The traditional enclosures of households, schools, and factories are well-known sites of discipline and confinement. In counter-distinction to these sites, this paper analyzes the marginal spaces of gender practices and habitable relations. The notion of marginal space generally supposes that we think in terms of relations of liminality. Conceptualizing gender relations in the context of liminality not only renews an awareness of space as a dynamic, social relation but also allows for new ways for thinking about relations of difference than the disciplinary enclosure model. One of the central arguments of this essay is that marginal spaces are not just spaces of movement but they become so through movement. These spaces are characterized by mobile habits: the gestures, dress, speech, and mannerisms that people either assemble in the formation of marginal spaces or are required to possess as they negotiate, occupy, or transform the margins. I suggest that there is an interrelation between space and social activity wherein mobile habits delineate peripheral spaces at the same time that these spaces condition habits. As I attempt to show, the interaction between space and cultural practices is neither causal nor representative but loosely textured and full of potential permutations and transformations. Throughout this essay, I analyze the spacing of gender and the gendering of space in the context of ethnographic illustrations from the Turkish, ‘European’ region of Trakya. Particular attention focuses on how women’s and men’s activities, especially their forms of togetherness both inside and outside the household, are inextricably bound up in practices of space and movement.

When we think of disciplinary spaces, we often envision spaces that confine people to act, behave, or work in particular ways. These spaces range from prisons, barracks, and asylums to households, schools, and factories and are common sites for individualizing and regulating groups of people according to a homogeneous orderliness. As Bauman (1992: xv) reminds us, people here are not born into their places: they need to be trained, drilled, and induced into finding the place that fits them and in which they fit. Thus, disciplinary spaces command bodies and prescribe fixed gestures; they are marked with a
1. I use the term household to refer to those people who live together as a domestic unit as well as a dwelling unit. Household membership in this region, as well as in other areas, is generally based on kinship through marriage and descent.


4. Ethnographic illustrations derive from field research carried out in an agricultural community (Arzu, pseudonym) in the region of Trakya (Thrace), or European Turkey, during the summer of 1996. In this community (pop. 235), and in the surrounding area, local inhabitants identify themselves as Sunni Islamic, reckon descent in patrilineal terms, support arranged marriages and virilocal residence, and live mainly in three-generational households. Their major economic activities include certain mode of detailed political investment of the body, a ‘micro-physics’ of power. Here, the art of discipline proceeds from the distribution of individuals in an ‘enclosure,’ a place different to all others and relatively closed in upon itself. It is a space that partitions people into certain locations and organizes ‘cells,’ ‘places,’ and ‘ranks’ (Foucault 1979: 139–148). In these relative enclosures, the habits and mannerisms of individuals are governed and regulated and there is little room here to introduce new forms of ‘knowing how to act’ as these places are already designed and organized for specific duties and practices.

Disciplinary strategies characterize the domain of family households in Turkey as well as in other nations. This is evident at the level of state policy and civil code in matters of family, gender, and property relations (see N. Arat 1996: 403; Y. Arat 1996: 29). The government’s monitoring of parental and conjugal relations in claims of citizenship and its regulation of license marriages, property inheritance, divorce, and child custody procedures are among the most disciplinary tactics deployed to authorize aspects of family life, sexuality, and reproduction as well as partition people into certain locations. Even in the context of local culture and politics, rural women’s social status in household dwellings, such as extended households, places them in hierarchical positions based upon kin and authority relations (Sirman 1991: 201; Kocturk 1992; Ilcan 1996a, 1996b). This placement potentially situates them in positions of unpaid, domestic and farm workers, and confines them in spaces of duty, of perpetual and endlessly repeatable tasks that have increasingly little recognition. For example, and based on my case study of an agricultural community (Arzu) in Turkey’s northwestern countryside, the disciplinary space of households is typically organized as an unpaid workplace for women and a relaxing place for men. Here, women are generally expected to act in regular, dutiful, or predictable ways. These expectations, influenced as they are by kinship and gendered beliefs, attempt to make women (especially in-marrying women) capable of monotonous conduct. This is especially so if they are subject to steady and coordinated pressure by local family and community members. In this site, women’s situated habits are often predicated on the forces of moral conviction. This does not mean, however, that women do not transform the traditional,

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disciplinary domain of the household, and nor does it mean that this is 
the only site of women’s activity. Sirman (1991: 201) reminds us that 
all social structures open up particular spaces of operation for socially 
positioned individuals, [and] we should investigate what this space 
consists of for women and what women do within this space, as well as 
the means available to them for enlarging its boundaries.

