exchange of the cultural phenomenon. While they brought the habits of the European culture to the capital, such as tea parties, dances and balls, they were eager to carry the atmosphere of the 'East' to their countries.⁸⁵ While theaters, balls and other activities that become more common day by day inside the Empire is the one part of the exchange, paintings and photographs are the interesting representations for the presentation of the Ottoman culture. Actually this fascination started with the sixteenth century when diplomats had their portraits painted wearing Turkish

84 Sakaoğlu, N. "Elçilikler" *Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi*, İstanbul: Türk Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 1993. pg 149-150

85 Ibid. pg 150

costume. With the growing demands, some of the Istanbul embassies started to have employed artists to do paintings and drawings of Turkey, Middle East and Egypt. Naturally those were not only for self- exposition but especially for the satisfaction of the curiosity of their friends in Europe. Hannavy evaluates this situation as the beginning of orientalism and takes attention to the exaggerations and distortions ⁸⁶ Maybe it is possible to talk about a kind of realism in the representations of the Empire in Europe with the invention of photography but naturally breaking the frames of the image that was shaped centuries ago thanks to the paintings was not possible easily.



Figure 2.13: “Kaiser Wilhelm II”. Artist: Max Fleck 1916 in German Embassy in Istanbul ⁸⁷
 This picture stands as an example for Hannavy's claim with the depiction of the ambassador with a fez.

⁸⁶ Hannavy, J. *Encyclopedia of Nineteenth Century Photography*. New York: Routledge, 2007. pg 1036

⁸⁷ See http://www.istanbul.diplo.de/Vertretung/istanbul/tr/02/KanzleiResidenzTarabya/Generalkonsulat/Bildergalerie_Generalkonsulat.pageIndex=1.html. 05. 08.2010

Lewis mentions that diplomats were actually acting like travelers. Ambassadors were the ones who were able to get some more detailed information about the capital and have possibility to carry them to their own cities. This kind of relation depends on the times of Byzantine Empire and Venetians who formed resident communities. The recognition of the Consul of the Venetians in Constantinople by the Byzantine government as the head of the Venetian community was the beginning of the residential embassies inside the capital.⁸⁸ This cross-cultural exchange that started centuries ago was also visible in the architectural language. Embassies and the artists who were appointed to the European embassies in Istanbul were one of the important means that supplied a kind of architectural interaction between the Ottoman and Renaissance Italy.⁸⁹ While the architects who come to the capital started to be fed with the capital's architectural language, their styles on the embassies made *Grand Rue de Pera* a European inspired urban artery. The embassies that competed with each other in terms of monumentality (and started to be named as Palace) have played a crucial role in the construction of the neo-classical language of the quarter. Pera's landscape was dominated by the large gardens, often attached to the religious and educational facilities. Çelik claims that their overwhelming identity was highly effective in the architectural style of the other building types like hotels, cafes, restaurants and theaters.⁹⁰

88 Lewis, B. *Babel to Dragomans: Interpreting the Middle East*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004. pg 144

89 Ali O., Essa A. *Studies in Islamic Civilization: The Muslim Contribution to the Renaissance*. London: Cromwell Press Group, 2010 pg 237

90 Çelik, Z. *The Remaking of Istanbul: Portrait of an Ottoman City in Nineteenth Century*. USA: University of California Press, 1993. pg 133

The embassies impact on the life of Pera cannot be limited with the formal background of the architectural language. The activities that impressed the formation of such a style like the dances, balls and theater is started to be recognized more and more with the existence of the embassies. During the *Tanzimat* Period, Embassies brought a kind of recognition to the capital for the European theater and dramatic literature. The reformist approach of the Sultan Selim the Third is a turning point for the formation of such recognition. Starting from the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries foreign embassies were presenting plays like Corneille, Moliere or Montfleury.⁹¹



Fig 2.14. The view of German Embassy in 19th century.⁹² An example for the monumentality of the embassies. The structure is easily recognizable thanks to its large scale and strong stylistic expression

91 Halman, T. 'Introduction', *İbrahim the Mad and Other Plays: An Anthology of Modern Turkish Drama*, ed. By Halman, T. , Warner, L. New York: Syracuse University Press, 2008. pg 18

92 See http://www.istanbul.diplo.de/Vertretung/istanbul/tr/02/KanzleiResidenzTarabya/Generalkonsulat/Bildergalerie_Generalkonsulat.html 04. 08.2010

Several reasons give rise to the popularization of theater as a leisure time activity. Most of the Embassies are the important audiences of the plays and give important clues about the plays and general theater aura with their diaries. The other side of this relationship- the diaries of the Ottoman Embassies who were abroad- was also important. For example, Yirmisekiz Mehmet Çelebi's observations on a performance in Paris carry great importance in order to understand an Ottoman's reaction to the opera. He declares his astonishment for the technology that was used during the performance and high expenses that was paid by the government. He mentions that the audiences were mostly consisted of the elites and the setting of the performance was 'a palace that was built specifically for those performances'.⁹³

Embassies are one of the most important means of the popularization of Western theater in Ottoman Society with their theater halls. Nearly every Embassy has its own space for the performances. Especially the theater of French Embassy is important but not for its being a smaller prototype of the Theater Farnese in that becomes a role model of every theater building with its horse shoe shape and framed stage in 1619 by Aleotti. Similar to all other theater structures inside the borders of the capital, its authenticity stem from its after life and interesting creation story. The French Embassy Theater was planned by Cornelia Magni. Actually he was not an architect and did not want to plan the building. However, the French Embassy Marquis de Nointel told him not to worry

93 Rado, Ş. *Paris'te bir Osmanlı Sefiri: Yirmisekiz Mehmet Çelebi'nin Fransa Seyahatnamesi*. İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2008. pg 52.

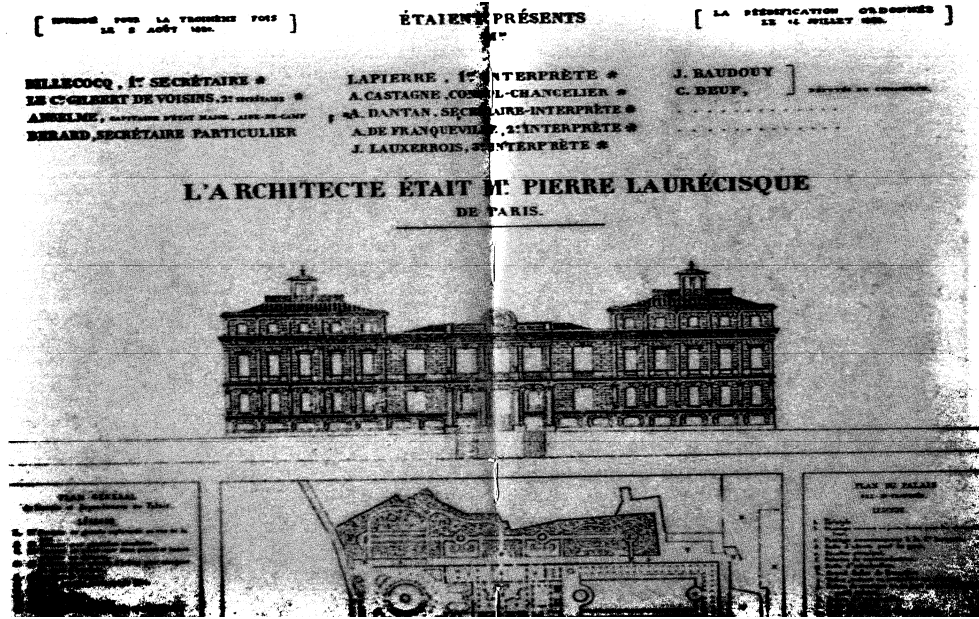


Fig 2.15: The architect's plan and the representation of the French Embassy.⁹⁴

and plan the structure because he thought that there was no one to be able to criticize the structure. As a result Magni accepted to plan the theater building and his building became so popular that everybody asked him how he could plan such a fabulous building.⁹⁵ He explained the inspiration behind his plan was his long examinations in Italy. Actually he mentions that the only place that he visited in Italy was Farnese. As an appreciation of the beauty of this structure many important plays like Macbeth -not only light comedies- were performed in this building. The main attraction point of his plan was the large theater box that was

⁹⁴ Beyoğlu, 1870-2000-Bir Beyoğlu Fotoramalı: Bir Efsanenin Monografisi. İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2000.

⁹⁵ And, Ibid. Pg 39.

designed for the elite guests of the Embassy. Because of the largeness of the private boxes; he made extra seats that surrounded the stage. Besides, he made a special box for women that were sending references to the Ottoman rituals.⁹⁶

While the theater performances of the Embassies were taking attention and becoming a kind of model for the Ottoman elites and Sultans who were allured by the European life style, balls were feeding this attraction by creating theatrical scenes. First ball was given during the reign of Mahmud the Second by the English Ambassador. The ball was inside a ferry in Haliç. It was the first European style ball that the Palace had also attended. After five days the French embassy also wanted to give a ball in order to compete with England. However, as far as the memories of the first ball became famous inside the capital and criticized by the bigot people, the government refused the invitation. An important invitation was given by the French ambassador Tuvenel in 1856. One of the guests of the ball was Abdülmecid who had accepted the invitation and attended to the ball surprisingly. Firstly, he had an interview with the ambassador and rested in a room. Paris Congress was a part of their discussion. Then he visited the dancing ball and chat with people. The other Ambassadors also waited for the attendance of Abdülmecid to their balls but this one was the first and the last ball that Abdülmecid accepted to come. In a similar manner Napoleon the third visited the Ottoman embassy in Paris during a fabulous ball. After the Paris Congress in 1856, all of the allies gave balls inside the Embassies.⁹⁷

96 And, M. Ibid. pg 38-40

97 Sirer, M. "Türkiyede Verilen İlk Balolar" *Resimli Tarih Mecmuası*. December 1954: 3567-3573.

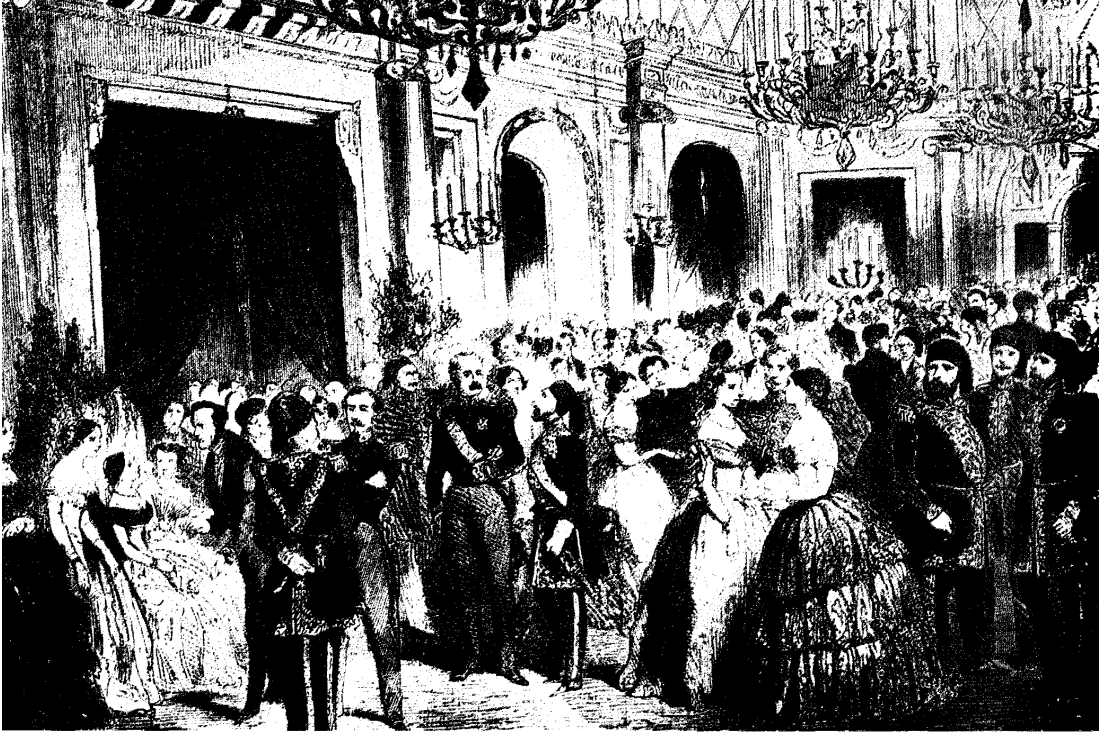


Fig. 2.16: A ball in French Embassy in nineteenth century⁹⁸

The strong physical and cultural existence of the embassies should not be identified with the idea of ‘imposition’. As a result of the growing emphasis of the international relations Ottomans also send ambassadors to Europe. Therefore, as far as the representation issue is valid both for the European and Ottoman parts, the relationship can be evaluated as a cultural and political interaction rather than ‘imposition’ of the West to the Ottoman Empire.

98 Akbayan N., Sakaoğlu, N. *Binbir Gün Binbir Gece: Osmanlı'dan Günümüze İstanbul'da Eğlence Yaşamı*, İstanbul: Denizbank Yayınları, 2000.

CHAPTER III

THEATER IN PERA

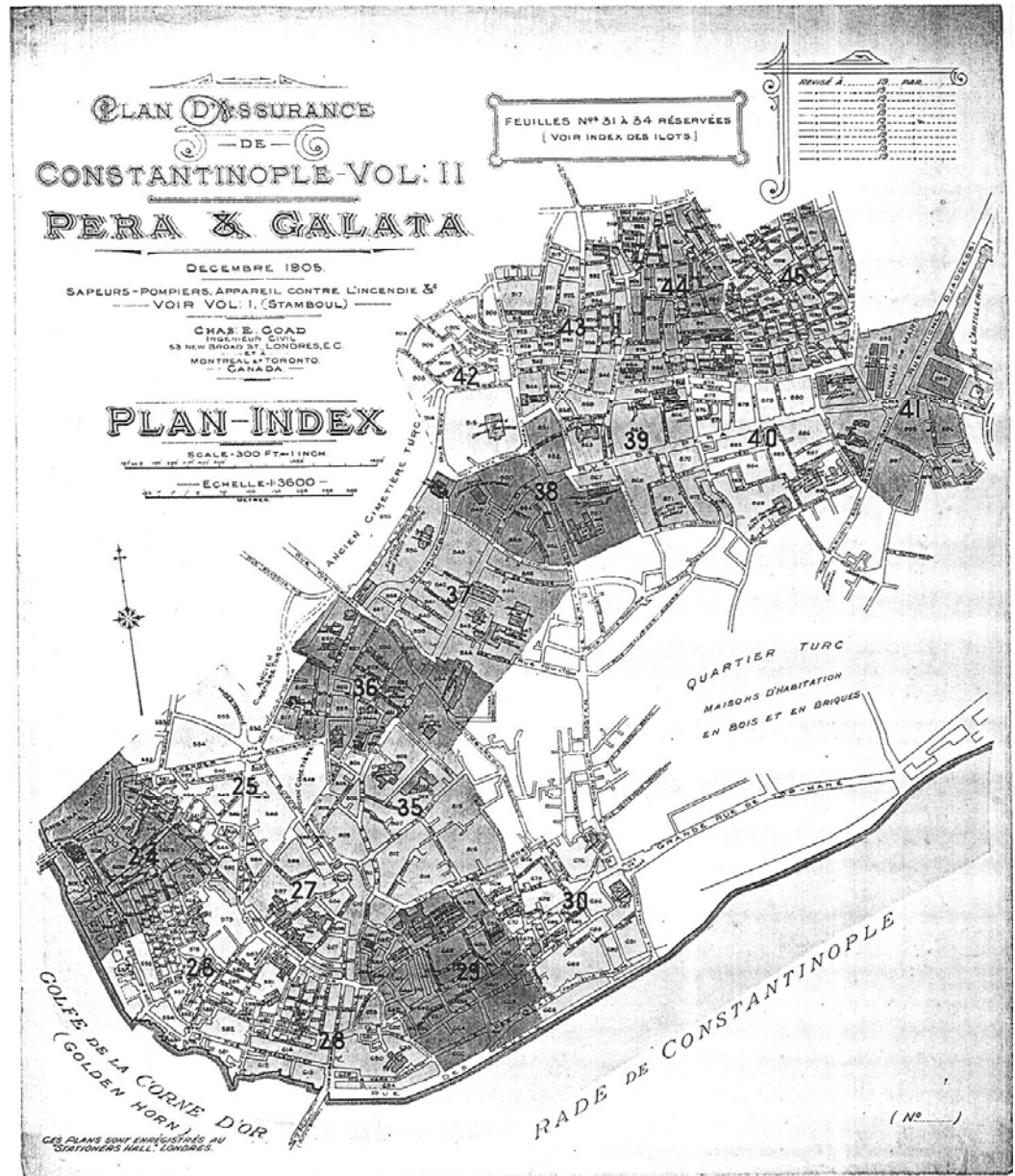


Fig. 3.1: The Goad Plan of Pera and Galata.⁹⁹

⁹⁹ Kubilay, A. Y. *İstanbul haritaları : 1422-1922- Maps of Istanbul : 1422-1922*. İstanbul : Denizler Kitabevi , 2009

It is possible to claim that theater is not the essence of the whiplash aura¹⁰⁰ of Pera and Galata. As it has been mentioned in the previous chapter, theatrical space has already existed inside the Empire in different places and for different aims. On the other hand if any of the theater buildings in Pera and Galata is eliminated; this leads to the undermining of a wide social life and culture that is identified with dances, actors, audiences, *cafés chantants*, beer gardens and singers. Moreover, it is true that similar to hotels, cafes or patisseries; theater has been an indispensable part of not only Pera but also the whole capital. Also it is known that some of the European composers' operas were performed firstly in Pera. Then the question on the reason of this indispensability rises. What makes 'Pera's theaters' special despite to the existence of many spectacular theaters in other European cities or inside the Ottoman Empire? In other words, why the theaters in Pera should not be evaluated as the literal translations of the Western prototypes, despite to the close social, cultural and architectural ties between the European cities and *Pera*? The reason brings us to the essence of the uniqueness of the district besides explaining the special relationship between this multi-cultural space and theater. In this chapter's context, Pera itself appears as a kind of theatrical space, whereas the audiences as the actors and also creators of the space. As it was told in the memories of the Scottish traveler John Reid, rather than the acrobats and jugglers on the scene, he prefers to watch the audiences due

¹⁰⁰This aura that has been started to be formed during the nineteenth century has been defined as 'wiplash' by many authors of the era and contemporary literature. For instance, in *40 Pare Enis* Batur emphasizes the importance of the rigour, violence, and defects besides the harmony and pleasure during the formation of this authentic aura. Ahmet Rasim and Naim Tiralı concentrates the contrast between the people, activities and rhythm of night and day. According to their first hand experiences, the wiplash aura of Pera comes from this contrast. The colorful but harmonious and peaceful atmosphere of the district leave its place to chaotic and traumatic feelings with the night. (*Büyük Cadde* and *Fuhş-i Atik*)

to their being 'as colorful as the rainbow'. The men with knives and guns, many people with several European costumes, Italian and Greek women with gorgeous hats become the decoration and also the leading actors of the theater in Reid's terms. However, the 'climax of the performance' starts with the appearance of a group of women from Harem, who visited the performance with the special permission of the Sultan.¹⁰¹ Therefore, the theater structures in Pera do not appear as the literal translation of the Western prototypes despite to the strong presence of the embassies, minorities and their interaction with their own identities.

