

## The imperfection of the incomplete timeless urban space

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*Received: August 2012*

*Final Acceptance: February 2013*

### **Abstract:**

What if we fold time and see the different time frames together? For instance, while Theodora was watching the race at the Hippodrome, she would also attend the circumcision feast of the sons of Suleyman the Magnificent; the janissary band of municipality would take a stage at the same celebration; Uncle Septimius Severus could give presents to the siblings and the Japanese tourist, Okazaki, would take a picture of that moment.

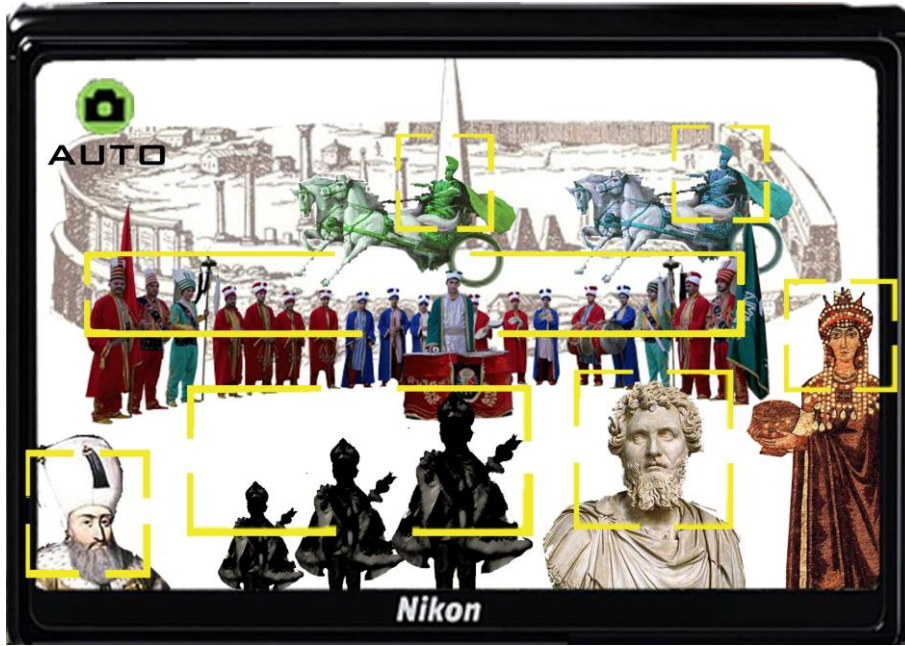
Cities are the reality of a physical and spatial response to their temporality -which clouds the mind creating a feeling of timelessness. This situation of the city prevents designers from creating 'the perfect space'. However, in contrast to a negative sense of imperfection; uncontrolled, imprecise and incompatible city dynamics, keeps the imaginations vigorous, passes incomplete data to the inhabitants and encourages them to interact with the city to fill in the blanks. Because, unlike the irrational space of myths, a city is an obscured, ignored and eradicated chaos.

As every civilization imprints self-traces onto cities with monumental structures, intimately imperfect daily life flows consistently and leaves the prints behind. While some cities cannot reflect today's time, space and life stratifications as much as their past; Istanbul is compressed between struggle of past and present.

**Keywords:** *Istanbul, imperfection, temporal folding, timelessness, incompleteness, body, superpose, looping, production and consumption, fluctuating urban space*

### **Temporal folding**

What if we fold time? The Byzantine Empress Theodora who was watching the race at the Hippodrome, would also attend the circumcision feast of the princes who were the sons of Suleyman the Magnificent- who made his mark on golden era of Ottoman Empire; the twenty first century janissary band of the municipality of Istanbul would take a stage at the same celebration; the Roman Emperor Uncle Septimius Severus could give presents to the prince-siblings; Mustafa, Mehmed, Selim and the Japanese tourist, Okazaki, would take a picture of that moment with his digital camera.



**Figure 1.** Temporal folding/Sultanahmet.

Voyagers that arrived in the port of Theodosius could transfer from Yenikapı station to the Marmaray railway, would encounter Neolithic inhabitants and at the same time the Byzantine Church Community could attend the ritual in their chapel; the Yali District dwellers opposed to urban renewal could come together in their association, archaeologists and excavation team could continue working on the sunken ships.

While the Ottoman Army moves along Divanyolu to the west, a cable car could collide with Emperor Constantine standing in front of the Constantine Column at Çemberlitaş, after this tragicomical accident the first man who would run for help could be the Flemish legate Busbeke who was staying in the Legate Inn and at the same time the fire that destroyed this inn would begin; however, those waiting for their prospective masters in the Slave Bazaar, the janissaries sipping their coffees in the Chicken Bazaar coffeehouses and the university students who were enjoying a hubble-bubble pipe in the Madrasah of Çorlulu Ali Pasha would be unaware of that fire.

The Ottomans who come together for basic law announcement during publication of the constitutionalism, protesting students and demonstrating workers would encounter each other in Beyazıt Square -the Third Hill of the seven-hilled city- which was called the Forum of Theodosius in the Roman period, the Forum Tauri in the Byzantine period; and at the same time the groundbreaking ceremony of The Science and Letters Faculty building designed by Sedad Hakkı Eldem and Emin Onat could be started.



**Figure 2.** Temporal folding/Yenikapı.

While the sharks in the Florya Istanbul Aquarium swim nonstop to keep their balance in the water, the Monument of Ayestefanos which was built in order to remember the Russian soldiers would be bombed due to the deteriorating relationships, the people on the Solaryum and Haylayf beaches would be surprised at the loud boom; and at the same time, Atatürk walks from the pier of timber piled sea pavilion along the beach with Seyfi Arkan who is the architect of the pavilion.

Or while Fatih Sultan Mehmet who began a new era in the world history, was entering to the Hagia Sophia for the first Friday prayer, the Greens and the Blues screaming “Nika!” was coming from hippodrome and on the other side

the soldiers of Dandolo, who was the commander of the Forth Crusade, would attack the structure, someone who was waiting in the queue to buy a ticket for the museum could shout from behind “Heyy bro, we have been waiting for ages, how dare you?”.