Rural women in Turkey and elsewhere have been known to occupy the household not simply as a central site of domestic duty, 
and social and generational reproduction, but as a space for socializing and participating in female events, neighbourly visits, and 
informational exchanges (Wright 1993; Sirman 1991; Tapper and 
Tapper 1987). They are able to do this because they populate the household’s liminality, a space of ‘outside belongings’ that 
designates a profound manner of shared outsidersness and challenges women’s ‘secondary’ status, however momentary this may be. In 
various regions of Turkey, for example, women leave their natal households upon marriage and move to their husbands’ parents’ 
home. They are known as gelin (the ones who come). Except for unmarried females, and the occasional ‘girl kidnapping,’ every 
woman is a gelin. The frequent contact many women have with their female neighbours in the form of economic co-operation, domestic 
decision-making, bride searches, and marriage negotiations, as well as discussions on household politics and conflicts (especially those 
between women and their in-laws), highlights their habits of sharing ‘outside’ differences and of ‘belonging’ on the edge. By displacing 
themselves on the cultural edge, women are able to create for themselves a potential ‘radical openness’ (see hooks 1990: 145–153), what I have called a ‘nomadic dis-position’ (1998, in press), which embraces change and fluidity rather than fixity. In the liminal 
positions that they occupy, especially when they engage in activities 
that have little to do with governance, they reach an ability to ‘re-
vision’ themselves differently. Through relations of difference and outsidedness (cf. Callaway 1993: 181), rural women in northwestern 
Turkey are made aware of the separation between the periphery of sporadic but meaningful encounters and the centre of regulated 
activities. In fact, for them, living on the edge enhances their capacity 
to do things differently: to unfold autobiographical histories, to tell stories, and to disappear from household duties and routines for a 
while. Consequently, their interpretation of their daily lives shifts 
capital- and labour-intensive agricultural work, household reproductive work, and some animal husbandry. There is a strict gender division 
of labour: men are responsible for capital-intensive farm work, commercial transactions, and home restoration activities; women do most of the labour-intensive agricultural work, household-related chores, garden tasks, and caring of animals.

5. In Outside Belongings, Elspeth Probyn offers an interesting sociological analysis of the sociality of the outside and the ‘belonging’ linked to it. Drawing upon Foucault’s concept of heterotopia, she poses the term ‘outside belonging’ to emphasize the social world as surface, the space of movement, the movement across space, and the ways in which belonging is situated as threshold, as both private and public (1996. 11–13).

6. The term ‘girl kidnapping’ translates in Turkish as kiz kaçırma. It most often applies to
couples who have 'run away' to get married without parental approval.
7. Western notions of Turkish (and Middle Eastern) women have been historically connected to the harem imagery of women's restricted use of space and their seclusion and concubinage (Marcus 1992a; Melman 1995; Ternar 1994). This imagery has often filtered through contemporary travel writing and television portrayals of women, signaling women as subservient and subordinate in their apparently changeless and uniform places of retreat.
8. See Trinh (1993) for more on the hegemonic unification and representation of occupied territories.

without forgetting where they have come, from what they have done and changed, and with whom they live with in the interior. This renewed understanding of themselves is, as Shields emphasizes, 'a liminal phenomenon which takes place on the threshold of self and other, at the point of contact between embodied subjects positioned in a material context' (1996: 286). It is this 'knowing how to go on' that also counters the passive 'hidden women' as they are often portrayed in the West, an issue raised more generally by Mohanty (1991) in her discussion of feminist scholarship and colonial discourses.

Other spaces abound within and alongside disciplinary ones. Different from the relatively closed, disciplinary spaces of the household — where its inhabitants are typically distributed to specific locations, given specific tasks, and their individual behaviour and work inspected or approved according to hierarchical plans — I have illustrated above the existence of spaces that are not under disciplinary orders. Even though disciplinary regimes aim to separate the outside (the undisciplined, the marginal) from the inside (the ordered), to dominate social spacing, and to regulate who is to be put in operation, they never eliminate the outside. The outside always remains an unordered space of spontaneity, unpredictability, and indeterminability: a space of 'multiplicity' (Grosz 1994b: 192) capable of creating sociable relations, producing new views on living life, and challenging hegemonic borders. Living on the edge has the potential to alter the 'spectatorship' of the centre and de-naturalize discipline's boundaries. As Kirby (1993: 189) so aptly states:

'we cannot afford to naturalize the boundary, though we must analyze boundaries that have been naturalized in order to break down their rigidity. We cannot afford to reify the distinction between 'inside' and 'outside,' though in formulating a politics, we cannot abandon either space but must continually traverse the difference.'

Thus, we should not underestimate the numerous effects and differences that emerge when women occupy peripheral places.

**Occupying the Margins: Spaces of Movements and Habits**

There is no doubt that in contemporary, global society we are witnessing changes in traditional, disciplinary spaces. State planned systems of order-maintenance are continuing to lose much of their strength as a vehicle of regulating the population. Not only are they undergoing reform in the form of deregulation, decentralization, or
privatization, but they are thought of and experienced differently in many parts of the world. This may be because these enclosures are not completely rigid or homogeneous; they are filled with openings and spaces for forms of togetherness that are different from those bound by authority and its stabilizing mechanisms. We now confront a social space populated by 'agents who are entangled in mutual dependencies and hence prompted to interact. These agents, however, are not operating in anything like the “principally coordinated” space’ (Bauman 1992: 61), like those well-structured and securely allocated spaces. Marginal spaces, therefore, are of great interest. We need to understand their differences from disciplinary spaces, account for the habitual routines that are formed there, and articulate the interrelations between space and social activity generally.