As far as the urban fabric is an organic structure that can rise, develop and transform, its creation period never comes to an end. Similar to the urban fabric, buildings- as the elements of this picture- have the same property. They are created as ideas, gain a form and by time changing cultural, environmental or economic parameters end up with the transformations in their form and meaning. Therefore, the after life of a structure which carries the paths of the architect and patron but more importantly stemming from the users, audiences, environment and changing relations of the structure's with those parameters appear as the part that gives the identity to the structure. While the after life of a building makes every kind of structure unique; it also appears as one of the aspects that makes the direct translation of the architectural language from one structure, geography or plan to the other impossible. The after life of a theater structure becomes the indispensable part of it in the scope of this study for two reasons. Firstly, its being the setting of theater; a performance art that is highly in contact with the users and

101Aracı, E. *Naum Tiyatrosu: 19. yy İstanbulu'nun İtalyan Operası*. İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2010. pg 50-51

the viewers of the structure in the personal and social level and acting like a mirror rise the importance of the after life of the theater buildings. Secondly, a theater hall's afterlife in Pera is an important quality of it due to its situating in a space like Pera- which offers a social atmosphere as colorful as rainbow as defined by Reid.¹⁰² Therefore, when the after life of a structure is considered, especially in a cultural mosaic like Pera it becomes the most important part of the creation process of a theater hall. The uniqueness of the theater in Pera does not stem purely from the style of the buildings or the aesthetic understanding of the patrons and architects but directly related with the users of the theater buildings and their contact with the urban structure that is shaped by the multi-cultural understanding. While the multi-lingual style of the urban structure breaks the cliché of a despot Empire and represents one of the most important examples of a vivid, multi-layered and spectacular culture, its reflections on architecture goes beyond the frames of any label. As far as the after life of the buildings is the essence of the uniqueness of Pera, this property emphasizes the undermined factor of user and viewer. This idea puts the user and viewer into the limelight of the theater buildings and changes the whole district into a theatrical space and makes the people on the street as the main actor in the creation of an authentic theatrical space. As far as the importance of the theaters in Pera depends on their direct contact with such a cultural spectrum, this chapter focuses not only to the names of the structures, architects, patrons or building dates of the theaters but aims to reflect the relationship between the theatrical space and people in Pera. Thanks to being the leading actors of the creation of a unique theatrical space, Levantines

102 Ibid. pg 51

and their cultural identity carry the greatest importance in the rejection of a direct translation of the theater buildings from European cities to Pera and Galata.¹⁰³

3.1 Levantine Background

When the after life of a theater structure is considered, social atmosphere which contributes to the formation of the identity of the structure carry a major role. If the social background of the audiences, actors or entrepreneurs who succeeded in creating a theater culture in Pera is taken into consideration, the examination of the district in a multi-layered manner is needed thanks to the multi-lingual aspect of the Levantine culture. The story that goes between the Levantines and Istanbul depends on the tenth century and can be identified as a starting point in the East-West encounters in Mediterranean. As it is mentioned by Rinaldo Marmara, trading communities from Venice, Genoa and Pisa came to Istanbul in tenth century. In 1082, the Emperor Alexis Comnenos gave a district to the Venetians in Constantinople and Italian colonization starts in the right part of Golden Horn in Perama, (the later Bahçekapi, Balıkpazari and Zindankapi districts). However this Italian-Latin identity that was formed in tenth century should not be understood in the same way with the Levantine identity of the nineteenth century. Marmara determines the differences between the Ottoman Latin and Levantine as their quite different life conditions and formers' partly disappearance with the conquest of Istanbul in 1453 by the Ottomans. Also,

¹⁰³ One of the most popular expression of this clishe is formulated by Mithat Cemal Kuntay in *Buhariyi Yaktılar*. He evalautes Pera as the 'unconquered' İstanbul.

contrary to the 19th century Levantines, those people do not have a major architectural production. Their main interest and means of living was trade and they could be evaluated as the people who carry Eastern culture to the West rather than being an agent of the opposite direction. Thus, a part of the Italian-Latin community turned into the Ottoman-Latin community inside the Empire and they can be evaluated as the ancestors of Levantines. However, this relation does not refer to a cultural continuity due to the breaking points in the identity.¹⁰⁴

A group of Latin people who stay and similar to other minorities inside the Ottoman borders obliged to pay jizya tax is named as non-Muslim subjects-*reaya*. Marmara call this group the transitory inhabitants, the ‘Ottoman- Latin’s and emphasizes their different position when compared with Levantines who lives much more comfortable and freely as a result of the existence of embassies. In that case, the major breaking point that supplies freedom and comfort for the Levantine identity is the *Hatt-i Serif of Gulhane*. The First Constitutional Era’s outcomes such as the abolition of capitation tax for the non- Muslims can be evaluated as the subject of the second and the major breaking point that gave rise to Levantine identity. However, neither the pressure that came from foreign countries and resulted in more economic and politic rights inside neither the Empire, nor their relatively good relations with the Muslims saved the Levantine being the ‘other’. It is not possible to guess that if being the ‘Other’ inside the Empire or being called as the ‘Other’ by the people who came from Europe was worse for the Levantine community. Due to their being Catholics and living

104 Marmara, R. *Bizans Imparatorlugu’ndan Günümüze Istanbul Latin Cemaati ve Kilisesi*, Istanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2006 pg 13-28

according to the rules of another point of view were making Levantines and Ottomans the members of different worlds. On the other hand, as it is mentioned by Alessandro Pannuti, the word ‘Levantine’ itself was used instead of *heimatlos*, cheater and fiddler by the European voyagers who come to Istanbul.¹⁰⁵ However, the popularity, economic and political conditions besides the social life that fed the Levantine identity was one of the strongest one inside the Empire which show great effort in order to preserve its fundamentals while forming a new culture with the borrowings from a completely different one. Therefore, their authentic culture including their life style, clothes, art and entertainment understanding become the source of inspiration especially for the other communities inside the Empire but also for the Ottomans who were affected by the European lifestyle with the aura of *Tanzimat*.

3.2 Social Structure

Pera starts to gain new aspects in terms of culture with the contribution of several non-Muslim communities and their gaining wider opportunities in expressing themselves in terms of culture, space and style. The question of the meaning of Pera for the non-Muslim communities can be answered as ‘everything’ and this ‘everything’ concept is explained by Bareilles as Pera's being the spatial ‘abstract’ of the social life of non-Muslim communities. He mentions

¹⁰⁵ Oktay, Nilüfer. “The interview with Alessandro Pannuti about his doctorate thesis :’20. yy.’da İstanbul’daki İtalyan Levantenler” *Milliyet*. 09. 06.2010
<<http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2002/11/07/cumartesi/cum03.html>>

the necessity of visiting Pera if there was a need for finding or meeting with someone, buying a hat or umbrella, drinking a beer or wants to get marry.¹⁰⁶



*Fig 3.2: Pera Palace Hotel and the entrance of Tepebaşı Garden Pub. Two important structures that occupies a large space in Levantine's daily life.*¹⁰⁷

It is true that nineteenth century's political atmosphere give more chances to non-Muslim subjects to represent themselves in the urban fabric. More freedom led to more space and more institutional organizations for the communities. In the late 1900's missionary schools, banks and embassies were dominating the city's skyline. This pressure was felt by the Muslims and they started to give effort for

106 Bareilles, B *İstanbul'un Frenk ve Levanten Mahalleleri: Pera, Galata, Banliyöler*, İstanbul: Güncel Yayıncılık, 2003. pg 44.

107 Akbayer N., Sakaoğlu, N. *Binbir Gün Binbir Gece: Osmanlı'dan Günümüze İstanbul'da Eğlence Yaşamı*, İstanbul: Denizbank Yayınları, 2000.

building a new structure in front of a non-Muslim structure. Therefore, besides the needs of modernity ideas, during this era schools and banks that belong to Muslim community were also built in order to compete with the non-Muslim spatial identity in Pera and Galata. However, the Empire was out of cash and was not being able to establish new schools or support the Muslim investors as strong as Westerns do. As a result, a large area, starting from Pera and Galata, started to be covered by the Western institutions with a stylish architectural language. Monumental structures like embassies followed by the residential architecture and the ambassadors started to live in houses as gorgeous as the Ottoman Palaces.¹⁰⁸ Hence, in Pera, European communities were meeting with the people who were like them without eliminating any of their authentic existent.

On the other hand, Pera was not only the 'meeting place' of the non-Muslims but also the meeting place of those communities with Muslims. This meeting of the cultures was giving rise to a new culture because each part of the society has possibility to find a common point and compromise while entertaining, shopping or eating. 'Standing and living together' became the main aim of every single culture and the cultural mosaic offered a very colorful picture: The cafes and grocery stores were Rum, the fashion and door plates were French, the styles of the coats were English, beer gardens were German, the fiestas and serenades were Italian and Spanish whereas the red fez, night guards and porters

108 Bareilles, B. Ibid. pg 45-46.

were Turkish. So all those elements were leading to a multi-lingual social language and all of the theaters carry the effects of this multi-lingual life.¹⁰⁹

3.3 Borders of the District

In a district that is shaped with the contribution of a society like Levantines who cover a large variety of languages, cultures and habits, any definition always seem incomplete and ready to be changed. Similar to many blurred characteristics of the area, even the borders of Pera can be defined in many ways. The most common one is determining Pera as the district that covers the streets of İstiklal Caddesi and the street itself, between Tünel and Taksim¹¹⁰. However, as Koçu mentions it was not possible to define the borders of Pera exactly, due to the complex structures of the streets that find an end finally in Grand Rue de Pera. He offers a less deterministic definition and defines the district as the area that situates behind Kasımpaşa, Fındıklı, Galata and Tophane. However, the complex topography and the changing borders due to the rapid growth of the city were leading the determination of the exact borders to ambiguity and left up-and-down definitions.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. pg 35-38

¹¹⁰ Akın, N. “Beyoğlu” *Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi*. İstanbul: Türk Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 1993. 212

¹¹¹ “Beyoğlu” *İstanbul Ansiklopedisi*. İstanbul: Tan Matbaası, 1958. pg 2703

3.4 The name of District

Another blurred issue on Pera appears as calling the district as *Pera* or *Beyoğlu*.¹¹² As it has mentioned by Arkan, the name of the district is another matter of debate in today's discourse. Calling the district as Pera rather than Beyoglu started to refer to the Western pressures on Empire whereas Beyoglu stands for Turkish roots of the district.¹¹³ When today's discourse was left aside and concentrated on the historical meaning of the name 'Beyoglu', Fatih Sultan Mehmet's conquest of Trabzon appeared as the beginning of the story. The last Emperor Komnenos and his family were taken as prisoners and Fatih tried to finds a settlement place for them. They settled in Pera and integrated with the Islamic culture. Emperor's son Aleksios became a Muslim and lived in today's Tünel district for a long time. Thanks to his close and sincere relationship with people; he started be called as 'Beyoglu'. Thus, the name Pera turned into 'Beyoglu' and the former name started to be forgotten¹¹⁴.

3.5 Urban Structure

In a district that pushes the limits of every kind of definition and frame, urban fabric and architectural language naturally follows the same path. However, this idea should not be evaluated as the synthesis of styles or eclecticism. Similar

112 In this thesis the district is called as Pera without referring any Ottoman, Republican or Western point of view but considering the cultural parameters of the nineteenth century.

113 Arkan, Ö. *Beyoğlu: Kısa Geçmişi, Argosu*, İstanbul: İletişim, 1989. pg 18

114 Koçu, R.E. Ibid. pg 2703

to culture, the district follows its own rhythm and rules during the creation of space. The formation of spatial characteristics of the district depends on the seventeenth and eighteenth century but mostly take its strongest characteristics from the architecture of nineteenth century. As Akin claims in the first decades of 16th century, Pera was a place with full of gardens. However, this ‘garden-city’ turned into a settlement area for the non-Muslim European communities during 17th and 18th centuries. The dominant structure of the period was the embassies and they gave rise to the birth of the parishes. It is known that, during the nineteenth century, this open- space area transformed into a secluded area with its narrow and dirty streets. Unfortunately, this problem was not tried to be solved by the government. However, Istanbul was a city that had high catastrophe risks because of earthquakes and fires. Thus, the problem solved naturally and the 1831 fire destructed the area and gave rise to new and more ordered streets ¹¹⁵. It is known that the 1831 fire destructed the left part of Galatasaray whereas the 1870 fire led to the growth of the northern part of the street and the street started to be named as ‘*Cadde-i Kebir*’. Important structures like Naum Theatre and English Embassy were destroyed during this fire as well. The main reasons of the fires were the timber dominated architecture, narrow and dead-end streets besides the strong winds of the capital. After the fire, a new understanding of restructuring that was also including the residential spaces appears. Besides the embassies, the houses of the rich Greeks, Catholics and Armenians and some of the hotels were

115 Akin, N. Ibid pg 212

made up from stone were built and the district started to gain a new life and architectural style with the use of stone and new building typologies.¹¹⁶



Fig. 3.3: Fire in Pera.

3.6 Architectural Language

Naturally foreign and Levantine architects gain a popularity thanks to be able to form a cultural transition beside the spatial one. While the new cultural

116 Birsel, S. *Ah Beyoğlu Vah Beyoğlu*, İstanbul: Sel Yayınları, 2002. pg 6-9

necessities started to be satisfied with the new building typologies; those typologies came up with inexperienced architectural languages during the nineteenth century. In the era of the economic and political decline, the rapid growth of the entertainment structures identified with the new styles like Art *nouveau* and Neo classicism. Due to the rapid changes in the capital of the Empire like the changing demography, raising effectiveness of the transporting, import, export and being a port, the variable needs of the demography and the capacities to satisfy those needs began to increase. While the traditional social structure lost its power day by day, a new bourgeoisie started to appear on the streets. The raising bureaucracy, Levantine bourgeoisie and their specialized needs started to be more important than the former centuries, with the decreasing economic and political power of the Empire. Fashion, communication and art changed into a need rather than luxury in Pera.¹¹⁷

With the rituals of this new life style, new spatial needs appeared. Istanbul started to offer new job facilities for construction. The necessity of the foreign architect may rise from those increasing needs or from the need of a Westernized language inside the urban fabric. This opened the roads to the Western architects from the 18th century. *Hassa mimarlar Ocagi* or *Sanay-i Nefise Mekteb-i Alisi* or a few Ottomans who went to Europe for their education were not enough to satisfy the needs of the empire that grows rapidly.¹¹⁸ Foreign architects like Krikor and

117 Batur, A. "Art Nouveau Yapıları" *Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi*. İstanbul: Türk Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 1993. pg 327

118 The author does not refer to Ottoman's architects not using the Western styles inside the urban fabric. Similarly I also beware of such a generalization that threats Art Nouvea or neo-classicism as the exported styles besides ignoring Ottoman Baroque or authentic neo-classim in Topkapi Palace.

