



Imagining the Turkish House: Collective Visions of Home

Carel Bertram

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"Houses can become poetic expressions of longing for a lost past, voices of a lived present, and dreams of an ideal future." Carel Bertram discovered this truth when she went to Turkey in the 1990s and began asking people about their memories of "the Turkish house." The fondness and nostalgia with which people recalled the distinctive wooden houses that were once ubiquitous throughout the Ottoman Empire made her realize that "the Turkish house" carries rich symbolic meaning. In this delightfully readable book, Bertram considers representations of the Turkish house in literature, art, and architecture to understand why the idea of the house has become such a potent signifier of Turkish identity.

Bertram's exploration of the Turkish house shows how this feature of Ottoman culture took on symbolic meaning in the Turkish imagination as Turkey became more Westernized and secular in the early decades of the twentieth century. She shows how artists, writers, and architects all drew on the memory of the Turkish house as a space where changing notions of spirituality, modernity, and identity—as well as the social roles of women and the family—could be approached, contested, revised, or embraced during this period of tumultuous change.



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