Unlike disciplinary spaces, marginal spaces do not distribute or circulate populations in a network of relations; they are not cellular or rank-ordered since there is no outer wall, no dividing of places for individuals, and no individualized places. They do not have the precepts of behaviour that illuminate the meaning of ‘knowing how to act’ or ‘how to respond’ as found in the disciplinary spaces of households, schools, or workshops. These spaces are ‘open’ to a wide variety of behaviours since there is no one situation given completely, no one set of rules to follow, and no one way to act. They are the spaces of ‘inbetweenness’ that Elspeth Probyn (1996: 26) highlights when we are in between two languages, cultures, and histories or in a process of becoming. They are the ‘spaces on the side of the road’ that enact the destiny, texture, and force of a lived cultural poetics that Kathleen Stewart (1996) so vividly analyzes and describes. They are even the spaces where people feel lost, confused, or disempowered, a feeling that Zygmunt Bauman (1995: 181) refers to as proteophobia.

Marginal spaces are spaces that have been situated on the periphery of cultural systems of space in which places are ranked relative to each other. Constituted by the ‘culture of the marginalized,’ these spaces are ‘for someone and for something’ (Shields 1991: 3–6), for specific kinds of persons and for specific kinds of events. In A Space on the Side of the Road, Stewart (1996: 44) emphasizes this agency of places.

Imagine how, in the hills, place is everything yet a family’s place is not where they “live” but where they “stay at” as if the staying has to be marked, like a temporary respite requiring constant vigilance... I could tell you that houses, like people and things, circulate and become abstracted into moving forms, that it is their dismemberings and re-memberings that seem to matter most, that things do not hold, that “thangs are not what they seem.” It is as if the ownerly attachment to objects that makes them seem unmoving, substantial, and discrete is only a mirage. Yet re-membered fragments grow infilled with absent presence and bear the marks of a continuous agency.

As a site for people’s changing locations and positions, marginal spaces are not just sites of movement but they become so through movement. They are spaces in which people
either pass through or fill. They are sites for moving along, going by something in the course of moving, and crossing over or between things or events. These mobile activities are familiar to everyone. We all move from one place to another, passing in and out of places and occasionally occupying them. It is however in these places, sometimes out-of-the-way sites, that place seems to matter most while the place located in the centre of things grows misleading and similar (Stewart 1996: 42). The most centred of locations can thus become marginal.

A marginal space is a complex site of social activity. It is complex because people in these spaces cannot be assessed in terms of their functionality or dysfunctionality, for their movements do not fall under a totality or organized structure. This space therefore does not lend itself to predict peoples’ activities or to grasp what they will do in advance. Furthermore, this space is populated by many different people from varied class, gender, age, and ethnic backgrounds who have goals that do not necessarily match those of others and who move in different directions for different purposes. Consequently this prevents the site from closing in on itself and from being regulated from a single source or point of view. Overall, this marginal space is strikingly different from the confined and regulated spaces of order that people have long inhabited as well as transformed. Instead of equating marginal spaces with modern ‘structures’ of places, it is more important to go beyond such a conception of space to one that is more open and less authoritative. Such a focus will allow for a sociological assessment of these sites, one that raises questions about social activities, conventions, and power dynamics in particular places.

The kinds of places we occupy or pass through are to some extent an effect of the ways in which we perceive and make sense of these places (Grosz 1995a: 97; Hanson and Pratt 1995). It is thus not surprising that ‘places on the margin’ possess a cultural status and evoke images, labels, and stereotypes. In Connel’s Gender and Power, the street can be a battleground for gender struggles, ethnic rivalry, and other routine conflicts as well as a theatre of advertising displays, sexuality, and styles of femininity and masculinity. What is fascinating about the street is that people passing through this marginal space convey messages about themselves and their cultural status by dress, jewellery, posture, and speech (1987: 132–34). While these conveyed messages are influenced by cultural and social expectations (such as those based upon gender, class, and ethnicity), shared meanings are also associated with such marginal places. In Turkish village society, for example, community streets, aside from being used for the local transportation of farm animals, goods, and workers, are considered as occasional playgrounds for young female and male children; adventure spaces for men to explore, discover, and talk; and visible spaces for incidental strangers as well as for morally appropriate women to hide themselves in the open [i.e., to wear the appropriate ‘habit’ so as not to be labeled ‘açık’ (open)]. Similarly, in rural Greek society, the street is reckoned as a site of immoral

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behaviour where debris is thrown, where humans and animals defecate, where strangers pass by, and where women are euphemistically known to deceive their spouses ‘in the street’ (Dubisch 1986: 200). Interestingly, these stereotypical meanings and ideas of place, these ‘place-images’ (Shields 1991: 47), impact on the material, everyday activities occurring in these sites.

Marginal spaces do more than possess a cultural status or produce labels and images. They are spaces of habits. In these spaces people tend to act in particular ways, giving way to a behaviour pattern of manners and styles that has a degree of familiarity or even comfort. Individuals experience and confront new phenomena and are capable of absorbing, and of responding to, a steady and growing flow of stimuli. Their habits or ability to ‘know how to act’ in the margins are related to movement. People move from one place to another and, through motion, either they create a space on the margin or space itself induces or conditions a behaviour pattern of movement. We may refer to these motor-activities as mobile habits: the gestures, dress, speech, and mannerisms that people either assemble in the formation of marginal spaces or are required to possess as they negotiate, occupy, or transform the margins. The manifestation of any given mobile habit must therefore depend on whether or not a situation or space is given completely. However, an important question needs to be raised in this context: how do we explain the habits, gestures, manners, dress, or speech of people in these marginal, non-disciplinary spaces where there is no architecture that is built to supervise movements, no institutional instruction, training, and exercise, no precise system of command, and no panoptic machine to produce homogeneous effects of power? How is it possible for people to have habits as they negotiate, pass through, or occupy marginal spaces?