**Figure 3.** Temporal folding/Süleymaniye.

When the architect Sinan was on the Süleymaniye construction site, someone could have whispered to him that someone is trying to construct a more monumental mosque in Camlica and the poet Orhan Veli who listens Istanbul would hear these rumors and laugh.

### **Ambiguity of folded evolution product Istanbul's instant description**

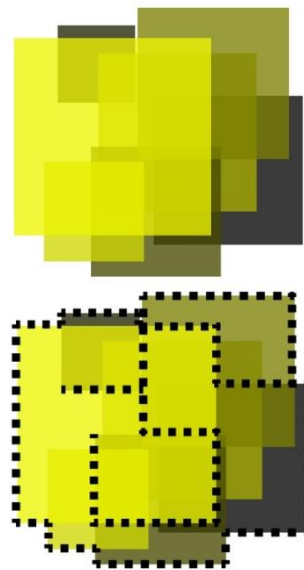
Cities are formed from a single topographic formation to present urban embodiment by their own evolution. However, not all cities evolve by sustaining the past or articulating the previous city layers. The chronological image in the citizen's memories, where the formation is not processed according to historical sustainability and regular development as expected, is folded as described in Istanbul example. Thus, the preliminary image is converted to another which is not like the authentic and healthy image with a great difference between the preliminary image and its materialization (Kuban, 2004: 419).

History for architects is the representation of entire eras beyond a single time frame: 'at present' (Tanyeli) and temporality is just a blurred image for the present time representation of Istanbul. Even if an urban space has a radical temporality, 'present' reflects space time just as 'one moment' and it cannot be described in abstract. As Nietzsche stated: "Only that which has no history can be defined" (Kwinter, 1992). If architecture, space production, is not only a singular fact, but also a phenomenon of urban life that includes all the space layers and generations (Şentürer, 2005) and if it is a production of a process; then it is not possible to define these cities that are produced by temporality according to the single 'present moment'. However, if it is intended, the obtained have reflections of further moments in 'one moment', that is why it is not possible to reach the pure 'one moment' in a multiple ambiguous superimposition. Since pursuit of pure reality may cause misleading perceptions for a city like Istanbul, instead, this city should be perused according to the complete representation of whole eras. Whether this is a personal or someone else's perusal, understanding beyond the present moment and being aware of what has been achieved is only possible by being curious of the past, making evaluations and interpretations, associating and suspecting what is seen and heard (Yürekli, 2010: 12).

Lynch argues that, expansion of a city might be fulfilled by integration of present with past and future; however, conserved works should be associated with their own temporality and that should be meaningful in our own present time (cited in Führ, 2005: 49).



**Figure 4.** Cities of the linear temporality.



**Figure 5.** Cities of the folded temporality.

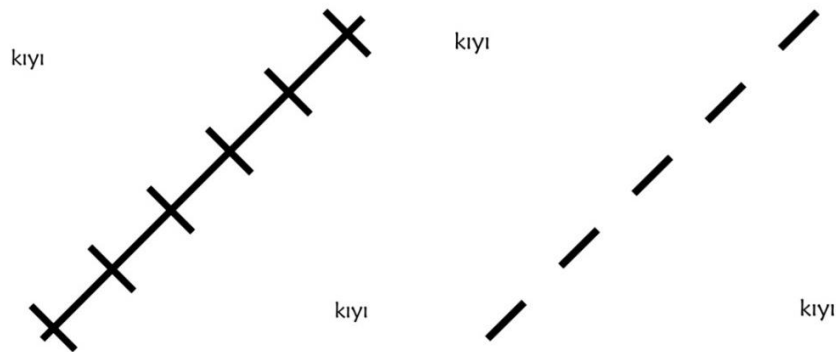
### Designing the space as the body of time

As Heidegger stated, 'things' that still exist and somehow are history at the same time as being historical just on the basis of temporality (Führ, 2005: 52). In that case, the current situation is a spatiality that depends on time - but cannot be defined as historical. Cities, therefore, are the present image or the physical, sensorial and spatial response to a blurred temporality or precise timelessness. Urban space is the materialization field of daily life that forms among the tension of strategies and tactics (Dereli, 2010: 27). Even though the formation of urban space makes progress depending on life and time layers; time for the citizens living in the present time is uncertain, thus space is timeless.

"Space and time as conceptual categories; might be designed as pure physical assets devoid of any materiality. Approving these designs is to agree that time and space are not formable." (Führ, 2005: 44). The uncertainty of the present moment originated from time and space paradoxes that are outside chronology and are still in the progress of formation.

### Potential of border: 'Creative city'

If cities, lifestyles and discourses are analyzed today, it is possible to talk about widening borders between different socio-cultural groups, lifestyles and usages, limited-transitions or intransitive relations, in other words, lifestyles with walls and barbwire (Şentürer, 2005). Using a conceptional expression, if border is that kind of barbed-wire separator, the three dimensional spaces that excludes both sides are the isolated edges. Thereby, edges are not the sole formations near the border, instead, they are the spaces that form and maintaining living with the existence of the 'other'. Hence, 'having borders' could be considered as imperfect; however, it also has the potential of 'having edges' in terms of relations with the other. As Şentürer states, "Borderlines have a significant potential that overcome the impermeability issue with open-structure, unwritten and the state of being ready to be written." (2005).

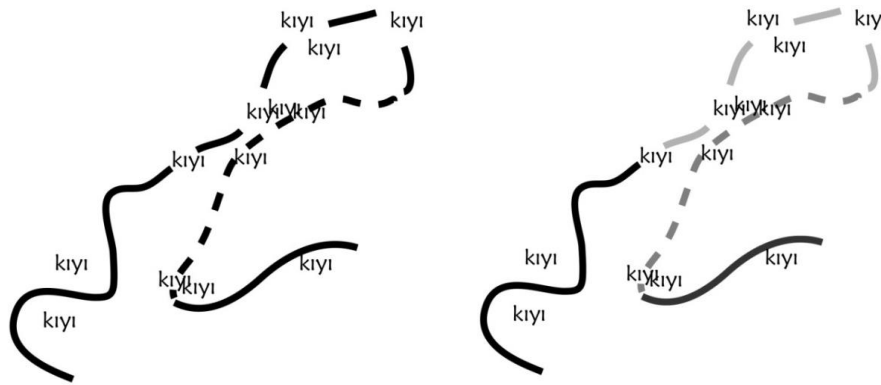


**Figure 6.** Border-edge relation in the city.

The hazardous situation of crystallization in the borders instead of edges legitimizes the negative meaning of imperfection and in that case, multiculturalism converts into monotony, unrelated and opposed lifestyle. However, borderlines use the contradiction, supplying connections instead of separations. To exemplify, while Istanbul's land walls are the separating walls with the first meaning, if the potentials are considered, it could be

interpreted and perceived as a bridge that connects the Golden Horn and the Bosphorous.

