

AMBIGUITIES OF TRANSPARENCY AND PRIVACY IN SEYFİ ARKAN'S HOUSES FOR THE NEW TURKISH REPUBLIC

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1. "Şehrin [Ankara] aktüalitesi biraz da bu yeni binalarla Mustafa Kemal'in hayatıydı. Bu nerde basıldığı bilinmeyen, hatta hiç elinize geçmeyen, fakat sizden başka herkesin okuduğu ve her ağzın beraberce size naklettiği bir gazeteye benziyordu." Tanpınar (1945, 1992, 7). The earlier version was originally published in *Ülkü* (September 1942,10-15). The quoted passage was added afterwards. All translations from German and Turkish belong to the author, unless otherwise indicated.

The reality of the city depended as much on these new buildings as Mustafa Kemal's life. This was like a newspaper that nobody knew where it was published, that you never even saw once, but one that everyone else read and recounted to you as a chorus (1).

This depiction of Ankara by the contemporary novelist and thinker Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar (1901-1962) reveals the symbolic significance of Atatürk's and his circle's life for the implementation of the revolutionary changes in the new Turkish Republic. Tanpınar's metaphor of the new President's life as an invisible newspaper whose contents were nevertheless perfectly known to the city's population visualizes a particular tendency that held true for the Regime's approach to the making of a new residential culture. The Kemalist elites recognized in the practice of architecture and town planning an effective mechanism for making a modern country. For instance, during the late 1920s and early 1930s, several German-speaking architects and city planners were invited to Turkey, such as Carl Lörcher, Hermann Jansen, Robert Oerley, Clemens Holzmeister and Ernst Egli, to prepare the master plans of major cities and to design state-sponsored institutions. With the schools, hospitals, houses and governmental buildings of these architects, the Kemalist state sought to display the achievements of the Revolution, while subsequently disseminating symbols of modern and Western living to the nation by using a new set of architectural tropes.

One of these influential German professionals, the architect and city planner Hermann Jansen reserved the southern hills of Ankara for the upper-class single-family villas in his master plan for the city. Many houses for the new Republican elite were also placed on the hills of Çankaya. I would like to argue in this article that these houses were promoted as emblems of modernization and Westernization, showcased to disseminate a new vision of living to the whole nation, and to exhibit to the rest of the world how the Turkish bureaucrats stripped off their

2. It is hard to determine the precise reasons why Arkan was chosen among other Turkish architects to undertake such representative tasks for Atatürk. Yet, it is possible that Atatürk wanted to reserve some important commissions for a young Turkish architect educated in Germany, while placing the rest of the institutional buildings for the new State in the hands of German architects. In one of the few articles written about the architect, Uğur Tanyeli suggested that Arkan could have attracted the interest of the official elite with the memorial he designed for the Kubilay incident. Tanyeli (1992, 88-95).

“Oriental” habits. Beatriz Colomina (1998) argued that the most influential houses of the twentieth century have been produced and used also for display, either in the professional exhibitions, or popular department stores, museums and fairs, or propaganda and advertisement. “The modern house has been deeply affected by the fact that it is both constructed in the media and infiltrated by the media. Always on exhibition, it has become thoroughly exhibitionist (Colomina, 1998, 164).” In the case of Turkey, some highly specific houses for the official elite confirm this account, albeit with a specific twist. In addition to their functional use as the living spaces of their owners, these houses can be seen as part of nationalist spectacles, namely the publicity and propaganda techniques of the new Turkish regime. They can be interpreted in terms of a *staged modernity*. I call them staged, not because the women and men in these houses were acting or because their modern houses were like a decor in a theater. This is in no way to claim that these houses were not “authentic,” just because they provided a transformed domestic environment compared to the traditional ones. On the contrary, they were as genuine as any other house, as long as they embodied the aspirations and future ideals of their residents. I call these houses staged, rather because the Kemalist project of modernization in Turkey started with the initiatives of a pioneering group who were on a stage. The lives of this official elite were meant to construct the ego-ideals of a nation, their houses were to establish the new standards of taste.

This article concentrates on three of these houses, two of them in Ankara, one in İstanbul, all designed by the Turkish architect Seyfi Arkan (1903-1966) who had just returned from Germany after working with Hans Poelzig. In a city where the German-speaking architects designed literally all of the state-sponsored institutional buildings of the Revolution, the Turkish architect Seyfi Arkan (1903-1966) stands out as an exceptional example—an architect whose career still awaits scholarly interest. Arkan had a close personal relation with Atatürk, who not only gave the architect his family name (previously Seyfi Nasih), but also suggested a first name for his daughter in a hand-written letter that survived the unfortunate destruction of the architect’s archives after his death (**Figure 1, 2**). The relation between the president and the architect was reinforced during the construction of these three emblematic villas designed for the regime (**2**).

Unlike an historiographical approach that treats architecture only as a transparent and direct mirror image of the economic infrastructure or the political organizations of its context, my intention here is to show the historically and geographically constituted, and even at times incidental relations between ideology and architecture that gets redefined for each specific example. I will not therefore claim that architectural form in the Kemalist Republic was exclusively a fixed reflection of the Kemalist ideology, even if it was highly shaped by it, where the state officials allegedly demanded specific architectural expressions. On the contrary, by focusing on Seyfi Arkan’s buildings for the officials of the new Turkish Republic, I intend to show how the specific architectural expression of a certain ideology is considerably the result of the decisions of the architect, who nevertheless shares and is guided by the political ideals of the ideology he aspires to represent. The fact that Arkan’s formal approach cannot be neatly categorized with the same terms that define the formal preferences of many of his contemporaries such as Holzmeister and Jansen, to cite two names to be referred to below, will confirm this point.



Figure 1. Seyfi Arkan and Atatürk examining the Florya site (Arkan second from right; Arkan Papers, National Palaces Archive).

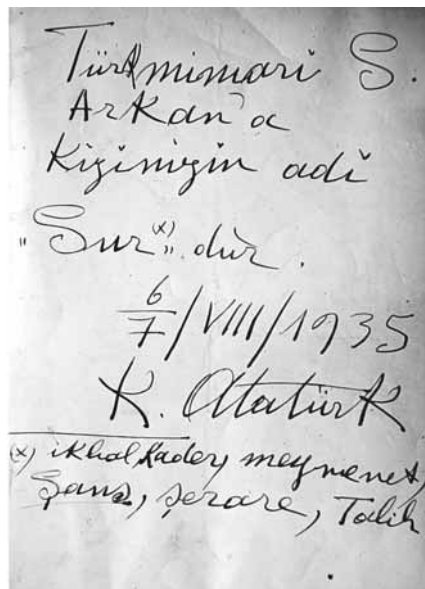


Figure 2. Atatürk's handwritten letter for naming Arkan's daughter (Melih Şallı Private Collection).

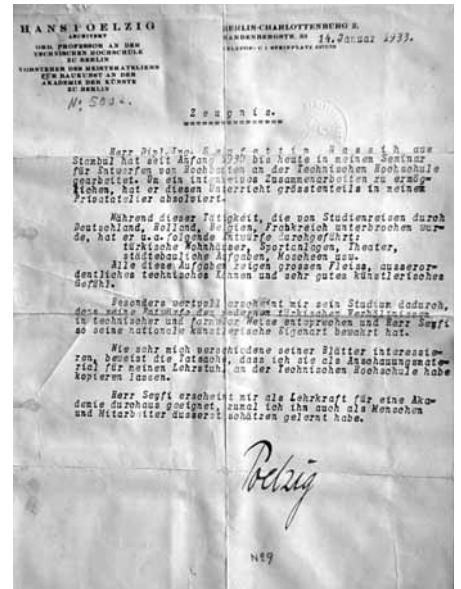


Figure 3. Poelzig's Letter of Recommendation for Arkan (Arkan Papers, National Palaces Archive).

Education of an Architect: Hans Poelzig - Seyfi Arkan (Berlin, 1930-1933)

Arkan designed these houses just after he returned from almost a three-year period of education in Germany where he studied with Hans Poelzig. Before departing for Germany with a state fellowship, Arkan had graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in İstanbul in 1928 (3). At the time, a pedagogical approach that was inspired by *Beaux-Arts* was promoted at the Academy by the teachers such as Vedat [Tek] and Guilio Mongeri whose Ottoman Revivalist buildings soon fell out of fashion during the selection process of Mustafa Kemal's Presidential Mansion, designed by Clemens Holzmeister. In Germany, Arkan experienced a different kind of pedagogical approach, as well as a first-hand exposure to the development of the new building style. Two letters of recommendation from Hans Poelzig and one from Erich Zimmerman (4)

3. Arkan's fellowship award was mentioned in the newspaper *Vakıf*, 8 October 1929.

4. Hans Poelzig, Letter of Recommendation for Seyfi Nassih (Arkan), 9 March 1931, Hans Poelzig, Letter of Recommendation for Seyfi Nassih (Arkan), 14 January 1933, Erich Zimmerman, Letter of Recommendation for Seyfi Nassih (Arkan) 9 March 1931 (Arkan Papers, National Palaces Archive).

5. In their letters of recommendation, Zimmerman talks about the fact that Arkan took the master class of Poelzig in the Prussian Academy of Arts; and Poelzig mentions Arkan's work in the Technical University.

6. In his supportive letter of recommendation, Poelzig mentioned that Arkan went on study-trips in Germany, Holland, Belgium and France, analyzing current architectural developments. Poelzig also noted that Arkan worked on Turkish houses, sport buildings, theater, mosques and urban design projects during his stay in Germany. What Poelzig found "especially valuable" in Arkan was the fact that his designs fulfilled the requirements of "the modern Turkish conditions in both technical and formal aspects." Arkan had "a very competent national artistic character," Poelzig said. "Besonders wertvoll erscheint mir sein Studium dadurch, dass seine Entwürfe den modernen türkischen Verhältnissen in technischer und formaler Weise entsprechen und Herr Seyfi so seine nationale künstlerische Eigenart bewährt hat."

Hans Poelzig, Letter of Recommendation for Seyfi Nassih (Arkan), 14 January 1933, Seyfi Arkan Files, Milli Saraylar Archive, İstanbul.

7. Arkan continued to speak appreciatively about his relation with Poelzig after he returned to Turkey in 1933. Although Arkan's own designs cannot be claimed to literally follow those of Poelzig's, his friends and family confirm that the architect often mentioned his debt to his teacher. The architect's stepson Melih Şallı also stated that Arkan was very interested in German literature, and that he mainly had German and French books in his library. Melih Şallı, Interview with author, 24 November 2002, İstanbul.

8. In an article in 1931, T. Friedrich explained the difference between Tessenow's and Poelzig's classes in relation to the University Reform in Germany. Although the writer found both methods incomplete, he clarified the distinction between the two seminars in relation to the freedom of expression allowed to the students of each. Poelzig let his students choose the project they would work for the term, whereas Tessenow assigned them all with the same particular problem. According to the article, the first method offered the students plenty of freedom, whereas the second "deprived" them from this autonomy. The writer also asserted that students with "inner energy and distinct self confidence" chose Poelzig, while the less self-confident students chose Tessenow, since they could find support and assistance to their concerns. Although the students in Tessenow's classes produced moderate work, the writer was appreciative of this pedagogical method at the expense of the loss of "seeming individuality," because, he claimed, the students learned architectural principles through multiple repetition and crystallization, out of the moderate exercise that they could apply to similar other design projects. Friedrich (1931, 453-455).

9. Helmuth Heinrich, a student in Poelzig's class, claimed that the young students who were familiar with Mies van der Rohe or the

confirm that Arkan (still under the name Nasih at the time) worked "intensely" with Poelzig both at Charlottenburg Technical University (*Technische Hochschule*) and at the Prussian Academy of Arts (*Preussische Akademie der Künste*) in Berlin from the beginning of 1930 until 1933 (5). He presented in the exhibition *Poelzig und seine Schüler* (Poelzig and his Students), and worked in the architect's private office (6; Figure 3).