Garabet Balyan, Smith, Melling, D'Aronco and Fossati Brothers besides the Levantine ones like Vallauri and Mongeri start to form a different language that started to appear in schools, hospitals or government buildings and also theaters. The urban architecture started to gain a different language with the contribution of several styles and architects who were transforming their own style from several nations. Batur claims that during the formation of this new language and fabric, rather than becoming invisible; Eastern and Islamic style appeared still strong and contribute to the unique language of the architectural language of the nineteenth century¹¹⁹

3.7 Theater in Pera

3.7.1 French Theater

According to the information in *Bir Beyoğlu Fotoromanı* the first theater building in Pera was known as the French Theater which was built in 1827 and rebuilt in 1831. It was closed in 1906 and torn down in 1920.¹²⁰ And claims that this theater belonged to an Italian entrepreneur named as Giustiani. It was an Italian style theater with a horse-shoe plan. It had six floors and twenty six theater boxes that were for eight people. The theater did not have any balconies or galleries. It opened up to a large parterre. Gold and velvet dominated the decoration. After a while a rectangular ball room with galleries that were carried by eighteen columns was added to the theater. There existed a large salon at the

119 Batur, A. Ibid. pg 328.

120 *Beyoğlu, 1870-2000-Bir Beyoğlu Fotoromanı.: Bir Efsanenin Monografisi*. İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2000. pg 127

center of the building and its entrance was made by glass. Hence, it started to be named as Palais de Cristal starting from 1861. The ball room was leaded by a corridor that was lightened by sixteen oil lamps. On the left side there exists another room for dancing, a kiosk and a smoking room.¹²¹ Therefore, it is possible to claim that Palais de Cristal has an aim of satisfying the every aspect of social life in Pera. It represents all aspects of a theater hall with additional facilities that addressed to the rising social demands and variety. An ordinary day in Pera starts in a cafe goes on with shopping and ended up with theater and dance. In the social atmosphere of the district none of those activities were less important than the other and a theater hall could not have remained in the frames of theater but appeared as performance and leisure time space. The transformations of a theater hall from its classical definition to a recreation area, the new concepts in the social atmosphere were the main determinants. While the varieties in social life started to be richer, the activities gained new meanings and aims. For instance, dancing could not be defined only as ‘dancing’ in the nineteenth century’s Istanbul because it was standing at the heart of social relations. Dance nights were reminding the English balls and becoming the most widespread and significant entertainment style in Pera. Besides, the charity balls were the most important and beneficial way of supplying money for the schools, hospitals or asylums. Orphans, homeless old people and poor people were becoming the subject of the public spirit during those nights and dances were turning into the source of hope without expecting anything from the government.

121 And, M. *Tanzimat ve İstibdat Döneminde Türk Tiyatrosu: 1839-1908*. Ankara: İş Bankası Yayınları, 1972. pg 200

Bareilles mentions that if there were not any dances in Pera, most of the schools would be closed or most of the hospitals would not be able to accept any patients because everyone in the nineteenth century's Ottoman setting was trying to survive by him or herself ¹²². As far as having a theater is an important part of business during nineteenth century, the different demands of people are tried to be satisfied by the entrepreneurs. Thus new habits of the new social life of the local people gave rise to the several translations of the theater typology. As it is in the example of Palais de Cristal, those changing demands and needs of the society stand in the middle of the creation of a theatrical space and may give rise to essential changes in the plan of the structure.

3. 7.2 *Varyete Theater*

While the social life transforms and gains new meanings, this transformation finds its reflections in the urban fabric. The rising popularity of theater becomes the essence of the change in some structures. For instance, circus that covers a large area and becomes an important leisure time activity starts to leave its place to theaters as it is in Varyete Theater. The theater that situates in Halep Bazaar, at the end of the Halep Gate was established instead of Circus Theater that started to lose its popularity. This large space that was planned for a circus was changed into an opera hall- Theatre Cirque de Pera. When the owners of the area got the permission to use the circus as the theater the dome was eliminated and wide windows were built. However, problems like lightening or the odor of the horses that remained from the circus days could not be managed

122 Bareilles, Ibid. pg 73

and they got worse during the summer time. Therefore Varyete asked for permission from Ridvan Paşa in order to use Tepebasi Theater during summer. In 1904 the theater who was directed by Raminez was renovated and added seventy theater boxes. Those changes were designed by Ramon and theater was planned to be active during six months in the beginning. However, groups performed here for eighteen years. During the widening *Campanaki* designed a new and wider door for the theater and changed the facade.¹²³ Those enlargement operations and renovations despite to the planning of the theater as a short-term structure could be explained with the disappearance of Naum and keeping the growth of the demands for a social life like Naum Theater offers. As it has mentioned by Akin, with the disappearance of Naum in 1870, a social gap in Pera's entertainment life had occurred. She claims that Varyete that belonged to Lamberger brothers became one of the theaters that could fill this gap.¹²⁴

123 And, M. Ibid pg 212

124 Akin, N. 19. *Yüzyılın İkinci Yarısında Galata ve Pera*, İstanbul: Literatür Yayınları, 2002. pg. 259

3.7.3 Naum Theater

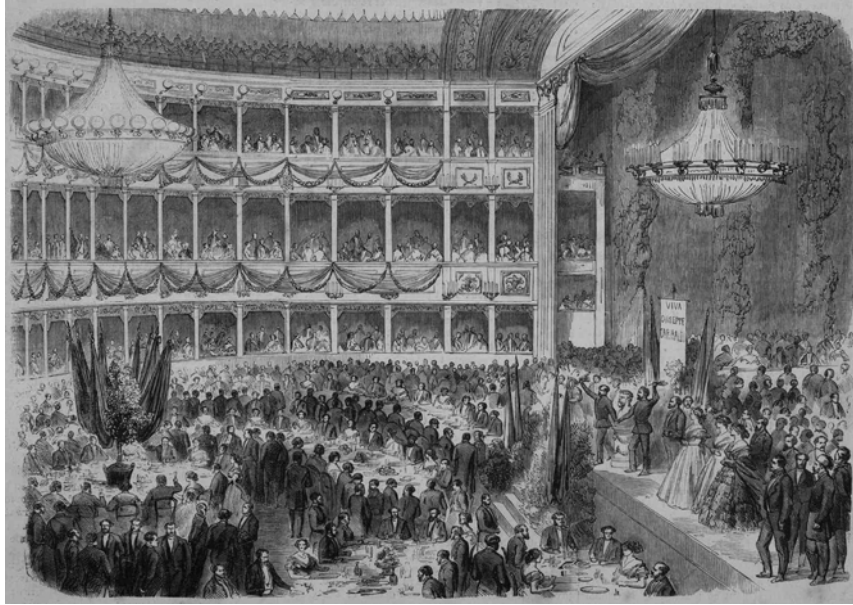


Fig 3.4: A celebration for the honour of Garibaldi in Naum Theater.

As it is understood from Abdülmecid's emphasis and the growing importance of theater as a leisure time activity; Naum occupies a large place in the social life of the nineteenth century. Mihail Naum and Yusuf Naum, two entrepreneurs who were aware of the rising popularity of theater wanted to build a structure. However, the first Naum Theater was converted from a crib but gains great popularity despite to the lack of the acoustics and comfort that a theater must have. In 1844 the first version of the theater was built as a timber construction. Selim Nüzhet Gerçek claims that this structure was built thanks to

the insistence of Russian, French and English ambassadors and accepted by Abdülmecid as a result.¹²⁵

However, Palace's affinity on theater and other arts have already started and go on with a growing sympathy during the reign of Abdülmecid as it has mentioned in the earlier chapter. The structure situated inside the Hristaki Passage and started to serve for a large group of people. When the capacity of construction was thought to be small and a new structure was started to be planned; the building was burned up during the fire of 1846.¹²⁶ The third and the most mature architectural expression of the theater belong to the year of 1848. After the destruction of the Second *Naum*, Mihail Naum contacted with the government and asked for material support. Actually from the first day of its establishment Naum was supported by the government. In 1842 the theater had ten years of license and exempted from taxes in 1862. The theater re-opened in 1848. It was for one thousand and five hundred people and its entrance situated on the main road. Therefore, the structure does not isolate itself from the theatrical atmosphere of Grande Rue de Pera and does not exclude the people on the street. The theater carried the classical properties of an Italian design as a reflection of the condensed political relations between Dolmabahçe and Venice Palaces. The horse- shoe planned saloon had a large parterre and three floors boxes around the stage.

125 Gerçek, Selim Nüzhet, 'Uc Naum Tiyatrosu', *İstanbul'dan Ben de Gectim* Kitabevi, İstanbul, 1997. pg 188

126 Ibid. pg 188

Verdi's Il Travotare was performed in Naum before Paris. The theater was disappeared at the end of 1870 fire.¹²⁷

The original plan of the structure and the interior design were made by Gaspare Fossati and Giuseppe Fosatti. The main shape of the plan was rectangular and consisting of three main parts. The facade consisted of two colonnades and four pilasters. A square planned foyer, a parterre that consisted of three floors with horse- shoe plan and a large rectangular stage was the important interior elements. Thus, the entrance consisted of two floors whereas the parterre and the stage part consisted of four floors. The two floored entrance part had a symmetrical approach because both of the floors have three circular belts and they gave rise to three openings. At the base, there existed two pilasters and two colonnades. The colons were Ionic at the base whereas they gained a Corinthian style in the first floor.¹²⁸

As it has mentioned theater occupied the largest place of the social life of Pera and Galata for a long while. The theater's opening ceremony announced the start of the entertainment season for the winter. Italian groups who came from Italy and lived in Istanbul were the inalienable actors of the theater. Besides Naum's being a Catholic Armenian made him to support the Armenian groups and rent the theater for the Armenian Community's celebrations. In 1862 of 15th May *Journal de Constantinople* announced that the theater would be closed for three

127 Büyükcinal, F. *Bir Zaman Tüneli: Beyoğlu*, İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2006. pg 167

128 Akın, Ibid pg 257

years for the renovation. Despite to the theater's reopening after two years; the death of Duhani brought the theater to a financial crisis ¹²⁹

3.7.4 Elhamra Theater

It is clear that Naum brothers' success encouraged the other entrepreneurs. Their success and popularity not only within the Armenian community but also inside the Palace and whole Pera announces the legitimization of theater as a business and entertainment activity. Therefore, the number of theaters starts to increase rapidly as a result of demand and supply relations besides the support of the government. The places of old theaters were occupied by the new ones thanks to the rising number of audiences, groups and entrepreneurs. Therefore, the important and popular architects of the era who live in Istanbul started to be more active in the construction of theaters. Elhamra Theater which was opened in 1871 and burned down in 1874 left its place to another theater hall. In 1875 Barborini planned a theater with two storeys and balcony. ¹³⁰The dominated colors inside the theater were white and gold and it was lightened by sixty oil lamps whereas the stage was lightened by two hundred and eighty oil lamps. The entrepreneur was Giordon and the theater was planned to be named as Verdi but announced as Eldorado

129 Ibid. pg 258

130 This theater should not be confused with the theater and cinema hall inside Elhamra Passage that was built instead of Palais de Cristal.

in 1877 with the changes in its shape. Then in 1897 it appeared as Verdi and finally announced as Odeon.¹³¹

3.7.5 *Café Des Fleurs*

During those years which was full of new spatial organizations, rather than building distinguished examples of theater architecture, creating a theatrical space by changing gardens or open spaces into theater started to appear more. One of the examples of this populist view was *Café Des Fleurs* that belong to the entrepreneur Scribe. The complex consisted of a theater building and a garden that is a cafe-concert. It has a special space for *Karagöz*.¹³² Therefore, the entrepreneur's aim of keeping every part of society together without realizing a large amount of investment find its reflections in this garden theater. Different groups like the ones who want to watch a *Karagöz* performance and drink beer while listening to music come together in the same leisure space. Besides the existence of a specialized place for the *Karagöz* performance can be evaluated in two ways. Firstly it gives the impression of theaters' in Pera getting popular among the Muslim subjects. Secondly, it gives the idea that *Karagöz* was a popular performance art for the non-Muslim community. Both cases show the theater's not being a literal translation and not a copy of the Western prototype that cares about its local cultural parameters.

¹³¹ And, M. Ibid. pg 212

¹³² Ibid. 205

3.7.6 Şark Theater

The idea of 'a performance cafe' in the modern sense can be identified with other examples like Café Oriental. The space was organized as a cafe and turned into the theater thanks to the Armenian Community.¹³³ The efforts of Hekimyan, Ekşiyan and Güllü Agop and positive reactions from the Palace and people encouraged others. Hence, Altundaryan brothers rent Café Oriental that situated in the place of Tokatliyan. The building that was built in 1859 named as Şark Theater and performed only one Armenian play in 1862. Due to political, financial and language problems besides the Catholic and Gregorian tension, the theater was closed. The ones who were not satisfied with the money went to Izmir and established Vaspuragan group. Later Magakyan established a group who perform in Turkish in Şark Theater. However, he could not keep the group together and some of the members started to act in Ortaköy-Hasköy Theater. As far as the performances were in Turkish and did not refer to political issues; palace helped the theater to keep it alive.¹³⁴

Altundaryan Brothers appeared as one of the important theater entrepreneurs of the nineteenth century. After Şark Theater, they established another theater which is named as Şark Theater again. They destroyed the Alcazar Theater and built a new one instead. The entrance of the theater was decorated with marble and bronze statues. Rather than the thick columns that were hindering the visibility inside the theater boxes, thin iron columns were used. It had two exits that led both the *Grande Rue de Pera* and to the back street. It was lightened

133 Akın, Ibid. pg 261

134 And, M. *Osmanlı Tiyatrosu: kuruluşu, gelişimi, katkısı*, Ankara: Dost Kitabevi, 1999. pg 42-44

with oil lamps and the theater had a kiosk and a smoking room.¹³⁵ However, for this new theater they could not gain the support of the Empire due to the rising political tension. During the years of 1866 and 1867 The Empire was against the Şark Theater. During those years, Sivaciyan started the realist approach in Armenian theater with his plays that were inspired by the daily life of the Armenian people. During the celebrations of the death anniversary of nationalist writer Mikael Nalbatyan, the theater was decided to be closed because of having political aims.¹³⁶ The building was torn down during the construction of the street railway and in 1884 and a new theater was built on the land that belonged to Armenian Church by Aznavour.¹³⁷

3.7.7 Talimhane-Croissant Theater

Another interesting transformation of space belongs to *Taksim Talimhane-Croissant Theater*. It was opened as a cafe in 1860's but originally this large arena was used as a drill field of *Topçu Kışlası*. It was covering such a large area that when it was turned into a theater hall the capacity was for two thousand people.¹³⁸ It had mobile circular curtains in order to prevent the sound and dust that came from the launching area. However, similar to the other transformed spaces this area could not be evaluated as an example of theater architecture. The dust and noise were never prevented and due to the largeness there was lack of acoustic

¹³⁵ And, M. Ibid. 210

¹³⁶ And, M. *Osmanlı Tiyatrosu*. pg 44-46

¹³⁷ And, M. *Tanzimant ve Istibdat Döneminde Türk Tiyatrosu*, pg. 209

¹³⁸ "Talimhane Tiyatrosu". *Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi*, İstanbul: Türk Tarih Vakfı. Pg 88 Yayınları, 1993.

quality.¹³⁹ Alcazar Byzantin, American Alcazar and Tracadero appeared as the other theater halls that were famous with women singers, sailor audiences and fights.¹⁴⁰ Therefore, theater in Pera cannot be framed with famous Naum and with its Italian style architecture, Italian operas and actors besides the elite audiences. Theaters in Pera always come up with surprising varieties, spaces and audiences. It breaks the rules and shows that even inside the most European part of the Empire, theater as a culture, does not imitate and translate the Western point of view as a copy. While representing the most sophisticated examples of Italian style as it is in Naum; it also violates the forms of Italian theater architecture and creates theatrical but not architectural spaces.

On the other hand, as far as it is known, Pera does not have a traditional performance space like the coffee houses. In this case, the outdated and cliché question re-appears: Does it mean that Pera is an imitation of Europe that stems from its synthesis with the Eastern culture when it was necessary? It is clear that this kind of reading of Pera leaves its place to a wider and more meaningful discourse and gives up the anxiety of incapacitating an empire to the labels like 'east', 'west' or 'synthesis'. Naturally, elimination of such questions refers to many other cultural theories and requires a deeper and more specified research on Pera; that cannot be fulfilled in the scope of this study. However, at this level, it is beneficial to mention that during the evaluation of the spatial organization of entertainment we need to get rid of that kind of anxiety. This clarity will open the road to the realization of Pera where stands for all of the changing and blurred

139 And, *Tanzimat ve Istibdat Döneminde Türk Tiyatrosu*, 209

140 "Talimhane Tiyatrosu", *Ibid.* pg 205

definitions of the nineteenth century and does not need and suit any framed and harsh conceptualization.

