

**BOUNDARIES OF GENDERED SPACE :  
TRADITIONAL TURKISH HOUSE**

A THESIS

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FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF FINE ARTS

By

Esma Burçin Dengiz  
August, 2001

I certify that I have read this thesis and that in my opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Fine Arts.

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Dr. Nur Altınyıldız (Principal Advisor)

I certify that I have read this thesis and that in my opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Fine Arts.

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Assoc.Prof.Dr. Gülsüm B. Nalbantoğlu

I certify that I have read this thesis and that in my opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Fine Arts.

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Dr.Ali Cengizkan

Approved by the Institute of Fine Arts

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Prof. Dr. Bülent Özgüç, Director of the Institute of Fine Arts

## ABSTRACT

# BOUNDARIES OF GENDERED SPACE : TRADITIONAL TURKISH HOUSE

Esma Burçin Dengiz

M.F.A. in Interior Architecture and Environmental Design

Supervisor : Dr. Nur Altinyıldız

August, 2001

This work looks at the traditional Turkish house and its two boundaries from the point of gender-space relationship. Acknowledging that gender and space mutually construct each other, this thesis explains both the manifestation of gender difference in the built environment in general, and how the domestic environment in Ottoman architecture and gender mutually construct each other. The two boundaries of the hayat house are analyzed, as regards the body and the gaze of the woman. These are the house-street boundary (street façade and its components, also living areas which are adjacent to the street façade's interior and exterior) and the house-garden boundary (garden façade and its components, also living areas which are adjacent to the garden façade's interior and exterior). In this respect, the boundaries of the house are thresholds between the public and the private, the exterior and the interior, therefore they express the binaries that these bring within. By looking at the body and gaze of the woman at these thresholds, the oppositions of these thresholds are illustrated.

**Keywords:** Gender, Space, Gendered Architecture, House, Turkish House, Threshold, Boundary

## ÖZET

# CİNSİYETLE ETKİLEŞİMLİ MEKANLARIN EŞİKLERİ: GELENEKSEL TÜRK EVİ

Esmâ Burçin Dengiz

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Bu çalışma, geleneksel Türk evine ve onun iki sınırına cinsiyet-mekan ilişkisi açısından bakmaktadır. Mekan ve cinsiyetin karşılıklı birbirlerini oluşturdukları göz önünde bulundurularak, önce genel olarak cinsiyet ayrımının yapıda gösterimi ve daha sonra da özel olarak Osmanlı konut mimarisinde cinsiyetin yapı ve çevresini oluşturduğu, aynı zamanda yapının da cinsiyet ayrımı kalıplarının gelişmesinde etken olduğu üzerinde durulmaktadır. Sonuç bölümünde, çalışmanın yoğunlaştığı hayat evinin iki sınırı, kadının bedeni ve bakışı açılarından incelenmiştir. Bu sınır bölgeleri, ev-sokak sınırı (evin sokak cephesi ve onun bileşenleri, evin sokak cephesinin iç ve dış bitişiğindeki yaşama alanının bir kısmı), ve ev-bahçe sınırıdır (evin bahçe cephesi ve onun bileşenleri, evin bahçe cephesinin iç ve dış bitişiğindeki yaşama alanının bir kısmı). Bu çerçevede evin sınırları, kamu ve özel, dış ve iç arasında eşiktir, dolayısıyla bu ikilikleri ve bu ikiliklerin barındırdığı başka ikilikleri de yansıtır. Kadının bedenine ve bakışına bakılarak, bu eşiklerdeki zıtlıklar resmedilmektedir.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** Cinsiyet, Mekan, Cinsiyetlendirilmiş Mimari, Konut/Ev, Türk Evi, Eşik, Sınır

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

This thesis studies the traditional Turkish house from the point of gender-space relationship. Acknowledging that gender and space mutually construct each other and looking at the domestic environment in Ottoman architecture as such opens up possibilities for new interpretations. The study is concerned with the two boundaries of the traditional Turkish house, the house-street boundary and the house-garden boundary, as boundaries of the house are thresholds between public-private, exterior-interior. The body and the gaze of the female are explored at these thresholds, after explaining and exemplifying manifestations of gender difference in the built environment where the public (exterior) is dominated by male attributions and the private (interior) is dominated by those of the female.

I would like to clarify the point that I do not see gender as the only influence in the construction of the house or its boundaries, but that I look at the construction of the boundaries of the traditional Turkish house from the point of gender-space or gender-architecture relationship. I am aware that there are many other important factors such as climatic, topographic, regional which come together and form the boundaries of the traditional Turkish house and which affect its construction. However, in this thesis, these factors will not be mentioned as they are not related to my argument.

This way of looking at the traditional Turkish house opened up new areas of knowledge for me such as anthropology, social studies, cultural studies and gender studies. Research on the traditional Turkish house ran parallel to research on gender and I tried to establish a link between them with a critical approach. This work includes a scrutiny of the boundaries of the traditional Turkish house, based on gender literature. Since this thesis approaches the issue of the Turkish house from a rather abstract point of view instead of dealing with its solid architectural elements, I believe it provides a different insight to the study of both the traditional Turkish house and gender literature.

### **1.1. Aim of the Study**

This study aims to investigate how the boundaries of the traditional Turkish house are constructed by and construct gender difference. It attempts to provide a fresh approach to both the study of the traditional Turkish house in particular and the field of gender and architecture in general. The purpose of this thesis is to study the body and gaze of the female specifically at the boundaries of outer sofa house (hayat house) and to show that these boundaries are more complicated than a mere separation of realms and that domination or power over the boundary is differentiated when the body and the gaze of the female are separately studied.

## **1.2. Methodology**

The thesis is based on literature survey and critical interpretation. The former constitutes the basis for the latter. Studies on gender and architecture, especially those on the conduct of the body and the gaze, are used to interpret operations of gender at the boundaries of the traditional Turkish house. This, in turn, allows a future reinterpretation of the workings of the body and the gaze as regards the female and the male.

## **2. GENDER AND ARCHITECTURE**

Relationship of gender and space has long been an issue in the discipline of architecture, especially in the last five years. Most of the research on gender-architecture criticizes the built environment as a “man”-made environment. Thus, most of these works question the place of the woman both as inhabitator and as designer/builder. Studies about the public environment appear to be more numerous compared to studies about the private environment, in other words, about the house. However, gender relations affecting or affected by the house, are popular subjects since the house is the place that man and woman inevitably share.

Research on gender and architecture first started to appear in the 1970s, mostly written by women and usually from a political feminist angle. These works were mostly concerned with the architectural profession and the “man”-made environment. The relation between gender and architecture is rich, considering the research that has been done in the last twenty years. Among these, some works aim to bring a feminist critique to the built environment, exploring concerns with sex, desire, space and masculinity. Others concentrate mostly on sexual division of labor and the sex role in the work environment, specifically dealing with the work environment besides dwellings and including observations about women’s status in societies, history of sex discrimination against women and relationship of woman and dwelling. The relationship between

architecture and gender has in common a multifaceted nature and today, there exists an interdisciplinary context for a gendered critique of architecture.

Before moving on to the sections that investigate manifestation of gender difference in the built environment and specifically the domestic environment, I would like to draw attention to the key concepts in gender and sexual difference, mostly as they relate to space.

## **2.1. Gender**

What is gender? Is it a matter of language, of signs and symbols, a semiotic construct? Gender is not the equivalent of sex. As Spain explains, gender refers to the “...socially and culturally constructed distinctions that accompany biological differences associated with a person’s sex” (4). The biological differences are stable over time and across cultures, but there is a variety of the social implications of gender differences historically and socially. Gender is the set of cultural practices and representations associated to biological sex. It is the “...cultural meaning attached to sexual identity” (Landa, 15).

## **2.2. Gender Role and Gender Difference**

Gould suggests that gender difference has most often been used to subordinate or oppress women (17) and Ortner makes the assumption that the subordination of women exists in all societies – “a true universal”- (Brettell, 107). However, Landa adds that gender roles are always central to a culture’s interests, meaning that each culture will

have a variety of means to express the way men and women are expected to behave (16). The notion of gender role is more specific to and therefore more variable than gender. Therefore, can we really speak about a universal subordination of women while accepting that gender roles are strongly influenced by any society's specific culture? In my opinion, it is more appropriate to accept varieties in the degree of subordination or domination of either sex, according to different cultures, but yet I observe there is a tendency for an ongoing universal patriarchy in the world. As Kristeva put it;

“Sexual difference...is translated by and translates a difference in the relationship of subjects to the symbolic contract which *is* the social contract: a difference, then, in the relationship to power, language and meaning.” (qtd. in Frosh, 117).

Does this difference mean two opposite sides, one having power and the other not? In patriarchal culture, man denies woman's “ownership of her own position”, therefore her independence. The woman is idealised and degraded, made into an object of representation and investigation (Frosh, 118). Men are culturally constructed as active beings, who must be strong to deal with the problems of the world, while women are seen as passive and given a place closer to the objectual.

“Men have always been the bearers of reason, culture and seen as inhabiting the public sphere. Women are traditionally seen as closer to nature and to emotion and theirs is the private sphere” (Landa, 23).

Masculinity has the appearance of being defined by something positive, that which the male has and the female lacks (Frosh, 79). In the traditional masculine-feminine opposition, the masculine attributes are given precedence. Traditional masculinity focuses on power, dominance and independence, without any room for intimacy.

Emotion, which implies dependence is thought to be dangerous for man as it makes them “womanly” (Frosh, 3 and Landa, 23). In patriarchy, women are constructed as the negative pole, while men as both the neutral and the positive term. This makes woman become the “other” (Landa, 22). Why or from where do these negative or passive associations come along with the female side? The origin seems to be explanations based on the biological structure of the female body. The elements of biological passivity in the female body are transformed by culture into a whole mythology; the simplest example is the analogy between man and the mobility of their reproductive cells; sperms, in comparison with the passivity of woman’s reproductive cells; eggs (Ortner, 20).

The division of gender roles bring within itself binary oppositions. The binary oppositions, stemming from the polarity of masculine versus feminine, can be various such as hard-soft, tight-loose, rigid-pliable, dry-fluid, objective-subjective, reason-emotion, science-art, culture-nature, intellectuality-sensuality, symbolic-body etc. They have become real, and fixed. Frosh argues that all of these are constructed, therefore not naturally given oppositions (11, 65, 72). About the possibility of transgressing gender assumptions, he states that escaping gender categories of masculinity and femininity is not an easy task since they are culturally constructed phenomenon (10).

“The essential patriarchal organization of culture, or the phallic structuring of language, means that woman takes up her place as the ‘other’, as something which stands outside the symbolic as its negative, giving its presence through her exclusion as underlined by Lacan’s famous slogan: ‘There is no such thing as *The Woman*’”(Frosh, 118).

### **2.3. Theories about Gender Difference**

There are various approaches in the theorization of gender difference. Scholars from different disciplines provide different explanations considering gender difference from the physiological, psychological and social perspectives.

Money, Diamond, Stoller and Green are some of the leading scholars in the field of sexual difference and gender roles. They base their theories on biological studies (Seidenberg 117, 118, 119). In the explanation of most theories about gender difference, biological facts play an important role as they constitute their bases. Not only is biological difference seen in the genital organs of both sexes but also difference in their physical appearance brings about hierarchical discussions. The fact that men, having more muscled, larger and heavier bodies than women was conducive to the conclusion that they are stronger, therefore having the capacity to exercise physical power over women. This biological fact led to the subordination of women, which in turn, resulted in the superiority of men in society, while women became secondary especially in patriarchal cultures, for example in the Ottoman.

Psychoanalysis explains the establishment of gender roles mostly depending on the fact that the biological structures of the two sexes are constant. For instance, Erikson uses the anatomical structure of the human body to explain the differences between the two sexes (Seidenberg, 55). Erikson believes the female returns inwards while the male turns outwards and that the female always feels the fear of being left empty, since from early childhood, the female always feels the lack of the male sexual organ (Seidenberg, 56). We can link this theory with attributions of the sexes to space. The inward orientation of



women associates them with the home whereas the outwardly oriented men are associated with the city.