I will show in this article that Arkan, as a graduate student in Poelzig's studio, initially worked in Germany on the preliminary designs of the houses that he later submitted to the Turkish State. However, the nationalist context in Turkey that guided the final designs nevertheless gave totally novel meanings and functions to these houses. These buildings stand as informative studies in illustrating the translation of a representational style from one context to another, as well as the impact of architecture schools in building cross-cultural connections (7). Poelzig had been teaching the master class in the Prussian Academy of Arts since 1922, following the resignation of Bruno Paul; and he was appointed at the Technical University in 1924. Since the two schools were next to each other, it was convenient for the students to work closely with Poelzig in either of his classes (Posener, 1992, 179). During his stay in Germany, Arkan followed both Poelzig's classes at the Technical University and his master class at the Academy. Berlin-Charlottenburg Technical University was the locus of important debates at the time. Heinrich Tessenow and Hans Poelzig were the two influential teachers in the school, whose pedagogical methods (and eventually politics) were often contrasted by their contemporaries (8) and students (9). In his memoirs, Tessenow's assistant and Hitler's future chief architect, Albert Speer (1970, 14), mentioned how the University eventually became the meeting ground of National Socialists: most Nazi sympathizers took classes from Tessenow, except for a group of "communists" who gravitated towards Poelzig's classes. However, Speer's memories should not be taken as a conclusive statement about Tessenow and Poelzig's political stances themselves. Instead, the difference between the two men should be regarded as a matter of pedagogical approach, without drawing any definitive political conclusions:

There are two types of teacher that may be classified as ideal...One expresses his own thinking and experience in a doctrine whose truth he is so convinced of that he feels it his duty to pass it on to the next generation...Such a master was, in the twenties, Heinrich Tessenow. The other teacher is one whose experience has convinced him that many ways can lead to a goal, to several goals...His purpose is to enable every pupil to pursue his own particular course. Such a master, then, was Hans Poelzig (Posener, 1977, 20).

The opposition between Tessenow and Poelzig also resonated in Turkey: In addition to Arkan's relation with Poelzig, Hermann Jansen was teaching with Tessenow at the School. As the city planner of Ankara who also gave influential decisions about the new buildings, Jansen promoted similar values with Tessenow. These could especially be detected in his proposed housing types and formal preferences, such as the original architectural projects of the Bahçelievler Co-operative Housing (which were changed during construction). Due to my limited space in this article and for the sake of a focused argument on Arkan, I cannot reflect on the intricate pedagogical and political details of the Poelzig-Tessenow debate in Germany, and how these resonated in Jansen's decisions, both of which

developments of modernism enrolled in Poelzig's seminar, whereas the "older and conservative students" in Tessenow's. "While Poelzig saw the promotion of the students' individual talent as the goal of their education, Tessenow made an effort to promote the highest possible average..." Another student, this time from Tessenow's class, Gerhard Heuß, recalled that Tessenow got angry and sent two Chinese students to Poelzig's class "for doing an orgy with steel, concrete and glass."

In a long and informative letter to Paul Schmitthenner in 1933 about the political and aesthetic splits amongst the architectural milieu of Berlin as well as in the Technical University, Heinrich Tessenow mentioned his problems with the "Poelzig circle," confirming these students' observations.

Heinrich Tessenow, Letter to Paul Schmitthenner, 31 January 1933. Nachlass Tessenow, IV.1.1, Briefwechsel, Kunstbibliothek, Berlin; Memories of Helmuth Heinrich (April 1980). Nachlass Tessenow, III.1.2.3. Kunstbibliothek, Berlin; Memories of Gerhard Heuß. Nachlass Tessenow, III.1.2.4. Kunstbibliothek, Berlin.

10. Two newspaper items in 1946 confirm Tessenow's invitation to Turkey as a master studio teacher at the Academy of Fine Arts in İstanbul: *Die Welt, Hamburg*, 28 November 1946; *Badische Zeitung, Freiburg* i. Brsg, 10 December 1946.

Tessenow discussed his invitation to Turkey in a couple of letters with Erich Böckler and Paul Schmitthenner, who advised him not to accept the offer. Tessenow had to spend the last years of the Second World War in a small village with serious financial difficulties and in deep despair. The position in Turkey would have solved many of his problems, yet his friends and colleagues who were concerned about his health tried to find him another post in Germany. In a letter to General Friedrich in 1947, Tessenow mentioned that he finally decided to stay in Germany fearing that he might not be able to return if he left, which could have been the case since the architect died three years later. In the letter in January, Schmitthenner mentioned that he was also invited to Turkey and looked forward to reuniting with Tessenow and Paul Bonatz in Turkey. In the letter written in April however, Schmitthenner asserted that the recent German existence in Turkey was already sufficient for all times and that he preferred to stay in Germany. He advised Tessenow to do the same.

Erich Böckler, *Briefwechsel aus späterer Zeit*, Vol. 10 (Hamburg: Matin-Carl-Adolf-Böckler Stiftung, 1938). See esp. Heinrich Tessenow, Letter to Böckler, 17 March 1947; Sattler, Manuscript entitled "Vermerk. Prof Heinrich Tessenow," 24 April 1947; Paul Schmitthenner, Letters to Heinrich Tessenow, 31 January 1947; 11 April 1947; Heinrich Tessenow, Letter to Schmitthenner, 21 December 1947, Nachlass Tessenow, IV.1.1, Briefwechsel, Kunstbibliothek, Berlin; Heinrich Tessenow, Letter to General Friedrich, 1947, *Nachlass Tessenow*, Sonderheft III.2.1.19, Kunstbibliothek, Berlin.

11. A letter of recommendation sent by Martin Wagner to Tessenow from İstanbul

I have explained elsewhere (Arkan, 2005). What needs to be stated for the sake of this paper is rather Arkan's relation with Poelzig and the subsequent different formal approach (though not necessarily the ideological) he promoted in Turkey in comparison to some of his German colleagues, including Jansen.

Tessenow never immigrated to Turkey himself, even though he seriously considered an invitation after the Second World War, which he had to turn down due to his deteriorating health (10). Nevertheless, the Turkish architects of the young generation at the time were familiar with his ideas (11). Tessenow's classes attacked metropolitan living conditions in the rental barracks, emphasizing instead small houses with a garden and the details of modest furnishing. Tessenow stressed the simplicity of peasant life and the importance of reclaiming the modern inhabitant's relation with nature. He thus hoped to replace the "ills" of the metropolis with the virtues of the small towns and peasant houses to be rejuvenated by the modern architect (Tessenow, 1953, 1982).

... today we seem to lack the ability to see what we love the most, ... we have a dangerous surplus of destructive characters or we always have great trouble finding and holding on to things that have, at least to some extent, calmness and clarity (12). ...let it be as silent as possible, very "incidental," very timid (13).

Repetition, regularity, modesty, everyday experience, mediation between extremes and collective unity were considered great virtues in Tessenow's classes; yet it was individual creativity and extraordinary expression that were emphasized in Poelzig's. Julius Posener, the well-known German historian and salaried contributor to the influential French journal *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*, was a student of Poelzig at the Berlin Technical University between 1926-1929, namely a few years before Arkan. Herein, Posener describes Poelzig:

If one went into Poelzig's studio in the Technische Hochschule in Charlottenburg [Berlin] on a Thursday or Friday, one could see a group of students huddled in a semicircle around a column of blue cigar smoke and from there one could hear someone speaking: clearly, decisively, didactically, with spirit and wit. Poelzig was holding a crit. ... [T]here was no 'Poelzig school'. He tried to guide every student to his 'self,' even if Poelzig was not in tune with his 'self'. And he wanted us to approach each new work as if we had never designed anything before. He was an opponent of routine, of things that have been learned once and for all (Tessenow, 1916, 44-45). Poelzig was not an academic teacher; he was the 'the Master', and his students in Berlin used this term affectionately (14).

Poelzig und seine Schüler, the influential exhibition of Poelzig's student work in the *Akademie der Künste*, stressed the individual and differentiated character of each student. In his introductory text to the exhibition catalogue, Poelzig underlined his "non-formalist" approach, stating, "it would only be a self-delusion to apply formalist canons to the mental, technical and economic problems of the time (15)." The Poelzig School, if there was to be one, was not a matter of form, but a "mentality of building" (*Baugesinnung*), the architect concluded. The exhibition, in which Arkan also participated, was portrayed in *Wasmuths* magazine in 1931, which quoted the respected critic Walter Behrendt's appreciative description of Poelzig as a "stimulating and entertaining teacher (16)." The article stressed that Poelzig did not seek the creation of a style attached to his personality, or to educate his students as his literal followers. Poelzig was praised for teaching "creative power"

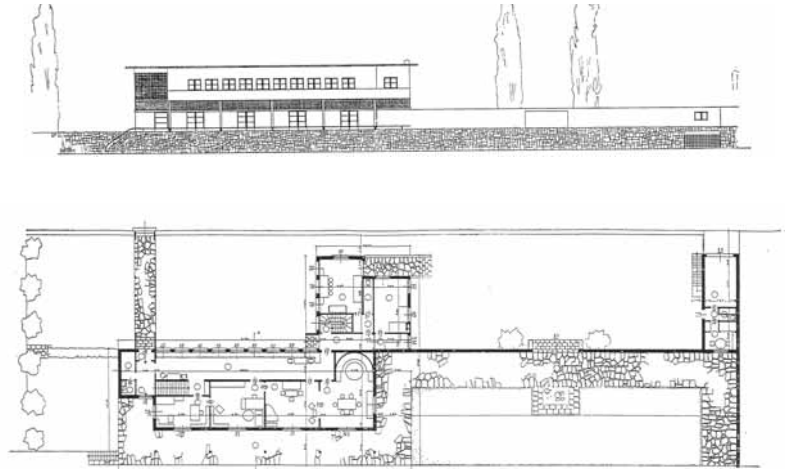


Figure 4. Seyfi Arkan, A Small House at the Sea, Student Project in Germany, 1930-33 (*Arkitekt* (1933) 4, 111, 112).

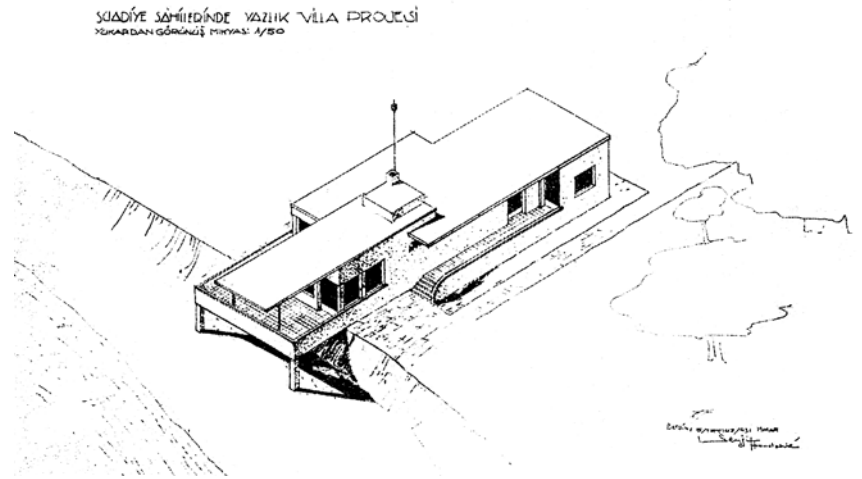


Figure 5. Seyfi Arkan, Waterfront House, Student Project in Germany, 1930-33 (*Mimar* (1934) 1; 6).

in 1937, asking him to accept Leman Tomsu, one of the first graduate woman architect of Turkey, to his office in Germany reveals that Tessenow's ideas were received in Turkey. Martin Wagner, Letter to Heinrich Tessenow. 9 June 1937. Nachlass Tessenow, IV. 2.3., Kunstbibliothek, Berlin.

12. "... es fehlt uns heute daran, das zu sehen, was wir besonders lieben, ... wir haben einen gefährlichen Überschuss am Zersetzenden, oder wir haben immer wieder die größte Mühe, das zu finden und ferzuhalten, was nur einigermaßen das Ruhende oder Geklärte habe." Tessenow (1916, 14).