3.7.8 Concordia- Jardin des Fleurs

Concordia also appears as a part of the esteem changing the gardens into the performance spaces. It situates on the opposite of French Theater where the Church of St. Antoine exists today. During the winter theater situated on the street and a summer garden theater existed behind it. In 1871 Ricci and Parmegiani planned a theater for this space. The stage was so small that only five or six people could perform together. It became a cafe- concert in 1886. In 1904 the director Livadas made some changes but in 1906 it had built down and the church of St. Antoine was made instead. ¹⁴¹

Before the year 1871 the theater carries the properties of a *café chantant*. After turning into a theater, important performances like *La Traviata* was shown here. ¹⁴². It is a garden that includes a pub, a summer and winter theater. In 1871 this area was turned into a theater hall and started to be the performance hall of a series of comic opera by Ricci and Parmegiani in order to compete with the Palais de Cristal. In 1874 the hall was burned completely and the next year another building was built. The summer theater was consisting a stage was raised on simple timber columns and simple curtain decorations. The garden was designed according to the baroque understanding with the geometric shapes and covered

141 And, Tanzimat ve İstibdat Döneminde Türk Tiyatrosu, 206

142 Akın, Ibid. pg 263

with a fabric tarp. Even though French artists and plays were performed here, they were mostly the ordinary comedies rather than the artistic performances.¹⁴³

In 1882, a pub was opened which was suitable for community celebrations and national fests. Greek musicians were playing here. In 1886 the winter theater was recovered and turned into a *café-concert*. The owner of the theater, Malia Andreas was using the advantages of the minorities and opened a casino here. In 1904 the director Livadas changed the entrance that was turned into a timber construction, heightened the timber foyer of the stone building and add seats. In 1906 all structures inside the garden was destroyed for the construction of the Saint Antoine Church.¹⁴⁴

3.7.9 Tepebaşı Summer and Winter Theaters

As the essence of transitions and translations, Pera always appear with interesting breaking points. While an Armenian theater, Concordia, appears with the possibility of turning into a Catholic Church as it is in the example of St. Antuan; a Muslim cemetery can turn into a theater inside a garden. Even though the cemetery areas can refer to the excursion spot generally, it's changing into a garden and than into a theater garden still reflects the vivid understanding of modernity inside the Empire. Actually, for the case of the transformation of the cemetery area to a garden theater, rather than functional, it is possible to observe a formal change. Rather than planning a leisure time space according to the needs of modernity, the change can be evaluated as a formal necessity at the first level

143 Durudoğan, S. "Concordia Tiyatrosu". *Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi*, İstanbul: Türk Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 1993. pg 439

144 Ibid. pg 439

due to the areas having one of the most beautiful scenes of Istanbul. *Grand Rue de Pera* which starts to gain a more domestic face with the rising number of stone structures started to seek a kind of empty point with a picturesque landscape. Therefore, while the cemetery area offered a sacred space for the rituals of the dead body for the Muslims, the same space had already becomes a ‘promenade’ area for the non-Muslims. Hereby, the same space brings the different religions, languages and people together as it is in the example of theaters. As it had mentioned in the memories of a French noble, choosing a cemetery area for promenade was an uncommon way of performing a leisure time activity. However, not only the non-Muslims but also the Muslim subjects, despite to the idea of the sacred body, was using the area for the picnic or chatting.¹⁴⁵



Fig 3.5: The representation of the garden and theater.¹⁴⁶

145 Gülersoy, Ç. *Tepebaşı: bir meydan savaşı*, İstanbul: İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediye Başkanlığı Kültür İşleri Daire Başkanlığı Yayınları, 1993. pg 13

146 Gülersoy, Ç. *Ibid*

While an interesting contradiction happens between the people who attend to the ceremonies and enjoying the landscape, the spatial meaning of the area had already started to change due to the variety of functions. The formal change started at the end of 1850s. As it has already mentioned in the previous chapters, Crimean War came up with many departures. The French Band which started to play on the little roof of the cemetery area was one of those inexperienced ways of leisure. With the regular attendance of the minorities to those mini-concerts a *Jardin* culture starts to appear here, near the Muslim cemetery.¹⁴⁷ The year of 1871 was the time of the construction of a very interesting tramway and an interesting way of using the remaining soil from the digging of the tunnel. However, the creation of a regular garden and a theater inside depended on the year of 1872, when Abdülaziz wanted the construction of a theater from Guatelli Pasha. Abdülaziz who was mostly attracted by the performances depending on imitation, supported the traditional Turkish art mostly. Therefore, when the Sultans were considered in terms of their artistic interests, he was famous with his ignorance of Dolmabahçe Court Theater and Western theater as it was mentioned in the previous chapters. However, according to a letter that was written by Namık Kemal to his brother, the Sultan wrote a play and it was performed in the Palace. Besides he kept visiting the opera performances in Naum after the fire in Dolmabahçe Theater. Rather than reconstructing the structure he preferred to watch the play from a temporary stage in the garden of the Palace. The year of 1867 and his visit of Vienna could be evaluated as the start of Abdülaziz's interest for the Western theater. The Austrian Emperor *Franz Joseph* invited him to a

147 Ibid. pg 10-13

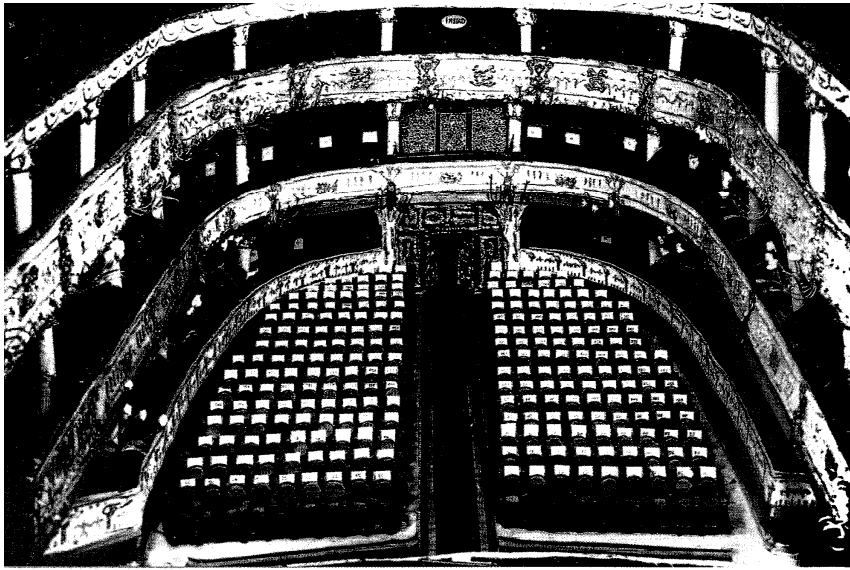
performance about the failure of the Ottoman army in Vienna. Abdülaziz, who became sorry about this performance, did not mention anything to the Austrian Emperor but when he turned back he ordered a play about the Vienna to the artists of *Muzikay-ı Humayun*.¹⁴⁸ As a result of his rising interest for the Western theater and maybe because of the lack of a monumental theater structure after the destruction of Naum the theater was decided to be built despite to the limited space and budget. During the search for a suitable space, the cemetery area was chosen because of its covering a large space and violating the picturesque scene of the structures that were started to be more and more popular in Tepebaşı. While the decision of the destruction of Muslim cemetery area was an example for the inefficiency of the Sultan, a larger area started to be created with the usage of the left-over soil from the tunnel in 1874 and 1875. Finally, in 1881, nothing had remained from the Muslim cemetery area. A promenade area with a Parisian look besides an English garden and an Italian theater started to appear in the same space.¹⁴⁹

As it has mentioned, similar to the other theaters, the authenticity of the theater does not only depend on its architectural language but stem from its architectural understanding that is shaped by the different conceptualization of the modernity inside Pera. While the modernity offers a new understanding of management to the Empire, it is possible to identify Pera and Galata as an experiment space for the new applications. The Sixth Municipality; which was including non-Muslim subjects besides the Muslims, started to offer a different

148 Cezar, M. *Sanatta Batıya Açılış ve Osman Hamdi* İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları, 1971.pg 89-91

149 Gülersoy, Ibid. pg 29-30

kind of urban understanding with a series of new plans and regulations. One of the first applications was against to the fatal destruction of the fires. The Municipality demanded the static maintainability of the buildings and conditions to strengthen the constructions if it was necessary.¹⁵⁰ Therefore, an Italian theater which was decided to be built according to the decision of Guatelli Pasha on the Mezarlık Street was required to be a stone structure. However, similar to the some of the ideals and ideas of modernity, the stone buildings remained as a thought rather than application due to the financial crisis. Barborini's expensive and monumental plan was eliminated due to the fiscal reasons.¹⁵¹



*Fig 3.6: The amphitheater after the reconstruction.*¹⁵²

Naturally, during the construction of a theater on the Muslim cemetery

150 Akın, Ibid. pg 264

151 And, Tanzimat ve İstibdat Döneminde Türk Tiyatrosu, 205

152 Gülersoy, Ç. Ibid.

area, the only possible problem was not the fiscal one. Metin And mentions that with the announcement of the construction of a theater on the cemetery area; the oppositions started to appear not only on the streets by the Muslim subjects but also inside the government and press.¹⁵³ Despite to the oppositions, Mr. Blauque, as the head of the municipality, supported the idea of a theater on the cemetery area. He made an agreement and the soil that was left as a result of the construction of the Tunnel was used in order to fill the high slope and supply a suitable position for the construction of the theater and garden. He planned to carry the soil that was left from the Tunnel's construction and filled Tepebaşı with this soil and supply an amount of money for the construction of the theater. However, this money was not enough and in order to convince the rich people to subscribe money for the theater, he made the gypsies to abide in this place. Hence, the disturbed aristocrats donated money and he financed the park and theater with this money. Metin And tells about his doubts about this story due to some non-overlapped dates.¹⁵⁴ However the construction story of the garden was told in the same way in the memories of one of the most important people in the Ottoman theater. Ahmed Fehim who could know the story from the first-hand also tells about the brightness of Mr. Blaque in solving the main problems in Pera in an effective and practical way by telling the same story.¹⁵⁵

153 And, M. Ibid. *Tanzimat ve İstibdat Döneminde Türk Tiyatrosu*, pg 206

154 And, Ibid. pg 206-207

155 Alpman, H. K. , *Ahmed Fehim Bey'in Hatıraları*, İstanbul: Tercüman Matbaa, 1977. pg 22-23

As it has mentioned the structure was decided to be planned by Barborini. However, this large and expensive project was decided to be replaced by a smaller and cheaper one that belonged to Housep Aznavur. Even though the plans of the theater could not be found; the theater attributed to him. He was a London born Armenian architect who lived in London for a long time. Then he came to Istanbul with his father who was established a janissary museum in London. The same year he was sent to Venice and in 1876 he attended to Rome Fine Arts Academy. He was graduated with the Valore mansion and known as the winner of a competition that was planned for the construction of a villa while he was a student. After his graduation in 1879 he turned back to Istanbul and stayed there until the First World War. He went to Egypt; worked and died there.¹⁵⁶

Barborini planned a horse-shoe shaped parterre and two stored theater boxes around it for Tepebaşı Winter Theater. The facade was an example of neoclassicism with its Ionic head plasters, three arches and a parapet at the end.¹⁵⁷ Actually the building was planned as a part of garden that would be used during the summer time. However, due to the effect of the hot weather and the bad isolation conditions of the theater; this building was used as the winter theater and another garden theater was built for the summer.¹⁵⁸

156 İbişoğlu, V.S. “Tepabaşı Yazlık ve Kışlık Tiyatrosu”. *Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi*, İstanbul: Türk Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 1993. pg 511

157 Kuban, D. *Osmanlı Mimarisi*, İstanbul: Yem Yayınları, 2007. pg 666

158 And, Ibid. pg 206



Fig 3.7: The view of the facade of the winter theater.¹⁵⁹

An opera improviser named Cladius planned the summer theater in the beginning of the summer of 1889. However, the stage was extremely far away from the audiences who sat at the back. It consisted of four theater boxes, had a small foyer and seven different roads led to the stage. Stairs and floor were timber and lodges situated near the foyer entrance. In 1890 the theater was burned.¹⁶⁰ After the fire, Cladius was in a deep financial crisis and wanted help from the French ambassador. According to the information in *Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi*, the ambassador accepted to help and until the end of the reconstruction, Cladius' group performed in the winter theater for a month. In 1892 a tunnel which led directly to the main road was added to the plan.

159 Gülersoy, Ç. Ibid

160 And, Ibid. pg 208

Another change was made in the entrance door. In 1905 the entrance door directed to the Glavany House rather than Kallavi Street. The author of the plan was Campanaki who was also enlarged the theater to one thousand and two hundred people. The seats were made by Maison Vesbecker in Paris and the decoration was designed by Leon. Thanks to its amphitheater shape it was known as 'amphi' as well.¹⁶¹

The opening year of the theater coincides with the years that motion pictures started to be popular. The famous film maker *Pathé Frères* sent Weinberg to Istanbul in order to rent this building and converted the theater into *Pathé Cinema*. In 1915, the cinema hall was rented by Charles Varian and until 1924 several investors rented the theater, gave it several names and used as a cinema hall. In 1924 it was started to be used by *Şehir Tiyatroları Comedy Department* and built down in 1958 without any reasons.¹⁶²

The end of *Grande Rue de Pera* reaches to *Galata* and meets with another kind of leisure time understanding. Even with a slight geographical change, the profiles of the audiences, artists and the activities show great changes. *Baloz* which appears as the main space of the leisure time activities of *Galata* could be seen as a parallel understanding of *cafés chantants* like *Concordia* and *Odéon*. Those structures carried the common property of putting the emphasis not only on to the stage but the evaluated the whole space as the stage of the dancers and musicians. As it is told in a story by Rasim, a night that had started in the parterre of *Odeon* went on with the belly dancer's visiting each table and asks for money.

¹⁶¹ And, Ibid. pg 209

¹⁶² Üsdiken, B. “Şehir Tiyatroları” *Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi*, İstanbul: Türk Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 1993. pg 358

While smoking and alcohol accompany to the performances, spaghetti and Gruyere cheese with beer appear in the menu of *Concordia*. Hence, rather than representing the elite high art mood of *Naum*, later theaters like *Concordia* and *Odéon* resembles *Galata's Balozs*.¹⁶³

Meyhane, beer gardens, *baloz* and women dancers had the leading role in the entertainment life of *Galata*. *Arap Yorgi's Şerbethane Baloz* was the most famous one among many ones. *Yüksek Baloz* or *Sakallı Yorgo's baloz* also stood as the important entertainment areas which became the meeting point of performance and entertainment. As far as listening to the musicians and watching the women dancer while eating and drinking were the main activities in *Şerbethane Baloz*, the prices were not so cheap. The *baloz* of Adalı *Yanni* had a distinctive structural approach with its small theater hall which had a parterre for an orchestra of seven or eight people. Maybe as a result of his structural contribution to *baloz* that caused more concentration on stage and allowed more sophisticated performances most of the customers were Greeks, Levantines and foreign sailors.¹⁶⁴

While people are traveling, spreading new ideas to new geographies and contribute to the local culture, it is impossible to evaluate this process as a one-way relationship. Therefore the nineteenth century's *Pera* cannot be evaluated as the setting of the Western typologies but should be considered as the outcome of an interaction. As far as the architectural reproduction cannot be limited with the structuring process and goes on with the ontological existence of the building the

163 Rasim A. "Eski Eğlenceler ve Sazlar" *Resimli Tarih Mecmuası*. August 1956: 503-507

164 Alus, S.M., "Eski Galata'nın Eğlence Yerleri" *Resimli Tarih Mecmuası*. March 1951: 640-642

afterlife of the buildings gains a major role in the examination of them. When the after life of the theater structures are considered it is seen that they do not fit any labels and limitations that were made them a part of the literal translations.