Just as Landa, Ortner proposes that women are universally identified with natural reproductive processes and men with cultural processes (Spain, 23). Spain adds that as long as societies value culture (meaning technological advancement) over nature, masculine attributes will be valued over feminine attributes and women's status will be lower than men's. According to Ortner, because of women's reproductional capacity, many societies place women nearer to nature, while men's productive activities gain them a place nearer to culture (Rodgers, 55). Similar approach of associating women with nature, reproduction and emotion exists in Parsons and Bales's study which introduces a functionalist approach to gender stratification that men are the providers of wealth, while women are the caretakers of emotional needs within the home (qtd. in Spain, 22).

### **2.3.1. Approach to Woman's Body**

Alberti matches the mind with the male and the body with the female, saying that the body is constantly trying to master the mind or reason since the body is after sensuous desires. He thinks that the body should be disciplined. This disciplining of the body is an extension of the traditional disciplining of the cultural artifact, woman, authorized by the claim that she is too much a part of the fluid bodily world to control herself (Wigley, 345). The source of pride in the body in Greeks came from beliefs about body heat, which governed the process of making a human being. The fetuses well heated in the womb early in pregnancy were thought to become males; fetuses lacking initial heat

became females. The lack of sufficient heating in the womb produced a creature who was “more soft, more liquid, more clammy-cold, together more formless than were men” (Sennett, 41).

“In returning to the city, women should again return to the shadows. No more were slaves and resident foreigners entitled to speak in the city, since they too were all cold bodies.” (Sennett, 167)

Aristotle made a connection between menstrual blood and sperm, believing that menstrual blood was cold blood whereas sperm was cooked blood; sperm was superior because it generated new life, whereas menstrual blood remained inert. He characterizes “...the male as possessing the principle of movement and of generation, the female as possessing that of matter”, a contrast between active and passive forces in the body. According to him, because the male tissues were hotter, a man’s muscle was firmer than a woman’s so the male could stand exposure and nakedness more than the female could (qtd. in Sennett 167). The men with warm bodies could join public life whereas the women with cold bodies covered their bodies and stayed at home, as Sennett adds (167).

### **2.3.2. The Gaze in Feminist Theory**

Studies of the gaze have been able to link representation with real divisions of power and to locate both within cultural structures of gender. The gaze has attracted much scholarly attention because of the insight it allows on the gender dynamic. Mulvey, in her work *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*, introduces a landmark work which presupposes that vision, depending on whether its subject is a man or a woman, divides space differently. Kirby explains that two different models of the gaze are most frequently written about in feminist theory (125). The first sees the gaze as a projectile

going out from one subject to another and then being reflected back. The sex of the subject looking, and the sex of the object looked at determine the gender dynamics of the gaze. In the second, gaze is seen as a constitutive field itself, forming the power differences between subjects. The direction and the quality of the gaze determine the gender positionality of the participating subjects. In this case, the gaze is reversible; whoever controls the gaze has power, and thereby turns implicitly masculine (Kirby, 126). My study is based on this second perspective, which has attracted more attention in feminist thought, for example, Kaplan asks in the title of one essay “Is the Gaze Male?” (309). Her approach suggests that our gender, and therefore our relation to power, has nothing to do with the sex of our bodies; power is attained by simply opening the eyes and seeing (Kirby, 126). There are some important questions that come along with this approach: One of them is whether a reversal of the gendered structure of the gaze is culturally possible (Kirby, 127).

“There is a round-robin equation of looking/power/masculinity in feminist theory and in the larger culture that I find disturbing...There ought to be some point in the breaks between these three terms to disrupt the perpetual pairing of the gaze with power, and of power with masculinity” (127).

With the power of the gaze, when women are in the dominant position, are they in the masculine position or can we imagine a female dominant position that would differ from the male dominance, or is there the possibility for both genders to occupy the positions we now know as masculine and feminine? (Kaplan, 318).

## **2.4. Gender Difference in Turkish Family and Society**

Without an overview of the social and private relationships between the sexes and an exploration of the role of women in domestic life in Ottoman Turkish society, it would be impossible to propose a relationship between the construction of boundaries of the traditional house and the gender roles. Therefore, gender dynamics in Ottoman society and, more specifically, the family, needs to be elucidated within the context of social and religious constraints during the late Ottoman period.

### **2.4.1. Male – Female Dynamics**

In Ottoman society, Muslim religious code calls for the seclusion of women. This means that a woman can not occupy the same space with men unless he is her husband or a close enough relative to whom she can not get married. This rule, as well as other strict regulations of Islamic law, divided the social life into two; a men's world and a women's world. Women had to wear veil if they had to go out of the house or if male guests came to the house when their husband was also home. The institutionalized boundaries between the members of different sexes in the society expressed the recognition of power in one part at the expense of the other. Mernissi maintains that any transgression of the boundaries was a danger to the social order because it threatened the acknowledged allocation of power (8). The division of social order on the basis of sex resulted in seclusion of women from the communal or public environment, providing freedom for men in the same space. While the physical appearance of men was same in any realm (public or private), women had to adapt themselves while occupying these environments. Inside, if there were no male guests, they did not wear veil but outside of the house their bodies had to be covered. Women had to obey strict rules about

appearance, which I believe affected them psychologically as well. The western theory that associates women with nature, man with culture and women with the object, men with the subject is applicable to the eastern cultures as well. In Ottoman society, women would not be behind the boundaries of the house nor would they cover their bodies if they were not seen as objects. Just like in western approach, woman was believed to have the capacity to disrupt the man with her body, if exposed. As inhabitants of the domestic world, Turkish women in the Ottoman Empire were primarily “sexual beings” (Mernissi, 139) whose existence outside of that sphere was considered an anomaly. Taşkıran also explains men’s assumed superior role in society and women’s tendency to resign themselves to an inferior position (9).

Although the relationship between men and women in rural areas was relatively relaxed due to demands of labor, constraints became stricter in the urban environment – the more so up the economic ladder to the extent that even the home came to be divided into two as harem (women’s quarter) and selamlık (men’s quarter). Demirdirek points out the fact that the sexes could not have any moral relationship except marriage or kinship (61). Therefore, marriage was sacred and so was the house, being directly associated with each other.

#### **2.4.2. Turkish Women in the Ottoman Empire**

The high status of Turkish women in society during the period between the founding of the Ottoman Empire in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and the 16<sup>th</sup> century is mentioned by both Dođramacı (*Atatürk*, 12) and Taşkıran (18). Back then, women had freedom in public

and they did not cover themselves, they just wore a scarf over their heads with their face uncovered. It was mostly foreign (Byzantine and Persian) influences and acceptance of Islamic faith that firstly brought restrictions to Turkish women's social life (Doğramacı, *Atatürk*, 13). Dengler draws attention to Turkish women's constraint in the manner of their public appearance and he states that at least from the 16<sup>th</sup> century to the end of the 17<sup>th</sup>, urban Turkish women had come to be veiled in public (230). The veil had the practical effect of helping to isolate women as a group from ordinary public contact with males.

The western explanation that women's biological characteristics (such as their relative smaller body compared to men's, stability of their reproductive eggs, and their bodily weak state during menstruation period) all called for her passive position and her inability to stand difficulties (such as change in weather, long distance travel etc) in eastern culture also. It is obvious that this mentality was not foreign to that of Ottoman. In the Ottoman society, restrictions placed upon the physical movement of women such as discouraging long distance travel, providing separate accommodation for women and a male or family member escort during such occasions also reduced possible contact between the sexes. It can be said that the physical space allotted to women in the Ottoman Empire was narrower than that allotted to men and it was of a substantially different nature as well.

Since their presence outside home was extraordinary, Turkish women mostly lived behind the walls of their home. Living within a system of restrictions without the possibility or the ability to interact with males outside the network of kin, family and

household unit, Turkish women seemed to adapt themselves to this, without questioning since the Ottoman social system provided them with a number of incentives for staying within the women's world. These incentives were almost as various as the restrictions placed upon them. First of all, in the Ottoman system, a woman's sense of worth increased through marriage (Dengler, 231 and Nuri 85) and later with the production of offspring, especially if male. An unmarried woman had a very low status in society, legally and socially. In Turkish, to marry is evlenmek, which by direct translation is "to acquire a house". There is a great similarity between the ancient Greek culture and the Ottoman culture in this matter. Women who were housed by the marriage institution, as Wigley (336) pointed out, were respected more in society since marriage gave women a formal position in the community at large.

Celal Nuri, in his work *Kadınlarımız* that he wrote in 1915, talks about women and family in Turkish society throughout history, often comparing it with values of European countries and stating the differences between women and men in both cultures. He also mentions the importance of marriage for women, linking this to women's desire for looking beautiful and "being seen". However, here I believe that, rather than talking specifically about Turkish women, he talks about women at large. He opens it up by saying that "to be seen" was a womanly desire, especially among women who were unmarried. According to him, most social activities were established for women's desire to be seen, and as a general fact women want to be beautiful in these events to find a man (110). This point that he underlines might be the case in western countries in that time, but the situation differed in Ottoman Turkish society. How could women be seen

by men in this kind of social order and with the fact that their faces (except eyes) and bodies were covered in public?

## **2.5. Gender and Space: Manifestation of Gender Difference in the Built Environment**

“From the symbolic meaning of spaces/places and the clearly gendered messages which they transmit, to straightforward exclusion by violence, spaces and places are not only themselves gendered but . . . also reflect and affect the ways in which gender is constructed and understood.” (Massey 179).

The built environment has the power to enhance and restrict, nurture or impoverish human activity and behaviour (Weisman, 4). It can as well produce conditions which reflect or reinforce the status of the human being that is experiencing it. Laws, regulations, practices as well as cultural attitudes are the factors that play a role in the occurrence of these conditions. Thus, Norberg-Schulz states that architecture expresses social, ideological, scientific, philosophical or religious ideas in concrete forms (22). In other words, as put by Preziosi,

“There is no human society which does not communicate, express, and represent itself architectonically. Moreover, there is not just one code spread in gradient diffusion around the globe, but as many codes as there are cultures, and more.” (6).

Architecture controls and limits physical movement and controls the power of sight as part of this physical experience. It also creates an arena and a frame for those who inhabit space (Friedman, 334). The division between the sexes brings within itself status differences with hierarchical organisations and certain associations, which are regarded



either positive or negative. As explained by Brettell, women's status will be lowest in those societies where there is a strong differentiation between domestic and public spheres of activity and where women are isolated from one another and placed under a single man's authority, in the home (64). When architectural or metaphorical space is considered, this division of gender and system of hierarchies seem to be more apparently observed. "A whole history remains to be written of spaces – which would at the same time be the history of powers -." (qtd. in Spain, intro.)

If both gender and space are productions of social, cultural, traditional values, gender relations, in some way, must be manifest in space as well as spatial relations being manifest in the construction of gender. "In so far as woman is universally defined in terms of already maternal and domestic role, we can account for her universal subordination" (Rosaldo, qtd. in Brettell, 68). Whether a universal or culture specific suppression of women exists, which I also talked about in the gender section, it's shaping can be seen architectonically. The concern in this section is to trace some of the relationships between the role of gender in the discourse of space and the role of space in the discourse of gender. Thus, this issue attracts the attention of scholars from various disciplines. Feminist geographers such as Bondi, Massey, McDowell and Rose are leading researchers who investigate how space is produced by and produce gender relations. Much of the writings in feminist critique making connections between spaces occupied by women and their social status, rely on their works (Rendell, 102).

Architectural and geographic spatial arrangements have supported status differences between women and men throughout history. This spatial segregation reinforces

women's lower status relative to men's, because of the difficulty of women's access to knowledge. The social construction of gender difference establishes some spaces as women's and others as men's (Frosh, 11). The spatial arrangements between the two sexes are socially created and the "daily-life environment" of gendered spaces acts to convey inequality (Spain, 4).

Rendell, approaching the issue from a different point of view, explores whether space is gendered and, asks whether gendered space is produced intentionally according to the sex of the architect, or whether it is produced through different interpretations of architectural criticism, history and theory. In defining the term "space" in gendered space, as he explains:

"This is not the space as it has traditionally been defined by architecture - the space of architect-designed buildings - but rather space as it is found, as it is used, occupied and transformed through everyday activities." (101).

What are these everyday activities? They are the behaviours within the enclosure, shaped by traditions and culture, as space is not only materially but also culturally produced and is an integral and changing part of daily life where social and personal rituals and activities are performed.