13. "... sei es möglichst suntil, sehr 'nebenbei' und schüchtern." Tessenow (1916, 44).

14. Tessenow (1916, 179). Posener also recalls that Poelzig believed an architect could never have enough education, therefore an architecture student needed to be inspired. In the Beaux-Arts tradition, he held short competitions and encouraged a student to follow the project if the result was good, or to go on to the next competition if it wasn't.

15. *Poelzig und seine Schule, Ausstellung* Veranstaltet von der Preussische Akademie

(*Schöpferkraft*) to his students, rather than the rules of his own school (Hegemann, 1931, 100-103). Although the architect was against teaching a single style of expression, his studio work nevertheless had an identity that could explicitly be differentiated from what was perceived as the repetitious and collective, aesthetically conservative and traditionalist approach of the *Heimatstil*. His promoters defended Poelzig's approach as creative, free and individual, because it was different from traditional styles, not because it lacked an identifiable style. Poelzig's approach was in close dialogue with the Bauhaus, and moreover, his master's classes in Breslau were the first pedagogical steps toward what would come to be known as the revolutionary Bauhaus workshops (Akan, 2005; Frank, 1983; Schirren, 1989).

Seyfi Arkan's close contact with the "progressive" German architectural developments and debates for three years made him a crucial agent of translation in-between Turkey and Germany. Throughout the 1930s, Arkan became one of the most outstanding Turkish architects fulfilling a modernist agenda, in the aesthetic-formal sense. He was one of the first architects to translate European modernist features into the Turkish scene. To the extent that modern architecture is considered the representation of the new and advanced technologies, it is legitimate to state that Arkan promoted a European-inspired modern architecture more enthusiastically

der Künste zu Berlin, Exhibition on March 1931 (1931) Ernst Wasmuth Verlag, Berlin; 3.

16. Arkan's name was listed in p.13 of the Catalogue. *Poelzig und seine Schule...* (1931, 13). List of Students who participated in the exhibition:

William Anders, Andreas Barany, Wolfgang Bangert, Walter Bangert, Asta Berling, Maz Berling, Hans Brandt, Maz Cetto, Egon Eiermann, Karl-Joseph Erbs, Albrecht Friebe, Werner Friebe, Moritz Hadda, Felix Hinssen, Gunther Hafemann, Rudi Hamburger, Fritz Jaenecke, Adolf Kegebein, Theo Kellner, Hans Köhler, Walter Kraupe, Emil Lange, Heinrich Lauterbach, Curt Liebknecht, Friedrich Mews, Carl Otto, Richard Paulick, Richard Prietzel, Walter Rothschild, Max Säume, Sakamoto, Seyfi Nassih Himmetzade, Camilla Sommer, Heinrich Schapiro, Max Ernst Schneiders, Ernst Scholz, Rudolf Schwarz, Carl Heinz Schwennicke, Rambald Steinbüchel, Zdenko Strizic, Friedrich Tamms, Heinrich Tischler, Ludolf Veltheim, Konrad Wachsmann, W.W. Zschimmer, Hermann Zweigenthal.

17. Poelzig won the first prize in İstanbul Opera House Competition, which was partly the motivation behind his invitation. He also designed two other unbuilt projects for Turkey. One of them was the *German-Turkish House of Friendship* Competition in 1916, the other (with two versions) was designed for the House of Diplomats in Ankara, in 1935.

In 1939, Poelzig's friend and biographer Theodor Heuss wrote about the "tragic end" of the architect after he was invited to İstanbul. "His friends observed this tragic play of wanting to go [to Turkey] and not being able to go with deep spiritual perturbation and understood its symbolic significance. What a misguided stroke of fate, that this man of exceptional talent, a talent that in its instincts and responsibility was so completely linked with the German people and Germany, should be expelled on an adventure into intellectual and cultural exile! A sense of responsibility and desire to be creative called this untiring spirit to his new life. But was this to be the last twist of fate in the life of a great man—to go and teach the Turks something about good architecture? ... He took his departure very seriously and died." Theodor Heuss, 1939, 79. Translated in: Posener (1992, 255).

For more information and discussion on Poelzig's unbuilt projects in Turkey see: Nicolai (1988, 130-133).

18. In 1935, Arkan entered the İstanbul Opera House Competition in which his teacher Poelzig received the first prize. Arkan won the first prize in three other major competitions during this period: Competitions for Sümerbank, Municipality Bank and İstanbul Port Passenger Hall. Although the commission for the Sümerbank was eventually passed to the German architect Martin Elsaesser, Arkan did have a chance to build his competition project for the Municipality Bank. Arkan's projects just after his arrival from Germany stand out as distinct projects of the time in

than many of the German and Austrian architects working in Turkey during the late 1920s and early 1930s. Apart from formal expressions of modernism, such as horizontal windows, white walls and flat roofs, Arkan also explored the organization of the open plan, the dissolution of boundaries between the outside and the inside, as well as the functionalist standards of collective housing and minimal dwelling types. His teacher Poelzig was also invited for a position to Turkey in 1936 upon the recommendation of Martin Wagner, yet died just before he could make it, opening the post for Bruno Taut (17). After coming back to Turkey, Arkan began delivering urban design lectures at the Academy and found himself in a growing controversy with Sedat Eldem. The mid 1930s were definitely the brightest years of Arkan's career, which brought him recognition in numerous competitions for institutional buildings (18). As far as the residences for the state officials are concerned, Poelzig's architectural approach that sought for the individual expression of an artist "genius" was a perfect match for the clients' desires to represent themselves with exceptional houses. The single-family houses Arkan designed as a student of Poelzig in Germany influenced the upcoming years in his career (19; Figure 4, 5). The large terraces, extending eaves and winter gardens in the student projects remained as essential elements in the houses that would be built for the Republican elite in Ankara; the close relationship between the water and the house in student projects would reemerge in the design for the summer residence in Florya in İstanbul. The following sections look closer to this architectural hybridization of Germany and Turkey in constructing the residential symbols for the new Republic.

A House for Official Festivities and A House for Femininity (Ankara, 1933-1936)

Seyfi Arkan's first important commission in Turkey was the *Foreign Minister's Residence* in Ankara (1933-1934, Figure 6). This house soon became a residential icon of the new Republic and its photographs frequently appeared in propaganda journals such as *La Turquie Kemaliste* (20). Just like Atatürk's own residence at Çankaya designed by Clemens Holzmeister, the Foreign Minister's Residence was not only a private domestic space for a statesman, but also a place for official festivities and a stage for the international appearance of Turkey's new look. It was meant to reveal to the foreign diplomats the modernizing and

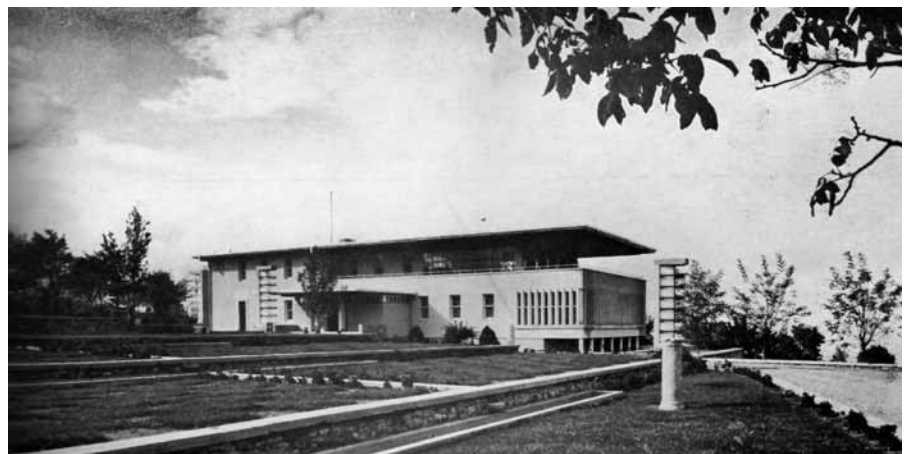


Figure 6. Seyfi Arkan, Residence for the Foreign Minister, Ankara, 1933-1934 (*Arkitekt* (1935) 11-12; 311).

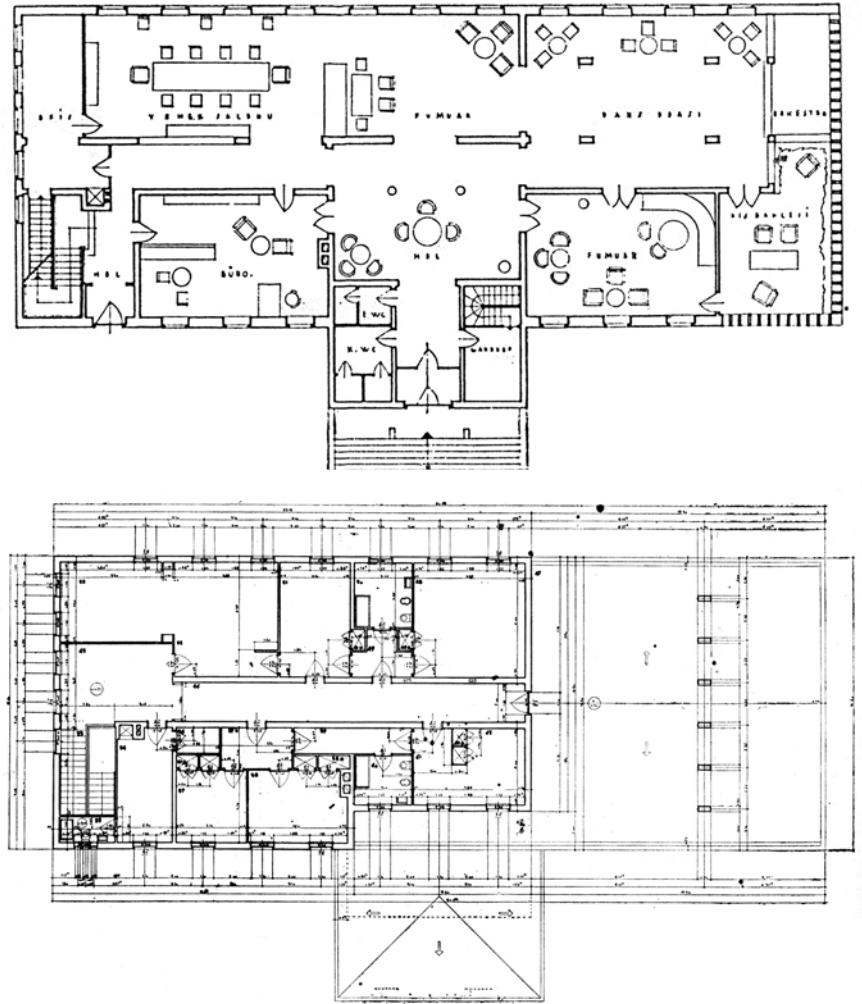


Figure 7. Seyfi Arkan, Residence for the Foreign Minister, Plans (*Arkitekt* (1935)11-12; 312, 316).

Turkey. The influence of some of Poelzig's buildings such as the Festival Theater for Salzburg is legible in a project Arkan published in *Arkitekt* under the title "Movie House." Arkan's other institutional projects from the period such as the Municipality Bank, Competition for İstanbul Port Passenger Hall, Ankara National Assembly, The Technician's School, or Akhisar Tütünçüler Bank, explore similar themes of *modern monumentality*, which was the concern of only a few German architects at the time. Poelzig was one of them, with his buildings that dramatically captured a monumental expressionism.

"İstanbul tiyatro ve konservatuarına ait uluslararası proje müsabakası," (1935) *Arkitekt* (1) 1-33. Arkan's project p. 27; "Sümerbank Proje Müsabakası," (1935) *Arkitekt* (2) 68-85; "İstanbul Limanı Yolcu Salonu Proje Müsabakası," (1937) *Arkitekt* (2) 41-56; "Belediyeler Bankası Proje Müsabakası – Ankara," (1935) *Arkitekt*, (10) 287-295; "Meslek Okulu Projesi," (1936) *Arkitekt*, (2) 43-44; "Akhisar Tütünçüler Bankası" (1935) *Arkitekt* (4) 112-113.