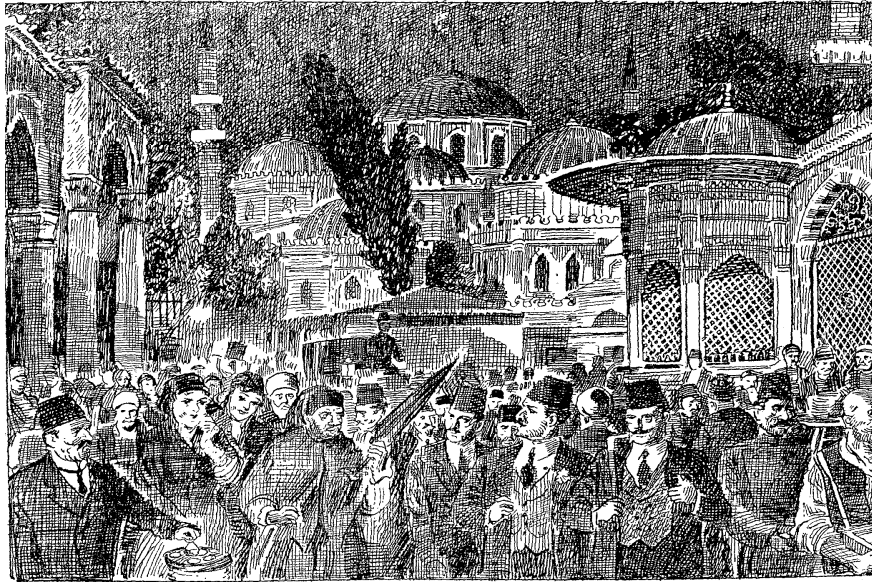
CHAPTER IV

DİREKLERARASI

Improvisation, the most natural expression of human consciousness, stands as the essence of the traditional Turkish theater. The genre that starts with the stories of *meddah* and goes on with *orta oyunu* and *tuluat* does not identify itself with any peculiar built structure. However, this situation should not be characterized with the non existence of an organized performance space. Contrary to this, the improvisational attitude of the artists and audiences that depend on very basic human instincts like curiosity, need for self- expression and entertainment give rise to a genuine translation of the Western style theater typology in Şehzadebaşı. Inspired by the essence of improvisation, the evolution of the theater buildings in Şehzadebaşı follows a very instinctive path. While the streets appear as the settings of the first spatial organizations for the traditional Turkish theater; and lately theater buildings become the performance spaces. While the first stages, the streets and coffee-houses do not refer to any intentional aim of creating a built architectural structure for the theater performances, they still appear as spontaneous spatial organizations. Therefore, the later formations carry the paths of this evolution and offer an authentic spatial organization which speaks in its own language. This chapter focuses on the genuine interpretation of the theatrical space and does not limit the borders of the architectural translation of the typology only with the theater buildings. In the city scale, Direklerarası stands as an example for the spatial organization of the theatrical space on the

street, the district's astonishing meeting with the Şehzadebaşı Mosque represents a unique case that passes beyond the existence of Dolmabahçe Court Theater and Mosque, for the case of the authenticity of the interpretation. Besides many other small and temporary performance areas, Ferah and Millet Theaters make great contributions to this formation in the district similar to Letafet Apartment that acts like a performance complex. As an architectural organization, coffee-house also appears as an interesting performance area that reflects the spontaneous formation of the theatrical space. For this case, Fevziye Kırathanesi represents an evolution process that starts as a coffee-house that becomes the setting for the artistic performances and goes on with a theater structure and cinema hall.

4.1 Ramadan: time for the appearance of new performances and spaces



*Fig 4.1: A view from Direklerarası during Ramadan. A large crowd is waiting in front of the theaters and performance spaces.*¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁵ Şehsuvaroğlu, H. *Asırlar Boyunca İstanbul: eserleri, olayları, kültürü*. İstanbul: Cumhuriyet Gazetesi

The long wars and stressful international politics increased the need for entertainment inside the Palace despite to the dramatic decline of the economic situation. Celebrations like Sultan's having a child, circumcision weddings of the shahzadah's, the marriage ceremony of the sultans or the military success was celebrated with the fests. Those showy celebrations offered a setting for the several leisure time activities like the performances of musicians, jugglers, acrobats and *Karagöz*.¹⁶⁶ Among those celebrations the Ramadan month appear as a flashy ceremony not for the Muslim subjects but also for the non- Muslims, especially for the Armenians due to their having the leading role in the leisure time activities. Therefore, with the participation of many cultures the Ramadan month appears as the most important and restless time period of *Direklerarası*.

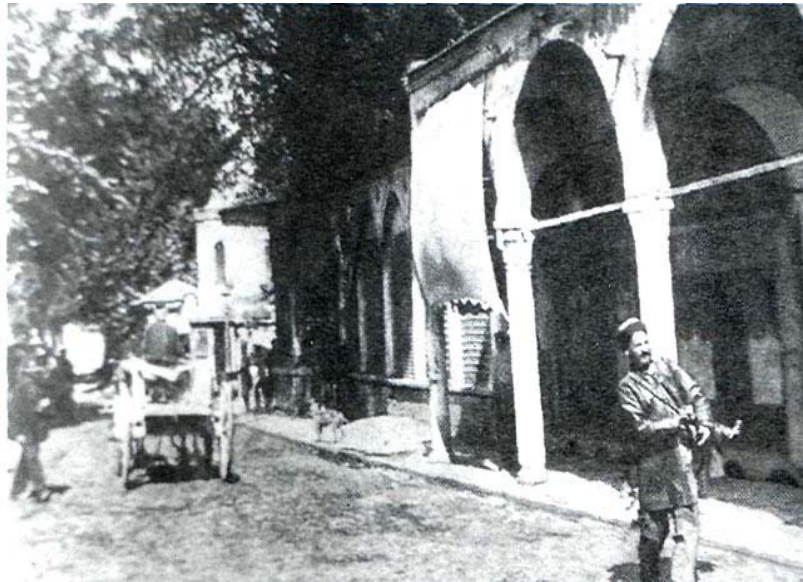


Fig 4.2: The view of arcades together with the road.¹⁶⁷

166 Süha, A. "Eski Şenlik ve donanmalar" *Resimli Tarih Mecmuası Resimli Tarih Mecmuası*. February 1956: 81-88

167 *Toplumsal Tarih Dergisi* September 2007, Number 166.

While the each night of whole month was treated like a fest, Şehzebaşı act like a 'Ramadan complex' that also includes harmonies and ironies in it. The monumental mosque of Sinan was built for the memory of shahzadah Mehmet, the son of Sultan Suleyman who had died in a young age. The name of the Mosque and also district was inspired from the buried heads of the young shahzadahs who were killed and have cemeteries in the courtyard of the Mosque. In front of the corner of the Mosque, *muvaqqit* who set the time for the people and repair watches situates.¹⁶⁸ Hence, the requirement of the modern times, consciousness of time, the Mosque, cemetery of the shahzadahs situates together with the coffee houses, restaurants and theater halls. This chapter concentrates on how the meaning of the theater structures in this district pass beyond their forms and offer an authenticity created by the regional culture and spatial formation of Şehzadebaşı.



Fig 4. 3: The view of the Mosque together with the shops and theaters.¹⁶⁹

168 Tutel E. "Eski Direklerarası Tiyatroya Hasret" *Toplumsal Tarih Dergisi*.: September 2007. pg 65

169 *Toplumsal Tarih Dergisi*, Ibid.

Ahmet Rasim describes one of the performances in a Ramadan night as the meeting point of beautiful, attractive and coquettish Armenian cabaret singers with the rude sailors and the audiences who seek for easy and light leisure time activities.¹⁷⁰ However, similar to the rejection of the pure formal analysis of the theaters in this district; this chapter claims the function of those performances cannot be limited with the middle-class audiences and light plays due to their offering a base not only for the Ottoman theater but also modern Turkish theater. While those theaters become the houses of *tuluat* and *kanto*, traditional coffee houses become as the stages of the story tellers and *Karagöz* players which appear as the genres that give great clues about the Ottoman culture. In a similar manner, most of the Armenian artists contributed to the modern Turkish theater by forming a genuine relationship with the Muslim subjects who want to contribute to the development of theater and appear as the audiences, writers, theater owners and actors. Hence, those genuine performances create their own theatrical space and reflect an authentic leisure time understanding that chooses Divan Yolu, Bab-ı Ali, Direklerarası and Gedikpaşa as the setting. In this period groups like Şems Theater, Minakyan Theater, Abdürrezzak Theater, Benliyan Company performed in Turan Theater, Felek Cinema Hall, Hilâl Cinema Hall, Meşrutiyet Theater, Kagir Theater, Sanayi-i Nefise Mektebi Theater, Sahne-i Musiki-i Osmanî Theater, Bizans Theater, İstanbul Theater, Küçük Kagir Theater, Şark Theater, Millet Theater, Ferah Theater, Malûl Gaziler Theater, Fevziye Kiraathanesi that would appear as the Emperyal Theater and Millî Cinema Hall respectively. Artists

170 Rasim, A. "Altmış Sene Evvelki Tuluat Tiyatrolarında Kanto ve Kantocular" *Resimli Tarih Mecmuası* January, 1954: 35-39

like Kavuklu Hamdi (1841-1911), Abdürrezzak (1835-1914), Küçük İsmail (1854-1928), Naşit (1886-1943), Şevki ve Kel Hasan (1874-1929) performed in those spaces with their groups and companies.¹⁷¹ Actually it is not possible to determine the exact list of the theater and cinema halls in Şehzadebaşı due to their rapid growth in terms of number in the district during nineteenth century. Besides, in most of the sources, the names of the structures with the general aura inside are attainable thanks to the memories of the writers like Ahmet Rasim and Sermet Muhtar Alus. However, as far as the clarification of the information like the architects, plans and the exact dates pass beyond the aim of this study, it is beneficial only to mention that not all of those structures were active during the same decades and their existence cover a time period exceeds the half of a century and had great contributions to the social life of the nineteenth century Istanbul.

4.2 Armenians and Theater

According to a source that was named as “Yeğanak Düzyantyan” that was published in Venice in 1818, there existed 1150 Armenian houses in Pera. After the construction of the monumental Church in Pera this number increased rapidly and went on until the First World War.¹⁷² The Armenian inhabitants' appearance in Istanbul depends many centuries ago. However, as it has mentioned the modernity stands as a turning point for them - as it is for many of the non-

¹⁷¹ Tutel, Ibid.

¹⁷² Pamukciyan, K. *İstanbul Yazıları: Ermeni kaynaklarından tarihe katkılar*. İstanbul: Aras Yayınları, 2002. pg. 180

Muslims- despite to the strong struggle between the Greeks, Armenians and especially between the Apostolic Catholics and Protestant Armenians.

While the Tanzimat reforms supply more space for freedom, it also opens the roads of a higher education level of the minorities that resulted with their self-realization and expression. Similar to other minorities, with the capitulations, Armenians get the chance of a more effective education. With the acceptance of Nizamname-i Millet-i Ermeniyan, those schools were started to be ruled by the Armenians. In 1858 the number of Armenian schools in Istanbul was forty two and most of those schools had important roles in the popularization of the theater with their performance halls. Hence, the newly established schools made Armenians to increase their level of culture; they also offered suitable backgrounds for the theaters.¹⁷³

The Armenian theater between the years of 1859 and 1908 are remarkable during the establishment of Western Style Theater in Turkey. Şark Theater, Osmanlı Theater, Manakyan Theater, Büyük Benliyan Operet Theater, Fasulyacıyan Theater were the most important groups who enriched the Ottoman theater and opened the ways of modern Turkish theater.¹⁷⁴ Therefore, the establishment of Ottoman theater depended on a kind of genuine relationship that was shaped during the nineteenth century. It is not possible to claim that theater was represented in its high-art form in Direklerarası. However thanks to the Armenian artists' real interest and curiosity to this art; its applications- acting, plays, spatial understanding and theater as a business- found the most authentic

¹⁷³ Ibid. pg 7-8

¹⁷⁴ Arpad, B. *Bir İstanbul Var İdi*. Doğan Kitapçılık: İstanbul: Aralık, 2000. pg 46

form inside the capital of the Empire. Therefore, Armenians appear as the leading actors who form a more sincere bridge between the Ottoman layman and performance arts and require a deeper interest in the scope of this study. In this context, nineteenth century appears as a turning point thanks to the freedom it supplied in Armenians' way of representing themselves as the artists, owner of the theaters, actors, actresses or writers.

Even though the starting point of this interest can be explained with curiosity, its strong existence as an indispensable part of Armenian community cannot be clarified only with curiosity. Besides, Armenians integration with theater cannot be simply explained with their need to express themselves artistically. Theater represents a life style for most of them and contributes to their life as business, art, political expression and a leisure time activity. Similar to the encouragement of the success of Naum brothers for the other entrepreneurs, the popularity of theater among the Ottomans became an inspiration. Ottoman society's following the theater as the regular audiences gave rise to new job facilities for the Armenians. After a while this supply and demand relationship created its own artists like Güllü Agop, Magakyan, Atamyan and Fasulciyan who starts to establish their own styles and become a kind of prototype for Ottoman actors. Especially with the great efforts of Agop Vartaryan who had born in Istanbul in 1840, traditional Turkish theater started to form an authentic relationship with the Western theater. He was not famous with his acting performance but famous with the several contributions he made to Turkish theater with his conceptualization and management of his theater. Vartanyan started his career in Şark Theater, that was acting in Armenian and directed by Naum. After

several years Şark Theater started to perform in Izmir, where Vartanyan also moved and went on his career as a director of a new group that was established by young Armenian actors. When he turned back to Istanbul he continued to perform in several plays with Asya Company in Armenian language.¹⁷⁵ At the end of 1868 Güllü Agop was the director of Asya Company and in 1869; Asya Company left its place to Osmanlı Theater. Actually, the group was performing before Güllü Agop and they had already started to known by the people who were bored with the hurly burly life of Pera. Osmanlı Theater was the name of the building rather than the name of the group and the name was started to be used by Güllü Agop for his group after a while. In order to keep the audiences satisfied, they were performing only Turkish plays during the Ramadan whereas performing in Armenian during the Christian fests. Actually, the first performance of the group was in Italian thanks to the Italian educated Sırapyan Hekimyan, and Turkish. After a while, with a special permission they started to act in Armenian in Naum Theater. Due to the financial reasons, performing in Turkish was more beneficial because only Armenians were coming to the Armenian plays whereas both Armenians and Ottomans were watching the performances that were acted in Turkish. Hence he declared his need for the Muslim actors in order to put on Turkish plays and improve the pronunciation of the Armenian actors. Therefore a demand for the Muslim actors and writers occurred and a few Muslim partook in the group. However, this growing emphasis on Turks disturbed the three important actors of the Ottoman Theater: Bedros Magakyan, Aznif Hratça and

175 Çavaş, R. "Agop Vartanyan" *Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi* İstanbul: Türk Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 1994. pg 91.

Bedros Atamyan left Osmanlı theater and declared their opposition to Agop Vartanyan¹⁷⁶

As it is understood from Vartanyan's management policy, he tries to keep the political and cultural balances of the district while trying to satisfy the economic needs of his theater. During his support for the Turkish writers in order to make them to develop an authentic language in theater by putting emphasis on Turkish translations; he also starts to search for the Muslim actors for the correction of the pronunciation of the Armenian artists. Hence Molière becomes familiar with the Turkish audiences, actors and writers with the performed translations of Teodor Kasap and Ahmed Vefik Paşa. For more translations into Turkish and the reproduction of the new plays that were written in Turkish, he started to work with Ebuzziya Tevfik, Director Ali Bey, Recaizade Ekrem, Namık Kemal and Ahmed Mithat Efendi. Several Muslim actors attended to the theater like Ahmed Fehim, Ahmed Necib, Muhterem Efendi, and Mehmet Vamık. With their great efforts, *tuluat*, the new language of the traditional Turkish theater, found its authentic representation with the actors like Kel Hamid, Kavuklu Hamdi, İsmail Hakkı and Küçük İsmail who were performed with Osmanlı Theater. As a result of his great efforts Agop Vartanyan took a privilege that declares Osmanlı Theater's being the only theater that could perform in Turkish for ten years. After the ten years of privilege, the popularity of theater started to decrease with the raise of new groups. He started to work with Minakyan in his theater in Şehzadebaşı. In 1882 Abdülhamid ordered him to work in the Court

176 And, M. *Osmanlı tiyatrosu: kuruluşu, gelişimi, katkısı*. Ankara: Dost kitabevi, 1999 pg 44-48

Theater. As a result of this invitation, he became a Muslim and named as Güllü Yakub Efendi.¹⁷⁷

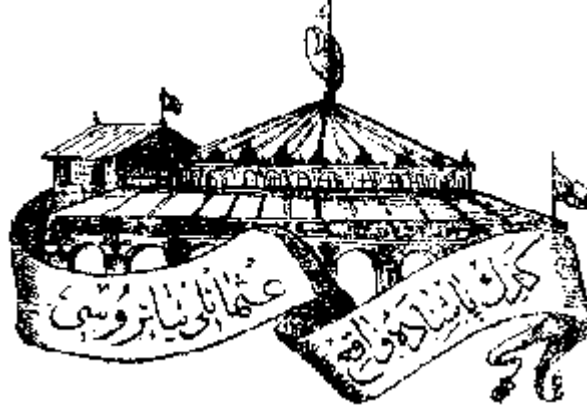
4.3 Gedikpaşa Theater

As a result of Agop Vartanyan's efforts that create an authentic language in Turkish theater, Gedikpaşa Theater as the setting of this unique formation gains a special meaning. The theater was in Gedikpaşa which was situated on the north side of Byzantine's famous Kadirga Harbor. As it is understood from the Byzantine remaining in the district, it was a very old inhabitant area. After the conquest of Istanbul, the district did not lose its popularity and remained as a settlement area. During the 15th and 16th Century the main inhabitants of the area were Greeks and Armenians. The settlement of Armenians in Gedikpaşa was explained in two ways: After the conquest, Fatih invites Armenians from Bursa in order to prevent a possible Rum rebellion. According to some other historians, Armenians who were escaping from Celali Rebellion moved to Istanbul and started to live in Gedikpaşa in the 17th Century. The Polish voyager declares the existence of one of the biggest Armenian Church - Surp Asdvadzadzin Patrick Church- situates near to Gedikpaşa.¹⁷⁸ On the other hand, Kevork Pamukciyan claims that the settlement of the Armenians to this area was relatively late when compared with the other districts like Pera. He mentions the Armenian Church in

¹⁷⁷ Çavaş, R. Ibid. pg 91

¹⁷⁸ Hür, A. "Gedikpaşa" *Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi* İstanbul: Türk Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 1994. pg 388- 389.