Anthropology was one of the first disciplines to imply the relation between gender and space, and that it was defined through power relations. Later, some of the architects, urbanists and historians who are interested in spatial boundaries examined the kinship networks and social relations in public and private realms. For instance, Ardener's research examines the differing spaces men and women are allocated culturally, and the

particular role space has in symbolising, maintaining and reinforcing gender relations (1-30). More recently, attention is drawn to the ways in which the relationship between gender and space is defined through power, in other words, how power relations are inscribed in built space.

### **2.5.1. Men in Public, Women in Private**

The dominant male public realm of the city and the subordinate female private realm of the home are constructed categories stemming from gender identities and the dichotomies that they bring along. This categorization belongs to patriarchy and it brings assumptions regarding sex, gender and space and prioritizes the relation of the men to the public or the city (Rendell, 135).

"The gods made provision from the first by shaping, as it seems to me the woman's nature for indoor and the man's for outdoor occupations." (Alberti qtd. in Wigley, 334).

This relation of men with the public realm and women with the private is more evident in Middle Eastern countries compared to the western ones. Especially in Muslim societies, where women are not allowed to share the same space with men whom they are not related with kinship, this divergence of realms is strongly apparent. This is explained by Lamphere that in the Middle East, women were associated with the private domain and a lack of power, while men with the public domain and the center of politics (70).

Bahloul, for instance, who investigates the domestic life of Maghrebian women describes the courtyard as the "womb of the mother house" and the street as "a

masculine forum for difference” (41). She associates the protecting, harmonious, domestic and enclosing characteristics of the courtyard with motherhood. When men talked about this place, they described it as “women’s territory” as “...the house clearly records this gender-based definition of the domestic space..” Bahloul adds. The street, in contrast with the internal femininity, asserts itself as masculine and violent, having power. “The passage between these two worlds, inner and outer, is a passage from one sexual world to another” (qtd. in Bahloul, 44). The street was clearly dominated by the male and men talked about this space as being their own territory and they were proud in their bravery of dealing with this outside world of difficulties.

Although the identification of women with the domestic environment is particularly apparent in Middle Eastern culture, it is by no means limited to that region. Thus, Wigley who takes Greece as his example, maintains that home becomes the place of woman and underlines that the

“...stereotypical feminine space situates itself in the sexualized, emotionalized, personalized, privatized, erratic sphere of the home and bedchamber rather than in the structured, impersonal public realm” (330).

He explains that it was a dishonor for men to remain indoors instead of devoting themselves to outdoor pursuits. Such a spatial reversal was believed to cause a reversal in sexual roles, transforming the mental and physical character of those who occupy the “wrong place”.

The threat of being in the wrong place is not just the feminization of the man, but also of the woman. In ancient Greek thought, it is believed that if the woman goes outside of the

house she becomes more dangerously feminine rather than more masculine. A woman's interest in the outside is related to her virtue. The woman outside is implicitly sexually mobile and her sexuality is no longer being controlled by the house. My opinion is this is also true for the Muslim countries where women live segregated lives as a group behind boundaries, having a restricted public life. Because women were seen as potential disrupters (if they exposed their body), they had to cover their bodies in public. Married women had a more respectful place in the society, as the house gained by the marriage institution made them virtuous. Furthermore, in ancient Greek thought, where women are believed to lack the internal self-control (which was credited to men), respected women were kept away from public places and only prostitutes walked in the streets. The agora was never a safe place for women and traditionally, women were a part of the private life (Seidenberg, 12).

This self-control was no more than the maintenance of secure boundaries. It was believed by ancient Greeks that internal boundaries, or rather boundaries that define the interior of the person, the identity of the self, cannot be maintained by a woman because "...her fluid sexuality endlessly overflows and disrupts them...she endlessly disrupts the boundaries of others, that is, men, disturbing their identity." In these terms, self control for a woman, which is to say the production of her identity as a woman, can only be obedience to external law. Unable to control herself, she must be controlled by being "bounded ". (Wigley, 336). Similar is true for Muslim societies, specifically the Ottoman society. Women had to have escorts with them (men from their family or their husbands) in order to go somewhere public, especially if they would travel. They were always under control of the opposite sex.

The house appears as the main mechanism of control through the production of gender division. Marriage provides this control. In these terms, the role of architecture is clearly the control of sexuality, or more specifically, women's sexuality: the chastity of a girl, the fidelity of a wife. In Ottoman society, married women were the most respected because they were "housed", in other words their sexuality was controlled by the marriage institution legally, and by the boundaries of the house physically.

### **2.5.2. Domestic Realm: House as Gendered Space, House as Women's Space, House as Security, Identity, Prison**

Generally speaking, -if we exclude the modern movement in architecture- the expression of traditional, cultural roles and attitudes has always existed in the design of domestic architecture. Women are contextualized with the house, as it can even be observed from the advertisements of household goods in the media. Especially in patriarchal societies, women are perceived as acquiring their social identity and personal individuality mostly in the private sphere while men could have two lives; at the private side and at the public side, both of the realms supporting the emergence of their personality.

"The home, the place to which women have been intimately connected, is as revered an architectural icon as the skyscraper. From early childhood women have been taught to assume the role of homemaker, housekeeper, and housewife. The home, long considered women's special domain, reinforces sex-role stereotypes and subtly perpetuates traditional views of family..." (Weisman, 2).

Ang and Symonds, in their work "Home, Displacement, Belonging" associate house with identity and security, being the primary site of care and comfort (5). "Being home" refers to the place where one lives within familiar, safe, protected boundaries (Miller).

House, the territory of women, is seen as prison in some feminist work. The concept of house as a prison ties in with the idea of gendered space. Rosemary George captures this concept of house by saying “Homes are not about inclusions and wide open arms as much as they are about places carved out of closed doors, closed borders and screening apparatuses” (qtd in Miller). If woman must live within the prison of house, her identity is therefore limited. Thus, as Smithe and Hannam note “...home is the place from which one ventures out into the world” (29). In the case of the Ottoman women, this “venturing out” was possible only visually, not physically.

When explaining the role of architectural space in maintaining status distinctions by gender, the space outside the house is the arena in which social relations (i.e. status) are produced, while the space inside the house becomes the place in which social relations are reproduced. Dwellings reflect ideals and realities about relationships between women and men within the family and the society (Spain, 7). In other words, houses serve as metaphors as they suggest and justify social categories, values and relations. This means that if status differences exist inside the house, they are likely to be apparent outside also.

Observations of status differences between sexes in various societies shows that in non-industrial societies the distinction between men and women becomes more apparent, affording men with the higher status within or outside the house. Oliver states that nonindustrial societies often separate women and men within the dwelling (Spain, 11). While this is not the case in industrial societies, in the Middle East, just like in medieval thought, the physical characteristics of the house controls the feminine body. Wigley

explains that the house could only operate as such, if the woman's sexuality, which threatens to pollute it (pollution being, for the Greeks, no more than things out of place), is contained within and by it (353). Where the house provided a physical barrier between man and woman and the public, the house assumed the role of the man's self control. Similarly, in Ottoman society, women's virtue could not be separated from the physical space. The primary role of the house was to protect the women by isolating them from public life or other men, and perhaps to protect men from women also.

In non-industrial societies and the Middle East, for a woman, the house is something she acquires once she is married or she is the mother of adult men; there is no place where the domestic chain was handed down uninterruptedly from mother to daughter, or where women's estate accumulated. (Shurmer-Smithe, 34) The situation was similar in the late Ottoman times.

Although man and woman live in the house together in the classical example of the family, woman is the part that has been talked more about, being associated with the home. By saying that the house is an appropriate focus for the analysis of female activities and spatial organisation -the "woman-environment relationship"- , Hirschon underlines the association of the house with the female. (Ardener, 70) For instance, Bahloul makes use of women's diaries in "Telling Places: the house as social architecture". She presents the life of a Jewish community in Dar-Refayil between 1932 and 1962. The narratives she uses focus on the descriptions of domestic life, specially female accounts since women spent most of their time at home (29). She mentions that the Arabic word 'dar' designates the house of the father, so it gives the impression of



being the house owned by the male, but states that in Maghrebian culture, domesticity is described as an enclosure of femininity, a mother-house symbolically associated with reproduction. Thus, the traditional architecture of Maghrebian societies allowed and encouraged the physical control of women. Bahloul states that the importance of the idea of enclosure was expressed by doors and windows being opened to the courtyard. Doors and windows were symbols of an open society since they showed the desire for social advancement. The domestic world was a place for enclosure and only internal mobility, in women's memories (35).

Grosz maintains that women become the "guardians of the private and the interpersonal", while men build "conceptual and material worlds" adding that men produce a universe built upon the "erasure of the bodies and contributions of women/mothers" and they refuse to acknowledge the debt of the maternal body that they owe (121). The public-private distinction has implications for the interplay between gender, status and power.

### **3. THE TRADITIONAL TURKISH HOUSE AND ITS BOUNDARIES**

The traditional Turkish house is a category encompassing many types. This diversity stems from the fact that each region of Turkey has different climatic, topographic, and material conditions. However, it is possible to talk about general claims and common characteristics considering the concept and form of the traditional Turkish house.

#### **3.1. Studies on the Traditional Turkish House**

Considerably numerous works exist on the study of the Turkish house in a variety of perspectives and it retains its contemporarity, being a subject of interest for foreign scholars as well. There are two types of main references about the Turkish house. Books and articles by scholars like Kuban, Küçükerman, Eldem and Bektaş address general issues like sources, plan types, structure and materials as well as use. More specific works, mostly dissertations that usually include measured drawings of a few houses, limit themselves to the investigation of particular houses in specific provinces or regions.

##### **3.1.1. General Sources**

Eldem, who is a pioneer in the study of the traditional Turkish house, conducted a detailed survey of the houses all around Turkey with his students. His extensive survey

enabled him to classify the houses according to the shape and the position of the sofa (hall) within the plan. He later collected these in his books *Türk Evi Plan Tipleri* (*Turkish House Plan Types*) and *Türk Evi* (*Turkish Houses*), the latter consisting of four volumes. Some of his other works about the residential architecture of the Ottoman Empire are; *Büyük Konutlar* (*Huge Residences*), *Sa'dabad*, *Köçeoğlu Yalısı: Bebek, Boğaziçi* (*The Köçeoğlu Yali at Bebek, Boğaziçi*).

While Eldem is mostly concerned with the plan typologies of the traditional Turkish house, Küçükerman approaches the issue from the point of spatial characteristics and practical use, and he investigates the house taking the room as the base. In his work *Anadolu'daki Geleneksel Türk Evinde Mekan Organizasyonu Açısından Odalar* (*The Rooms in the Traditional Turkish House of Anatolia from the aspect of Spatial Organization*), Küçükerman explores the role of the room in the whole spatial organisation of the house. His other books, *Anadolu Mirasında Türk Evleri* (*Turkish Houses in the Anatolian Heritage*) and *Kendi Mekanının Arayışı İçinde Türk Evi* (*The Turkish House in search of Spatial Identity*) describe the Turkish house and its elements in the light of the Anatolian heritage.

Making his research more specific, Kuban, the writer of *The Turkish Hayat House* sees the hayat, which is the gallery on the main floor, as the typical characteristic of the traditional Turkish house and explains its evolution and its architectural elements. He states that houses with open hayats constitute the archetype, which was being built when

the Turks first settled in Anatolia. Even though it underwent some changes through time, it is still possible to observe this type of house in rural Anatolian provinces.

Among all these scholars, Bektaş observes different parts of Turkey resulting in comparisons of regional differences. He also explains the architectural characteristics of the house, underlining the cultural and traditional meanings and values. Some of his works are: *Türk Evi (The Turkish House)*, *Babadağ Evleri (Houses of Babadağ)*, *Akşehir Evleri (Houses of Akşehir)*, *Kuşadası Evleri (Houses of Kuşadası)*, *Şirinköy Evleri (Houses of Şirinköy)* and *Bodrum Halk Yapı Sanatından Bir Örnek (An Example from Bodrum Vernacular Building Art)*.

Among all the above stated scholars, Kuban is the one who dwells upon the women in the Turkish house and how her life passed at home. He describes the physical space of the house and has the opinion that women enjoyed experiencing the interior of the house. Bektaş provides narratives about the traditions of people and the Anatolian way of life, underlining the modest and down to earth lifestyle of Turkish people. However, he doesn't specifically talk about women and the house together, or the relationship between the sexes, except while explaining the entrance mechanism of the house where there exists different doorknocks for the women and the men to use.