19. These projects were published in *Arkitekt* just after Arkan returned to Turkey. The German titles on the drawings

Westernizing aspirations of the new Republic, and to erase the "Oriental appearance" usually attributed to the Ottoman Empire. It blurred the distinctions between the private and the public by turning a domestic space into a carefully constructed stage for the public eye.

Arkan was given full responsibility in designing the building, choosing all the furniture and guiding the garden design. The final design is significantly similar to the "Waterfront House" that the architect designed in Germany, while he was still a student of Poelzig. In addition to the general massing and façade treatment, both designs have strikingly large terraces and wide extending eaves. Arkan differentiated the spaces of living from the spaces of protocol in the Foreign Minister's Residence (**Figure 7**). Providing separate entrances for each, he placed the family spaces on the second floor, while laying out the halls for official gatherings on the entrance floor (**Figure 8, 9**). This floor was composed of a private office, a large dining hall that could easily fit twelve to fourteen people around a table, an open and a closed smoking room (named as *fumuar*, rather than *sigara odası* or *nargile odası*), a dancing room, and a winter garden. Arkan's conception of the plan differed from Holzmeister's Presidential Mansion in one important aspect: Instead of using reinforced concrete as just another construction material, Arkan's house explored the use of the free plan as an expression of the new structural techniques

Figure 8. Seyfi Arkan, Residence for the Foreign Minister, Dancing Hall (*Arkitekt* (1935) 11-12; 314).

Figure 9. Seyfi Arkan, Residence for the Foreign Minister, Main Hall (*Arkitekt* (1935) 11-12; 315).

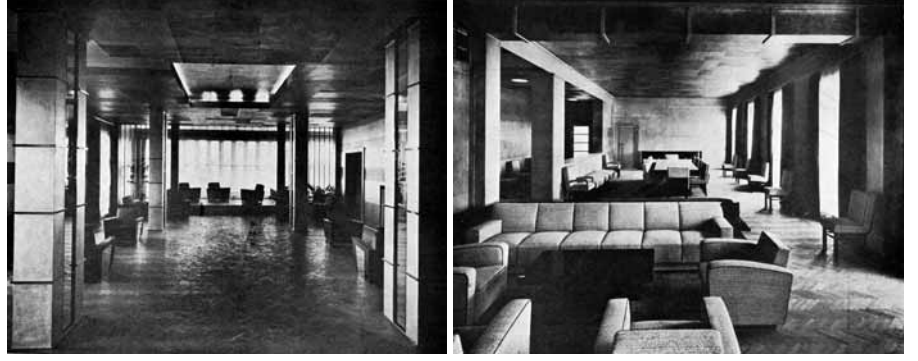


Figure 10. Atatürk Dancing (Mango, 1999, Fig. 30).

indicate that they were designed in Germany, most likely in Poelzig's studio. Seyfettin Nasih, (1933) "Deniz Kenarında bir Malikane," *Arkitekt*, (4) 111-113; Seyfettin Nasih (1934) "Ev Projesi," *Arkitekt* (1) 6-8.

20. *La Turquie Kemaliste*, n: 3 (October 1934); 2; *La Turquie Kemaliste*, n: 31 (June 1939); *La Turquie Kemaliste*, n: 42 (April 1941) Pages not indicated.

21. "O zaman, herkes, daha nasıl oturup kalkacağını, nasıl gezineceğini, nasıl dans edeceğini, gözlerini, ellerini, başını nasıl idare edeceğini hiç bilmezdi. Duvar kenarında küme küme hareketsiz hanımlara, kapı eşiklerinde manken gibi dimdik duran beylere ve büfe başlarında, hiç konuşmaksızın, mütemadiyen içip takıştıran toy ve mahçup gençlere rastgelineydi." Karaosmanoğlu (1972, 78).

22. "- What's in here? What're they doin? ... There is a ball, a ball! ... - Why are they wandering around at this time of the night? Are they looking for a place to stay, like me? ... Whose is this big mansion? - Oh, God. This is a hotel, hotel. In your terms, it is an *la Franca han*." "Burada ne var ki? Ne idirler? ... 'Balo var, balo' ... 'Bu gecenin yarısında hep dolaşır dururlar. Onlar da benim gibi garip mi, nedir? Yatacak yer mi ararlar? ... Bu koca konak kimin?' 'Tövbe yarabbi, tövbe yarabbi. Burası otel, otel be. Hani, senin anlıyacağın alafraanga han'" (Karaosmanoğlu, 1972, 89).

made possible by reinforced concrete. The entrance floor was composed of spaces without fixed and solid walls in between; the living, dining, dancing and smoking rooms flow into each other as parts of a single volume, rather than as rooms with contained and defined boundaries.

It is possible to observe in Arkan's houses some of the principal mechanisms through which the Kemalist cultural program aspired to disseminate symbols of modernization and Westernization to the nation. For instance, the emphasis on the dancing room in the Foreign Minister's Residence was not incidental. Republican balls where women and men danced intimately with Western clothes to Western music were one of the primary signs of modernization according to Atatürk (Figure 10). These republican balls initiated in the Ankara Palas Hotel were famous stages to illustrate the shining achievements of the revolutionized population in incorporating Western style dresses and entertainment habits into their lives. In one of these balls, after being irritated to hear that the women hesitated to dance with the Turkish officers, Mustafa Kemal is recalled to have said loudly: "I am ordering you. Spread out in the room! March! March! Dance! (Lord Kinross, 1966, 637)." The balls soon became a topic of satire for the writer Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, who in his novel *Ankara* depicted the period.

In those times [when the republican balls were first organized], nobody knew how to sit or stand, how to walk or dance, how to guide their eyes, hands or heads. One could see groups of unmoving women at the edges of the walls, straight standing men like manquins at the thresholds of the doors, and inexperienced shy young men who constantly tossed and drank without saying a word at the bar (21).

Karaosmanoğlu also described groups of peasants right outside the ballroom, watching the Westernized and modernized men and women make their brief appearances at the entrance steps of the vestibule in their much-awaited fashionable party dresses from Paris (22). Meanwhile, the new modern and elite families of Ankara going to the ball comment on the peasants:

Little by little, they will also learn and get used to it. The requirements of this new life will become reasonable, clear and uncomplicated for them as well (23).

Karaosmanoğlu, though a committed follower of Atatürk, criticized the Kemalist officials for losing the spirit of the Independence War and deteriorating into another sort of aristocracy (24). Nevertheless, this fictional anecdote of a republican ball captures a more fundamental feature of the Kemalist cultural program than the gradual transformation

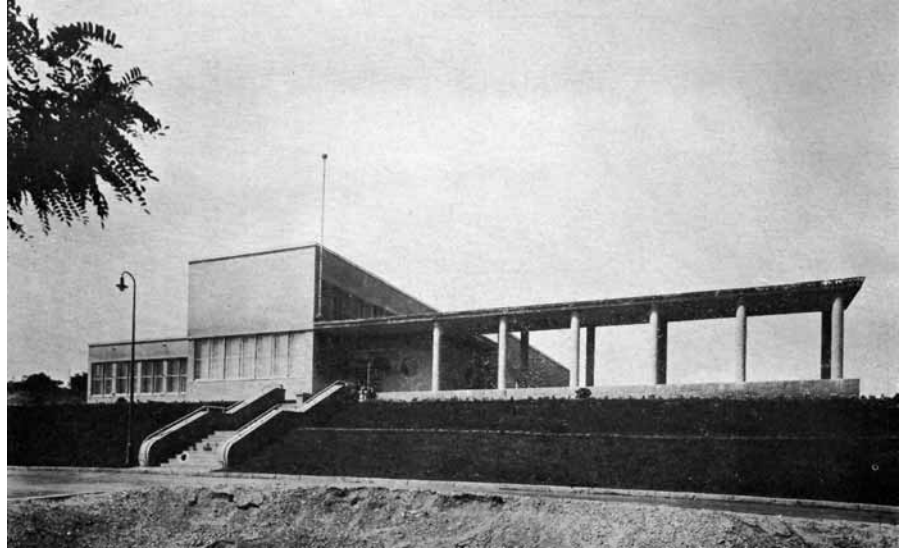


Figure 11. Seyfi Arkan, Residence for Makbule Atadan, Ankara, 1935-1936 (*Arkitekt* (1936) 7; 179).

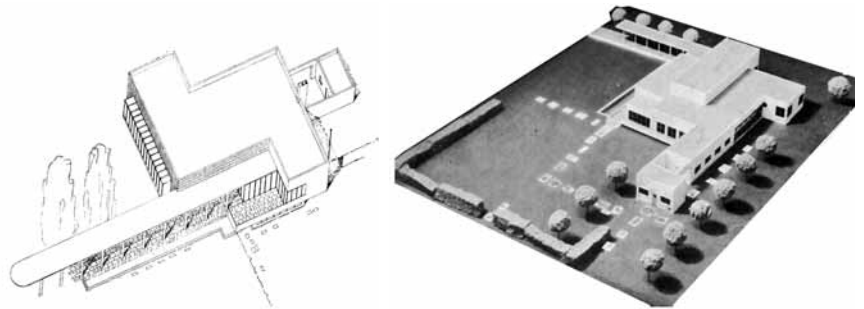


Figure 12. Seyfi Arkan, Residence for Makbule Atadan, First Version, 1935 (*Arkitekt* (1935) 4; 114).

Figure 13. Seyfi Arkan, Residence for Makbule Atadan, Second Version, 1935 (*Arkitekt* (1935) 6; 168).

23. "...Yavaş yavaş onlar da öğrenecek, onlar da alışacak. Bu yeni hayatın icapları onlarca da anlaşılır, açık ve basit şeyler haline gelir" (Karaosmanoğlu, 1972, 89).

24. The writer's ideas, including the journal he edited (*Kadro*), was found unsafe for the Party and the Party soon sent him abroad as a diplomat despite his reluctance. Karaosmanoğlu (1955).

25. The government's modernization program is suspect for assuming the public as "objects of a project" rather than "subjects of their history." The dancing hall in the Foreign Minister's Residence was yet another architectural trope that represented and simultaneously constructed the new life of this "project." For a collection of essays focusing on these criticisms in English, see Bozdoğan and Kasaba (1997). The expression "objects of a project" was proposed by Reşat Kasaba (1997, 24). For more discussion on the relation between architecture and top-down modernization, also see: Bozdoğan (2001).

26. For more information on the relation between Atatürk and his sister, see biographies on Atatürk, such as: Mango (1999); Aydemir (1966).

27. Arkan, Seyfi (1935) "Villa Projesi," *Arkitekt*, (4) 114-115; Arkan, Seyfi (1935) "Villa Projesi," *Arkitekt*, (6) 167-169; Arkan, Seyfi (1936) "Çankaya'da bir Villa," *Arkitekt*, (7) 179-186.

of its followers into a new elite. It rather confirms that despite its campaigns to be a movement of the masses, the Kemalist Revolution was carried out by a relatively small group of people, who implemented Turkey's program of modernization and Westernization through top-down political measures (25).

The second house that Arkan designed for the state was for Atatürk's sister (1935-1936) (Figure 11). Just as in the Foreign Minister's Residence, the architect was given full authority in this building's design and interior furnishing. In his will, Atatürk specified that his sister Makbule Atadan could keep the house until her death, and afterwards the residence became the Mansion for Prime Minister and Guests (*Misafir ve Başvekil Köşkü*). Makbule Atadan was fairly close to his brother, living with him and their mother in Dolmabahçe Palace when he visited İstanbul. When Mustafa Kemal tried to implement a multi-party system of democracy, and asked his friends to found a new political party to compete against his own, Makbule Atadan was one of the first to be made a member of this rival but staged party (26).