One way to approach this problem is to argue that space itself is a neutral background quite separate from social relations and interactions. Space here can be no more than a projection or expression of social activity (cf. Ardener 1993: 2-3). Underlying this view in all its variations is a form of humanism: social actors are conceived as self-given agents who are responsible for all forms of social activity and production. As such, it is a view that does not enable us to understand fully the spatialisation of social activities or

9. The concept mobile habit varies from Pierre Bourdieu’s (1977) ‘habitus.’ Among many other things, the habitus is a system of “transposable dispositions, structured structures, predisposed to function as structuring structures ... which can be ‘regulated’ and ‘regular’ without in any way being the production of obedience to rules” (1977: 72). It is the product of collective history, objective structures (e.g., language, economy) - any universalizing mediation that causes an individual’s practices to be made reasonable. As a metaphor for indicating that daily routines can be transposed to, and can change, another field of activity (1977: 79–90), the habitus is mobile: it can both deterrioralize and reterritorialize a given place. Bourdieu’s habitus, however, is not a system derived from movement in the way that mobile habits are.
the connections between space and habitual practices. It does not allow us to see how space makes possible different kinds of relations at the same time that these relations can in turn transform the image or meaning of this space (Grosz 1995a: 92). So, rather than giving primacy to one or the other, it seems more fruitful to analyze the articulation between space and social activity. It is important to show, for instance, how marginal places themselves elicit specific social and habitual routines that characterize the very spaces in which they surface. It is also imperative to illustrate how daily routines assemble a marginal site for specific actions and events. In such an analysis, the inter-relationship between space and social practices is most noteworthy.

Depending on the context presented, people’s mobile habits possess a productive and innovative quality. The productive character of mobile habits bears a striking similarity to ‘spatial practices,’ to those activities that involve the enactment of spatialisation by individuals in their daily gestures. Such habitual routines of space not only constitute a place where certain events or actions are expected to occur but they express the ‘multitudinous possibilities of any given site’ (Shields 1991: 53). Through lived practice, space is produced as ‘human space,’ as a place for work, recreation, death, remembrance, for this and that. Flânerie, for example, is a spatial practice (what I would call a mobile habit) of specific sites, such as those of parks, sidewalks, squares, and shopping arcades. As such, this practice is part of a social process of occupying and seizing urban space (Shields 1994: 65). This is the dynamic side of spatial practices that resemble the activity of mobile habits.

People’s mobile habits, however, can become subordinated to space until they contest and transform this site into something else. This subordination occurs when their habits are conditioned by a marginal space, a conditioning that is neither causal nor representational. A marginal space, its architecture, landscape, and layout, can require a certain mobile habit; it can circumscribe our daily routines in as much as we can circumscribe it. These mobile habits form as we ‘negotiate’ the environment,10 as we devise ways to pass through or occupy it. For example, and based upon my case study, Turkish rural women move through town streets in a particular habit of dress and with a set of mannerisms for seeing and being seen.
These required mobile habits and body images are needed because town streets are largely designed for the transit of men, since women face so many ‘no go’ areas and have concerns about safety and moral ridicule. Marginal spaces, however, can be reinscribed by the particularities of its occupation, by women’s habits and activities themselves, such that women have been known to occupy small sections of less populated streets for the selling of handmade goods during weekly grand bazaars, to gather at local bus stops, and to meet others in front of family-run enterprises or other ‘safe’ and familiar places. These efforts not only disrupt and reinscribe particular spatial settings but they also occur on a much wider and varied scale (see Hanson and Pratt 1995: 19-21; Shields 1991: 54). Marginal spaces therefore have the potential to condition social practices and can be contested and transformed by habitual routines. Consequently, mobile habits are nontotalizable activities. They are constantly changing and have the capacity to undergo permutations and transformations through movement.  

Spacing Gender and Gendering Space: A Case Study of Turkish Village Society

In the rural community of Arzu, located in the Trakya (Thrace) region of Turkey, women’s spatial movements outside their households are not only restricted in comparison to those of men but marginal spaces themselves induce and condition specific mobile habits for women. In such places, a woman, on meeting a man, averts her eyes, adopts a physical distancing stance towards him, and seldom initiates any verbal communication with him. It is understood that women should abide by a particular pattern of behaviour when they are required to travel away from home. In this way, marginal spaces have an element of control attached to them in the sense that they can be more confining for some than others.

Marginal spaces, ranging from the main village street that cuts through agricultural lands and residential housing properties to inter-household pathways, alleys, and back lanes, are reserved for specific people and certain events. These less established and out-of-the-way places need to be negotiated when people pass through or occupy them. This is especially so for women. In the process of negotiating these places, it is women who are required to have the appropriate habit of movement because it is women who are the day-light
12. There are a variety of head coverings which women wear in this region on specific occasions. The coverings women wear on the street are called *yemeni* and they are small, usually printed, flowery scarves that are trimmed with colourful, minute beads and hand-made tatting. See Delaney (1994) for an elaborate analysis and discussion of the meanings of hair and coverings in Turkish rural society.