In contrast to an imperfect virtual representation of 'border', its tangible response in cities exceeds linearity and planarity, and rolls several identified edges within itself and integrate them by meandering, squeezing, expanding and opening. This interaction converts edges into being more than 'two sides of a line', obscures margins and allows transitions between edges. Thus, cities become livable and creative with a hybrid approach using the edge potential instead of the border problem.



**Figure 7.** Hybridization of the city edges.

The concept of a 'creative city' in the literature is defined as those are surprising, unpredictable, dynamic, productive, where the citizens take part in creating urban spaces and where the creativity is formed by citizens with its own internal forces and potentials. Thackara describes creative cities as "the place where you get surprised how people do something in daily life." (cited in Dereli, 2010: 54).

### Hybrid spaces

The cities, while hovering between the dialectics of having borders and edges, form an interaction space with the 'other' to the extent of allowing for transitions and enhancing the diversity. Therefore, by avoiding sharp distinctions, they enable different levels of space and life that approximate, touch each other and nest along, namely 'hybrid spaces'.

The concept of hybridness carries a distinctive meaning for each city, because each city possesses different border-edge-transition potentials; and the bonds formed by these potentials have an effect on the chemistry of spaces. Whereas hybridness for cities like London and Paris means "coming together of parts and levels in order to form a whole" (Gündüz, 2007: 4), for Istanbul it carries a meaning of something that is mixed (Gündüz, 2007: 4). As Istanbul is becoming hybrid, there is no purpose of 'induction' on the contrary; all the parts of a whole are mixed together so as to completely transfigure each other. Istanbul is a hybrid body that enables urban experiences physically and mentally as well as being an imbalanced macro-space that is the result of shuffling and embracing the physical outputs of the historical course with its topography.



### Topography and natural beauty

Istanbul's impressive topography and natural beauty has made it all through history as a convenient place for people to live. For instance, Busbecq comments "as for the area where the city was founded, seems like it was created by nature to be a World capital", Lamartine goes further stating that: "God and man, nature and arts, collaborated in order to create this extraordinarily beautiful and incomparable piece of nature that is unique in this World." (Cited in Kuban, 2004: 11) and Napoleon Bonaparte commented that "If the whole world was a state, Istanbul would be the capital of it" ([http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Talk:Napoleon\\_I\\_of\\_France](http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Talk:Napoleon_I_of_France), 8 April 2013). The strategic importance of this city that came to be called as several names such as the capital of empires Nova Roma, Byzantion, Konstantinîyye, Constantinople, Tsargrad, Stimbol, Âsitâne, Der-i Saadet, Istanbul, and many others.



**Figure 8.** A section from the Bosphorus  
(<http://haftaninfotografлари.blogspot.com/>, Oğuz Meriç, 2013).

Istanbul, as the perfect capital of past civilizations was described by the poet Tevfik Fikret in the Disintegration era of the Ottoman Empire as 'the virgin widow deserted by a thousand husbands'. Kuban agrees with this description adding "Indeed due to the devastation of thousand years, this city over the Bosphorus still preserves a beauty of a young girl at some hours, at some corners. It is true that the complicated modern developments may have damaged this quality; however, if one can come across a trace of the past in every 50 meters or catch a glimpse of natural beauties, or when turns around corner, can be met by an interesting and elegant monument, in spite of all the deterioration that has been going on at an increasing pace for centuries, still it is possible to enjoy the city as if enjoying an old bookstore." (2004: 2).

Ağrandone	Darü'l-Hilâfetü'l-Âliyye	Kalipolis	Pây-i Taht-ı Saltanat
Alexandre	Darü'l-İslâm	Kanaturye	Polis
Aliyona	Darü's Saltanatü'l-Seniyye	Kayser-i Zemin	Pozanta
Almus Roma	Darü's-Sâde	Konstantin Opöl	Pozantıyam
Anthusa	Darü's-Saltana	Konstantina el Uzmâ	Roma Konstantinum
Antoneinia	Der-Âliyye	Konstantiniyye	Roma Nova
Antonla	Dergâh-ı Selâtin	Konstantiniyye el Mahrusa	Sakalye
Âşitân	Der-i Devlet	Konstantiniyye't-ül Mahrusat-ül	Secunda Roma
Âşitâne-i Aliyye	Dersâdet	Mahmiyye	Sitanbul
Âşitâne-i Saadet-Âşıyan	Eis Tin Polin	Konstantinobolis	Stanbulu
Âşitâne-i Şâh-ı Cihân	El-Farruk	Konstantinopol	Stenpolis
Astanbul	Escomboli	Konstantinopolis	Stimbol
Astanbulin	Esdanbul	Konstantinu K'alak	Stinpoli
Atakent	Estambol	Konstantinu Polis	Stinpolis
Augusta Antononia	Estefaniye	Konstantinye-i	Sultanu'l-Berreyn
Belde-i Mahruse	Gosdantnubolis	Kospoli	Südde-i Saltanat
Beldetü'l-Tayyibe	Granduye	Kostin	Şehir
Bilâd'ı-Selâse	Gülğüle-i Rûm	Kostyantine Grad	Şehr-i Âzâm
Bizantiyye	Hakanu'l-Bahreyn	Kostye	Şehr-i Konstantin
Bizantium	Herakliyon	Kunstantiniye	Taht-ı Rûm
Bozantin	Istanbul	Kustantiyniyye	Tarigrad
Bulin	İslâmbol	Mahmiyye-i Istanbul	Tekfuriye
Buzantion	İslâmbul	Mahrûsa-i Istanbul	Tsarigrad
Buzantiya	İstambol	Mahrûsa-i Saltanat	Urbis Imperiosum
Byzas		Mahrûse	Urbs
Cezâre-i Heft Cebel	İstanpol	Makarr-ı Saltanat	Ümmü'd-d-Dünyâ
Cizant Kağak	İstanpolis	Makedonya	Vezendovar
Constantinople	İstanpul	Megapolis	Vizantion
Constantinopoli	İstefaniye	Miklagord	Vizendovar
Cospoli	İstimboli	Miklagrad	Vizendovina
Çakdurkan	İstimbol	Nea Roma	Vizendoyne
Çar'gorod	İstimpol	Nesa Romes	Yağfuriye
Çaregrad	İstinbol	Nor Harmin	Yankoviçe
Çezar Kayzer	İstinbolin	Nor-Hromn	Yeditepe
Darü'l-Hilâfe	İstinpol	Nova Roma	Zavegorod
	İstinpolin		