Arkan's student project "A Small House at the Sea" designed in Germany with Poelzig anticipates several features of this house. The colonnade connecting the main body of the house with the guest's pavilion, the treatment of the service court, and the placement of the house on a platform raised above a high retaining wall are elements that appear also in the student project. Arkan published three versions of Makbule Atadan's Residence in the professional journal *Arkitekt* (27). The first

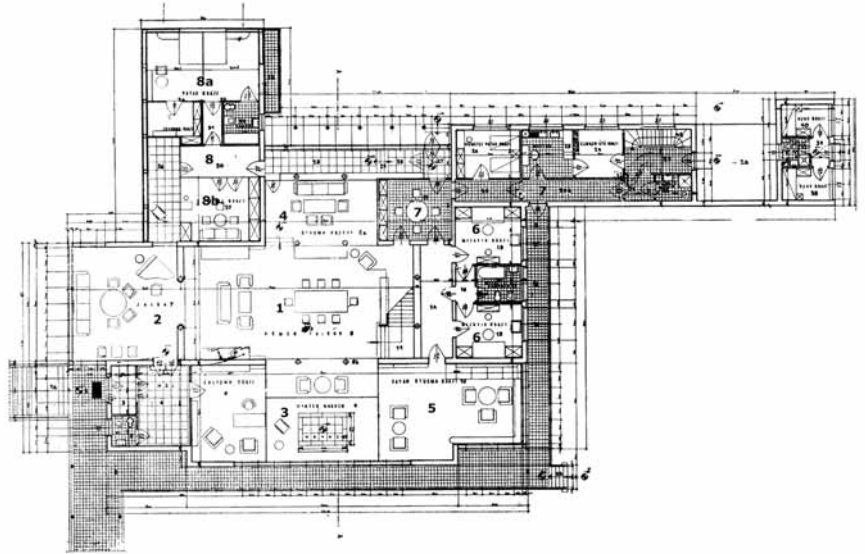


Figure 14. Seyfi Arkan, Residence for Makbule Atadan, Built Version, Plan (*Arkitekt* (1936) 7; 180).

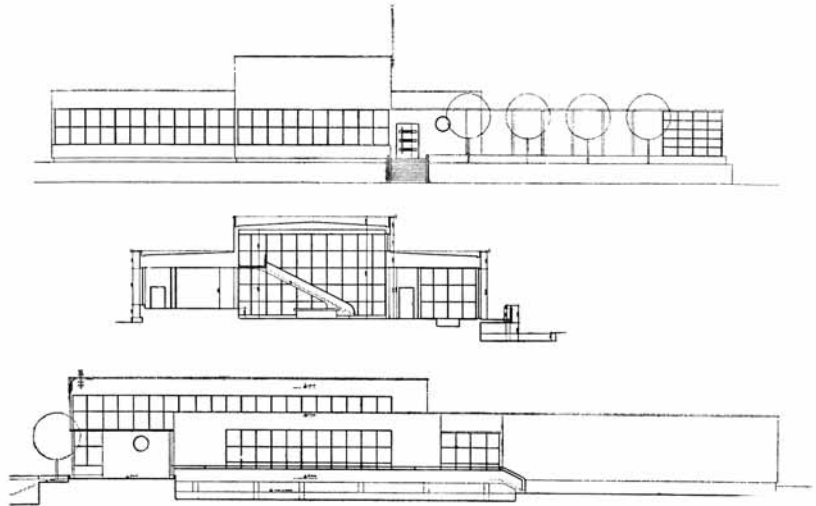


Figure 15. Seyfi Arkan, Residence for Makbule Atadan, Built Version, Sections (*Arkitekt* (1935) 6; 167).

version was considerably different, (Figure 12), although the entrance colonnade and service court in the final version already existed here. The second (Figure 13) and third (Figure 14, 15) versions were almost the same, except for the fact that the third and the built version had smaller dimensions. The colonnade that remained in all three versions provided a monumental expression, while the glass pavilion that appeared in all three projects was never built (Figure 16). Like the previous two houses, *Makbule Atadan's Residence* equally provided spaces for the social gatherings of the bureaucratic elite. In this case however, the subject of display was the living environment of a "civilized" Turkish woman.

The seemingly liberating and yet equally paternalistic attitude of the Kemalist cultural program towards women is given an architectural expression in this house. Women rights were one of the main paths to Western civilization in the eyes of the Kemalist reformists. The constitution granted the Turkish women the right to vote and be elected as early as 1934, which was even earlier than many of their European contemporaries. The pages of propaganda journals were filled with

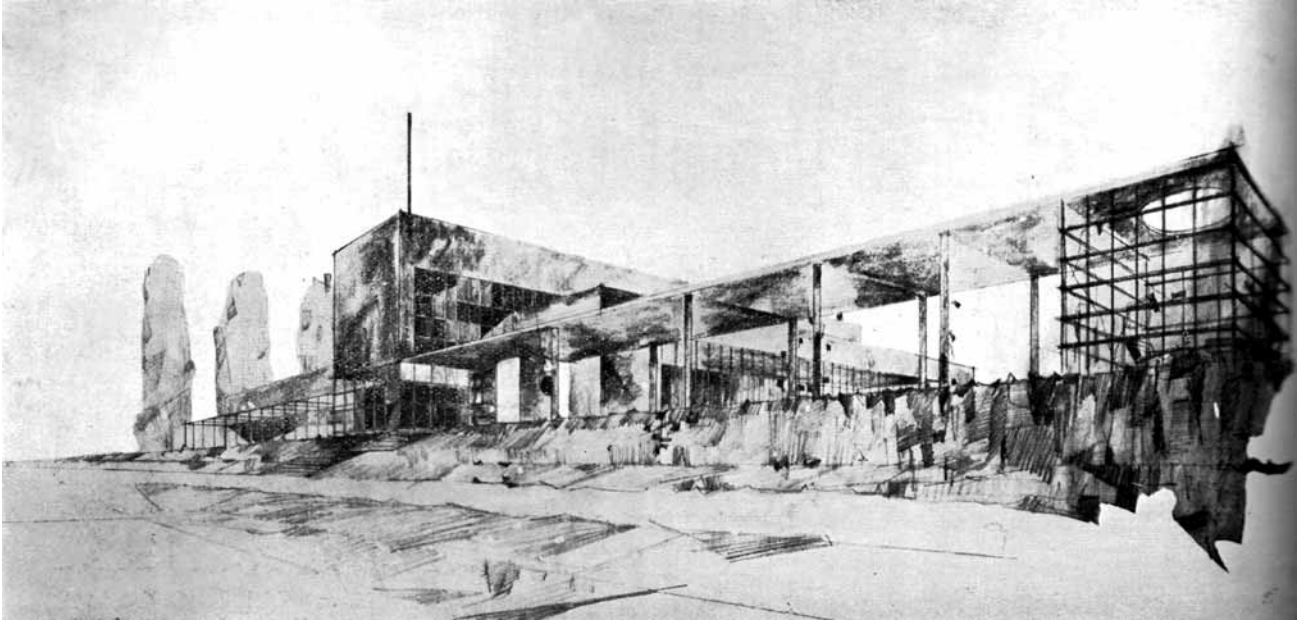


Figure 16. Seyfi Arkan, Residence for Makbule Atadan, Exterior Perspective (*Arkitekt* (1936) 7; 186).

28. For more discussion on the relation between architecture and women in the Kemalist agenda see: Bozdoğan (2001); Baydar (2002).

photographs portraying the new Turkish women in their unveiled Western clothes, attending schools, working as scientists and artists in laboratories and studios, doing sports *à la West* (Figure 17). However, for many Kemalist reformists, the women's role was as ambiguous as the place of the masses. Domesticity is an integral part of this discussion, especially with regard to women connected to the official elite (28). For example, Mihri Pektaş, the woman deputy of the early Republican period, described women's role as follows:

As I look back into the past as one peeping from a sun-lit garden into the dim and silent halls of a deserted house peopled by the pale ghosts of those resigned women, I realize with a sudden wonder how completely and

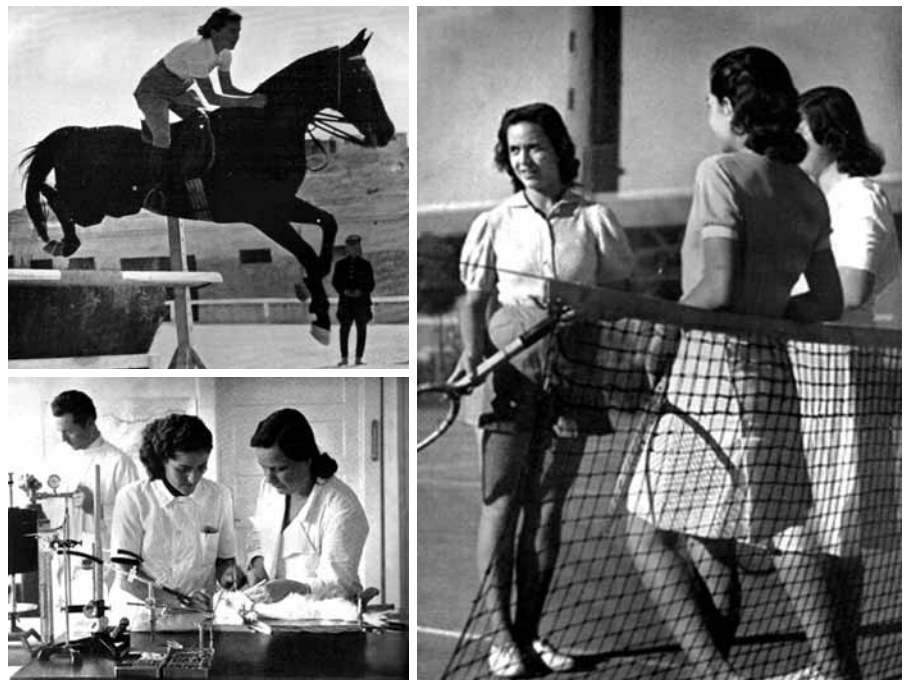


Figure 17. Portrayal of the New Women (Series in *La Turquie Kemaliste*).

29. Arkan often made it clear that this house was designed for a woman in the publications about the project.

forever gone that past is. ... How did the change begin? ... Wonderful things were going to happen and women were to have their share in the building up of a new, ideal world. ... And in all those movements there were men behind us: suggesting, directing, encouraging; men had realized that if Turkey had to survive, it had to change quickly, and that could not be done while women lived their old lives apart. This may be surprising to my western readers, where women had to fight and get her own [rights] ... [The Ottoman women], cut away completely from the rest of the world, without education, ... would be absolutely useless as a *help-mate* in the westernization of her country. She had to be *pushed out of her sheltering walls*, be healthy and strong first of all in her own body and soul if she had to help to create and mother a new order of life around her. ... Man has been wise in taking women into his confidence and sharing with her the carrying out of his scheme. ... *No, she has not been a poor investment at all* (Pektaş, 1939, 10-14; my emphasis).

The author unapologetically explained: Winning women, “pushing her out of the dim house where pale ghosts resided” would mean winning the nation, modernity and the West. Women were the best “investment.” Makbule Atadan’s villa must also have been regarded as an “investment” to exhibit the new Turkish women to the rest of the world and to the nation. This is evident in the circulation of the house’s pictures in the local as well as foreign magazines (29). Take, for instance, the English article in *The Architect and Building News* about the house:

Both interiors and exterior show how far *Turkey has progressed in providing a setting for femininity*. It is amazing to see the rooms of this house and realize that they are in the same country, which accepted the seraglio in the Sultan’s Palace at Constantinople as the right type of accommodation for ladies of the *elite*. In the seraglio the intimates looked inwards and even upwards (the Sultans know the safety factor of top lighting), but here the mistress of the house *looks outwards and far afield*. *Openness*, and a sense of breath govern here. ... (Robertson, 1938, 362-64; my emphasis).

“A setting for femininity” displaying to the world how Turkey has stripped off her Oriental habits; a house where the Islamic women were not enclosed behind the walls and screens of a traditional house or the Harem of an Ottoman Palace, but where they could look “outwards and far afield”—this was the task that Arkan faced. The aesthetics of modern architecture with its large glazed surfaces, light, air and free plan fitted perfectly this desire to “open” the new women to the outside. Transparency, an important component of the Modern Movement, was transported from Europe to Turkey, with a slight transformation of meaning. The dissolution of boundaries between exterior and interior that were made possible by new materials and technologies not only meant a closer relation of the house with nature, but also signified the “progress of Turkey in providing a setting for femininity.” The “unveiled” transparent house became a trope for the unveiled Islamic women. Glass, once again, was used to represent “progress.”