### **3.1.2. Specific Sources**

*Türk Evinde Çıkma (Projection in Turkish House)* by Evren, *Kütahya Evleri (Houses of Kütahya)* by Eser, *Sivas Evleri (Houses of Sivas)* by Bilget, *Ankara'nın Eski Evleri (Old Houses of Ankara)* by Akok, *Ankara Evleri (Ankara Houses)* by Kömürcüoğlu and

*Konya Evleri (Houses of Konya)* by Berk include measured drawings of 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century vernacular houses in the Central Anatolian region. I observed these, and in my thesis I used some of the drawings of those belonging to the hayat house that provided street and garden facades together with the plan drawings. Such drawings helped me exemplify the boundaries of the house and the relation between inside and outside.

### **3.2. Analysis of the Traditional Turkish House**

Turkish house will be presented, highlighting the cultural and traditional aspects that are inscribed in its evolution and development. References to gender-space or gender-architecture relationship are scarce in the existing literature of the Turkish house, however, the traditional Turkish house is a treasure for observing thresholds of gendered spaces because of the gender relations in the patriarchal system of the Ottoman society which separated women and men into segregated spatial realms.

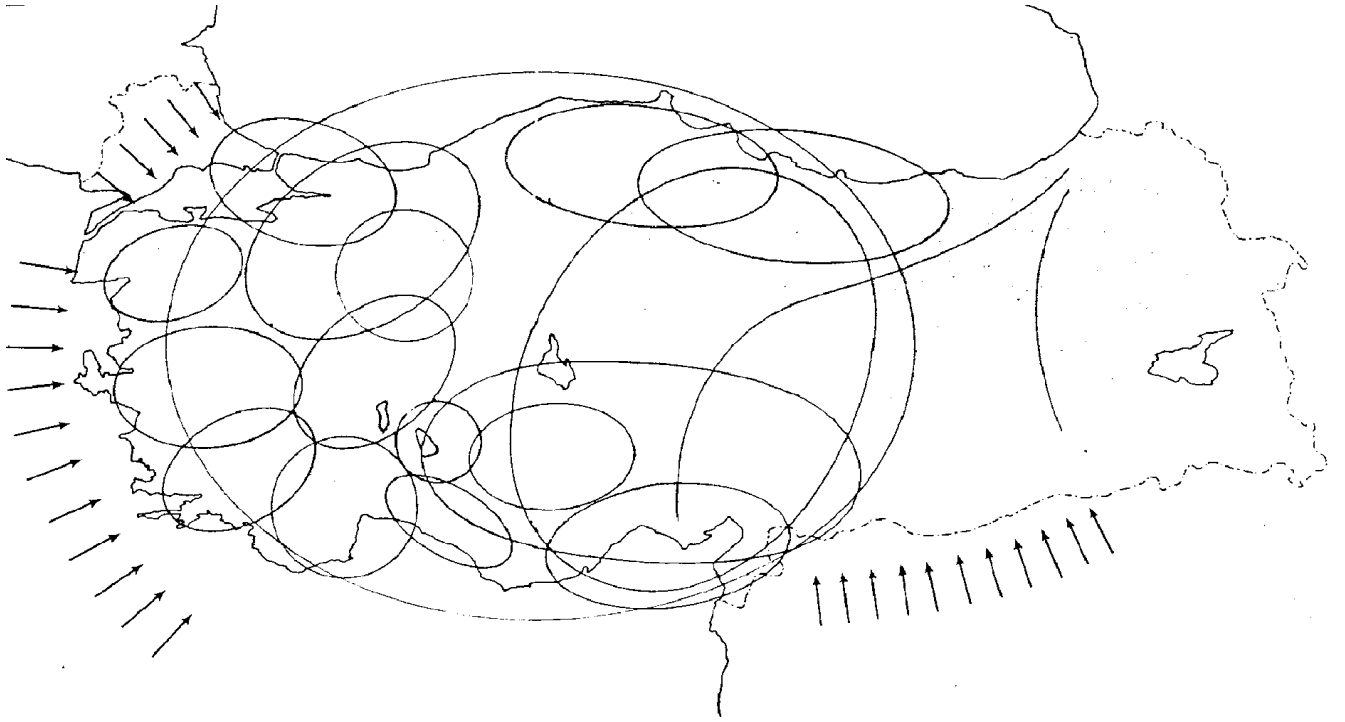
I associate the street with the public realm, thus men, and the courtyard with the private realm, thus women. The boundary of the public side is more protected, having less openings especially at the ground level and the boundary of the private side is much more open. This makes sense when we remember the concern that women were not wanted in public life at the street, since their place was limited to the privacy of the house and the courtyard. The separate realms have been specified. Their relation, their point of contact comes to life at the boundary and its immediate extensions.

### **3.2.1. Common and Varying Characteristics of the House**

The terms “traditional Turkish house”, “Turkish house”, “Turkish hayat house” and “Ottoman house” are the most frequently used terms to describe traditional houses of Turkey. The “Ottoman house” was a common name encompassing different house types existing in the vast geographical domain of the Empire. Thus, Eldem stresses that the “Ottoman-Turkish house” also spread to Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Albania and some parts of Greece (*Türk* 17).

The broad category referred to as the Turkish house accommodates a diversity reflecting the geographical and cultural heterogeneity of Turkey. There are variations throughout Turkey. As such, we can talk about İstanbul houses, Bodrum houses, Safranbolu houses, Harran houses and so on, separately. However, leading scholars agree that Central Anatolian houses represent the traditional Turkish house since the region is the most protected from foreign influence.

Küçükerman introduced a zone diagram showing the relationships between the various civilizations and the physical structure of Anatolia, and explained that the traditional Turkish house in Anatolia originated in the “inner zone” and as it spread outwards from the centre, regional influences brought certain changes in its configuration (*Kendi* 49). Development of these houses can be observed for about four centuries between the Central Anatolian steppes and the mountains surrounding the Arabian plateau.



**Figure 1.** Zone diagram

(Küçükerman, *Kendi Mekanının Arayışı İçinde Türk Evi* 49)

The Central Anatolian house is of timber frame construction with sun-dried brick filling, with the foundation and the ground floor walls built in stone. The methods of construction of the Turkish house follows the idea of the ease and comfort of the users (Bektaş, *Türk* 32). Most houses have at least two storeys. The ground floor, which is planned to adjust to the street, acts as a service area and storage place. The thick walls of the ground floor are made of stone, which are windowless on the street side while being open to the garden at the back. The garden is surrounded with a wall for privacy.

The main living area is the upper floor, designed independent of the ground level and consisting of several rooms organised around a common area called sofa or hayat (Ministry of Culture, *Turkish Houses*).

The room is the main component of the Turkish house and the characteristics of the room did not change from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards (Küçükerman, *Türk* 91). Cerasi points out the multi-functionality of the room adding that this characteristic remained valid in houses belonging to all economic strata (157). Thus, Bertram mentions that although the Turkish house varied according to wealth and size of the families inhabiting it, but they all shared a basic architectural vocabulary (429).

The form and organisation of the Turkish house came into being in accordance with a number of factors; economic conditions, regional and physical influences and practical application, however, the effect of traditions, social and cultural values should not be underestimated (Küçükerman, *Türk* 87).

### **3.2.2. Social, Cultural Factors and Symbolical Meanings Associated with the House**

As Kuban indicates, the intimate relationship between the house form and way of life could be better perceived in the pre-industrial age in Turkey. He states that the house arose from the material and spiritual conditions of life (12). Eldem underlines that it is the Turkish arts, Turkish components and Turkish life style which bring together the house with all the other factors such as topography, climate and the like (*Türk Evi* 17).



The old Turkish saying “house is the universe” explains the whole concept of the introverted lifestyle and shows the habit of looking inwards, inside the house, for finding peace and happiness in life. For centuries, the traditions of Islam as well as Turkish traditions were practiced in the house. The influence of Islam on the basic principles of the Turkish house such as simplicity, cleanliness and harmony is underlined by Küçükerman and Karpuz. The former states that the Islamic outlook was reflected in the introverted way of life (*Kendi* 45), and the latter indicates the effect of religion and traditions leading to the introverted lifestyle in the Turkish house (13).

In Turkish society, home is a sacred concept just as country and family are. Thus Bertram explains that traditionally the house was haram, in other words, it is a space restricted to those who follow certain rules, a space protected by Islamic law and Ottoman custom from the outside world (174).

### **3.2.3. House as the World of Women**

The development of the traditional Turkish house was strictly related to the situation of women in the family and society. Thus, as explained in the section about Turkish women in the Ottoman Empire, women were strongly associated with the house. Similar attitudes are found in other parts of the Islamic world.

“The house was the world of the woman, the world outside was for the man. In the everyday life of the household, the daily activities of woman necessitated rather ample spaces for cooking, baking bread, sewing, washing, and, in provincial small towns, drying fruit, cutting firewood and animal husbandry...Since the caretaker of all these

chores of everyday life was the woman, it seems that the formal development of the basic house concept was the outcome of the characteristic lifestyle of the Turkish family” (Kuban, 20).

According to Ünver, the Turkish house was carefully designed as a “monument of comfort especially for women” (qtd. in Bertam, 169). Furthermore, Eruzun and Sözen, who point out the social structure of the extended patriarchal family, explain that the women of the family spent their days in the house cooking, sewing, doing embroidery and other household jobs while men were at work (259).

Among the leading researchers in the study of the traditional Turkish house, Kuban specifically underlines that the time the women spend in the house can not be underestimated and that the house is made for women to fulfill their needs.

“When the man would return home from his daily duties or idle deliberations, he would enter a microcosm made for the woman. That the house was made for women is a common understanding in Islam. In Turkish, evlenmek (“to marry”) means to have a house (Kuban, 20).

While men were outside, having diverse experiences and associating with diverse people, women kept themselves busy being productive in all areas inside the house. What did the women do all day long? Sakaoglu talks about life, activities, spaces and productions within the Turkish house. The spaces such as avlu, ayaz (courtyard of harem), çardak (garden pavillion), kuyu (well), çeşme (fountain), ark, çörten (gargoyle), ocaklık, tandır, fırın (oven) (Fig. 2) and hayat (gallery on the main floor), which were outside and ahır (stable), örtme (shed), kameriye (garden kiosk), eyvan (recess in hayat), işevi (kitchen), konukevi (guest house), bahçe odası (garden room) which are indoors, were the places where various activities took place (31).



**Figure 2.** Woman cooking at fireplace. Aran, *Barınaktan Öte: Anadolu Kır Yapıları*, 152

The woman spent her day relating with nature, considering the outdoor spaces where she was cooking (Fig. 2, 3), taking water and doing laundry. Indoors, she was receiving guests and serving food and drinks. These guests were other women who came to visit during the day, or her husband's guests who came when he was also at home. Other everyday activities included doing housework, involving in manufacturing of goods or cooking. Bertram states that women, with their children would stay home and receive visitors, or they would go to the nearby houses to visit (194). Babagil describes the interior of a typical Konya house in his article "Konya Kadınlığı ve Konya Evleri". In his detailed expression of the house, he mostly talks about the beautiful embroidery work that shows the woman's talent, praising her attention for the house as well as her gracefulness (1773-76).



**Figure3.** Women working at the courtyard. Kuban, *The Turkish Hayat House*, 161

### **3.2.4. Formal Characteristics and Spatial Organization with respect to Interior Exterior Relationship**

In continuity with the ideas explained above, the traditional Turkish house has an introverted plan type. Altinoluk points out the common characteristic of the traditional Turkish houses being organised in such a way that they turn away from the street, opening up more to the courtyard (3). The house was developed around a spacious inner center of activity. The boundaries of the house reflected these aspects of closure to street and openness to courtyard, as such, the service areas of the ground level were closed to the street (the public realm) while being open to the courtyard (the private realm). Even if windows existed at the ground floor, they were so sparsely distributed

and kept so small in size and high in location that there was almost no visual relationship with the street (Karpuz, 10). The entrance and the street level were strictly controlled with the protected gateway. These characteristics of the house shaped the street façade of the house, which was mute.

“In most cases, the selamlık (men’s quarter) was at the ground floor, in closer relation with the street whereas the harem (women’s quarter) being at the upper floor had windows that were latticed” (Karpuz, 10). This quotation clearly underlines that the relationship of men was stronger with the street, or with the public while women were attached to the space inside the house or to the boundaries of the house since their life mostly passed at home.