13. A *mevlâd* is a formal performance of the medieval Turkish poem, ‘The Mevlîd-i Serif,’ describing the birth and life of Muhammed. In the northwestern region of Turkey, among Sunni Muslims, a series of yearly *mevlâds* are held to commemorate the death of a community member, celebrate the birth of a first child, or acknowledge the closeness of two friends. These performances often permit women to develop a regular network of contacts. In the community of Arzu, the majority of travellers of these places and considered by men to be in need of protection from the ‘outside’: the unfamiliar territory where the unpredictability and openness of men towards women occur. These sites where women pass through are typically associated with the movements of veiled or ‘covered’ women hiding in the open: a group of women travelling from one villager’s abode to another, going to a *mevlâd* located in a nearby neighbourhood, or returning home from a *kabul günü* (the reception day). Not nearly as mobile as their male counterparts in those spaces distant from household sites (see also Marcus 1992a: 108), women face moral ridicule and sometimes interrogation if they travel alone or without the permission of their husbands or in-laws. Especially significant in this context is that travelling is about seeing and, by implication, being seen (see Grosz 1994b: 101). Travelling entails movement; it is about moving from one place to another. When women move in the ‘open’ they are presented with challenges, similar to those experienced in the past. An older woman (who married ‘into’ the community some fifty years ago) offers an historical account of the manner in which women encountered the politics of the face and of marginal spaces. Like many other women’s recollections, her remembering highlights how women’s bodily movements were produced in history and through gender relations of power.

Women were unable to go out or do anything on their own. They were even unable to control the horses. In the past, it was not commonly acceptable for women to do men’s work. Even when they had to go to the fields on their own, the shepherds would attack them. And, even if women were permitted to go out on their own, they had to have a man with them. Historically, it was difficult for women to leave their homes. When they did, they had to wear a *çarşaf* [floor-length cape or veil]; they had to avoid men. They wore a special kind of veil then. I remember, my mother used to have one. They were real veils, black ones; they permitted you to see the outside world from the inside, with no one on the outside able to see your face... In our youth days, our mothers had a difficult life; they worked the fields by using horses and they had to protect themselves from men. Men sexually bothered women a lot in the past ...

While we may consider women’s veiling practices in this historical context as stemming from a panoptic mechanism of control that works to enclose women, what is significant here is the anonymity of veiled women: they are ‘inside’ looking ‘out’; they see everything without...
ever being recognized; and since they remain invisible, they are capable of making everything visible. Like a faceless ‘look’ able to identify everything observable in a field of perception, traditionally veiled women had an opportunity to take account forms of behaviour, attitudes, possibilities, suspicions — an ability to review the social world through movement, though with little direct opportunity to penetrate or alter the effects of observable, and even unwanted or unwarranted, behaviour.

Their ability to see without being identified, however, was transformed when most rural women were required to cover only their hair, and not their face, with the ‘modern’ headscarf. This momentous change in their appearance coincided with the order-building that followed World War II and the introduction of market economies, mechanized farming, and western values and dress codes. A new set of timely arrangements now attempt to keep women under visual inspection, especially when they are on the move. In this contemporary context, a younger woman articulates what it means to be seen and the kinds of restrictions placed upon women’s spatial movements.

I cannot travel onto the streets or to the countryside alone. There will be gossip. If I go out for a walk by myself, the men in the coffee house will talk about me, saying ‘look at her, she is walking around alone.’ We fear the coffee shop. We fear the men in the coffee shop. This is why, when we travel, we have to go in a group and cover ourselves. There are no limitations placed on men: they are serbest [free, unrestricted], they can go anywhere they want. For example, if my mother-law is sick, she, alone, cannot go to the doctor; she must wait for my father-in-law to transport her. But, there are no restrictions for him if he is sick; he will take the bus or find someone with a car to take him to the town doctor. He does not have to wait.

Today, when women travel in the ‘open’ they confront the situation of having to veil themselves from the visibility of those males who are now believed to undermine their reputation if they do not adopt the appropriate ‘know-how to act.’ Even when women travel alone, they are thought to incite the imagination of other men. With the sight of other men approaching from afar, women habitually check their headscarves to ensure that any loose hair is properly tucked in and they rearrange their sweaters or overcoats to secure proper bodily coverage. It is as if these coverings, forming part of a woman’s body

mevlüds are organized by women and for women, although a local, male imam (religious cleric) may be present to recite the poem. See Tapper and Tapper 1987; Marcus 1992a for an elaborate discussion of mevlüd performances in Turkey. See also E. Olson. 1994. ‘The Use of Religious Symbol Systems and Ritual in Turkey: Women’s Activities at Muslim Saints’ Shrines,’ The Muslim World LXXXIV(3-4): 202–216.

14. See Göle (1996) for an interesting discussion and analysis of civilization and veiling in Turkey.
image, serve as a reminder of what cannot be forgotten about the historical ties between veiling and spatial movements (see Göl 1996: 94). A woman’s body image, the way it becomes understood through or positioned by cultural judgments, narratives, or rules, involves the relations between her body, the space in which she moves, and the other objects and bodies in which she encounters while moving (see Grosz 1994a). Ultimately, then, this image does in fact do something: it has the capacity for merging and re-emerging relations as well as effecting and affecting movement (cf. Probyn 1996: 59), such as that of women’s movement in certain places. A woman’s image is thus the condition of her access to spatiality and her plans for action and movement.