However, a closer look at the treatment of transparent surfaces in both the Foreign Minister’s and Makbule Atadan’s Residence reveals contradictory meanings. Take, for example, the repetitive use of numerous winter gardens in both houses. Rather than conventional forms of residential outdoor spaces in traditional “Turkish houses,” such as courtyards or outdoor *sofas*, Arkan’s winter gardens served as the main semi-open space mediating between the interior and the exterior. There are two winter gardens in the Foreign Minister’s, and one built, one unbuilt winter

Figure 18. Seyfi Arkan, Residence for the Foreign Minister, Winter garden on the entrance floor (*La Turquie Kemaliste* (October 1934) 27).

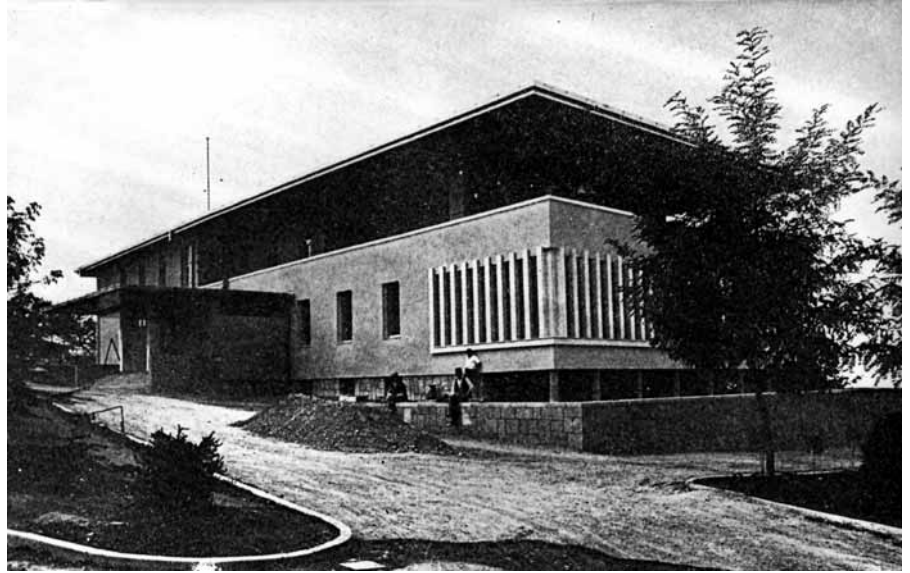
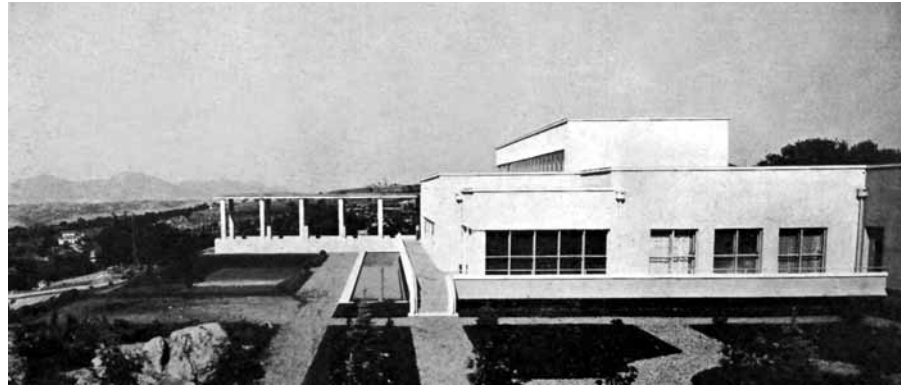


Figure 19. Seyfi Arkan, Residence for Makbule Atadan, Site and view from the house (*Arkitekt* (1936) 7; 180).



30. Arkan, Seyfi (1935) "Hariciye Köşkü," *Arkitekt* (11-12) 311.

31. Yet, a significant difference suggests a particular spin. The winter garden in Arkan's residence was a semi-closed one, with vertical concrete panels that looked like modernized versions of window screens in traditional vernacular houses. In other words, the winter garden for social gatherings of the bureaucrats was screened, in sharp contrast to the totally transparent glass walls of the winter garden on the second floor reserved for private use. This gesture inverted the usual connotations of the public and the private. The architect masked what was expected to be transparent, while he made the private house of an official elite penetrable. Also see Bergdoll and Riley (2001).

garden as well as a passage-way with double glazing in the project of Atadan's residence. Apart from the winter garden on the entrance floor of the Foreign Minister's Residence, all other spaces are enclosed with large glazed surfaces. Suitably, Makbule Atadan's house is also named as the "glass villa" (*camlı köşk*). Why would Arkan emphasize fully glazed winter gardens all around the houses? A winter garden would allow a close relation with the outside even in the cold winters of Ankara. In the hot summer days, the wide extending eaves would protect the winter garden of the Foreign Minister's Residence. Arkan himself mentioned his climatic concerns, and explained that he was inspired by the "wide extending eaves of the old houses in Ankara (30)". Yet his choices could hardly have been guided only by such regionalist concerns, nor could they have been motivated by the traditionalist symbolism that he regarded unfit to the contemporary Republican aspirations. What would be more appropriate for a house meant for display than the large glazed surfaces of winter gardens? Use of glass and transparency was an effective way of ensuring that these houses were associated with the modernist taste of European architects. Arkan had already explored the formal potentials of large glazing in the houses he designed in Berlin in Poelzig's studio. The winter garden on the entrance floor of the Foreign Minister's Residence resembled the one in the Tugendhat house designed by Mies van der Rohe, with its narrow and long dimensions in plan, placed as a

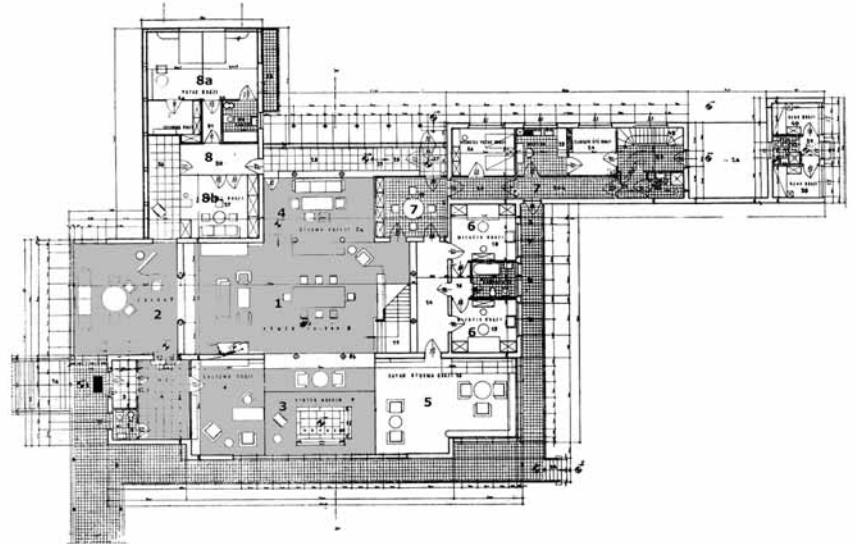


Figure 20. Seyfi Arkan, Residence for Makbule Atadan, Spaces of Spectacle and Spaces of Privacy (Diagram: E. Arkan).

buffer zone in between the garden and the inside (31; **Figure 18**). These transparent surfaces served effectively as the residential symbols of the Republic, also because they helped create the image of a stage, a house for exhibition, which put the national elite on a carefully calculated display.

Needless to say, physical transparency in a building does not always guarantee its contribution to social transparency. Both houses were located on top of a hill in Ankara, overlooking the whole city (**Figure 19**). While the dwellers could see an encompassing view of the city below from their large windows, the citizens of the city below could only see the houses of national power as a vague silhouette. The transparency attributed to the houses in the circulating journals and newspapers hardly functioned on the scale of the actual experience of the street. This one-way transparency allowed the gaze to travel from the dweller in the inside to the city, while hindering the same experience in the other direction. It was rather the *photographs*, the mediated circulations of the buildings that displayed the houses as transparent, rather than the actual experience of the houses themselves in the city. The houses were meant to be un-private as if this would live up to the utopia of a transparent society. And yet, they were transparent only in their idealized mediated images.

In addition to the use of glass on the exterior, the interiors of these houses, of Makbule Atadan's house in particular, created further ambiguities between transparency and obscurity, displaying and hiding, being seen and being screened. This can be seen as a duality between *the spaces of spectacle* and *spaces of privacy* within the house itself, and as a means to distinguish between the *exhibition value* and *use value* in this house (**Figure 20**). While this distinction was definitely pertinent in many palaces and houses of statesmen, my intention in looking at this distinction is to see its relation to the gender roles in this specific house. By making this implicit differentiation, Arkan maintained a very traditionalist and patriarchic organization in determining the place of the women in the house.

What is striking in Atadan's Residence is the stark separation of the large entertaining halls from the service spaces and daily living spaces. The spaces for social gatherings were extraordinarily large for a house of a

32. Here I am not claiming that the main hall and the music room in the house were not *used*, or that a social gathering is not a particular form of use. Rather I am proposing this distinction to understand the difference between several parts of the house.

Figure 21. Seyfi Arkan, Residence for Makbule Atadan, Main hall (*Arkitekt* (1936) 7; 183).

Figure 22. Seyfi Arkan, Residence for Makbule Atadan, Music Room (*Arkitekt* (1936) 7; 185).

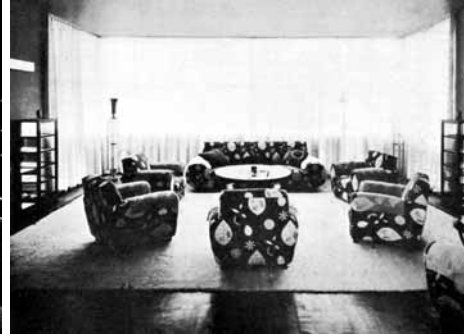


Figure 23. Seyfi Arkan, Residence for Makbule Atadan, Winter Garden (*Arkitekt* (1936) 7; 183).

Figure 24. Seyfi Arkan, Residence for Makbule Atadan, Intimate sitting corner in the main hall (*Arkitekt* (1936) 7; 184).



Figure 25. Seyfi Arkan, Residence for Makbule Atadan, Women's common room (*Arkitekt* (1936) 7; 185).



Figure 26. Seyfi Arkan, Residence for Makbule Atadan, Intimate sitting corner (*Arkitekt* (1936) 7; 182).

single woman. There was a large and spacious main hall with a dining table and sofas (**Figure 21**), a music room separated from the main hall with movable glass partitions (**Figure 22**), a winter garden (**Figure 23**), a more intimate sitting corner raised by a few steps and with a lower ceiling (**Figure 24**). These *spaces of spectacle* with their high ceilings, galleries and large glazed surfaces were the main points of attraction in the house. Just as in the Foreign Minister's Residence, the potentials of reinforced concrete and glass in creating an open plan with fluid interior boundaries were also explored here. A large service area with rooms for four maids supported these social gathering spaces.