## ISTANBUL

**Figure 9.** The names of Istanbul.

### Water: Dependent on / detached from

As Kuban states, Istanbul is a city built by the sea; the development of the city followed the coast line (2004: 418-419). When Sedad Hakki Eldem compared the Bosphorus with Venice, another city that owes its existence to water, Venice is delineated as a city where ostentatious and permanent structures are juxtaposed, while Istanbul is described as a city that provides human with the means of contact with nature and water (Cansever, 2008: 27). Today, while Venice sustains its durable relations with the canals, unfortunately this is not always true of Istanbul with the expansive waters that flow through and past the city. However, while Venice is not likely to survive once its boundaries with water are overcome and the city is extinguished, Istanbul, even though its relations with water are impaired, will remain alive by mobilizing its diverse potentials at different times.



**Figure 10.** Venice/Istanbul comparison.

### Palimpsest body

What makes this city palimpsest is, -that it is a place that has contained various cultural levels during the course of history (İnceoğlu and İnceoğlu, 2005). Istanbul -where urban space becomes a body for time- is like a parchment that has been overwritten many times using different scales and methods. Being written, erased, re-written, torn apart, scrabbled and creased in different time periods, its valuable paper gives a hint about life levels in the temporality of urban space. This palimpsest situation of the city





**Figure 11.** *A superimposed pattern.*

has encouraged its 'users', particularly the designers over time to reconfigure it but prevented efforts to create flawless spaces. The city, with its borders that cut off the continuity, its curves, its shores that through partly tying and untying, form various levels; has become a matter that is thought about, discussed, and an answer sought although in fact there is no answer.

Warhol states that the need to replace old for new provides an occupation for people as he says "Rome is an example to what happens if the buildings of a city last for a long time." The occupation of the city dweller who encounters many

problems in Istanbul talk about these problems ponders, and even complains about the chaos. Kuban evaluates this issue as follows: "modern Turkish society has created a physically chaotic environment, it is living there and it is suffering there." (2004: 419).

### **Urban imperfection**

This undefined and inconsistent state of urban dynamics appears as a defective image in people's minds. The Turkish Institute of Language define 'defect' as "lack, missing, shame, inconvenient situation", however, it is defined in Encyclopedic Architecture Dictionary as "mistake originating from design, application or material that affects a structure partly or fully" (Hasol, 2010: 289).

The state of being defective appears in its urban definition as a new and a larger-scale concept. 'Defective City' or in other words 'Urban imperfection' is evocative of liminal states such as circumstances annoying the user, dissonant matches, uncertain situations, ambiguous formations and undefined regions. Yet, in contrast to these negative definitions, it would be an injustice for Istanbul to perceive its defective aspects as mistakes or deficiencies by ignoring city dynamics. On the contrary, urban imperfection possesses the potential of allowing the existing problems to progress, transform, and be realized. With a postmodern understanding, Venturi also supported this optimistic approach stating that "The increasing dimensions and scales of architecture in city and region planning add more to the already difficult. I for one give all of them a warm welcome and set out to benefit from the obscurities." (1966: 17).

### **Intervention to "incompleteness"**

Despite its ambiguous temporality and being written time and again, defectiveness, which attains a concrete body in urban space, is disturbing with its 'incompleteness'. This disturbance encourages the user to interact with the space s/he is in, namely the subject with the object. In Ferhan Yürekli's words: "Being disturbed and defiant are human characteristics" (2010: 12) and this feeling of disturbance and incompleteness is the gearwheel that initially triggers the mechanism.

Though perceived negative, when faced with change, tendency is to make the space 'groundless' and converting it to 'thing' actually creates a new awareness. The negative results of change, as an engine that set in motion the mental construction, cause us to think space-time relations in a new 'seeing' way (Aydınlı, 2005).

"An architectural work is merely a trial; it is nothing but presenting a scientific manifesto or bringing up thoughts for discussion" (Yürekli, 2010). In this sense, it is not acceptable to treat individual or urban structures solely as an exhibition such as the Mona Lisa in the Louvre. Products of architecture in this sense, does not have only a visual dimension but also an experimental one. Any architecture product that is added to the city, and the thought or thoughtlessness it brings up, is condemned to be criticized as long as it continues to be experienced.

Reading the space in a multi-level manner and understanding its growing structure through space-time relations that articulate one another necessitates a total experience: 'spatial experience' (Aydınlı, 2005). In this respect, the urban dweller that encounters time-space proliferations as puzzle waiting to be solved in Istanbul is experiencing the latter, rather than solely being in it. Hence, the urban dweller goes further than as person 'living in the city', but he is 'living with the city', keeps his imagination dynamic.

The incompleteness of the composition that is formed by the singular structures coming together will never be satisfying in terms of perfection and this situation will be considered as defective. This faulty situation, with modern cultural understanding will enable a relationship between the structures and the passers-by, who stop to contemplate, who actually lives here and make use of it personally. The defects of being indefinite and incomplete motivate the designers in this way. On the other hand, the fact that, it cannot be redesigned completely, it is limited by its defects or it is defective because of its limits, is provokes the designers into come up with their own solutions sooner or later.