In these ‘places on the margin,’ Arzu women engage in a particular mobile habit: they have a dress ‘habit,’ they refrain from wearing make-up, they speak softly so as not to attract the attention of others, they engage in ‘mis-meetings’ with those unknown men whom they pass by (see Ilcan 1998b, in press), and they move from one point to another. Like these women’s mobile habits, my research companion and I experienced an overwhelming sense of mobile awareness during our daily travels, especially when we were passing ‘unveiled,’ as it were, in front of the bustling coffee house or when we were returning to our temporary abode (located near the coffee house) in a housing complex generally reserved for itinerant doctors, midwives, and visitors. We were, of course, far from alone in thinking that our movements were noticeable. Our movements sometimes produced a quiet curiosity in the men sitting outside the coffee house or became the site of imaginary mappings, of picturing where we had been and visualizing with whom we had spoken. What seems important here is that the order of space conditions a habitual moving form of practice upon a site. On this level, marginal places, in constituting mobile habits, are a locus for the production and circulation of power. The exercise of power is, however, always met with counter forces.

Women contest the habitual prerequisites for travelling through marginal spaces. They are known to travel by themselves, appear in front of the ‘male gaze’ emanating from the coffee house, and leave the household without appropriate dress accessories. These counter acts, no matter how small or insignificant they appear to be, reveal the
transformative qualities of women’s actions and mobile habits. This is why it is important not to have a rigid view of the social practices or mobile habits that take place on the margins. Habits are themselves inherently unstable and constantly undergoing change. As Shields argues, “[c]ontradictions are always being encountered and old notions abandoned; old practices being improved by new ones. This could be thought of as a repository of the habitual ‘ways of doing’ and ‘ways of being’ that one lapses into between bouts of individualistic innovation” (1991: 65). For this reason it is essential to illustrate the two-way linkage between marginal spaces and mobile habits, showing that they both define and establish each other. This is not a holistic view that stresses the unity and integration of space and bodies. Rather, these interrelations involve a chain of energies and events, bringing together or drawing apart their impermanent alliances (cf. Grosz 1995a: 108). In this regard, and in what follows, I will explore how mobile habits (like spatial practices) produce a space for certain events. In drawing upon ethnographic illustrations from the community of Arzu, I reveal how women’s and men’s mobile habits enact new marginal places, places that are not completely settled or established.

Both disciplinary and marginal spaces characterize the household. Women occupy them in different ways, for different purposes, and under particular conditions. It is their specific relations with others, the intermingling of their bodies, that define the kind of household space women live under or move through. In the household’s disciplinary space, women feed and care for household members, tend to garden duties and household chores, and follow a routinized work process that individualizes them within a visual field of control and according to a homogeneous orderliness. By contrast, in the marginal space of the household, women introduce new forms of movement that do not fall under an organized, bounded structure: they conduct marriage negotiations, recite poetry, tell stories, and organize specific kinds of female gatherings that distinguish the remarkable from the ordinary. The kabul günü (the reception day) is a good example of a female event that takes place on the margins of household living; it involves activities separate from those which characterize the disciplinary household. As a cultural and social practice, one that possibly cultivates a “mobile consciousness” (Ong 1995: 368), ‘the reception day’ produces a space to challenge totalizing discourses, to allow for the unfolding of creative and affective dimensions of everyday life, and to permit people to imagine and sense things differently. Here, the private space of the household becomes a space of public marginality and of anonymity.

As a visiting pattern common in other regions of Turkey as well, the *kabul günü* is an event that ruptures everyday routines, makes no claim to consistency, and gives rise to forms of movement, of transformation. It is not only filled full of processes by which things become visible and re-ordered and by which people are set in motion and offered different possibilities, but it requires advanced authorization, planning, and organizing. Once a host receives permission (*izin*) from her husband to hold such an affair, she is then responsible for inviting individual women to her home on the designated reception day. When the word spreads that such an event is being planned, all potential guests anticipate the call. These invited guests are typically young, married women from varied social class groupings but from similar ethnic backgrounds. They usually live in the community and are in close walking distance to the host’s household. However, in order for them to attend, they too must ask their husbands and in-laws for approval. As soon as the guest list is finalized, the host begins to plan the food menu and the necessary goods to be purchased. Such visits generally take place in a designated host’s household about twice a month, especially during the spring and summer months, and include between twenty to forty women (see Ilcan, in press 1998a). The reception day, therefore, is not an impromptu affair; it is a transformative event, a new production process and the production of the new.

There are a variety of rituals associated with the reception event that challenge the disciplinary space of the household. Upon arriving at the household where the reception day occurs, several small groups of women are greeted by the host and then escorted into a living space in the household. These women sit next to each other, sometimes on pillows arranged in a circle. They place their *elişleri* (hand-work) in front of them, a gesture used to indicate that they will be staying for more than a brief visit. In fact, women say that they can judge the length of a guest’s visit by whether or not she brings her hand-work. Once everyone has arrived, and all the women have had the opportunity to greet one another and to show others the intricacies of their hand-work, the host of the reception sprinkles *kolonya* (lemon cologne) on everyone’s hands. This is a symbolic practice commonly used to welcome the arrival of a traveller and to refresh the guest after her journey. Shortly following this, and in the midst of casual banter, each woman is then offered a cigarette to smoke, an activity

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considered disrespectful if conducted in front of those older than you (i.e., especially one’s husband’s family and relatives). Even women who do not regularly smoke participate in the activity. In a more general way, the social practices related to this event enact a space for disrupting the norm. This becomes especially apparent when women, from their positions of being on the inside looking out, engage in a series of reflections and criticisms about their affinal households and their responsibilities to household members as gelin.