However, division of spaces into harem and selamlık was not an original characteristic of the Turkish house. It did not originate from Turkish tradition, it was adapted from Persian culture and also with the effect of influence of Islam. Palaces, sea-side residences and mansions of the wealthy in most cases showed this division into two. However, the majority of the residential building stock, respect to privacy in the home was not through a strict segregation but the careful use of the rooms. Special care was expected from the male guests to respect the privacy of the women.

#### **3.2.4.1. Interior-Exterior Relationship: Projections, Bay Windows, Windows**

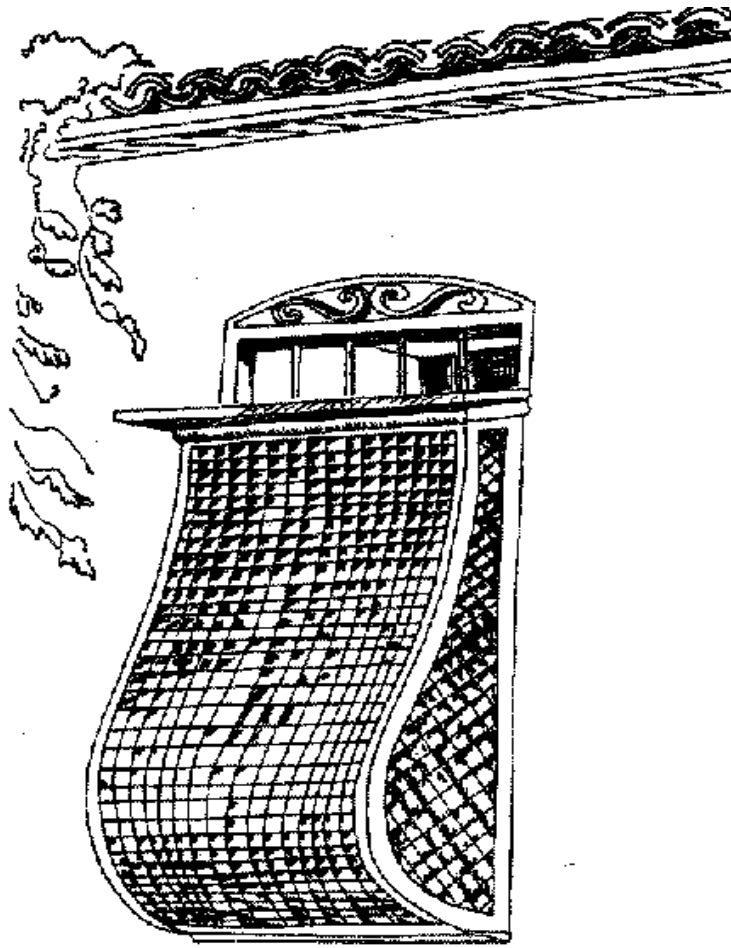
In the traditional Turkish house, direct relationship between house and community was established with the projections of the facade towards the street. Cerasi names the projections of the house as “the life veins”. Remembering the fact that the Turkish

house was conceived from the inside out, he underlines the difference from Western Europe where the outside or the street was the basis of the design of the house (156). This explanation once more stresses the introverted organization of the traditional Turkish house. Besides the projections that overlooked the street, the facades that overlooked the garden were lively with kiosks, hayats (galleries) and tahts (raised timber platforms).

Çakıroğlu states that, in the old times, the windows of the houses in Kayseri were only open to the courtyard and that the walls that faced the street and the neighbours were left closed. In some examples, wooden lattices were provided even for the windows on the courtyard facade (13). But usually, the interior spaces that are right next to the hayat were open to the private courtyard, which was already women's territory, a place they could easily use for daily activities without any disturbance.

“The demand to have a view of the street was compelling and was satisfactorily solved beginning in the seventeenth century by overhanging upper floors” (Kuban, 21)

The main floor was no longer a mute enclosure, but a mediator that provided relationship with the outside world. At this floor, the house had characteristic projections towards the street with windows. The general name for the protruding floor was çıkma. If it was made of a projecting window, it was called cumba. If the çıkma was made of a protruding central communal area (an eyvan), it was called şahniş or şahnişin.

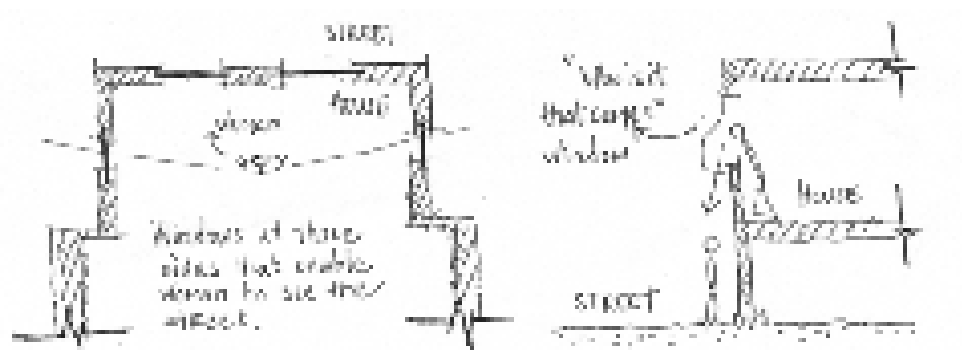


**Figure 4.** Illustration of cumba (“bay window”)

(Kuban, *The Turkish Hayat House* 123)

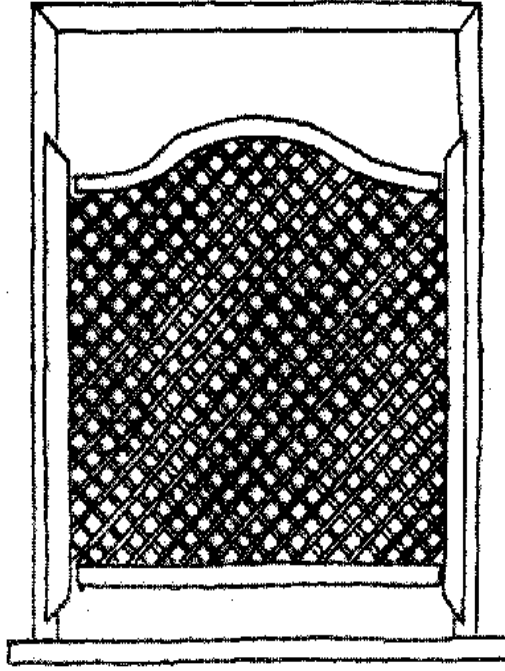
While cumba overlooked the street, şahnişin would overlook the garden. A house would take its external character from its several çıkmas or its single şahnişin (Bertram, 431). The projections of the house on the main floor, especially the bay windows, provided a view of the street to the woman from almost all angles (Fig. 5). Privacy was an

important factor here also; therefore the windows had wooden screens. The passers-by were kept from seeing the interior of the house. In some houses, there was even a special window that was built just above the entrance door in order to see the guest before opening the door. This window was called kingeldi penceresi (“who is it that comes” window) (Fig. 5) and the onlooker could not be seen by the one who was at the door (Bektaş, *Türk* 80). The person inside the house had such opportunity to see the outside without being seen with the help of the design of the latticework and the shutters. Evren says the daily life of the Turkish woman passed at the bay window, since she was the ruler of the internal affairs of the house as well as establishing a link with outside. She rested, bought things from the seller on the street; she talked with her neighbour. These kept her busy and this part of the house became an important place for the resting and the entertainment of the women (7). While this characteristic of the space gave her utmost visual power, she could not actually participate in street life since the only thing she could do was to watch the street, at most to talk to a neighbour from window to window.



**Figure 5.** View of the street from all angles and kingeldi penceresi (“who is it that comes” window).





**Figure 6.** Illustration of kafes (“trellis”) (Kuban, *The Turkish Hayat House* 123)

#### **3.2.4.2. Plan Organization: Typological Interpretations**

The fundamental concepts of plan organisation of the houses remain the same all over Turkey regardless of the region and the conditions (Eldem, *Türk Evi* 17). Based on the classification of the plans of the main floors. Eldem presented typological classifications of the houses which were structured according to the location of the central hall, or hayat. In other words, the central hall became the core of his classifications and the type of the house was determined directly by the shape and location of the sofa. This way of classification was accepted and used by the other scholars as well (Bektaş, *Türk* 99, Küçükerman, *Anadolu* 174, Kuban 104).

Before passing on to the schematic explanation of the outer sofa type of the traditional Turkish house, it is useful to define the central hall, i.e. the sofa and talk shortly about other types also. Since every room acts as a multipurpose space for the inhabitants of the traditional Turkish house, we can think of the room as a unit. Therefore, a connection between these units had to be established, where the house had more than one room, and the sofa acted as the common area that all of these units opened to. The sofa was either closed on one or two sides or it was in the middle, resembling a square. The sofa often gave access to the whole house, meaning that the staircases were often accommodated in or in relation to the sofa. As well as being a passage, the sofa was the place where social activities or gatherings took place.

This characteristic of the sofa is conducive to its conviviality. Furthermore, the parts of the sofa which were free from circulation were used for sitting and these parts were separated from the sofa either in the form of a recess (eyvan) in between the row of rooms or in the form of a projection or divan added to the front of the sofa. Some sofas had more than one eyvan, being protected places with sedirs (built-in cushioned benches). Divans, sekiliks or tahts (raised timber platforms) were built two or more steps higher than the sofa, supported on consoles, especially if there was a nice view. These were open on two or three sides. In greater houses, these divans were built in the form of pavillions (kiosks), which differed from ordinary rooms only in the way that they had more windows or openings.

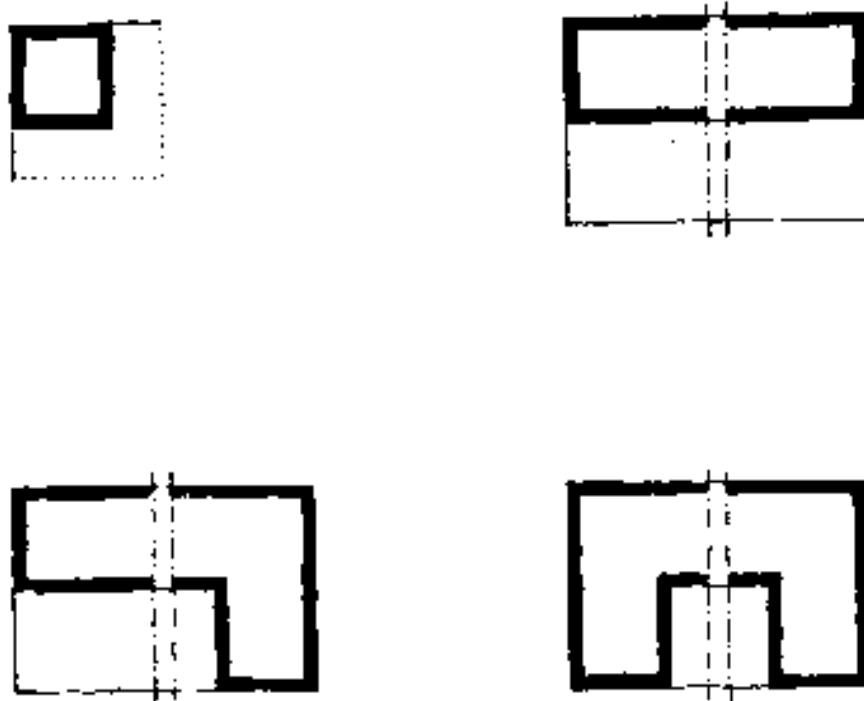
According to the location of the sofa, the traditional Turkish house is categorised in the following four types: no sofa, outer sofa, inner sofa and central sofa. It is necessary here

to underline that these types can not be attributed to certain periods or to certain regions. The order shows the stages of the development of the traditional Turkish house within time, as one type roughly succeeded the other. This continuous development, however, did not proceed everywhere. Eldem states that it developed at a faster pace in towns than in villages (*Türk Evi Plan 220*).

The no sofa type is the most primitive state of the house plan, which consists of one or more rooms placed in a row. Access between rooms is from the outside. The outer sofa type is the first stage in the development of the plan. The internal sofa plan which occurred by the closing of hayat and moving completely indoors, becoming a central hall that opened to individual rooms, evolved after the external sofa plan, mostly in the colder regions (Bertram 431). Finally in the central sofa type, the common area is placed in the exact centre, providing communication between the rooms. The central sofa is surrounded by rows of rooms, protected from external factors.