When designers, who aim for a perfect production by taking overcoming the faults of the city, cannot accomplish what they have in mind, are exposed to the comments, critiques, and even proposals for different designs of other designers and the ordinary urban dwellers. Since there are as many different ways of thinking as the number of people, the tension arising from what is faulty for some people is not defective for the opposing view almost causes design 'teasings' in the city.

In this way the city, even with the common users being actively involved in consumption and production while utilizing the urban spaces, attains a potential dynamism Even a casual walking activity is sufficient to mobilize this dynamism. "In the walking, what is happening between the urban space and everyday life is not only being a witness of an occurring situation, it is an act of creating that the walker participates in." (Dereli, 2010: 60-61). As De Certeau stated, "The walker, within the daily nature of the urban space, through these improvisations, he is, at that moment of walking, a creator of the urban space and his existence is in motion within it." (Cited in, 2010: 61). Even the fact that the walking individual does not pursue a predetermined goal but just roams around place him in interaction with the palimpsest levels of the city.

### **The fourth dimension**

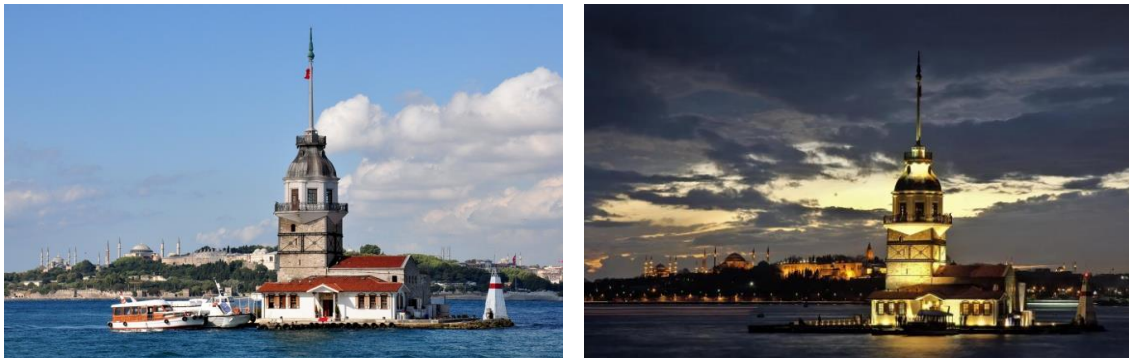
When the term of 'palimpsest' is incarnated on an urban scale, the aforementioned stratification does not merely consist of superposing in a planar sense. A fourth dimension in the form of experiences, feelings and thoughts is added to the hodgepodge of nesting urban constituents. The fourth dimension comes about in the state in which urban space, its fullness and emptiness mixes with senses, emotions and mental habits. Although the density of this heterogeneous mixture varies with respect to spatial usage and user experience, it as a whole ensures the continuity of distinct spaces by achieving the conceptual existence of the city. This wholeness spawns the spiritual perception of the 'urban' notion.

### **Night and day of the city**

Darkness papers over the cracks by degrading rough and incompatible forms, colors and textures into a single tone and similar textures; are softening the city layers as well. Warhol commented on the jugglery of the defect as follows: "If you see a beauty at the right time but in the wrong light, just forget about it. I believe in soft light and tricky mirrors. I believe in plastic surgery." (1975: 75).

While the darkness of the night creates the effect of plastic surgery over all the defects and ugliness of the daily life in which we live and in which we take part, monuments which are the witness of the past enter the stage. Monumental structures which are lodged between the other buildings in the fair enlightenment of the sunshine take place on their own in the misleading light of the spotlights. The stage lights of the monuments are so misleading that inhabitants could, except for modern structures like bridges and skyscrapers, forget today's realities for a moment during the darkness of the night.

Istanbul which hides its defectiveness at night shows its real face with the sunrise from the east; each side of the Bosphorus is not covered with pine and redbud trees but with villas, the dominant component of silhouette is not pierced by slim and fragile minarets but by the competing skyscrapers and bridge piers. However, a city like Rome, which does not have defects of today, does not need the concealing power of the darkness. According to Le Corbusier (1999: 173) "Rome has a picturesque view. Sunlight there wipes out all the confusion with such beauty."



**Figure 12.** Day and night perception of the city, Maiden's Tower  
(<http://www.gurkankucukler.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/kiz-kulesi-kapak.jpg>, 2013,  
<http://tarihvemedenyet.org/2010/09/yasayan-tarih-programi-kiz-kulesi/>, 2013).

### City in-between the competition of production and consumption

Time is defined as existence, rolling by, changing and sustainability, going afterwards in a direction that has no return. In the reality of the present time, Istanbul is enslaved by production and consumption in the cycle of alteration and transformation.

Increase in demand brings an increase in supply. Moreover, many factors such as direction, speed, location, amount and method of supply affect consumption pattern. Even though these effects fluctuate interdependently, consumption exploits production like a parasite in the urban space. While production fortifies and tries to keep up with consumption, consumption extinguishes production; as for that, city is squeezed between the stresses of the competition of production and consumption, losing its unique values.

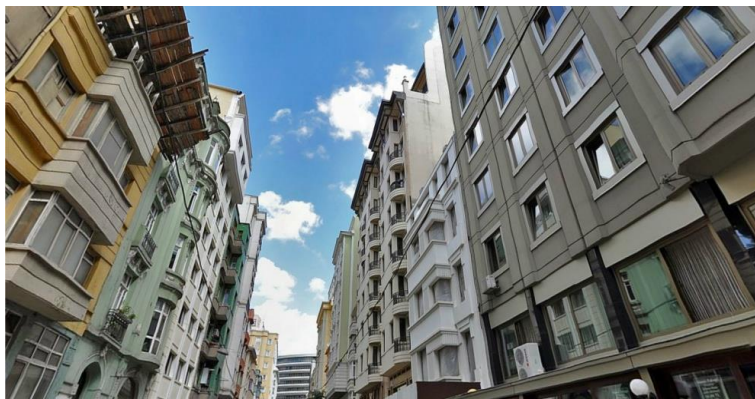
Consumption components such as real estate, fashion and textiles, food and drink, entertainment and means of transportation has continued to increase pushing the limits of the city. Consumption has started to force existing urban texture for rising needs, and the city has made progress in order to respond to the needs of consumer society beyond mere space production.