Gedikpaşa was built in the middle of the nineteenth century and gave rise to the increasing of the population.¹⁷⁹



*Fig 4.4: The view of the theater which takes attention with its circus-like circular organization.*¹⁸⁰

The popularity of the district starts with the theater's changing here to a kind of culture center.¹⁸¹ Actually the structure was built for the Soullier Circus who came to the wedding celebrations of Cemile and Münire Sultans in 1858 and started to perform in the theaters like Palais de Fleurs . First a temporary theater was built in Maslak for their performances. However, after a while the government decided to support the construction of a theater structure. They bought a place in Gedikpaşa Tatlıkuyu for the construction of a theater in 1859 and established Istanbul Theater Constitution. However, the exact construction

179 Pamukciyan, K. Ibid pg 184

180 And, M. *Osmanlı Tiyatrosu*.

181 Hür, Ab. Ibid. pg 189

date of the theater is unknown due to some news that was published before 1859 about the renovations that were made inside the structure. Besides the performances of the Soullier Circus the newspapers mentioned the lightening of the coffee house and theater with the gas oil besides the pantomime performances. In 1864 Soullier left Gedikpaşa and the building was used by other groups for dance, pantomime, bale and opera.

However, together with the Armenian artist Aramyan who convinced the government in order to support the theater, they rendered the establishment of Osmanlı Dram Company. Then Gedikpaşa Theater became the setting of Osmanlı Theater that belonged to Güllü Agop with some renovations in order to change the space that was designed for the circus performances more like a theater hall. Stepyan mentions the first rehabilitation was done in 1867 and renovated in 1870 without touching to the facade of the structure. The entrance had brick columns and oil lamps that leaded the audiences to the open space. On the left side a salon with good lightning and decoration was situated. Even though the theater had marble columns and stairs the construction was timber. The structure that had three layered lodges was lightened with a big chandelier. In front of the stage, there was Sultan's box with its closed curtains and big scale. On the first floor there were couches and chairs. The stage was extremely big and had lots of rooms behind. The writer Murat Efendi (Franz von Verner) who wrote on theater in the newspaper mentioned the social vividness of the structure with its foyer that situated under a glass porch. In his words a great number of people came here and

drank tea, coffee or hookah. However, despite to the renovations he declared his dissatisfaction about this theater hall because of its still reminding a circus.¹⁸²

The theaters good relationships with the Palace and the government's support had lasted for a long while. However, with the growing emphasis on the security intelligence as a result of the growing paranoia a play named as *Çengi ve Çerkez Özdenleri* found inappropriate due to its emphasizing the rebellion activities. The play brought the end of the structure and the theater was destroyed in 1884¹⁸³

4.4 Urban Structure



Fig 4. 5: The view of the arcades.¹⁸⁴

182 And, M. Ibid. pg 34-41

183 Üsdiken, B. "Gedikpaşa Tiyatrosu". *Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi*. İstanbul: Türk Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 1994. pg 500

184 Toplumsal Tarih Dergisi, Ibid.

In order to understand the structural and cultural dynamics of Direklerarası, the spatial meaning of Divan Yolu, Bab-ı Ali, Gedikpaşa and Cağaloğlu carry crucial roles due to the urban ties that refers to those streets close spatial relationship. Direklerarası situates between today's Vezneciler Street and Şehzadebaşı Mosque.¹⁸⁵ The both sides of the road had stone colonnade arches and the distance between the two columns was approximately five meters. This colonnaded structure of the road was preserved until 1910. Then it was ruined and the tramway road was built instead.¹⁸⁶ The district has important structural ties with Divan Yolu axis and its tracts that give rise to the cultural interactions. Therefore, all of those street's offering several cultural paradigms and forming a multi- centered performance space require attention for the examination of Şehzadebaşı. The district's close connection with the Divan Yolu axis, which was identified with the authority area of the capital but actually offering a multi-layered meaning, the rising popularity of Bab-ı Ali and Cağaloğlu as the center of press and the vivid leisure life of Gedikpaşa thanks to the Osmanlı Theater offer a unique reading of Ottoman modernity.

The main street of the two Empires, Byzantine and Ottoman, can be identified with power relations and national or international policies. However, the axis passes beyond its authority area definition thanks to situate at the center of the relation between Gedikpaşa, Şehzadebaşı and Bab-ı Ali. In this respect Divan Yolu locates between Sultanahmet and Beyazıt today, offers a multi-layered spatial meaning. While the street get narrower contrary to Mese's large and

¹⁸⁵ Tutel, Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Koçu, R.E. "Direklerarası" *İstanbul Ansiklopedisi*. İstanbul: Tan Matbaası , 1958. pg 4478

monumental space conceptualization, it offers wide cultural opportunities by appearing as a tie and give rise to the formation of a multi- centered, multi-lingual and genuine leisure time space.¹⁸⁷

The colorful aura of the axis does not only stem from its situating in the middle of a city scale performance complex. The street itself was the setting of an authentic leisure time understanding. Actually in the 17th century there were no taverns, entertainment and music in the central area. However, the second half of the nineteenth century appeared as a turning point for Divan Yolu thanks to its contributions to the social life. This drastic change was visible in the architectural structure as well. With the street's getting free from the Janissary corps supplied more space for the civil life. Most of the buildings, like the shops and taverns, started to be used by the civilians and a new social life was shaped here. The first signs of the leisure time spaces appeared with the large concentration of tea houses, coffee-shops in which *meddah* and *karagöz* performed. Theaters and cinemas followed them and an alternative performance space was built outside of the Galata-Pera district across the Golden Horn. With the growing popularity of performance arts like *Karagöz* and *meddah*, towards the end of the 19th century the Çemberlitaş-Beyazıt tract of the Divanyolu became the setting of large number of coffee-houses and tea-houses where function like performance spaces.

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187 "Divan Yolu" *Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi*. İstanbul: Türk Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 1993. pg 72

188 Cerasi M. *Divanyolu*. İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2006. pg 74

During the creation of an alternative entertainment and performance space, Bab-ı Ali Street, also starts to gain a different face. Before the Republic the street starts from Sirkeci Square and goes on with a straight hill, Cağaloğlu, until it coincides with Nuru Osmaniye Street. The word itself refers to the management center of the Empire and starts to gain a different meaning as the center of the press and publishing houses after the 1870's. With the changing ideologies and the rise of a new kind of Ottoman nationalism, Young Ottomans start to appear as an opposition to the Levantine culture of Galata and Pera. Contrary to the French and other foreign languages' domination in the newspapers that were published in Pera and Beyoğlu, Cağaloğlu and Babı- Ali becomes the center of Turkish newspapers. The street feeds the intellectual curiosity and ripens the authentic ideas of Ottoman modernity.¹⁸⁹ Hence, it stands close to the government both literally and metaphorically while becoming spatial source of the oppositions to the Emperor. Also as a result of the maturation of the modernity concept of the Muslim Ottoman identity, it represents a cultural response to Galata and Pera.

In his memories Ahmet Rasim tells about the surprising possibility of the meeting of Rums, Armenians, Catholics, Syrian Orthodox, Jews, Italians, Levantines, Polishes, Hungarians, Germans and French besides the Muslims. Similar to Rasim, Cerasi also tells about the cultural dynamism of Divan Yolu axis. Therefore, the spontaneous meeting of those people in the same coffee-house or theater and becoming the audiences of a *meddah* or a *tuluat* offer the most suitable setting for the internalization of the *Tanzimat* ideals. During the growth of a '*Tanzimat* society' on the streets of Divan Yolu; the changing

189 Koloğlu, D. 'Bab-ı Ali' *Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi Ibid.* pg 524

ideologies and new formations gave distinctive functional attributes to the axis. While the retail commerce, Ottoman type leisure activities, housing and religious activities were keeping their existence, the second half of the nineteenth century brought interesting trends. The Tanzimat era people did not meet only with the Western style theaters and cinemas but also internationally linked activities like the dances or concerts started to be popular along the axis. Hence, between roughly 1880 and 1920 Şehzadebaşı tract appear as a kind of *ante litteram* Beyoğlu- Taksim thanks to the centralization of the modernization ideals in this part of the city.¹⁹⁰

While Cerasi defines the Şehzade-Firuz Ağa tract as an *ante litteram* for Pera, actually the district stand as the *ante litteram* of the Dolmabahçe Palace Complex as well. As it has mentioned in the earlier chapter, the meeting of the Dolmabahce Mosque, Dolmabahce Court Theater and the Clock tower stand as an extraordinary visualization of the modernity inside the Palace. However, the genuine representation of the translation of modernity in urban scale situates Şehzadebaşı. The glorious meeting of Sinan's monumental work Şehzadebaşı Mosque and the mosque's *muvakkithane* with Direklerarası where the theaters, coffee-houses and performance areas goes beyond the braveness of Dolmabahçe Palace and gains a second meaning in the scope of modernity as an *ante litteram*.

190 Cerasi, Ibid. pg 65



Fig 4.6: The representation of the view of the colorful aura in Şehzade. In the beginning of 1900s¹⁹¹

4.5 Meddah Orta Oyunu and Tuluat



Fig. 4.7: A orta oyunu performance in Letafet Apartment.¹⁹²

191 Toplumsal Tarih Dergisi. Ibid.

192 Toplumsal Tarih Dergisi, Ibid.

Ramadan appears as the source of inspiration for the leisure time activities at the beginning in Şehzade tract. Ramadan month was the most vivid time of the Direklerarası and many it was the time for the renovations in the important coffee-houses like Şule, Yıldız, Şark and Fevziye.¹⁹³ Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar tells about a huge crowd who were waiting in front of the theaters in order to be able to get inside. He draws a picture of the district starting from Fevziye Kırathanesi. He mentions the impossibility of hearing the violin because of the crowd that was too much even for a large area like Fevziye Kırathanesi. In the corner of Fevziye Kırathanesi a Karagöz performance appeared. A few meters later, a group of comedians acted in front of a large crowd. And after a few meters a group of audiences appeared while watching Dram Kumpanyası.¹⁹⁴ As it is understood, while Ramadan month appear as a kind of performance time it creates a vivid life that can compete with Galata and Pera.¹⁹⁵ Besides the vividness or the crowd of the streets the other important aspect was the popularity of *meddah*, *orta oyunu* and *tuluat* that appear not only as the most popular but also the most authentic expression of Turkish traditional theater.

Meddah was the most popular comedian of the time who appeared on the stage with a scarf and stick. He was the artist who makes people to entertain by telling tales and imitating other people. This art requires a great memory and capacity of taking the attention of people for a long time every night. This

193 Arpad, B. *Ibid.* pg 48

194 Gürpınar, H. R. “Şehzadebaşı Ramazan Geceleri”. *Resimli Tarih Mecmuası*. December 1954: 3551-3555

195 Talu, Ercüment Ekrem. “Şehzadebaşı ve Eski Ramazanlar” *Resimli Tarih Mecmuası*. April 1953: 2185-2188

authentic performance started in the beginning of the nineteenth century but left its place to *orta oyunu* and *tuluat* due to the stories repeating each other and getting boring after a century. The performance of the meddah starts with his appearance on a chair that situates on a high place. He sits on this chair with his props which will turn into several things during the performance. Talu emphasizes that the birth of meddah does not depend on Persian or Arabian culture but appears spontaneously and naturally as a result of the natural need for entertainment.¹⁹⁶ As far as it is not possible to determine the real need for the entertainment and its genuine satisfaction the spatial spontaneity of this artistic performance is not an uprising fact. As far as the satisfaction of the natural curiosity mostly depends on the instinctive actions; the performance of meddah can be framed neither with a written text nor with specialized built environment both for the artist and the audience. As far as the meddah's performance strongly believes in the existence of the moment, any dialogue can be the essence of the performance and it can happen anywhere. Therefore, their spatial understanding which represents a distinct case that cannot be identified with the classical norms of western architecture and requires a special attention due to their representing the genuine translation that goes on with interpretation despite to the lack of a built structure. Rather than building, meddah plans the space according to the spontaneous needs of his artistic creation. Therefore, not the structuring process but the planning strategy of the Western theaters were reinterpreted by the meddah and his audiences again and again in each performance.

196 Ibid. pg 2187

Similar to meddah, the orta oyunu artist also becomes the designer of his performance space. Ahmet Rasim claims that Orta Oyunu describes the life in the Ottoman Empire with its all aspects. (Rasim, 58)¹⁹⁷ Therefore, the setting of the plays can be anywhere- hamam, kahve, meyhane or a house. According to the play the actor changes his clothes and even sex by changing his voice, manners and accessories. Not depending on the degree of the seriousness of the subject; the aim of orta oyunu is making the audience laugh and still works for the satisfaction of the instinctive need of entertainment. Orta oyunu as a genre appear during the reign of sultan Selim and performed for the mentally sick people inside the hospital in order to treat them with music and leisure time activities. While Ahmet Rasim depends the birth of Orta Oyunu to the reign of Selim the Third, Musahipzade Celal tells the same story but depending it to the reign of Sultan Süleyman.¹⁹⁸ Even though its appearance could depend older times, its popularity started during the reign of the murad the third and it also appears in the coffee-houses of Bursa and Erzurum as it is told by Evliya Çelebi.¹⁹⁹

The former name of Orta oyunu was 'Meydan Oyunu' and both of the names emphasize the spatial property of the performance. (Talu, 2722)²⁰⁰ While Italian type of Western theaters draw a distinct line between the audiences and actors by making them face to face but not visible to each other with the help of linear positioning and the height of the stage; Orta oyunu offers a circular

197 Rasim, A. "Orta Oyunu" *Resimli Tarih Mecmuası*. March 1956: 57-60

198 Celal, M. *Eski İstanbul Yaşayışı*. İstanbul: İletişim, 1992. pg 59

199 Talu, E.E. "Meddah" *Resimli Tarih Mecmuası*. November 1953: 2721,2725

200 Ibid. pg 2227

understanding. By putting the artist at the center it makes audiences visible to each other and by annihilating the height difference between the audiences and artist both parts become closer and visible to each other. This designing philosophy of the artist make him to get closer to the aims of audiences and actors: circular positioning grows the possibility of acting together by creating a group consciousness and entertain more as a result. Therefore, the visibility of the audiences to each other gives them to the minor roles of the performance in order to grow their reactions to the main action on the center.

Orta Oyunu could be defined as the three dimensional representation of Karagöz play that depends on shadow. When was replaced by Pişekar, Karagöz was represented by Kavuklu.²⁰¹ Naturally not so much but only two main characters appear in the performance. One is called as 'Kavuklu' and the other is 'Pişekar'. 'Kavuklu' appear as a kind of old inhabitant of Istanbul who is known with his reliability. *Kavuk* stand as a symbol of his statue inside the society. The main dialogue depends on the relationship between Kavuklu and Pişekar but a Zenne, a young girl or an old woman who are all acted by male actors can also appear on the performance arena according to the main theme. As it has mentioned *orta oyunu* neither depend on any peculiar space nor any written text. The spontaneity of the text changes can change any space into a stage. As it has mentioned, together with this spontaneity, circular positioning and the lack of height difference end up with the disappearance of the borders between the audience and artist. However, those borders that were emphasized in the

201 Alus, S. M. "Eski Milli Tiyatromuz: Orta Oyunu" *Resimli Tarih Mecmuası*" July, 1950: 261-267

architecture of Italian style Western theaters results with the destruction of the aesthetic distance which supplies the recognition of the art work by the audience. In this case, as the designer of his own artistic space, the actor uses a prop. Therefore, '*Yeni Dünya*' appears as the main prop that acts like an architectural element that is used in order to create a performance area. Therefore, while creating a *kahve*, *hamam*, a house on the street or a store, *Yeni Dünya* supplies a kind of aesthetic distance to the audiences in order to make them to investigate the nuances of this 'new world'.²⁰²

The transition from the spontaneous performance areas to the built structures can be identified with the decreasing interest to the spontaneity because of improvisation's growing possibility of repeating itself after a while. In this contexts, the artist Kavuklu Hamdi can be evaluated as a turning point in the spatial understanding in traditional *Orta Oyunu* and *tuluat* thanks to his realization of the bored audiences. Therefore he decides to adapt the stories of *meddahs* and *orta oyunu* to the written texts that can be acted on the stage inside a theater building. He decided to change the concept of *Orta Oyunu* that was limited only with one month and no stage. This genre is called as '*perdeli orta oyunu*' and actually does not fit to the spirit of the *meddah* and *orta oyunu*. However, he tried to be faithful to the essence of the spontaneity of the stories while adopting them to the texts. On the other hand he wanted to change some of the plays that were in Güllü Agop's repertoire into the style of *tuluat* despite to Güllü Agop's oppositions. However, those new interpretations gained great success thanks to the appreciation of Abdülaziz who was an audience of

202 Ibid. pg 180-182

traditional Turkish theater. He was invited to the Palace by Abdülaziz but as far as he could not act as freely as he was inside the Palace, he gave up and started to perform with his friends Büyük İsmail, Küçük İsmail and Paçavracı İsmail in 1875. Ironically, in 1882, the loggias of Mehmet Efendi's theater in Şehzadebaşı were collapsed while he was acting. This unfortunate event made him to stay away from the theater buildings for a while.²⁰³

4.6 Coffee-house as the setting of performance

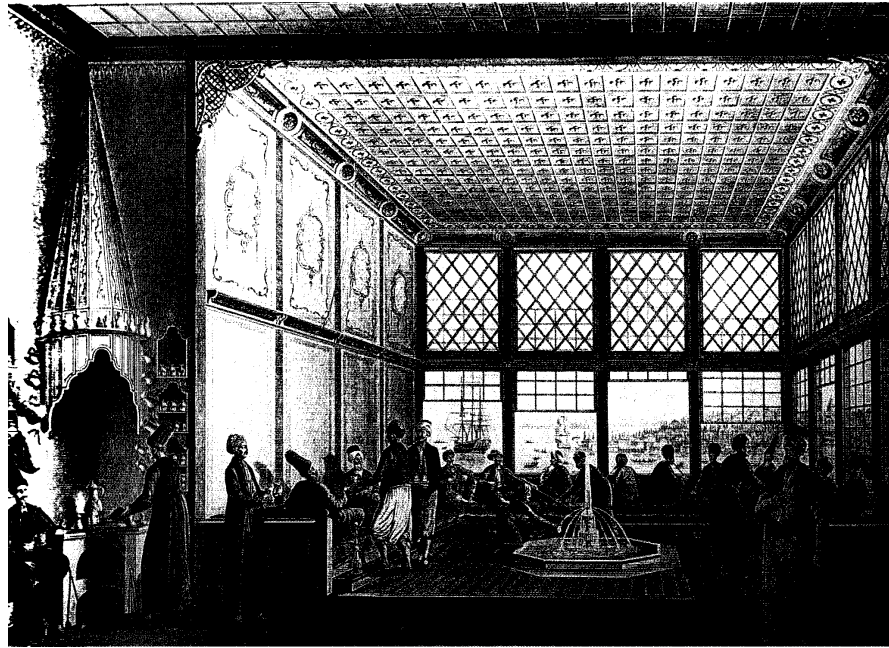


Fig 4. 8. The depiction of a coffee-house at the end of the 18th Century . Melling.²⁰⁴

203 “Kavuklu Hamdi”, *Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi*. İstanbul: Türk Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 1993. pg 176

204 Akbayer N., Sakaoğlu, N. *Binbir Gün Binbir Gece: Osmanlı'dan Günümüze İstanbul'da Eğlence Yaşamı*, İstanbul: Denizbank Yayınları, 2000.