#### **3.2.4.3. Outer Sofa Type**

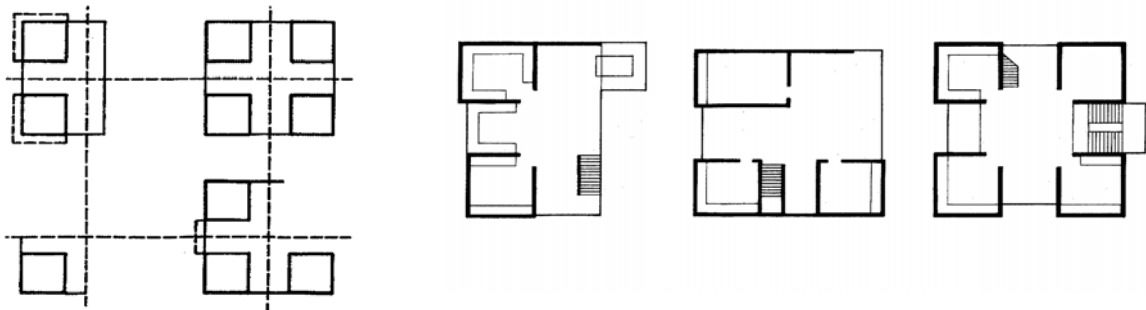
The type that I am dealing with is the outer sofa type of house, or the hayat house. In this house, a semi-covered or covered sofa connects the rooms with each other. The sofa was at first an open place, with only its top covered with a roof and it was used as a gallery (hayat). Later on, the gallery was enclosed with glass panes placed between the pillars.



**Figure 7.** Schematic plans of outer sofa type (Küçükerman, *Anadolu Mirasında Türk Evleri* 174)

Kuban, in his work *The Turkish Hayat House*, took the outer sofa house as “the basic configuration for reference” (105). As he states, the basic plan of the Turkish house both in its original and its developed phases, remained faithful to the open hayat. In the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, the exterior wall that faced the garden or courtyard was open both at the ground or tahtani level (the level of hayat) with its open taşlık, and on the first of the upper floors, that jutted over the garden in the form of a verandah, frequently called the hayat. The hayat, facing the garden, opened inward to the rooms, serving as

an external hallway and a communal area. After the 18<sup>th</sup> century, with the influence of western models (Eldem, *Türk Evi Plan* 221, Kuban, 105), closed and centralized plans started to appear, but mostly in larger centers, especially Istanbul. Although the big cities abandoned this semi-open hall type for more than a century, examples of traditional houses were being built in small towns of northwestern Anatolia even at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Eldem underlines that this type is at the origin of the traditional Turkish house, since the house was based on the dichotomy of semi-open and closed spaces. This is one reason why the outer sofa or the hayat house is the case for this thesis. Most importantly, this type is most suitable for the exploration of dualities stemming from opposite boundaries.



**Figure 8.** Geometrical analysis and example schematic plans of the Turkish Hayat house (Kuban, *The Turkish Hayat House* 105)

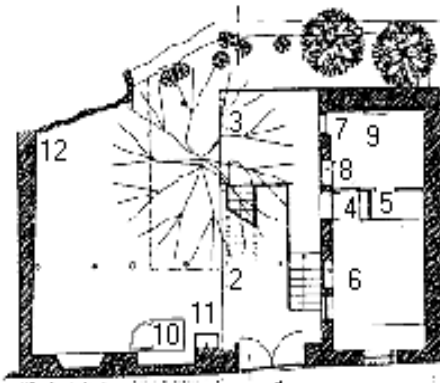
The plan of the outer sofa house could be square, rectangular, L-shaped or U-shaped, depending on the number of the rooms.



FRONT ELEVATION



GROUND FLOOR PLAN

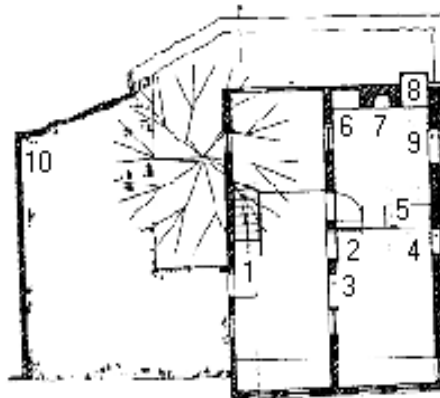


FIRST FLOOR PLAN

- 1- ENTRANCE
- 2- HALL (AVLU)
- 3- HAYAT
- 4- ROOM (ODA)
- 5- STORAGE (YUKLUK)
- 6- CABINET (DOLAP)
- 7- ROOM (ODA)
- 8- CABINET (DOLAP)
- 9- OVEN (OCAK)
- 10- WC
- 11- SINK (LAVABO)
- 12- GARDEN (BAHCE)



HAYAT SECTION



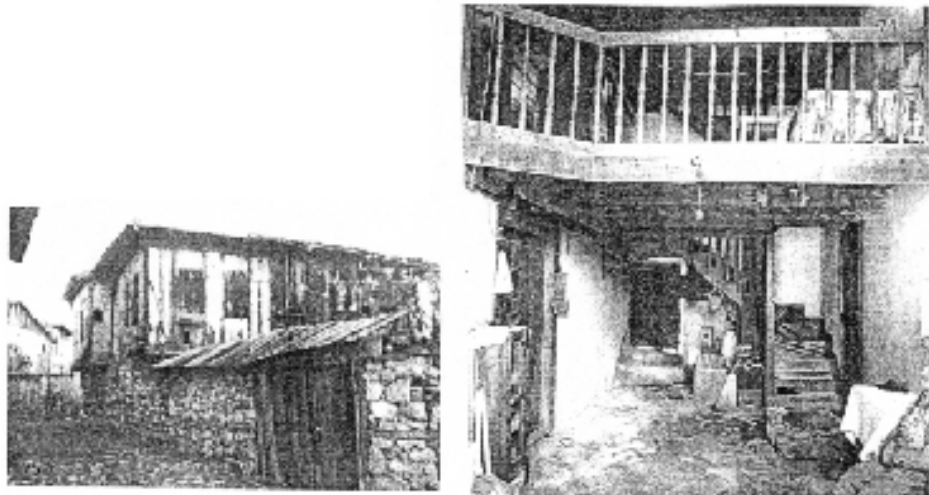
SECOND FLOOR PLAN

- 1- HAYAT
- 2- ROOM (ODA)
- 3- CABINET (DOLAP)
- 4- CABINET (DOLAP)
- 5- STORAGE (YUKLUK)
- 6- ROOM (ODA)
- 7- OVEN (OCAK)
- 8- WASHPLACE (YUNMALIK)
- 9- CABINET (DOLAP)
- 10- GARDEN (BAHCE)

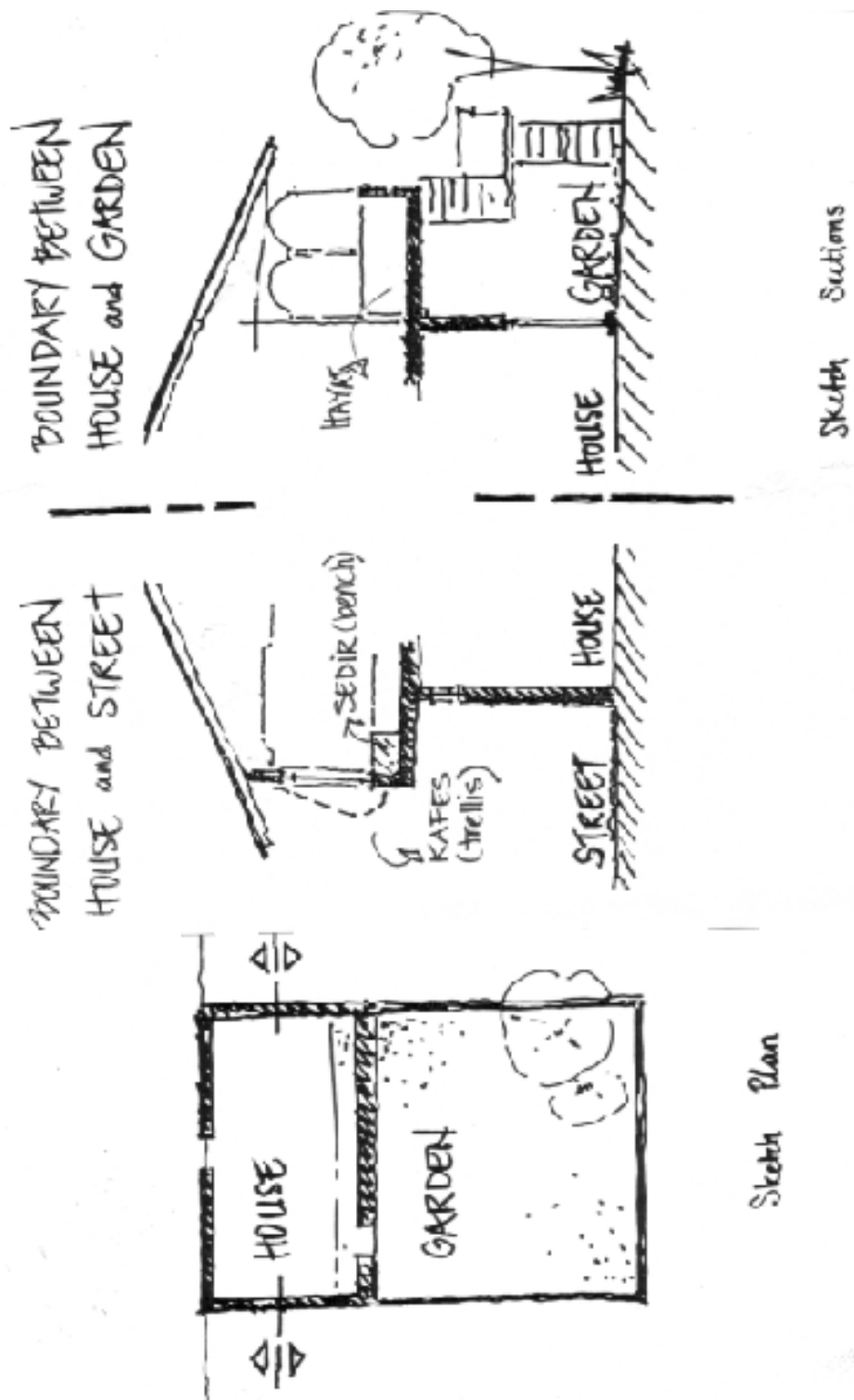
Figure 9. Example for hayat house (Bektaş, *Akşehir Evleri* 38-9)

#### 3.2.4.4. Boundaries of the Hayat House

The privacy requirements of the female in Islamic culture, and the internally oriented plan type of the house stemming from the lifestyle of the Turkish family play an inevitable role in the shaping of the boundaries of the hayat house. The aim of providing a safe and secluded environment for the family, especially for the female, whose job was to carry out the daily housework, most strikingly shows itself at the boundaries of the house. While the boundary between the house and the street acts as a defensive wall discouraging entrance, the boundary between the house and the garden opens itself to the outside – in this case the courtyard is the outside environment for the female to spend time outdoors without disturbance of the strangers. Nature is allowed into the house from the private boundary and the mute street boundary projects towards the street, not letting the public to intrude. Both formally and psychologically, these two boundaries show opposite characteristics (Fig. 10, 11).



**Figure 10.** Opposite boundaries (house-street, house-garden). Hersek, *Safranbolu Yörük Köyü: Geleneksel Yaşam Biçimi ve Evleri*, 41.