Cities reflect the results of mathematical operations between producers-consumers in other words they are creators-exterminators. "Countless natural or man-made disasters such as earthquakes, fires, wars and renovation applications, bury Grecian, Hellenistic, Rome, Byzantine and Turkish examples of art and architectural works in the ground and under ashes, even sometimes annihilate the memories of artifacts." (Kuban, 2004: 5).

### Space and time consumption

According to Virilio, 'speed' is a primary concept that defines variables related to time and space (Aydınlı, 2005). The changes in the city vary depending on the speed of consumption and the urban spaces that are being consumed.

In this respect, Talimhane, a central locality adjacent to Taksim, was once used to be a training area for the soldiers of Topçu Military Post and later on became a popular residential area with Art Deco style buildings, along with its changing and progressing urban centers, this district has lost its importance and its authentic users. It became an area containing auto mechanic workshops and there has been an attempt to revive the area by creating hotels for tourists; however, this led to a zone of hotels disconnected from ordinary urban life. "The dilemma between the needs and reality of urban life does not stop change. Change happens but does not meet the needs." (Kuban, 2004: 419). In this context, Talimhane has been



**Figure 13.** Hotels region, Talimhane  
(<http://harita.yandex.com.tr/>, 2012).



filled and emptied in accordance with various consumption tendencies and with different functions, the district that fell prey to this rapid change became lost its identity. Kuban defines the actual situation as a city that is no more like Istanbul or an unidentified settlement that is not even a city (2004: 414), although it retains the same name.

In Istanbul where it was possible to use the existing housing stock by improving it, lifestyles that are closed to outside world was encouraged, neighborhood life and its traditions were eradicated. While urban sites that were announced as renovation areas to be demolished, new constructions that serve the consumer society were erected, thus, districts lost their identities after losing their outlooks and inhabitants. The appetite of consumption became so extreme that it was impossible to recognize the Amcazade Hüseyin Paşa Waterfront Residence, the oldest and retaining the original features of a traditional house on Bosphorus, now it is becoming a hotel; hence traces of time were consumed. Istanbul is either no longer the capital of an empire, nor a focal point of international culture. It merely presents the memories of its past.

As the city grows blindly, transportation is becoming a serious problem and in particular the existing roads are no longer able to cope with the increasing volume of traffic. The projects designed to resolve the problems of transportation and infrastructure have proved to be limited solution. "Politicians and planners, under the burden of growing basic needs often tend to forget that the urban character is maintained not only by a comprehensive infrastructure but also by the attention given to detail." (Kuban, 2004: 418).



**Figure 14.** Amcazade Hüseyin Paşa Waterfront Residence, Anadoluhisarı  
(<http://www.istanbul.gov.tr/Default.aspx?pid=12910>, 2013,  
<http://akincimehmet44.com/tag/mihrabat-korusu/>, 2013).

"There is neither sufficient organization nor a cultural conscience that is capable of confronting the every-day problems of a city of this size. This can be perceived as the incompetency of urban life culture." (Kuban, 2004: 418). Urban life can be summarized as that which is able to express itself, to produce and to share and this is in fact, an aspect of being able to generate time and space while being in time and space (Şentürer, 2005). An 'urban dweller' is someone who thinks about the problems related to where he lives and who looks for solutions and comes up with questions. Every year, thousands of people are drawn to Istanbul in search of education and work



yet some are hardly aware of what it means to be a 'city dweller'. They do not feel responsible for their environment and only become a burden on the city itself. "A wall/barrier built up of power, money, speculation and technology stands against the issue of historical site conservation." (Kuban, 2000). The problems related to the protection of Istanbul results in losses on the historical environment side, however, on the other hand this irregular progress is reviving everyday life, with all its faulty, dynamic and indefinite forms.

Still, urban transformations, X shopping centers, Y palaces or Z residences, all with their projects presented as having flawless features that aim to eliminate the defective physical conditions, all belong to economic depression zones. Is being "defective" an economic phenomenon or rather does it serve to show the economic deficiencies as a "defect" or serve some illegal ends? While defective conditions are presented as peculiar to some marginal districts, luxury consumption and defective conditions are not only overlooked, they are accepted and demanded. In this framework, the concept of urban defectiveness should be discussed once again.

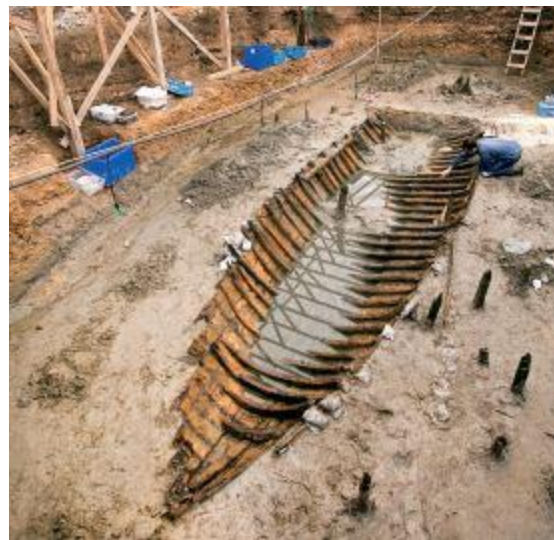
#### **Perception of obscure temporal accumulation**

As Harvey stated, the space-time jam can be explained as; "space deforms time, time damages the space." and this explains today's metropolitan experience (Aydinli, 2005).

The defective form of the deformed city, containing the feeling of 'decentralization' in its formation and its multi-language existence, takes on a mysterious aspect that makes the accumulation of obscure temporality partially possible to read more excitedly. There are two reasons why it is not possible to completely read the obscure temporality accumulations of the city; the faintness of disappearance or faintness of abundance.

The 'faintness of disappearance' is actualized when today smashes yesterday and struggles to come to the fore; the old city layers are externalized and become illegible during the stratification. If today's Turkey is analyzed in this context, what emerges it that the priority and density of 'the new' in the current life externalizes 'the old', and in a society for which the greatest national demonstration is to be proud of history, in reality, history is wholly externalized (Kuban, 2000).