As it has mentioned in the beginning of the first chapter about the court theaters, the birth of theater as a building type depends on Italian Renaissance. The building itself brings the actor who acts on the streets on the several stages to the single stage and changes the wandering spectator into the audience with the fixed auditorium. Besides, theater as an art takes itself from the streets to the palace. Actually, the single stage and fixed auditorium was an invention of the ancient Rome and eligible to the fifteenth century Italians with the help of Vitruvius' book *De Architectura*. In Alberti's version of Vitruvius book the auditorium was defined as a semicircle with a colonnade around the top and the stage as an architectural set-piece with rows of columns. Also he mentions about the acoustic, and three types of scene tragic comic and rustic. However, Filarette mentions that he does not know what they look like or what they served for.²⁰⁵ On the other hand, despite to the strong monumental effect of the classical Italian theater, the traditional Turkish theater takes attention with its spontaneity in its spatial organization. In this manner, the spatial language follows the identity and context of the characteristics of the performances. However as it has been mentioned, this idea should not be identified with the non-existence of a planned space for the artistic performances. Any space's having the potentiality to turn into a performance area in any time gave rise to the planned spaces that does not require to be built. The spontaneity in the architectural definition of the traditional Turkish theater started to be reshaped with a built structure that still keeps the spontaneity in its design process. In this context, coffee-houses stand as a

205 Pevsner, N. *A History of Building Types*, Princeton, N.J. : Princeton University Press, 1976. pg 63

breaking point because of forming a bridge during the transition between the not-built performance arenas to the theaters.

The history of the coffee- houses naturally starts with the departure of the coffee to the capital. Coffee came to Istanbul in the beginning of the sixteenth century. With the conquest of Egypt, Hijaz and Yemen also remained inside the borders of the Empire The story of the coffee- houses started in those days and developed and changed both in terms of architectural language and function where the popularity of those spaces where became the stages of many artists started to compete with *meyhane* and *baloz* culture.²⁰⁶ A new social life started to be formed inside the coffe-houses which was was established by Hakim and Şems from Aleppo and Syria respectively in Tahtakale for the first time in Istanbul. Here, twenty or thirty people come together and play chess, gammon, sing ghazal or read besides becoming the audiences of the performances of a *meddah*.²⁰⁷

Generally the door of the coffee houses ends up with a courtyard that has three cots -like wooden bedsteads and a fountain that has situated at the center of the space. A classically planned coffee house had a plan with a square court yard entrance. Mostly this place was surrounded by bedsteads and sometimes used for leaving the shoes out. The main space was twenty or thirty centimeters above this entrance and also surrounded with bedsteads. At the center a fountain dominates the whole space. Near the fireplace there are stairs which are leading to main bedstead- *sedirlik*- which belongs to the rich and important people. Also there was a special bedstead for the regular visitors near the main bedstead and a clock.

206 B.S. "Kahveye ve Kahvehaneye Dair". *Resimli Tarih Mecmuası* . November 1953: 2656-2658

207 Birsell, S. *Salah Bey Tarihi I: Kahveler Kitabı*. İstanbul: Sel Yayınları, 2002. pg 89

Similar to fountain, the veiled fire place dominates the space due to its functional importance. Near the fire place there are shelves for cups and hookahs.²⁰⁸ In this early organization, *sedirlik* was interpreted like a theater box that was rented or occupied by the elites. However, starting from the early times, there were limitations about the coffee-houses. During the age of Murad the Third and Murad the Fourth, coffee houses were getting closed due to their being the source of gossip and becomes the places that threatens the authority of the State.²⁰⁹

Together with the nineteenth century's affects on the mosques, coffee-house had some architectural changes. While the organization of space is a prototype of the mosque courtyard, the nineteenth century's appearance as the time of the more emphasized secular life, this organization started to be redefined. Bedsteads leave their places to chairs where the fountain is replaced by a stage for meddahs.²¹⁰ This organizational change brings us to the rising popularity of the leisure time activities rather than sitting around the fountain and concentrating on other people or self. The effect of the circular understanding becomes visible in this new coffee-house plan as well. While meddah was appearing as the focus point of the audiences while he was acting, chatting with other people became another important activity that stemmed from the spatial closeness of people to each other. As it is mentioned by Nihat Sami Banarlı, the topics of this chat may be anything and sometimes gain a kind of academic mission that focuses on

208 Evren, B. *Eski İstanbul'da Kahvehaneler*. İstanbul: Milliyet yayınları, 1996. pg 46

209 Birsal, Ibid. pg 92

210 Işın, E. Ibid. pg 550

arguments and debates.²¹¹ Therefore, the comfortable seats, rather than chairs, their circular organization that allows speaking and listening to anyone and coming up with a strong group psychology. Naturally this cultural interaction of people give rise to the formation and maturation of the new ideas that could be dangerous for the State when appeared together with the political ironies of a clever meddah. Therefore, bans and limitations brought the end of several coffee houses for several times.

As it has been mentioned, coffee house was the setting of many intellectual activity and performance arts. Especially with the nineteenth century coffee houses turn into art clubs with the rising popularity of theater, books, newspaper and magazines. As far as all of those were the satisfaction of the most basic human needs, like learning and entertaining, performance coffee houses became popular in Paris, the capital of modernity, a century later after the Ottoman. While that “Le Cafe Théâtre” s resembles the coffee houses of Ottomans with their stage conception, they do not carry the properties of elaborated florid Ottoman Coffee houses. They confirm the simplicity of modernism and they revolt the glory of theater buildings. Similar to the ones in Istanbul, there was no decoration on the stage and stage situates at the center of audiences. So the determinants like red curtains, decorations, light, backstage and dressing room, that separate actor from the audience disappear.²¹² For the case of the coffee-houses, the Ottoman type performance areas may appear as a role model for the ones in Paris. However, as far as this claim can be the topic of

211 Evren, B. Ibid. pg 44.

212 Kabaklı, A. “Pariste meddah Kahveleri” in *Meddah Kitabı* ed by Unver Oral. İstanbul: Kitabevi Yayınları, 2006. pg 131

another research and require a deeper analysis of the Ottoman-French relations in terms of political and economic situation and the artistic interactions besides the architectural ones.

4.7 Theater Buildings

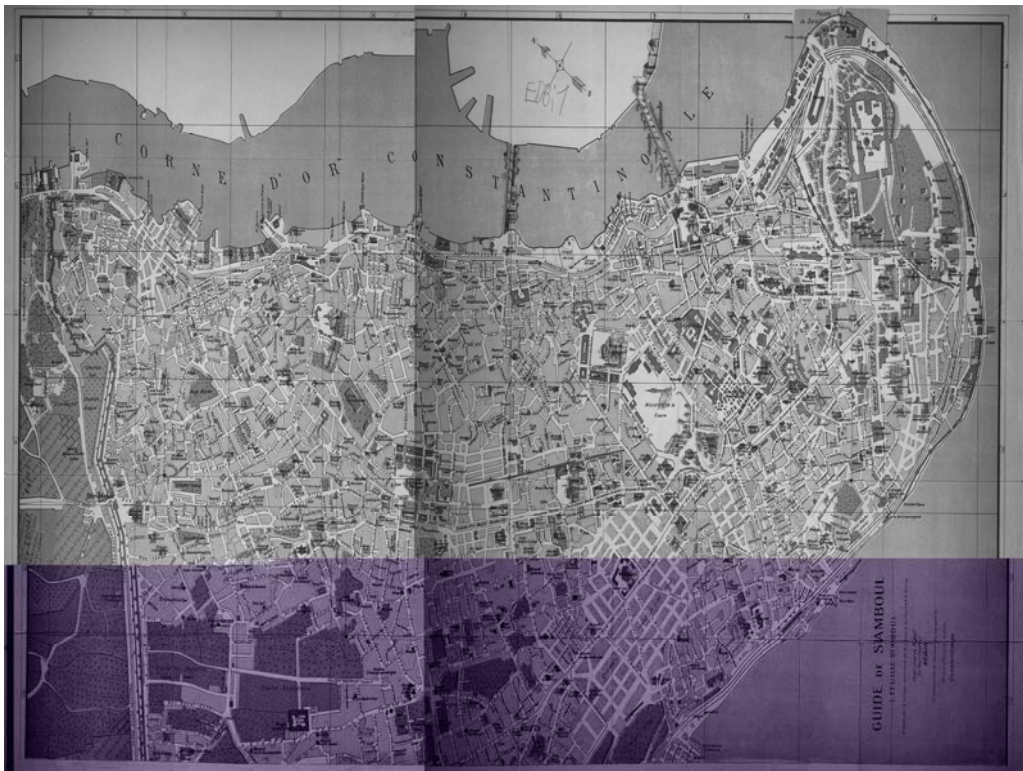


Fig.4. 9. Guide Nejib in 1918 that was published in İstanbul haritaları: 1422-1922 - Maps of Istanbul: 1422-1922

The history of theater buildings was identified with the modernity. However, one of the aims of this study appears as the clarification of this idea by showing the evolution of the theater buildings' dependence of a deep spatial understanding of the traditional Turkish theater and cannot be the literal translations of the Western prototypes especially in Şehzadebaşı. As it has mentioned above, coffee- houses stand at the middle of this evolution process and carry a major role as it is in Fevziye Kırathanesi case.

Fevziye Kırathanesi situated in front of Damat İbrahim Paşa fountain where Fevziye Street coincides with Şehzadebaşı. Its door was looking to the Şehzadebaşı Street whereas the garden was on the Fevziye Street.²¹³ The main emphasis of the space was the large garden that could be shaped spontaneously according to the needs of the performances. In this respect it still carries the properties of the earlier coffee-houses and still act like an entertainment and culture center that many actors, musicians and writers like Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar, Ahmed Rasim, Mehmed Celal and Ahmed İhsan Tokgöz were the followers of the coffee-house who visit Fevziye regularly as it was for the earlier versions of the typology.

The exact time of establishment of Fevziye Kırathanesi is unknown but the most important years was between 1885 and 1900. Its capacity was for one hundred and fifty people and in some days of the week famous musicians and actors were performing here. During Ramadan, except the Kadir night, every night was full of the performances of karagöz, meddah and puppet shows. Some of the famous musicians who were performed here were Kemençeci Vasilaki,

213 Arpad, Ibid. pg 69

Kemani Tatyos or Kemani Memduh efendi. Selanikli Berber Şemsi, Udi Asdikzade Boğos, Kemani Zafiraki, Nısfıyezen Kirkor, Udi Selim, Lavtacı Ovrik, Ortaköylü Karakaş Efendi, Ahmet Bey, Kara Boğos Aga and Gümüşgerdan Bey. The coffee-house became the setting of the important memories of the traditional Turkish theater. Besides the leading actors' of Orta Oyunu like İbnürrefik, Ahmed Nuri, Ahmed Muvahhid, Refet, Şadi and Nurettin Şefkati acting in Fevziye Kıraathanesi, the 'komik-i şehir' Abdürrezzak Efendi's giving his fez and bult to Naşit represents the starting of a new period in Orta Oyunu besides the spatial importance of this place for the artists and the audiences. The only products were tea, coffee and shrub.²¹⁴

The coffee-house existed until the end of the First World War and then it turned into a hall that could be used both as a theater and cinema hall. Therefore, the space itself became the subject of the evolution while standing as a symbol of it in the larger picture. Its name as a cinema hall was Emperyal Sineması then changed into Güneş and Felek. Lately, the salon was used as a dancing hall and named as Türk. In 1928 and 1929, Cemal Sahir Opereti and Raşit Rıza Theater performed in this hall. Cemal Sahir was the son of Abdülhamid's kehribarcıbaşı Mehmed Ali Bey. He went to Hungary for the agriculture education but went on his education in Peste Conservatory and worked in Vienna Operet. He translated Kálmán's operetta Kontes Mariça into Turkish and performed in French Theater that was not rented to a Turkish group until yet. English and German Ambassadors were also the audiences of the performance who were attracted by

214 “Fevziye Kıraathanesi” *Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi* İstanbul: Türk Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 1994. pg 307-308

those young Ottoman artists' performances. However this success did not stand through and the popularity of the performances with Turkish songs did not rise till Cemal and Ekrem Reşit Rey. While the function of the space changed into a coffee-house to a theater, cinema and dance hall, in 1958 the building was destroyed and the space was added to the road.²¹⁵

Ferah Theater the one of the first examples of the evolution of the theater buildings situated in Şehzadebaşı, in number 14 and 16. It was built in 1911 and thanks to the vivid atmosphere of the II. Meşrutiyet. Many important groups acted here but the later performances of Muhsin Ertuğrul's group who were performing with Darülbedayi formerly, brought the fame to the theater. Therefore in the history of Turkish theater the period between December 1924 and May 1925 was called as 'Ferah Period' that refers to the session which Muhsin Ertuğrul's group was on the stage. During this season, for the first time there were matinees with special discount for the students. Didactic banners and hand- brochures were prepared in order to educate the audiences. In 1928 the theater was started to be used as a cinema hall besides its main function and in 1941 Şehzade Sineması was built instead.²¹⁶

215 Arpad, Ibid. pg 69-70

216 "Ferah Tiyatrosu", *Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi* İstanbul: Türk Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 1994. pg 297



Fig 4.10: The crowd in front of the Ferah Theater and the facade of the theater.²¹⁷

Before Muhsin Ertuğrul, Ferah was the stage of Osmanlı Dram Company that was directed by Mınakyan. In front of it there was situated the theaters of Hasan and Şevki Efendi with its two floored lodges. While the romantic melodramas were appearing on the stage of Ferah Theater, the performance started with a drama and followed by kanto, duetto and ended up with a comedy performed by Hasan and Şevki Efendi in their theater.²¹⁸

Similar to many theaters, the emphasis of the first version of the structure was its ability to function as a circus. This evolution from circus to the theater building is visible in some of the theaters in Pera and Direklerarası besides the Gedikpaşa Theater. Most of the acrobats and jugglers were coming from abroad

217 Toplumsal Tarih Dergisi. Ibid

218 “Dram Kumpanyası”, *Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi* İstanbul: Türk Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 1994. pg 291.

and performing highly dangerous shows. A web that situated parallel to the stage and a part of the seats that were not sold to anyone was set. Sometimes the shows became more colorful and vivid with the performances of a large group with animals and clowns besides the acrobats.²¹⁹ However, by time, the popularity of the circus left its place to the theater and naturally this change became visible in the architectural language of the structures. The popularity of the theater and the success of the small entrepreneurs of the theaters took the attention of the rich business man. Ferah Theater that was built in 1911 was the first example of the case of a local entrepreneur, who was neither the actor nor the director of any company or group. As a result of the recognition of theater as a business, the structure was built inside the garden of the noble Kevabizade Necmettin Mollay Bey's mansion. The architect of the structure was Münif Fehim's father Fehim Efendi. They worked together during the construction and decoration of the structure. The main emphasis of the plan was the capacity of turning into a Circus when it was necessary maybe because of the entrepreneurs' hesitations on running a theater hall.²²⁰ Therefore, by supplying a variety of performances and group of audiences; the theater was planned ready for the structural changes.