However, the *spaces of privacy* were noticeably hidden from the spaces of spectacle. These were the spaces where the daily life of the house took place, namely the private rooms of Makbule Atadan and her guests, and the large section reserved for servants. A separate wing was provided for Makbule Atadan that contained her bedroom and daily living room, which was indicated in the plan as the "sewing room" (*dikiş odası*). In addition to this separate wing, (and perhaps even more indicative about the gender roles suggested through space,) there was a closed living room reserved specifically for women next to the main hall, which was separated from the main hall with translucent boundaries, but had easy access to the guest rooms. Ironically, this was named as a "Women's Room" in a house already owned by a woman (**Figure 25**). I would like to underline the use value of these spaces as opposed to the exhibition value of the spaces of spectacle (32). It was the spaces for everyday use that made the use of exhibition spaces possible. In plan, they surround the main halls literally like a backstage in a theater. These private spaces are always accessed indirectly. The door that leads to the service corridor providing access to the sleeping and daily living rooms of Makbule Atadan is hidden in the corner of the intimate sitting corner near the main hall (**Figure 26**). In fact, it is much more practical to enter the private



Figure 27. Seyfi Arkan, Residence for Makbule Atadan, Living room with glass walls separating women's realm (*Arkitekt* (1936) 7; 183).

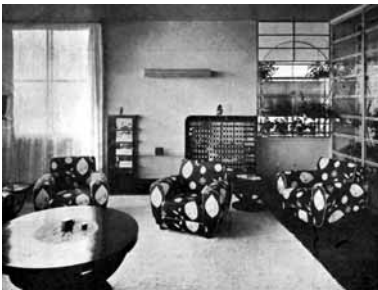


Figure 28. Seyfi Arkan, Residence for Makbule Atadan, Aquarium separating music room and private bedroom section (*Arkitekt* (1936) 7; 185).

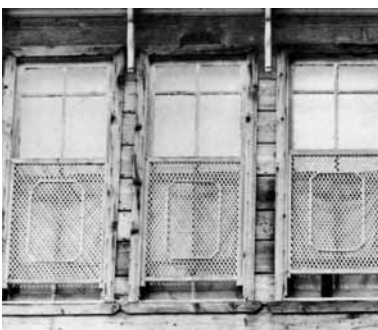


Figure 29. Window Screens in traditional vernacular houses (Eldem, *Türk Evi*).

33. Whether these spaces functioned exactly in this way would be the subject of another paper. Users always have the power to subvert the particular uses intended by the architect or suggested by the space. Therefore, my intention here is not to claim how the house was actually used once the users settled in, but rather to disclose what is suggested with the space through architectural design.

sections from the secondary entrance located at the back of the house, rather than the main entrance. The guest room section is directly connected to private spaces of the house and the service wing. It is as if there were two worlds that simultaneously took place in the house: the spaces of privacy that were used continuously and the spaces of spectacle that were exhibited occasionally.

These distinctions were also gendered. The women's realm, including both the private spaces of Makbule Atadan and the women's common living room, was separated from the spaces of spectacle with glass screens and silk curtains. A glass partition divided the women's room from the main halls (**Figure 27**). Similarly, an aquarium was placed between Atadan's private rooms and the music room in the main hall (**Figure 28**). Despite its modernist appearance, this use of semi-transparent glass in the interior actually maintained a very traditional organizational principle in defining women's place in the society. On the one hand, the women's sphere was implied and yet hidden; its existence was assured and yet made unreachable to the users of the main hall. On the other hand, it was actually the women behind the glass walls and silk curtains, who could peep in the parties that took place in the main hall, not the other way around. In either case, however, the glass partitions with silk curtains functioned exactly like the semi-transparent window screens in traditional vernacular houses, which acted as the partitions that both separated women from the street and allowed them to watch the public space without being seen (**Figure 29**). By dividing the women's realm from the main social gathering spaces, Arkan repeated a very common spatial tool to define and control women's place in society. She was permitted to be a voyeur of the public life, which was usually considered as men's sphere, and in the case of this house she was most possibly occasionally part of this life; and yet her real place was implied to be behind the semi-transparent screens (**33**).

Glass, whose use on the exterior signified the unveiled Islamic women, served to veil the women again with its elaboration in the interior. While the transparent exterior stood as a legible symbol of the Ottoman women's "liberation from her dim house where pale ghosts resided," the treatment of translucent interior surfaces discretely maintained the same traditional hierarchies between genders.

A House for Leisure (İstanbul, 1935)

These spaces of spectacle, especially of the Foreign Minister's Residence, circulated as photographs in the media with tidy furniture placed orderly in the rooms as if nobody had ever used them. The images portrayed an idealized space, rather than the actual life in these interiors: neat, errorless and ideal spaces, rather than the complex, heterogeneous and disordered ones. It is as if the life in these idealized spaces was consciously left undefined, so that the curiosity of the audience would be perpetuated, not unlike the preservation of any other myth. The exhibition value of these houses had to be handled as if it was *not* something of our world. The photographs of the houses did not portray real life in the house: there was no need to see the habitants' everyday use that made these spaces messy, dirty and worn out, that made them "human," so to speak. It was as if idealized, non-human bodies used these spaces; not the fallible ordinary humans. These houses were accessible to the eyes of the population only through their mediated photographs; they were meant to create the ego-

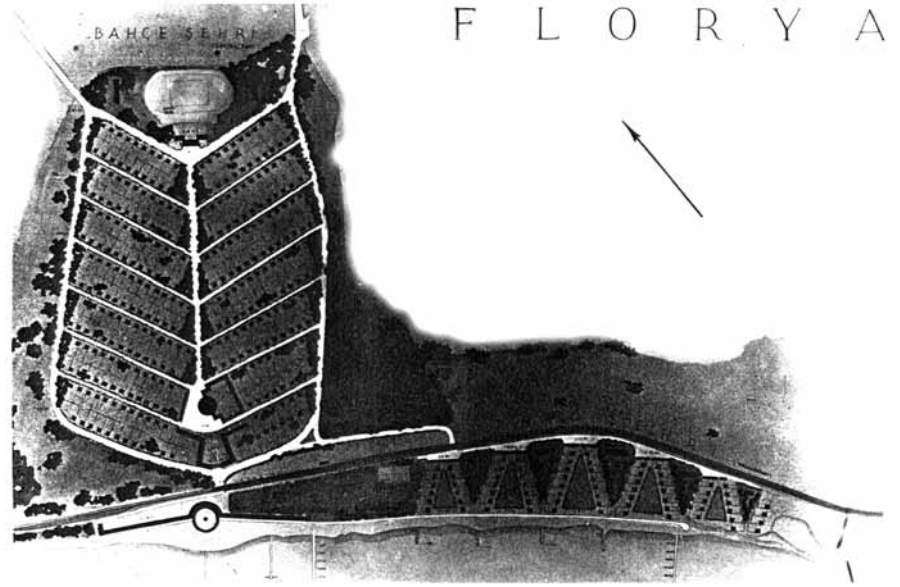


Figure 30. Martin Wagner, Proposal for Florya (Akademie der Künste (AdK), Nachlaß Martin Wagner, 28-12 F9).



Figure 31. Seyfi Arkan, Atatürk's House at Florya, Bird's eye view, 1935 (*Cumhuriyet'in Devraldığı İstanbul'dan Bugüne*, 245).

ideals for their local audiences. Their photographs were meant to claim that these spaces belonged to their ideal, godly heroes, to whom they should spend their lives living up to.

It was in the third house that Arkan designed for Atatürk where the "gods" came down to the world of the masses. Florya was one of the favorite resort places of Atatürk whenever he visited İstanbul. Deciding to have a summer-house for himself and a public beach in Florya, Atatürk invited architects to participate in a limited competition in 1935. Arkan was one of them, Martin Wagner who had just arrived from Germany was another. Wagner proposed to turn Florya into a garden city resembling the ones in Germany on the peripheries of big cities. He proposed a housing estate with freestanding houses in gardens and located Atatürk's House along the beach (Figure 30). In contrast, Arkan placed Atatürk's house literally on the sea connecting it to the shore with a bridge (Figure

Figure 32. Seyfi Arkan, Atatürk's House at Florya, 1935 (Photos: E. Akcan).

Figure 33. Atatürk in the Florya House (Photo: Florya Museum).

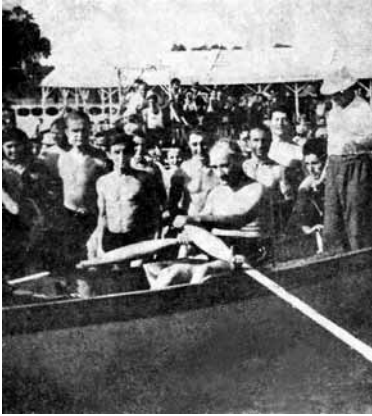


Figure 34. Atatürk with the masses in Florya (Banoğlu, 1974, 322, 184).

31). The shore was reserved for the service spaces of a public beach. Unlike Wagner, Arkan understood the recreational dimension that the president wanted in this part of the city. This was a house where Atatürk would spend his free time, while socializing with the citizens on vacation. Newspaper articles indicate that Atatürk had chosen Arkan because he understood his lifestyle and provided the right relationship between his own house and the public beach (Kandemir, 1952). Atatürk remained active in the realization of the project, visiting the construction site at least three times in one and a half months to give directions (34; Figure 32, 33).

Having heard from Atatürk's doctor that the climate and water in Florya would be a positive impact on the president's deteriorating health, Arkan worked intensely and finished the working drawings and building construction in only forty-three days. In Arkan's mind, his project was a testimony that the Republican revolution was a people's revolution. For him, this was a house that proved the president's close contact with the masses; this was where the nation and the leader came together in their recreational time. Florya resort was a symbol to declare that the Ottoman aristocracy, and by extension the hierarchy between the ruler and the ruled, was over. Now the president could have his vacation a few feet in front of the masses, he could swim and row with them, wave his hand at them from the terrace of his ship-like building. Remembering it seventeen years later, Arkan recorded:

[Atatürk] always told how happy and glad he became living together with the masses. He laid on the bed in his house at Florya, this exceptional piece of nature, and thought about the health and enjoyment of the nation even when he was using a few square meters of the sea. With the construction of his house in Florya, the whole region of Trakya was developed (35).

Indeed, whenever Atatürk spent time in Florya, the newspapers of the next day circulated several photographs of him mixing and mingling with the young and cheerful men and women in their swimsuits (Figure 34). The captions typically declared: "the most democratic president of the world who cruises in a rowboat amongst the masses in Florya (36)." These photographs emphasized the athletic aspect of the president. Unlike an image that portrayed him drinking, which he did extensively according to all his biographers, these photographs were to confirm to the audience their president's healthy body, doing sports, enjoying the sea and the sun just as his fellow citizens. At this point, it might be important to note the relation between modernization and the streamlining of human bodies. Maximizing human bodily performance was one of the main goals of modern organizational systems. The metaphor of machine and industry radically transformed the conception of body and bodily energy at the turn of the century. The human motor, "harmonizing the movements of the body with those of the industrial machine, (Rabinbach (1990, 2))"

34. Atatürk visited the construction site on June 28th, 1935, July 6th, 1935, August 11th, 1935. The construction was over on August 14th, 1935. (Banoğlu, 1974).

35. "[Atatürk] Halkın arasında yaşamakla, mes'ut ve bahtiyar olduğunu her zaman söylerdi. Florya gibi tabiatın bu müstesna yerinde bulunan köşküdeki yatağında yatar ve altındaki bir kaç metre karelik denizden faydalanırken bile milletin sağlığını, neşesini düşünürdü.... Florya'nın imarı ile bütün Trakya kalkındı." Kandemir (1952, 36).

36. August 4th, 1936, September 24th, 1937. Banoğlu (1974, 201, 336).



Figure 35. Mass sports spectacles organized in Youth's Day in Turkey (Series in *La Turquie Kemaliste*).



Figure 36. Atatürk's Photograph with his adopted daughter Ülkü on the deck of the House at Florya (Lord Kinross, 1966, 60).

became a trope not only for Taylorism, but also for scientific discourses (one can think of eugenics here) or for literal and visual representations of modernity (Armstrong, 1998; Rabinbach, 1990). The human bodies were to be as healthy, efficient, reliable and utilizable as a machine in the industrial world. Just as many authoritarian states during this period, Kemalism utilized sport's spectacles in occasions such as the Youth's Day, in order to emphasize the importance of healthy, sportive and young-looking bodies for the modern nation. These nationalist spectacles where a mass of bodies formed a totalized and unified performance, just like the joints and bolts of a machine, were perfect examples of the machine analogy used in conceptualizing modern human bodies (**Figure 35**).

