

HÜZÜN or HUZUR

Reflections on a sound piece by Mladen Bizumic or distortions from the queen of cities

By Adnan Yıldız

I don't remember the first time I felt emancipated in her. It feels long time ago and I always had that feeling later. -As if I subconsciously kept that feeling to stay conscious in her and pretended that I don't know anything about the term 'symbiosis'.

My memory insists on denying the retrieval of the first day I felt like an adult in her. Nevertheless I remember one thing very clearly; I knew that it was not going to be same as before, moreover it was going to change one day maybe it was already changing. That was the actual reason I was crying.

I can't remember the first time I felt like the grown-up but not like a kid anymore in her because it happened at the same time with something that I really wanted to forget and then I think I decisively worked on forgetting as I always do with things I decide. You might say it is because of the culture I have grown up but I don't think so. It is because of the genes I have, genes that cause suppression, oppression and ignorance.

She was different. When I was to Paris and Berlin much later than the first time I felt like a hero in her, I realized that she was there with me too. She was with me at all over the places. I know that she is always with me, but sometimes I feel her more than anything. Now what I realize is that she has always dwelled with me. I was the one moving to somewhere else.

I saw her in Paris. When I realized that it was something from her, which means that she was there with me, I felt happy. I felt like I had been living in Paris for a long time with those lovely small cakes and crazy drivers. I tried to find out what would be the most amazing thing to do in the city. It was not climbing up the Eiffel Tower but maybe walking under it; passing through that big penis made of steel and looking at people who freak out for it.

There is a laundry at Reuterstrasse. It is not so far away from where we live. I always remember her when I go there. I don't know what is so special there to remember her, to remember the queen of cities in a laundry? Maybe it is the time I spent there. As long as I stay alone with myself, I am back to her, to Istanbul.

In that laundry, I usually wait for a few hours to get my things cleaned -out of the machine. Most of the times I take a book with me but it is always more

interesting to read people. When I first arrive, I don't see anyone interesting around so I start to read my book. In the meanwhile there always comes in someone who has to ask something like an address or how the machines work. I smile and enjoy the moment of imagining who that person is and what s/he is looking for. I try to be quick because sometimes that person gives so much information in a few minutes so you even don't have time to guess. Or you can't keep your curiosity alive. Most of the people around are boring, aren't they?

In those moments of my beautiful laundry days, I feel like the angel in Wim Wender's "Wings of Desire" staring at the Turkish woman while she was sitting in the laundry at night; she rather looks like waiting for her mind to get cleaned up. If you have seen the movie, you remember its end. I like the movies with high ends. I would like to have a high end myself as well. A high end in her. The angel who becomes a human being in the movie runs in Kreuzberg at the end of the movie. Excuse me, have you asked where Kreuzberg is? She is the ugly daughter of Istanbul who escaped to Berlin. She is a beautiful ghetto but still Istanbul at least, still having that Istanbul feeling inside her.

She belongs to "Huzur". She is "huzur" herself. The legend pen of Turkish modernist literature, Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar's book "Huzur" -first printed in 1949-has been translated into English shortly after Orhan Pamuk got the Nobel Prize. The best book ever written about Istanbul is translated into English as "A Mind at Peace". Not peace itself, but a mind-set in peace.

Pamuk introduced the word "hüzün" to the Western world as a kind of impossible translation, reflecting that "hüzün" is not the same as melancholy and indeed very different from that. "Hüzün" is something Istanbul has got herself or gives to you. You can feel in her. But he has ignored another word ""huzur" which is very much different than "peace". Maybe more spiritual, more religious kind of peace, more wisdom, like goddess of happiness. Pamuk fantasizes himself as the inheritor of Tanpınar's language and acts as if he is however he translates the tastes and flavours for an educated orientalist mind. For those, Istanbul is the lost Byzantine father or the last station that could be imagined as a fantasy. Pamuk's Istanbul is an exotic stage for a historical thriller or a cosmopolitan rhapsody, and most of the loyal readers know that Tanpınar was not so predictable.

Happiness is like catching a fish from a water flowing –the moment you catch from life- and "huzur" is leaving your hand in that water knowing that you can catch a fish but not moving. Not dividing the life into moments. We don't need sadness or melancholy or other translated forms of them like "hüzün" to feel politically, psychologically or emotionally correct.

All we need is "huzur".

And it is what you can create only by yourself.