**Figure 11:** Sketch drawing of the boundary between the house-street and the boundary between the house-garden.



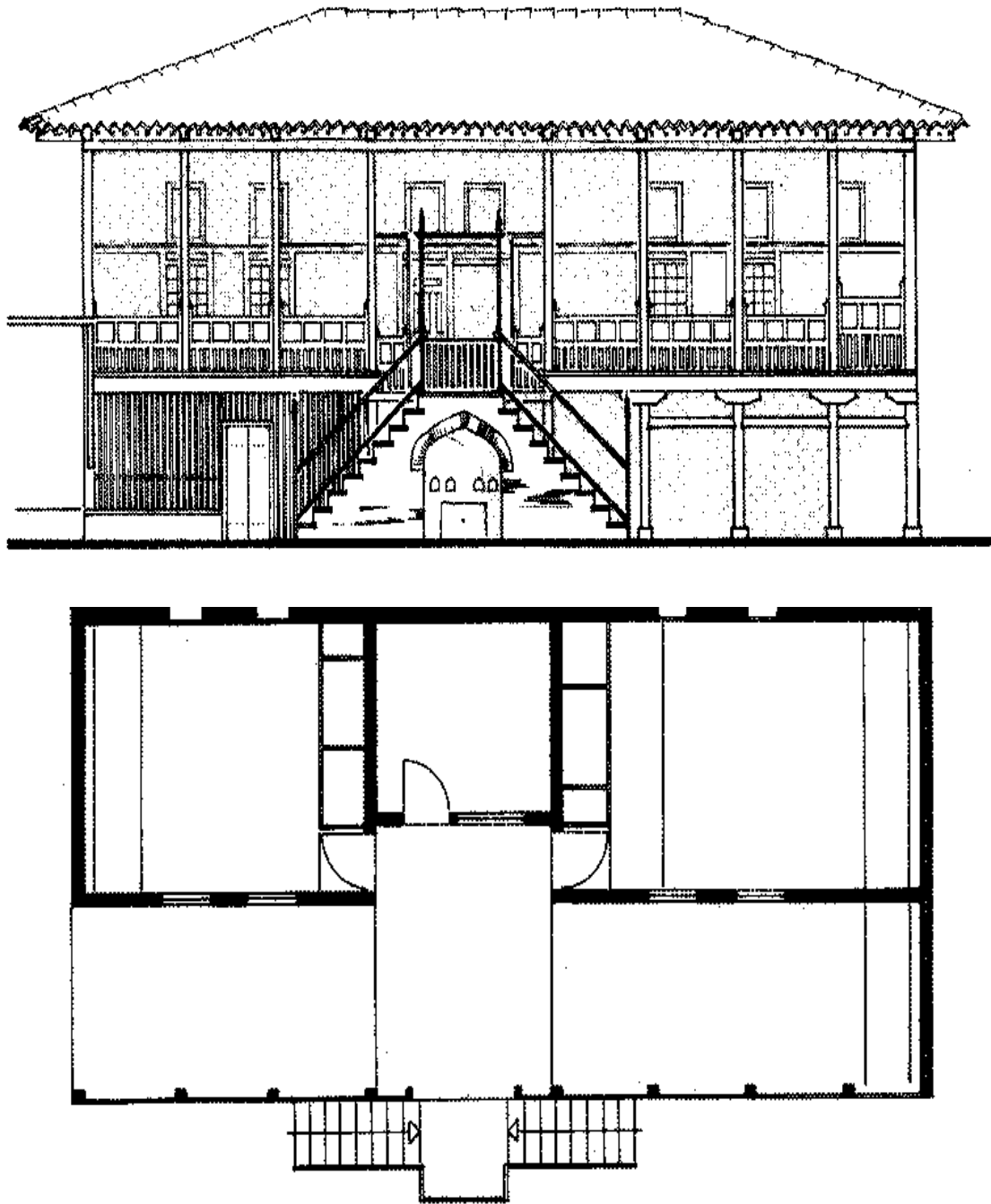
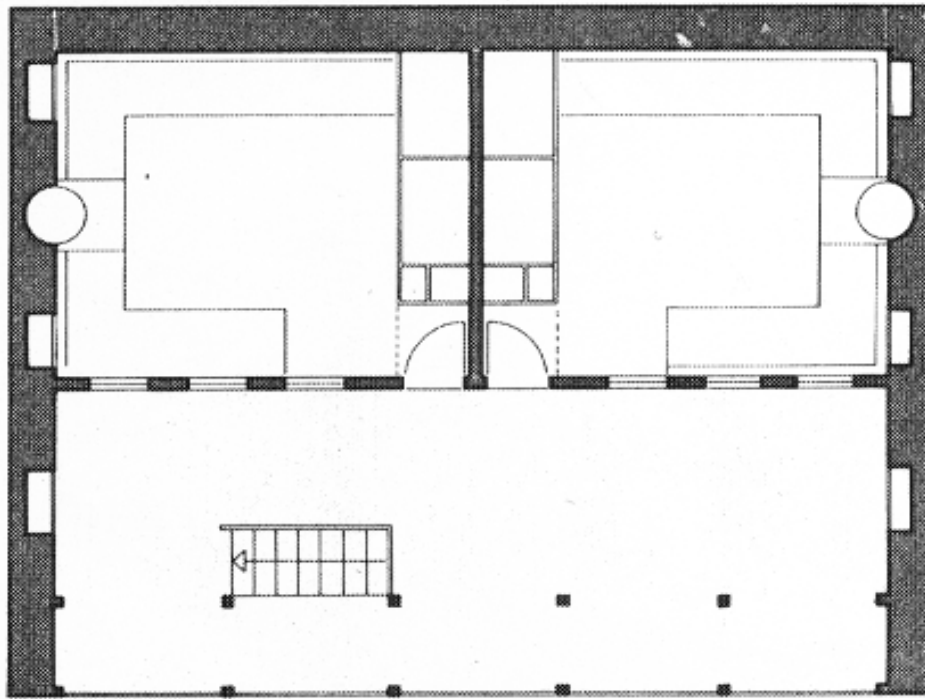
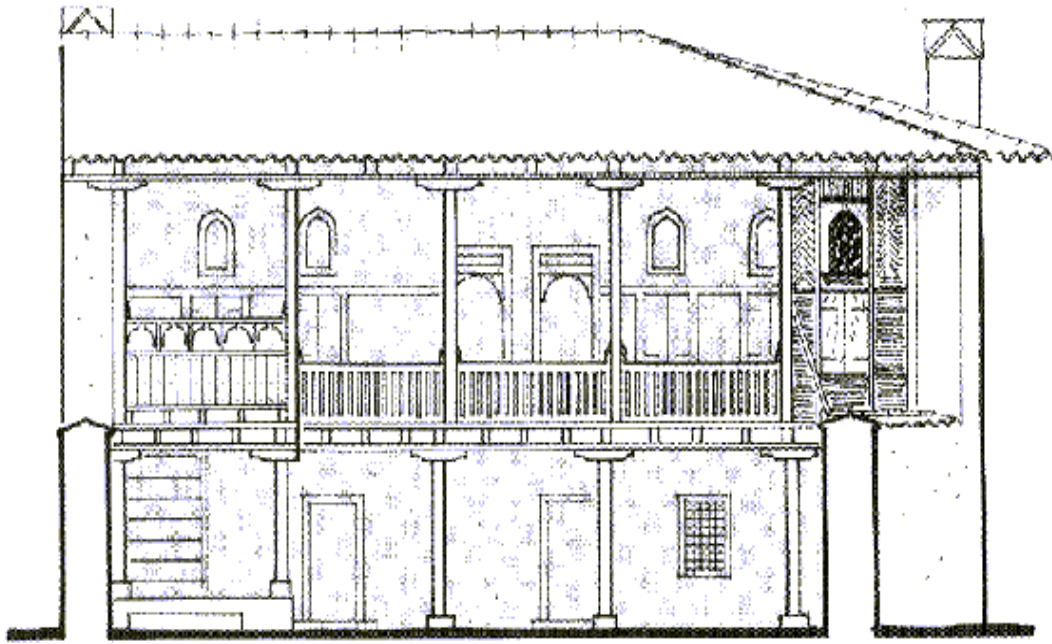
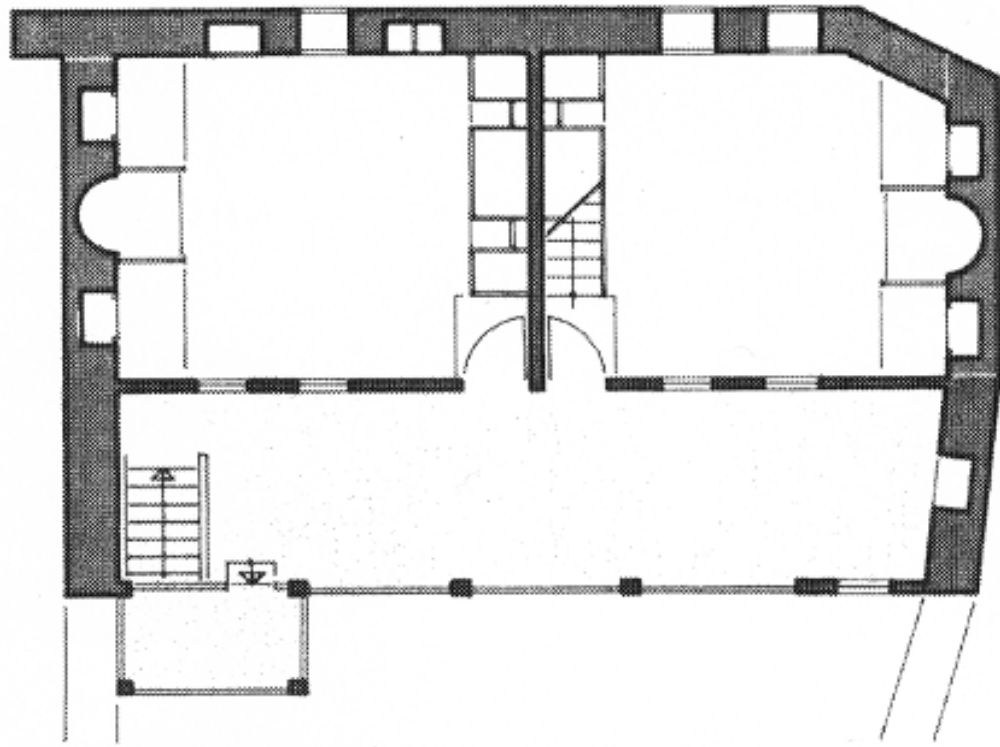


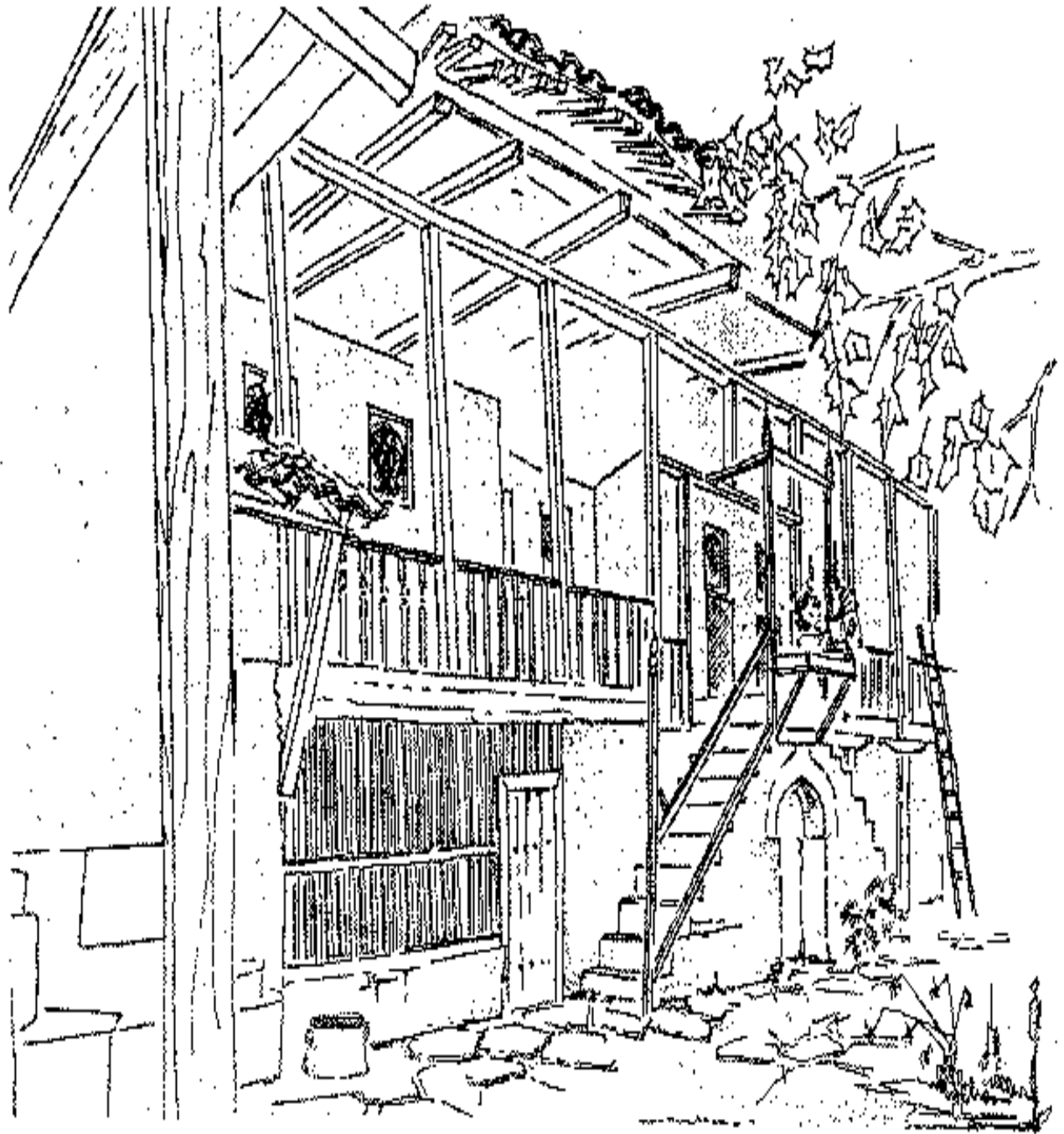
Figure 12. Bursa Halıcı İzzet house; main floor plan and hayat façade (Kuban, *The Turkish Hayat House* 54, 213)