The reception day is a time for every woman to talk openly about her life as a gelin and to voyage towards the outside, to speak of the past in the context of the present, and to tell stories of events that have happened and could happen again. It is an occasion for women to highlight the issues and struggles that they face as women who have entered the community from the ‘outside.’ And it is for this reason that men and mother-in-laws are not invited to these events, for they are often the source of conflict. More specifically perhaps, it is also a time for women to share their memories with one another and to reveal to others various kinds of ‘private’ information, ranging from detailed accounts of personal and family misfortune to economic and financial issues (such as the amount of land harvested, the type of machinery purchased, and the range of household goods bought or exchanged), the latter of which is rarely shared by married men with their wives.17 For example, during one reception, an older woman told the story of a time when she was looking out her living room window startled to see her husband directing a large flock of sheep, of which she later learned he had purchased that day by selling the household’s only farm tractor and for which she soon realized she would eventually take most responsibility for raising. A younger woman, who had recently moved to the community upon marriage, reminisced about the life she once had ‘back home,’ spoke of her social and spatial isolation from her natal family, close friends, and relatives, and resented the domestic demands now placed upon her. Like these women’s stories of ‘outsideness,’ another woman echoed her disapproval of her in-laws’ willingness to spend twice as much money on her younger sister’s-in-law marriage than they had on her. She recalled how the wedding expenditures required the sale of the household’s tractor, the borrowing of money from relatives, and the renovation of a bedroom for the couple, common expenses underscoring contemporary marriages in this region.

17. In an analysis of reception days attended by elite women from land-controlling families in the Hatay region of Turkey, Aswad (1978) notes that the nature of information exchanged in these meetings were both of an economic nature (e.g., agrarian conditions) and a political nature (e.g., class-based behaviour and patterns). See B. Aswad, 1978. ‘Women, Class, and Power: Examples from the Hatay, Turkey,’ in L. Beck and N. Keddie, eds., Women in the Muslim World, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, pp. 473-481.
Although I have condensed and simplified these narratives, these and other related stories of ‘outsidedness’ are not only infectious, with one woman’s story spurring another’s, but they parallel the relationship between veiling and women’s mobile habits in the margins. In essence, the concept of veiling has spread to effect other kinds of practices besides those which characterize the appearance of women in the street or in places which they do not inhabit. Veiling has now become an ensemble that wanders from one place to another, exhibiting itself in different manners. In the way that veiled women were historically seen and not seen at the same time, and were able to produce a new kind of ‘outside’ perception, kabul günü women engage in a similar veiled, mobile activity. The stories that they tell move outside their thoughts and extend beyond the present, into the past and the future. The things that they remember, both intimate and communal, re-collect the feelings of not quite belonging at the same time as they embrace a shared foreignness. In fact, their thoughts take place in a space that is filled full of possibilities and of new visionary insights. After all, they are on the inside looking out. And, no one from the outside can see them looking beyond or hear their tales, just as no one in the past could see the women’s faces — their expressions, their one-way glances — when they travelled completely veiled in black. Most notably, the reception event, as a veiled practice, allows women to be anonymous in a place that has not merely an ‘inside’ architecture but a manner of interchange with the outside. Such habitual routines involve the enactment of spatialisation by women in their gestures and mannerisms. Routines of space not only constitute a place for female gatherings but they produce a site for embracing change and transformation as well as forms of togetherness devoid of a binding authority. The female occupation of this site therefore directly transforms the predictable, habitual routines of women in relatively closed spaces. As a liminal space created by and for women, as a space for becoming rather than being, it parallels the marginal spaces created and occupied by men.

The marginal space of the household is typically not a site organized for the socializing of men like it is and has been for women. For men, the house is a routinized place marked by a frequency of repetitions that centre around the ‘caring’ of bodies: feeding, washing, clothing, and replenishing activities. Only on formal occasions of an engagement or a marriage will men stay home in the evening to participate in the celebrations. In fact, it is considered morally appropriate for a man to spend his non-working hours, and his communal affairs, with other men outside of the household.

In this rural culture, a distinct discourse of space prevails. The sociable practice of discussing the mechanical harvesting and selling of crops; the transportation of farm goods to the market; the purchases of farm machinery, fertilizers, and pesticides from the market; the loaning and receiving of money; and other conversation topics are male spatial discourses. These ‘discourses of space’ are composed of ‘perceptions of place
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[and] of the world as a “space” (Shields 1991: 48). They have become influential in actualising a ‘community’ of manhood rituals, a marginal space for men’s habitual speech and a place for them to occupy. Embodied in patterns of behaviour and in forms for transmission and diffusion, male discourses of space initiate the production of a new space for emotive associations. They not only demarcate a way of living one’s life but ‘bring together’ men in a place of cultural and political activity separate from women’s. This is a space of belonging and recreation that is far less finalized than places of work and places of repetitive activity.