For instance, it was seen again through the Yenikapi antiques that were discovered in the Marmaray Project-excavation, the city was more layered over that hill than was realised. However, while studying 'present moment' of the city, it has been noticed that it has become indistinct through the changes and developments. These layers, founded in archaeological cross-sections, starting from Neolithic-progressing through, Ancient Greek, Rome, Byzantium, and Ottoman chronologically



**Figure 15.** *Faintness of disappearance, Yenikapi sunkens*  
(<http://v3.arkitera.com/UserFiles/Image/news/2007/07/09/roma.jpg>).

towards the surface; and they are situated by overlapping and destroying the other, mixed and out of order over a plane in the surface of the city.

These multiple layers, existing and mixed prove that urban space is not created by only one civilization in only one specific period; however, while restructuring in historical area, not obeying the rules of contemporary conservation theory and the victory of 'the new' over 'the old', make the city undefined and incomplete. This is because of the defective areas identified by Kuban as a "half urbanized environment where half urbanized citizens live in" (2004: 416).



**Figure 16.** *Faintness of abundance, A view from Süleymaniye through Galata (Helena Mai Hirokawa, 2012).*

The other case 'faintness of abundance' comes from the state of 'abundance' on the contrary the meaning of the word faintness is 'being fewer, being uncertain'. The composition in Kabataş, Tophane and Karaköy is an association which does not establish relationships with status order, or chronology or distance. On one hand, these areas which are the result of accumulation are exciting with the hybrid city dynamics. On the other hand, the disorder and irregularity in the gathering of these dynamics results in these structures not being perceived as 'one' by standing out amongst others even if they are there and that they are always together with the other in the picture even if the frame changes. Even though they are known individually, the situations that are obscured, degenerated, corroded, are not recognized and not defined in the composition. Hence, this indistinct temporal congestion passes incomplete data to the inhabitants and encourages them to fill in the blanks.

Temporal stratification and obscuring affect the perceptibility of citizen's city perusal. Such that, the tendency of the city stratification, destruction of clarity with overlapping and becoming a rough draft as well as qualities, numbers and series of those obscured may

block the blood vessels of mental perception. As a result this situation may cause partial disconnection in perception or constant non-perception. The city dweller who lives in this non-perception situation continues his life in vegetative state and without awareness. The perception of this individual is so closed that it does not matter where he is, he rushes about his daily life and obeys its rules, he breathes, he is alive but he does not live.

New information is added to the gaps in the reading of the city with the developments such as archaeological findings in the city, revelation of the mysteries of the structures as a result of restoration work, reading manuscripts, unearthing the archives and thus obscured or empty gaps are filled. This increasing knowledge level enhances the level of perceptibility.

### **Experience of 'Palimpsest City'**

"What makes a place special, instead of an ordinary space is past experiences as well as physical matters." (Inceoğlu and Inceoğlu, 2005). Trying to understand a city by knowing its history, combining the stories in the memory with what is seen while advancing step by step are the

experiences which stimulate the senses and the more 'palimpsest' the city is, the more meaningful this experience will be. Each step taken in Istanbul, especially on the Historical Peninsula, each image encountered may find a meaning; but this is an equation depending on the cultural background and visual perception of the perceiver as well as being palimpsest of this city.

The greater the awareness of city dweller about the clues which lay in the memories of the city, the more the unknown parts of the equation increase. However, the incentive to find the unknown is a beginning, because those who are not in the search of anything, do not ask the right questions, do not look at the right places, cannot see what they are looking at, in other words who are unaware of the clues of the city, for them the city is an empty page. Those who create equations and think hard, examine the different dimensions of the city by taking into consideration what they read, hear, see and experience, they search for a response for what they do not know.

### **Dates of the city: Myths and truths**

In the perfect and irrational space of myths cities are like paradise, all governors are puissant and all nations are happy. However, as Kuban explains, "the core of a city's history is formed by the integration of life and physical structures" (2004: 5), and this history retains more in its essential background; it is such a chaos with obscurity, ignorance and eradication which drive it away from perfection.



**Figure 17.** *Kaleidoscope image.*

On the other hand, famous cities like Istanbul exist in memories as images instead of as real phenomena. Even for the modern residents of Istanbul, the city is an image beyond a physical existence. Therefore, the myths and images in this city are as real as realities (Kuban, 2004: 1) and realities are as imaginary as myths. Thus, realities and myths are mixed and unite in the magical atmosphere of Istanbul and this city, which blends black and white with all the colours and constitutes a whole, presents sophisticated but holistic image patterns like a kaleidoscope.





**Figure 18.** Mardin, Turkey (İTÜ Urban and Regional Planning archive).



**Figure 19.** Edirne, Turkey  
([http://www.edirne.bel.tr/Edirne/edirne\\_genel\\_bilgi.htm](http://www.edirne.bel.tr/Edirne/edirne_genel_bilgi.htm)).



**Figure 20.** Machu Picchu, Peru  
(<http://www.machupicchu360.org/machu-picchu-peru/photo-gallery-machu-picchu/citadel/47/machu%20picchu%20cusco/>).



**Figure 21.** Rome, Italy  
(<http://windows8backgrounds.com/roma-coliseum-wallpaper-hd>).



**Figure 22.** Istanbul.

### **Precessing living space**

Subjective time depends on time consciousness, it cannot be measured. However, objective time can be measured with the kinesis of the objects. The fact that people perceive the time in which they perceived the city over their existence and also over the historicity of the city and its objective existence are different phenomena. A city has such a strong physicalism that its own concrete existence cannot be ignored and city dwellers comment this physicalism filtering through their perception.

As every civilization imprints self-traces onto cities with monumental structures, intimately imperfect daily life flows consistently and leaves the prints behind. Even though the freezing of temporality is not possible for any city, some cities has deficient present times compare to their past. Hence, these cities cannot reflect today's time, space and life stratifications. For instance, while Mardin and Edirne are the cities reflecting past but not being able to generate present time and of which temporal fluidity become solid



and freeze; or Machu Picchu is a recluse which stays at the top of the Andes; or Rome is a dictator that cannot even stand today; Istanbul, beyond being a historical and touristic station, is distorted, ambiguous and imperfect precessed living space of inhabitants that are fluctuated and compressed between struggle of past and present.