The structure that was standing in the beginning of the street (today's 16 Mart Şehitleri Street) that went through Bozdoğan Arch was Letafet Apartment. This famous apartment was one of the first apartment buildings of the historical peninsula and the setting of many aspects of social life. The patron of the structure was important elite of İstanbul, Kazasker Rıza Pasha and built as a mansion.

219 Tutel, Ibid.

220 Arpad, Ibid. pg 49

However, the fame of the structure started with its usage by Darülbedayi. Cemil Topuzlu, who was insisting on the necessity of a Western style art institute, decided to establish it in Letafet Apartment. In order to get help, Andre Antoine from the Paris Conservatory came to Istanbul for the selection of the actors. In January 1914, Darülbedayi was established in this apartment and used as the application stage between the years of 1914 and 1917.²²¹ Therefore Letafet Apartment was the starting point of the modern Turkish theater that was used by Istanbul Conservatory. In a similar manner, Darul Evham(the house of the melody) was established in Letafet Apartment and formed the basis of İstanbul Technical University Conservatory.²²² On the entrance floor of the Apartment there was a large concert room which was used by Da'rüttalim-i Musiki Cemiyeti. The audiences of the traditional Turkish classical music bought tickets for the performances and attained to the concerts regularly. In the same hall, the last examples of the traditional Turkish theater, orta oyunu, were performed by the important artists like Sururi.²²³

221 Tutel, Ibid

222 Arpad, Ibid. pg 47

223 Tutel, Ibid.



Fig.4. 11: An orta oyunu performance in Letafet Apartment.²²⁴

Naturally, the architectural language of the apartment building does not remind any of the theater buildings in Istanbul because it was planned neither as a coffee-house nor as a circus. The mansion had four floors and the upper floor was timber construction with a bay on the corner. The concert hall was the salon of the mansion that was used during the crowded invitations. The other rooms of the mansion was used by several people like the pastries, restaurants and entertainment spaces such as the shop that established for shooting the balloons.

²²⁴Akbayar N., Sakaoğlu, N. *Binbir Gün Binbir Gece: Osmanlı'dan Günümüze İstanbul'da Eğlence Yaşamı*, İstanbul: Denizbank Yayınları, 2000.

However, together with the restaurant, entertainment shops, concert hall and small shops the structure functions like a leisure time complex which reminds the modern shopping malls somehow.



*Fig 4. 12: The half timber- half stone structure of Letafet apartment*²²⁵

The last theater building in Direklerarası was Millet Theater that was situated between the Şehzade Camii and Ferah Theater; in front of Şark Theater. The theater building was converted to a cinema hall named as Turan and used as a nylon warehouse for a while in its last years. The entrepreneur of the Millet Theater was the apothecary Kazım Bey. As it is understood the success of Ferah Theater as a part of business inspired other rich people in order to invest to the theaters. In a similar manner the Şark Theater's entrepreneur was Şükrü Sedef Bey

225 Toplumsal Tarih Dergisi, Ibid.

who sold ready-made shoes in Kapalıçarşı. ²²⁶ Eğlencehane-i Osmani Kumpanyası was one of the most famous groups that were established in 1895. The director was Komik Şevki Efendi and in 1901 it was performing in Şehzadebaşı in Ömer Efendi's building that was situated in front of Letafet Apartment. Besides the tuluat plays and kantos they were performing melodramas and serious drams that belong to Namık Kemal and Şemsettin Sami. The Company was consisting Armenian and Muslim artists and most of the famous Armenian women singers were performing in this theater like Şamram, Peruz and Minyon Virjin. ²²⁷.

Due to its becoming the last theater structure its plan symbolizes the courage of its entrepreneur. The building was planned as a theater building that had a horse shoe plan similar to the Western theater style. ²²⁸ However, together with Letafet Apartment it also symbolizes the end of the traditional Turkish arts, therefore the end of the authentic architectural language of the former structures in Şehzadebaşı.

During the second half of the nineteenth century some parts of Direklerarası started to be progressively demolished to widen the street. The first step was the destruction of the portico arcades to the north. Later the south arcades were eliminated and gradually some of the small shops were demolished or converted. Between the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, only two bodies of the shops of the original building of the arasta had remained.

²²⁶ Arpad, Ibid.pg 49.

²²⁷ Çavaş, R. "Millet Tiyatrosu" *Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi* İstanbul: Türk Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 1994. pg 141

²²⁸ Arpad, B. Ibid. pg 47

In the building to the north the shops were progressively replaced with theaters and cinemas. The width of the street was more or less doubled in order to allow a dual tramway line. Those regulations did not affect the monumental buildings but became affective just on the minor buildings such as houses and shacks.²²⁹ However, the destruction of the theater and cinema halls appeared as the next step of the renovation process that was summarized by Cerasi. In 1960, the monumental structure of the modern Turkish theater, Letafet Apartment was destroyed. In a similar manner, coffee-house performance halls like İkbâl or Fevziye do not exist today and two major theater buildings, Ferah and Millet left their places to office blocks.

229 Cerasi, M. Ibid. pg 132

CONCLUSION

Comédie-Française is using the same theater building since 1791 and *Théâtre de la Nation* exists about four centuries. *Burgtheater* in Vienna is performing in Dr. *Karl-Lueger-Ring* since 1888.²³⁰ In 29 January 1996, *La Fenice Theater* which was two hundred years old was damaged because of fire. The structure was rebuilt in six hundred and fifty days.²³¹ Unfortunately, it is not possible to talk about such spatial and cultural continuity for the theaters of Istanbul. While Yıldız Court Theater functions like a museum today, only a few of the theaters in Beyoğlu is active thanks to special entrepreneurs like Ferhan Şensoy. The others disappeared in one night without any reason, or became the victims of unexpected fires and new investments whereas a part of them was seen unnecessary in the new urban plans. Those inconceivable disappearances of the theaters can not be concluded only with the architectural chopping. They also cause the elimination of the chance of the researches to get the first-hand spatial experiences and get closer to the cultural aura and social identity of the Ottoman Empire's capital. However, this ignorance does not change their importance as a translated typology that stands at the center of the conceptualization of modernity. Theater structures of the nineteenth century Istanbul offers a wide spectrum for the researcher to be able to comment on the possible modernity consciousnesses of the different parts of the society. Therefore, I prefer not to limit the after life of

²³⁰ The building dates of the structures are taken from Wikipedia; under the related articles.

²³¹ Aracı, E. Ibid. pg 14.

the theater spaces with their structural existence and evaluate this study as a contribution to their afterlife in a way.

Every single detail like the geography, politics, economy, ideologies and the after life of the structure that is shaped by the users, viewers and its relation with other structures will cause changes in the meaning. Similar to any spoken word, languages, visual objects and all artistic products; architectural object is also impossible to 'translate' literally and cannot be named as the copy of a prototype. It involves in the idea of interpretation that makes translation possible. When the quality of interpretation changes due to the different consciousnesses of the translators and possible after life of the structures; the dose and type of the translation also changes. In the scope of this thesis, theater structures were discussed as a matter of architectural translation. It was shown that similar to other architectural translations, theater structures were neither fully transformed nor had not transformed during the translation process. In all chapters, there were examples of different doses and types of the translation. Therefore, for the translation of a typology, the translated visual object was not evaluated as the copy of the same plan to a different geography.

The ontological impossibility of a concept like 'direct translation' leaves no space for claiming the nineteenth century theater buildings in Istanbul as a copy of the prototypes of the Western typology. Rather than this, the idea of interpretation forces us to look on the problem with a different eye by concerning the spatial background of theater inside the Empire, role of the interpreters and the mediums of interpretation in order to understand how the translation was actualized . This study aims to follow this path and look into the theater typology

of the nineteenth century Istanbul as the outcome of a large and colorful translation area. Therefore, this thesis rejects the direct translation that is identified with the clichés like 'copying' the 'Western' style into the 'East' for the case of the theaters in Istanbul. Rather, this study searched for the dynamics of the translation in order to realize the originality of the architectural language of the nineteenth century's theater buildings. Thanks to the authentic, multilayer and multivariate aspects of the period's cultural life besides the references to the conceptualization of space in traditional Turkish theater, the genuine interpretations were realized despite to the strong architectural and cultural identity of the classical Italian design.

For realizing the formation of a genuine translation, it is important to notice that the history of theater and theatrical space depends on the earlier centuries of the Empire. It is true that until the nineteenth century it is not possible to talk about a theatrical understanding that involves in the idea of high-art and therefore a specialized building for this aim. However, this fact does not lead to the non-existence of a specialized and organized space for the performance arts. Starting from the 15th Century the entertainment and leisure life culture carries great importance, especially inside the Court. Conjurers, acrobats and *meddahs* who are coming from Egypt and Iran show the capacity of the entertainment life that can also be a clue about the demand and supply relation of the entertainment as a business inside the Empire. While the miniatures of Levni and Enderunlu Fazıl reflect the colorful life of the Tulip Era, voyager artists like Preziosi, Allom and Melling seem highly attracted by the leisure time culture inside the Empire. All of those artistic expressions show the existence and conceptualization of the

traditional artistic performances like *Karagöz*, *köçek*, *meddah* and jugglers. Therefore, it is not possible to think about the theatrical performance life of Empire as a *tabula rasa*. As far as each performance requires a special understanding of space, it is not possible to claim the non-existence of theater structures due to the fact that each performance's creating its own space. Hence, theater is not a concept that stands as an analogy for the language translation of a people from archipelago in the context of the Ottoman Empire. The pre-existence of a performance culture leads us to the existence of a theatrical spatial understanding that cannot be the subject of the 'radical translation' or 'radical interpretation'. This study rejects the cultural gap between 'East' and 'West' for the nineteenth century Ottoman Empire. Thanks to the rising number and effects of the mediums of translation, like the embassies, minorities, artists, architects or voyagers, the case for the cultural translation does not depend on a gap between the geographies but on interaction between the differences.

The leisure time activities are indispensable parts of the Palace. Even though the history of the performance arts depends on the earlier centuries of the Empire, they get stronger and take their place in the social life of the layman with the modernity. As it has mentioned, it is not possible to eliminate the power relations, authority, religious background, changing statues of the non-Muslims, Sultan's personal interests, economic problems, role of Westernization ideals and the multi-layered structure of the Ottoman culture and society while evaluating the court theaters. Even though those variables are valid for all court theaters as it is in the Western prototypes, the unique applications of those variables inside the Empire give the possibility of translation that saves itself from creating a copy of

the western typology. All of those concepts come together and form a complex architectural meaning that cannot be limited with the construction period, patron or the architect as it is in the meeting of *Dolmabahçe* Court Theater with *Dolmabahçe* Mosque or *Yıldız* Court Theater's fabulous Sultan box that refers to the invisibility of the Sultan. Hence, Ottoman court theaters come up with a unique meaning that cannot be identified with a literal translation of a Western prototype. Thanks to the unique case of Istanbul that keeps the traditional understanding of the performance arts and start to interpret the social requirements of modernity, court theaters appear with the authenticity in their architectural language and spatial organization.

One of the first questions of the thesis was the place of the court theaters in the translation process. Their position and the dose of translation are important for two reasons. Firstly, because of their acting as a role model and secondly because of the changing political and economic balances inside the Empire during the nineteenth century. The answers of those questions cannot depend on the formal analysis of the *Dolmabahçe* or *Yıldız* Court Theaters only. It should be considered that the idea of translation, especially for the case of the *Dolmabahçe* Court Theater as being the first permanent theater structure inside the palace complex, is applied for an area and actualized in the urban scale. Therefore, rather than focusing on the translation of a single structure as a member of a certain typology; it is beneficial not to limit the idea of translation and cause the ignorance of the interpretation of modernity and its visualization in the urban scale. The spatial relationship between the *Dolmabahçe* Mosque, *Dolmabahçe* Court Theater and Clock Tower that appear in the same picture stand as the

architectural translation that should be re-conceptualized with the ideological, cultural and social changes in the Ottoman Palace.

Nineteenth century cannot be identified with the military victories, balanced international and national policies or economic satisfactions for the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, the reasons of the translation besides the task of translation become an important debate especially for the case of Palace. This study rejects the possibility of imposition of the translation of the theater structures by the Palace by showing all Sultans' self interest for art as the patron, object or the artist in the context of nineteenth century. The reason of this interest can be identified with many things like the talent, cultural emulation or necessity of the modernity. As far as it requires a deeper and more specialized research, it is not possible to determine the exact reason for the interests of Sultans for theater in the scope of this thesis. However, it is possible to claim that showing the translation of the theater structures as a result of the imposition of the West does not go hand in hand with the Sultan's artistic approaches and the cultural interaction that goes stronger inside the Empire during the nineteenth century.

For the case of the interaction Pera occupies an important space due to its being the setting of 'Western typologies'. Not only the architectural language but also the social and cultural life that goes on in Pera and Galata make those districts to be evaluated as the 'direct translation' of Western point of view. However, especially during the nineteenth century this idea leaves its place to different paradigms. Embassies which appear as the most important determinants of the social life of Pera gain a more organic structure by forming more concrete relations with the streets and people of Pera. Hence, it is possible to observe a

growing interest for the Ottoman culture with their attendance to the daily life in a wider scale when compared with the past. When the embassies' leave their spatial and cultural isolation that goes inside the limited space of the Embassy buildings until the ends of eighteenth century is thought with the new rights of the minorities; a larger space for the expression of the life style was occurred for the minorities. Levantine culture's contributions to the social life and their culture's becoming more attainable for the Muslim subjects gave rise to the realization of another life style for both parts. Similar to Levantines, voyagers were the actors of the cultural interaction. While people are traveling, spreading new ideas to new geographies and contribute to the local culture, it is impossible to evaluate this process as a one-way relationship. Therefore the nineteenth century's *Pera* cannot be evaluated as the setting of the Western typologies but should be considered as the outcome of an interaction of the architectural, social and cultural paradigms.

Şehzadebaşı- Direklerarası is represented as a case for the genuine translation of the theater typology in the scope of this thesis. Several reasons were discussed for this case but the socialization of the Armenian community in this district and their having the leading roles in the construction of a theater culture was an important turning point. The rising number of the Armenian schools which offer an important background for the formation of Ottoman theater and the rising freedom of expression found their reflections in the architectural and cultural translation. Armenians appear as the artists and entrepreneurs who highly involve in the cultural interaction with other non-Muslims and Ottoman society in order to satisfy the audiences of Direklerarası who come from different religious and cultural backgrounds. Besides the cultural variety of the district, its spatial

background that was formed with coffee-houses and performance areas like circuses supply a unique platform for a genuine translation. While being an *ante litteram* for Grand Rue de Pera thanks to the vivid atmosphere of the Ramadan fests that was started before the nineteenth century, the important spatial transformations from the circus to the theater hall takes place during the translation process. The same evolution from the circus to the theater hall is also observable in Pera and may stand not only for the popularization of theater but also for the interaction between the audiences, actors or entrepreneurs of Direklerarası and Pera.

The conceptual relationship between Şehzadebaşı and Dolmabahçe also represents an important case. Şehzadebaşı stand as an *ante litteram* not only for Grand Rue de Pera but also for Dolmabahçe Palace Complex with the 'spontaneous' meeting of Şehzadebaşı Mosque, *muvaqqithane* and several performance and leisure time spaces. The religious life's harmony with the secular life becomes visualized in the architectural harmony between those structures inside the urban space of Şehzadebaşı. The spontaneity of this meeting refers to further questions on Ottoman Westernization period that goes not only inside the Palace or Pera but also in a space that can be identified more with the social life of Muslim subjects. Hence the area stands for the genuine conceptualization of the Ottoman modernity and can be satisfied with the realization of the cultural and spatial dynamics with a deeper research. However, this study does not focus on Şehzadebaşı specifically or tries to understand the Ottoman modernity depending on the district. The last chapter can be evaluated as an introduction to such

concern that can be satisfied with deeper sociological, historic and spatial analysis.

The ontological existence of a 'direct translation' is possible only if the specific conditions like transforming one structure to the same place, with the same technology, at the same time and in the same political, economic or cultural conditions. However, satisfaction of such conditions can be possible only in a 'possible world' and neither possible nor meaningful in the frame of our physical world. Besides, as far as translation 'transforms while transporting' as it has mentioned at the very beginning of this study it is not possible to talk about a concept like direct translation due to the lack of transformation in its meaning. However, this idea should not be concluded with the 'originality' or the 'authenticity' of every single architectural translation. On the other hand, naturally, this study does not involve in the idea of determining the 'architectural value' of the theater structures due to their all being an important part of the cultural history of the Ottoman Empire. I just tried to choose some specific examples for the sake of the study that can satisfy the realization of the essence and variety of the translation process. As I have mentioned, this thesis does not have an ambition like covering the all theater spaces of the nineteenth century Istanbul. It would be an illusive aim that was impossible to satisfy. Therefore, this study stands only as a 'one possible attempt of translation' on the architectural, cultural and historical aspects of theater in Istanbul during the nineteenth century, among the many other ones.

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