The marginal space of the community’s kahvehane (coffee house) is a place only for males. It is a local establishment that is open to clients throughout the year, from early in the morning to late at night, and which serves coffee, tea, soft drinks, beer and raki (Turkish liquor). As the most viable space created for expressing the ideas and meanings on space by men themselves, it is a site traditionally and contemporarily forbidden for women in Turkey (Sirman 1990: 47; Delaney 1991) and elsewhere (see Cowan 1991; Dubisch 1986; Driessen 1997). In fact, there are no such recreational spaces for women to occupy. Even restaurants in nearby market towns only occasionally reserve a ‘family’ room within which women sit but do not linger (see also Marcus 1992a: 117).

Aside from its gender restrictions, the coffee house is never a final destination but rather an in-between place, a place located on the side of the road, a space to pass through and occupy. Like Bauman’s form of ‘meta-togetherness’ (1995: 48), this site is a place of meeting that lacks any sense of explicit direction and moral obligation. Unlike other places, a man can be reasonably sure that he will be welcomed here. As such, it is a convenient visiting place for male farmers who are just returning from a day’s work in the fields or reappearing from the local cami (mosque) after daily prayers. It is also a location for attracting male visitors from other villages before they venture to nearby towns or after they have completed their day of factory work. What is interesting to note here is that these male mobile habits interact with durational time.

The market span, the work calendar, the travel period, or the duration to do this or that, appear as important aspects for understanding the ‘habit’ of movement through space. Diverse
timetables have in fact controlled the frequency of movements, such as the railway timetable (Grossberg 1996: 179) and the bus, farm, religious, and festive timetables. Different from disciplinary enclosures where time is subordinated to space,\textsuperscript{19} durational time complements the movements that take place in the margins. As I have briefly illustrated, the moving of men in and out of the coffee house is punctuated by the call to prayer, work schedules, and recreational periods. Although this conception of time contributes to the regularity of movements in these spaces, it does not structure space (see Bauman 1995: 89). The coffee house is an assemblage of mobile habits and customary norms that have come to define it as a site for certain activities and not others. It is a place suitable only to some, a reference point for identifying the existence of a ‘protected’ community for in-coming travellers, a site to avoid becoming fixed, and a place that fragments time into episodes and political games.

The coffee house is a well-known space for the politics of pleasure. It is a popular site for casual banter, intense political debates, occasional disputes, and various forms of entertainment (playing cards, backgammon, and watching television). In this in-between or liminal location much ‘surface egalitarianism’ (Maffesoli 1996: 142) takes the form of an array of social activities, such as arranging for the hiring of intermittent wage labourers during the hoeing season; exchanging information about the selling of crops during the harvesting season; conducting monetary deals, seeking knowledge about the factory employment of other villagers; and discussing formal politics, up-coming community events, and gossip and rumours circulating in and outside of this space. It is also a place for welcoming the return of young men from their eighteen-month military service, celebrating young boys’ rites of passage (sünnet, ritual circumcision), and disclosing village secrets. In other words, the coffee house is a miniature world of social relations full of economic exchanges, power struggles, and cultural celebrations. Over time, an elaborate assemblage of male practices has become attached to the notion of ‘coffee house.’ It is a liminal site for the leisure activities of men and for their release from physical labour, and a site ‘empty’ of women and separate from women’s household spaces.
Concluding Thoughts
Alternative ways of ‘belonging’ emerge from the margins and challenge the disciplinary, spatial regimes that command bodies and prescribe fixed habits. In disciplinary spaces, where people are assigned specific locations, given certain tasks, and are governed by a central authority structure, there are openings for living life differently. An in-between space can materialize as a site of change and transformation. In this context, I have shown how women occupy the household’s threshold, a space of ‘radical openness’ that embraces change and flexibility rather than permanency. With the potential to create sociable relations and displace the signatory nature of the ‘centre,’ liminal places raise our awareness of ‘outside’ practices. Fundamental here is the interconnection between marginal spaces and social activities: a threshold makes possible different kinds of relations. As a productive force, it has the potential to induce and condition mobile habits in the way that I have described the travels of veiled women in the ‘open’ and their habits of dress, talk, and ‘mis-meeting,’ as well as their acts of contest in the margins. Here, ways of ‘knowing how to act’ are themselves associated with particular events and settings; they are the migratory, habitual reactions to a locality. This is one way of spacing gender. In contrast, mobile habits have the potential to prescribe a marginal place: to assign a place; concretize a space in the built environment; and give a site cultural meaning. I have shown how women, through their veiled, mobile practices, create a marginal space for female gatherings inside the household. This space allows for a non-authoritarian form of togetherness that challenges disciplinary, household spaces. It also permits women, through their story-telling activities, to share ideas on the rigidity of power relations and to move beyond the present. Similar to this pattern of gendering space, I have illustrated how men, through their discourses of space, create a place of manhood rituals on the side of the road. This is a heterogeneous place of meeting, of cultural activity separate from women’s, that is devoid of any sense of explicit direction and moral responsibility. It involves moving into an endless and ever-changing flow of encounters and unpredictable linkages. Clearly, then, marginal spaces make possible disparate kinds of relations at the same time that these relations demonstrate the potential to transform the image or meaning of these places. The spatialisation of gender and the gendering of space involves rethinking habitual practices in terms of movement and recognizing not what we are in those relative enclosures but what we are becoming in the margins.

University of Windsor
Windsor, Canada

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