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### Zamansız kentsel mekânın tamamlanmamışlığının kusurluluğu

Zamansal bir katlama yapabilsek... Hipodrom'da yarışları izleyen Theodora, aynı meydanda Kanuni'nin oğulları için yaptırdığı sünnet düğününe katılabilir, belediyenin mehter takımı bu düğünde sahne alabilir, Septimius Severus amcaları Mustafa, Mehmed, Selim kardeşlere hediyeler verebilir, Japon turist Okazaki ise bu anın fotoğrafını çekebilirdi. Theodosius Limanı'na gemileriyle gelenler burada aktarma yapıp Marmaray'a binerken, Neolitik yerleşimdekilerle karşılaşabilir, bu esnada Bizans kilisesi cemaatinin ayin sesleri duyulurken, Yalı Mahallesi sakinleri kentsel dönüşüme karşı oluşturdukları dernek binasında toplanabilirdi. Ordu Divanyolu'nda ilerlerken, Çemberlitaş'taki Konstantin Sütunu önündeki Konstantin'e tramvay çarpabilirdi. Fatih Sultan Mehmet ilk Cuma namazı için Ayasofya'ya girerken, bir

yandan hipodromdan 'nika!' diye bağırarak gelen grup, diğer yandan ise Dandolos'un adamları yapıya hücum edebilir, kapıda müze kart sırasında bekleyen kalabalıktan biri ise arkalarından bağırabilirdi: "Hoop kardeşim, biz ne zamandır bekliyoruz, sizin ne önceliğiniz var". Ya da Mimar Sinan Süleymaniye şantiyesindeyken, Çamlıca'da kendisinininkinden daha heybetli bir camii yapılmaya çalışıldığı kulağına fısıldanabilir, İstanbul'u dinleyen şair Orhan Veli de bunları duyup gülebilirdi...

Kentler, zihinleri bulanıklaştıran zamansallığının ya da tam olarak zamansızlığının, şimdiki andaki gerçekliği; bedensel, algısal ve mekânsal karşılığıdır. Şimdiki anın gerçekliğinde üretim ve tüketimin esiri olmuş bir kent olarak İstanbul ise, tarihsel sürecin fiziksel ürünlerini topografyası ile kucaklayıp çalkalamış, dengesi alt üst olmuş bir makro mekân, fiziksel ve zihinsel kent deneyimlerine imkân veren melez bir bedendir. Ancak bahsedilen bedensellik salt topografyanın durağan güzelliği değildir; farklı ölçek ve tekniklerdeki taramalarla süperpoze edilmiş parşömen niteliğindedir. Bu değerli kâğıdın, farklı dillerde yazılmış, silinmiş, karalanmış, yeniden yazılmış, yırtılmış, buruşturulmuş olması, her dönemde tasarımcıların, bu palimpsest durumu düzenleme ve kusursuz mekân üretme çabalarını engellemiştir. Sınırları, kıvrımları, sürekliliği kesintiye uğrattığı farklı katmanları, düğümlediği mekânları ile kontrolsüz, kesinsiz, belirsiz, uyumsuz bir fizikselliğe dönüştürmüştür. Bu kusurlu hali, tek elden çıkmamışlık hissi, pek çok dili içermesi, silik zamansal birikmelerin okunmasını imkânlı ve heyecanlı kılan, ancak tam olarak gizemi çözilemeyen hali, kentlinin belleğine tamamlanmamış bilgi aktarımı yapıp, boşlukları doldurmaya teşvik etmektedir.

Kent dinamiklerinin bu tanımsız ve tutarsız hali, kusurluluğun olumsuz hissini aksine, kentliyi kent ile etkileşime teşvik etmekte, sorunlar üzerine düşünmeye ve tasarlamaya yönlendirerek hayal güçlerini zinde tutmaktadır. Bir yandan da tamamen tasarlanamıyor olması, kusurları ile sınırlandırılıyor olması ya da sınırlılığı ile kusurlu hale gelmesi, her tasarımı eleştirilebilir ya da yorumlanabilir kılmaktadır. Öyle ki, tasarlama çabasında olmayan sıradan kullanıcıların bile kentsel mekânları kullanırken üretim ve tüketime etkin halde dâhil olmaları ile kent, eleştirel bir potansiyele kavuşmaktadır.

İstanbul'un koruma konusundaki sorunları tarihi çevre açısından kayıplar verdirmekte, bu düzensiz gelişim gündelik yaşam ve onun kusurlu, dinamik ve belirsiz hallerine can vermektedir. Efsanelerin kusursuz ve irrasyonel dünyasında, tüm kentler cennet, tüm yöneticiler kudretli, tüm insanlar mutludur; kent tarihleri ise, özünde çok daha fazlasını barındırır. Gizlenmiş, göz ardı edilmiş, yok edilmişliklerle bezeli bir karmaşa olan kent tarihleri kusursuzluktan çok uzaktır.

Her medeniyet kendi izlerini anıtsal yapılarla kente mühürlerken, kusurlarla dolu gündelik yaşam hep akıp gider ve o da izini ardında bırakır. Hiçbir kent için zamansallığın tamamen donması mümkün olmasa da; bazı kentlerin bugünü, geçmişi yanında zayıf kalmakta, böylelikle kent, bugünün zaman, mekân ve yaşam katmanlarını tam olarak yansıtamamaktadır. Örneğin, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun eski başkenti Edirne ya da taşın şekillendirdiği kent Mardin geçmişi yansıtıp şimdiki zamanı var edemeyen, yani zamansal akışkanlığı katılaşmış, süreklilikten kopuk ve donuk kentler iken; Machu Picchu And Dağları'nın zirvesinde hayatta kalmış bir münzevi iken ve Avrupa medeniyetinin merkezinde bulunan Roma bugüne tahammül bile edemeyen bir diktatör iken; İstanbul tarihi turistik bir durak olmanın ötesinde bozulmuş, belirsiz ve kusurlu, dün ile bugünün mücadelesi arasında sıkıştırılan kentlinin devinen yaşama mekânıdır.