**Figure 13.** Bursa Sarayönü Quarter house; main floor plan, hayat facade (Kuban, *The Turkish Hayat House* 53)



**Figure 14.** Manisa Ayşekadın house; main floor plan, hayat façade  
(Kuban, *The Turkish Hayat House* 53)



**Figure 15:** Bursa Halıcı İzzet house, hayat side perspective (Kuban, *The Turkish Hayat House* 54, 213)

### **3.3. The Boundary between the House and the Street: *Visual Domination versus Bodily Restriction***

The boundary between house and street in the hayat house (Fig. 16) reveals that while the female body is restricted, in other words confined, her gaze is dominating, in other words, ruling. The outer wall of the ground floor does not allow her body access to the street side, which is the public realm (the space dominated by the male), thus the characteristics of the architecture of the boundary does not provide her doors that open up to the street, directly from the spaces that she uses at the ground floor.

On the contrary, at the upper floor (the piano nobile), she is given control over the whole street with her gaze. The piano nobile is designed with the utmost possible windows, especially the bay windows and projections overlooking the street and providing a view to three directions, are designed for her to easily see the whole street. From the street façade of the house towards the interior of it, there was the seating area sedir. Sedirs were adjacent to the walls, usually being fixed to them. They were the characteristic built-in furniture, which accompanied the bay windows. The woman alone or with her friends from the same sex, used this area to relax, work and most importantly to visually involve in the street life (Fig. 17). Even when she is sitting on the sedir with her back to the window, she can see the street from the side windows. And most important of all, she is seeing without being seen since the wooden trellises fixed to the sashes conceal her from the eyes of the public outside.

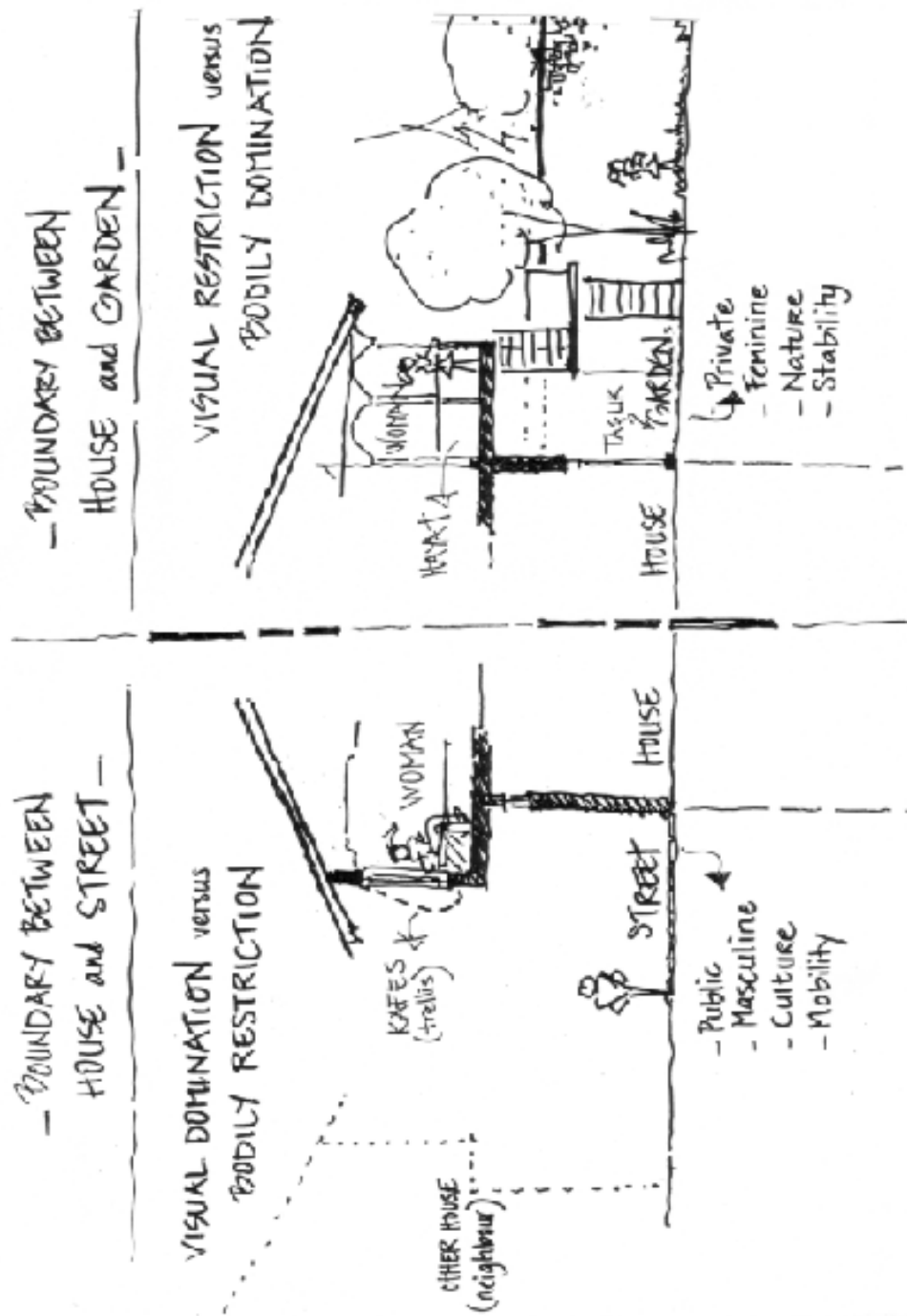


Figure 16. Sketch drawing showing the body and the gaze of the woman at the boundary of house-street and at the boundary of house-garden.

The street, which is the immediate space at the outer side of this boundary, was bodily dominated by men but when we look at the descriptions of the street in novels written in the Ottoman times, we see women at the windows of the houses, chatting or gossiping with other women at the windows of houses across. At the street, there were men walking by, or selling things. Although not very common, there were women with covered bodies walking accompanied by elderly women or male relatives. Across the street, there were neighbouring houses which were in some cases as close as two meters from bay window to bay window across. Even in the most strict times of the Ottoman Empire when it was prohibited for women to go outside of the house several days of the week, women held their existence at the street with their gaze and speech, if not with their bodies.



**Figure 17.** Woman sitting on the sedir near corner windows. Hersek, *Safranbolu Yörük Köyü: Geleneksel Yaşam Biçimi ve Evleri*, 41.

### **3.4. The Boundary between the House and the Garden: *Visual Restriction versus Bodily Domination***

What goes on at the boundary between the house and the garden (Fig. 16) is the opposite of the situation for the female at the boundary between the house and the street. Since the female body is not able to experience the public realm (the street) freely, the boundary between the house and the garden, being open, provides the female body access to the outside environment.

The house-garden boundary is a private outdoor environment that is surrounded by courtyard walls, at the service of the female so that she can freely do various activities like cooking, cutting wood, chatting with friends, washing clothes etc. without the interruption or intrusion of the strangers. Her body is given freedom to access the exterior but this time she has no chance to see what is going on behind the courtyard walls. Her sight is restricted by the man made, as well as the natural borders around, in other words, the walls, the trees etc.

Her body is no longer trapped indoors, but her gaze is not controlling anything, since no member of the public realm which is accepted as dangerous for her exists at this side in other words, her gaze does not have any valuable effect at this side, since there is no object that the gaze could dominate.





**Figure 18.** Woman preparing food at the hayat; part of the house-garden boundary.  
*Aran, Barınaktan Öte: Anadolu Kır Yapıları*, 156.

### **3.5. The Gaze and the Body of the Woman in the Traditional Turkish House**

It may be said that whoever controls the gaze, has the power. It is shown, in what ways do the boundaries of the house allow the female to reverse her restricted situation to her advantage, therefore, how the female attains control over the public/the male, so that the theory reverses and the gaze is no longer the “male gaze”.

In the hayat house, the female gaze challenges the male/female, public/private, interior/exterior binaries. At the boundaries of the traditional Turkish house, the “male gaze” addressed by feminist theory changes to the “female gaze” with the possibilities that the architecture of the boundaries provide for her. At the public and private boundaries, woman exists controlling and dominating in one way or another, as her gaze and her body are positioned differently.

When interpreted as gendered constructions, the boundaries of the traditional Turkish house, seemingly confining the woman and secluding her from the public realm, in fact empower her through her gaze. Thus, contemplating the woman’s body and gaze separately complicates the relation the woman experiences between inside and outside and challenges the long-standing assessment that the house inhibits woman’s participation in public life. A possibility opens up for considering the confinement as in fact not total. The eye disrupts the solidity of the boundary. Being the providers of the relationship between the public realm and the private realm, the boundaries of the house enable or disable the contact between these realms or arrange the degree and the way of the contact with them.

## CONCLUSION

In this thesis, the two boundaries of the hayat house are studied from the point of gender-space relationship. When the body and the gaze of the woman are considered, the public boundary and the private boundary act as gendered constructions, rather than a mere separation of realms. The body and gaze of woman are in opposite situations at the two boundaries.

My initial assumption was that the house-street boundary gives visual power to the woman while restricting her body, the house-garden boundary gives bodily freedom to her while taking away her visual power. I investigate specifically the power inherent in gaze, in seeing without being seen. Woman's vision has power at the street boundary because it presides over the public realm, the realm of culture belonging to men. It is incapacitated at the garden boundary because the garden or courtyard is an extension of the private realm of the home, the realm of nature already belonging to the woman, which is specifically why this boundary is unprohibitive.

Man, building the street boundary to contain and to confine the woman's body, to hold it back from participation in public life, unintentionally endows power upon her gaze precisely because of her bodily concealment. The woman's gaze cannot be returned. The man's gaze, unable to see the woman behind the facade, is impotent. But how does woman's visual power over the public realm work?

Novels depicting life in traditional neighborhoods refer to women as well as men on streets in residential areas. Though properly attired and veiled, their interactions become the subject of gossip for other women watching them behind trellised windows. Watching over the street is connected to gossiping across the street. Thus, the women in the public realm become the object of the gaze of the woman in the private realm besides men in the public realm, doubling their restriction. The woman's concealed gaze performs like the man's gaze in that it too controls women. But there are differences, which only enhance woman's controlling power over other women. The covered bodies of women on the street only become identifiable to the familiar eyes of their female neighbors rather than male strangers. The woman's body, by virtue of its being covered, becomes immune to the men's gaze, exposed to other women's gazes. Women in public, being anomalies, are more vulnerable to the knowledge gained by the observing but unobserved eyes of women concealed behind facades than men, whose customary presence on the street gains significance only when they interact with women.

Going back to the initial scheme, the gaze of the confined woman does have power over the public realm. But it is not exercised on men but on other women. In a way, the woman's gaze returns to itself.

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