Arkan's "cubic house" with its white washed walls, which were purified of any excess of ornament or burden of history, created a perfect milieu for these healthy shaped bodies to congregate. Placing the house on the sea like a ship and providing terraces that looked like ship deck contributed to this vision (**Figure 36**). The metaphor of a ship was already widely noted as a basic inspiration for modern architectural form, most famously manifested in Le Corbusier's *Vers une Architecture*, which declared that the style of the times already existed in industrial objects and machines, including ships (**Figure 37**).

However, the analogy of a machine alone does not explain the context completely. The Florya house, and the bodies in and around it were meant to represent health and cleanliness of modernization, but they also had to comply with the image of leisure. The ship worked as an appropriate metaphor for the architect in signifying leisure as well. As a writer from an English journal noted, putting an "international style" box in the middle of the sea was like a fantasy that young creative architects "often toy with on the drawing board, but seldom realize (Robertson, 1938, 362-64)." Atatürk's house of leisure certainly attracted attention with its extraordinary character, floating on water. Arkan's extravagant avant-garde house was delirious, successfully fulfilling the two important requirements: it simultaneously symbolized modern leisure and machine aesthetics, in its most dramatic fashions.

What is still left unspoken, however, is the strong affiliation of a house in the middle of the sea with the traditional Ottoman waterbaths (**Figure 38**). İstanbul's waterbaths floated on the waters of the Bosphorus during the Ottoman times, but were slowly disappearing with the decline of the Empire. These waterbaths, structures built along the shore for swimming, were usually assembled in the beginning of the season and taken down for the winter. The contemporary anti-Ottoman ideology prevented any open reference to these wooden waterbaths as sources of inspiration. Nevertheless, the close contact with water in İstanbul had traditionally produced unique building types in the city, and continued to inspire the architects of the Republican times in producing equally unique works. The *Floating House*, which Ahsen Yapanar designed in 1934 sailing on the water was yet another example (**Figure 39**).

Atatürk's recreational house at Florya soon became an icon of modernization in Turkey. Whenever the president visited İstanbul, he spent lots of his time in the house hosting not only important diplomats and politicians, but also many academicians who discussed with him the new theories of Turkish history and "pure" language (*Güneş Dil Teorisi*). To give a few examples, the British King Edward the 7th visited Florya and the newspapers proudly reported how "impressed" the king was by

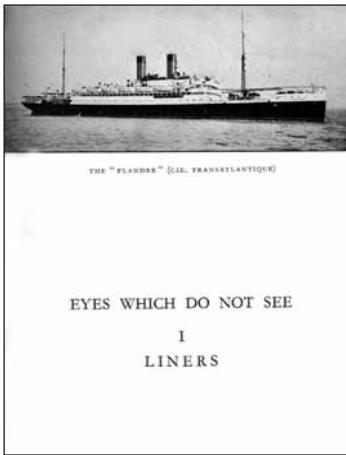


Figure 37. Page from Le Corbusier's *Towards a New Architecture*.

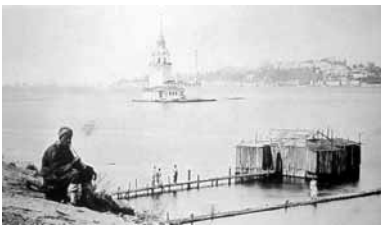


Figure 38. Istanbul Waterbaths of the Ottoman Period.

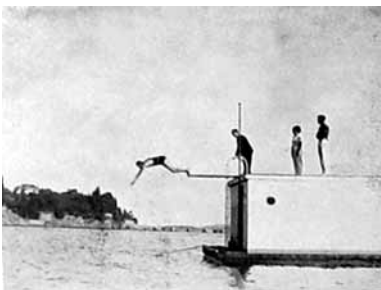


Figure 39. Ahsen Yapanar, Floating House, 1934 (*Mimar* (1934)).

37. Martin Wagner, Letter to Walter Gropius, 20 August 1935. Quoted in Nicolai (1998, 127).

the idea of such a recreational house. The decision to offer Celal Bayar the post of prime minister was taken in this house. Professor Pitard, a prominent figure working on the theories of Turkish history in line with Atatürk's ideas, also stayed in this house (Banoğlu, 1974).

Having lost the competition, Martin Wagner severely criticized Arkan's building in a letter to Walter Gropius for putting a "mishmash of Le Corbusier and Mies" in the middle of the sea, and copying "functional houses" (*Funktionshaus*) from Europe while failing to understand the functional logic behind their creation (45). Wagner himself failed to notice the connections of Arkan's design to the traditional Istanbul waterbaths. Architectural historian Bernd Nicolai (1998, 127-128) has suggested that this building actually motivated Martin Wagner and his German colleagues after him to start formulating a more regionalized and culturally specific form of modernism for Turkey. In other words, Arkan's villas for the state testified to the victory of "cubic architecture" in Turkey. But the moment of official recognition also meant the rise of opposition in Turkey. "Cubic architecture" was now contested by the very same people that promoted it in Germany.

These houses exemplify how much the meaning of a certain architectural form may become transformed during the process of translation from one context to another. A formal expression that usually stood against nationalism in the German context could well be used to symbolize nationalism in the Turkish one. A formal expression that symbolized the industrial culture and socialist expectations of modernism, such as economy, efficiency and functionalism, gained other connotations in Turkey, reflecting the intentions of a nationalist elite. The formal expression with which Arkan familiarized himself in Germany while working with Poelzig, an expression usually perceived to be in contrast to Tessenow's approach, was inverted and used in Turkey for reasons that was more akin to the *Heimatstil* circle. There is no need to categorically denounce this process, in the way Wagner did, since architectural form is always partly the result of a representative aspiration. Rather, this example reaffirms that a certain architectural form and ideology are never essentially coupled with each other, but almost always redefined within a specific condition. The exact meanings of forms are seldom transported from one context to another. This relatively free semantics of architectural form actually makes translation relevant to explain the flow of images and styles across geographical space. It is the flexibility of meaning, the possibility of a form to attain different meanings in new places that makes cross-cultural translations so pertinent to the practice of architecture.

A house for Turkey's foreign minister, a house representing the new Turkish femininity and another one portraying a setting for modern leisure. In the local and foreign media, all three residences for the Turkish bureaucrats were praised as evidence of the Kemalist State's "unadulterated will to create in the spirit of the day (Robertson, 1938, 362)." These houses are usually appreciated for bringing European modernist aesthetics to Turkey. With their smooth surfaces stripped of any ornament or historical reference, flat roofs and large glazed surfaces, these houses were consciously designed to stand as radically new and groundbreaking objects in their environments, not as continuations of a regional style of building. They were also meant to represent the new Turkey's openness to foreign influences. These houses were intentionally estranging, but they were also not imitations of their European

counterparts. Arkan transformed the European-inspired styles of expression by combining them with local features, whether this was the wide extending eaves in the Foreign Minister's Residence; or a more implicit space-making principle that maintained the traditional values concerning women's place in the house as in Atadan's Residence; or finally, the legacy of a local architectural type such as the Ottoman waterbaths, which were slowly becoming obsolete as in the Florya House. The external form of these houses spoke the language of modernism, and yet their complexly layered floor-plan organizations, interiors, and placement in the city also embodied propagandistic tools of a top-down modernization and nationalization process, as well as some of the paradoxical facets of this period. They did not just represent European architecture in Turkey or just mirror their own national political context, but they *constructed* the appropriate architectural organizations that would realize the specific mix of the Westernizing and nationalizing ideals sought by the Kemalist government.

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SAYDAMLIK VE MAHREMİYET KONUSUNDA BELİRSİZLİKLER: SEYFİ ARKAN'IN YENİ TÜRK CUMHURİYETİ İÇİN TASARLADIĞI KONUTLAR

Bu makalede yeni kurulan Kemalist devletin bürokratları için Seyfi Arkan tarafından tasarlanmış üç konut üzerinden saydamlık ve mahremiyet, propaganda ve gösteri kavramlarının modern mimarlık pratiği ile ilişkileri incelenmektedir. Modernleşme ve Batılılaşmanın amblemleri olarak tasarlanan bu konutlar, işlevlerinin ötesinde yeni ulus-devletin gösteri araçları haline gelmiş, hem yurtiçinde yeni bir yaşam tarzı için talep uyandırmak, yeni zevk standartları oluşturmak, hem de yurtdışında Türk bürokratların 'Doğulu huylarından' sıyrıldıklarını kanıtlanmak için kullanılmışlardır. Makalede ilk önce Arkan'ın Almanya'da Hans Poelzig'in öğrencisi olarak aldığı eğitimin bu üç konutun mimarisini nasıl doğrudan etkilediği tartışılmakta; bu konutların ilk tasarımlarının bizzat Almanya'da yapıldığı, ancak Türkiye'deki milliyetçi bağlamın bu mimari anlatımlara yepyeni anlamlar verdiği gösterilmektedir. Almanya'da endüstri devrimi, ekonomi, verimlilik, işlevsellik, sosyalizm gibi idealleri temsil eden biçimsel bir anlatım, Türkiye'de yeni milliyetçi elitin kendini tanımlama ve gösterme ortamı olarak kullanılmıştır. Daha sonra sırasıyla *Hariciye Köşkü*, *Makbule Atadan Evi* ve *Florya Köşkü*'nün yakın bir mimari okuması yapılarak, her konutta saydamlık ve mahremiyet arasındaki karmaşık ilişki incelenmektedir. Örneğin, Hariciye Köşkü ve

Makbule Atadan Villası'nda dış cephelelerdeki yoğun cam kullanımı ve tekrarlanan kış bahçeleri, mimarlıkta saydamlık temasına verilen önemi göstermektedir; ancak her iki villanın da şehirdeki konumu ve şehirlilerle aralarına koydukları mesafe düşünüldüğünde bu fiziksel şeffaflığın sosyal olarak desteklendiğini iddia etmek zordur. Dış cepheye ek olarak, cam yüzeylerin evlerin içindeki kullanımı da şeffaflık ve gizlilik, göstermek ve saklamak, görmek ve görünmek arasındaki çizgide gidip gelmektedir. Bu konutların planları gösteri mekanları ve mahrem mekanlar olarak, işlevleri segileme değeri ve kullanma değeri olarak ikiye ayrılmıştır sanki. Özellikle Makbule Atadan Evi'nin şeffaf dış cephesi, medya tarafından Osmanlı kadınına karanlık odalardan ve pencere kafeslerinden özgürleştiren bir yaklaşım olarak yorumlanmış ve takdir görmüştür. Ancak, aynı cam yüzeylerin evin içindeki kullanımına dikkat edildiğinde, cinsiyetler arası geleneksel hiyerarşileri, erkek-egemen mekan kullanımlarını desteklemekten öteye gitmediği görülebilir. Konutun cephesinde camın kullanım biçimi Türk kadınının İslamın koşulu türbandan kurtarılmasını simgelerken, konutun içinde saydam ve yarı-saydam yüzeylerin kullanım biçimi mecazi olarak aynı kadının örtünmesini, geri planda kalmasını desteklemektedir. Üçüncü olarak, Atatürk'ün halkla kaynaşacağı, beraber spor yapıp, tatilin keyfini çıkaracağı yer olarak tasarlanan Florya Konutu ise, makina estetiği, modern beden, gemi, ya da Osmanlı deniz hamamlarına gönderme yapan, diğer bir deyişle çok çeşitli okumaları davet eden zenginliği ile dikkat çekmektedir. Sonuç olarak sırasıyla yeni Kemalist devletin dış ilişkilere verdiği öneme, kadına biçtiği yeni rollere, ve Atatürk ile halk arasında kurulmaya çalışılan ilişkiye ışık tutan bu üç konut, sadece Avrupa mimarlığını Türkiye'ye taşımakla, ya da kendi ulusal politik ortamını temsil etmekle açıklanamaz: Kemalist devletin batılılaşmacı ve ulusalcı ideallerinin belli bir karışımını tanımlayan mimari anlatımı bizzat kendi inşa eder.